

## Exploring EFL Students' Perspectives: The Role of TikTok in Enhancing English Language Skills

Alifarga Kresnayoga Susanto<sup>1</sup>, Suparmi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>Corresponding author. Email: argasusanto150203@gmail.com

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Negeri Malang

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

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### ARTICLE

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### ABSTRACT

Presently, numerous media platforms are available for autonomous English learning, with TikTok emerging as a popular option. This study explores students' perspectives on employing TikTok as a tool for English learning. Twenty participants from the 2022 English Language Education program who utilized TikTok for English learning completed questionnaires, with five students participating in interviews. The selection of participants was carried out through purposive sampling. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data collection involved questionnaires and interviews. Thematic analysis revealed that students utilized TikTok for multiple language skills and its component such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. TikTok aided vocabulary expansion and contextual understanding of grammar. Although challenges like accuracy and content quality variations existed, most students recommended TikTok to enrich English learning experiences.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, social media platforms have revolutionized how we communicate, learn, and interact with the world around us. TikTok has emerged as a global phenomenon among these platforms, captivating millions with its short-form videos and diverse content. While often associated with entertainment and viral trends, TikTok is proving to be a surprisingly effective tool for language learning, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students (Pratiwi et al., 2021). TikTok is a social media platform for sharing short videos (Hanson, 2020). TikTok is a social media platform based on short video sharing that features video clips of up to 60 seconds each; hence, it is no surprise it targets Generation Z. What sets TikTok apart is the excitement and creativeness this short content brings. In addition, the video clips offered in TikTok allow EFL students to interact and be a part of the language, which is a far better technique than the conventional learning procedures. These video platforms feature diverse videos that include tutorials, language challenges, conversations, cultural aspects, and typically entertaining and laughter-inspiring content and catering to different language proficiency levels and interests.

One of the key strengths of TikTok as a language learning tool is its authenticity. Unlike scripted dialogues or textbook exercises, TikTok videos showcase real-life language usage in various contexts, exposing learners to authentic accents, slang, and colloquial expressions. This authenticity not only enhances listening skills but also helps students develop a more natural and intuitive grasp of the language (Perangin-angin et al., 2021; Rahmawati, 2022; Sihombing, 2021)). Additionally, TikTok's interactive features, such as comments, likes, and duets, foster a sense of community among EFL learners, creating collaboration, feedback, and peer support opportunities. By engaging with content creators and fellow learners worldwide, students can practice their English skills in a social and supportive environment, building confidence and fluency in the process.

Numerous studies related to the use of TikTok have shown that beyond its direct impact on EFL students' listening skills, TikTok also serves as a tool to develop students' speaking skills. Through exposure to diverse content creators and topics, EFL students gain valuable insights into the authenticity of conversation. Besides, the short-form video format can also be a fun and engaging way to practice speaking skills. Hence, incorporating TikTok in the learning activity can motivate students to engage in the speaking activity (Fitria, 2023). As a study by Ahmad et al. (2023) showed significant improvements in students' oral communication skills after regularly watching videos on TikTok and creating content in English. Additionally, students mentioned that their pronunciation accuracy and fluency revealed a positive correlation between regular TikTok usage and improved pronunciation skills.

Another potential concern of TikTok is the student's reading and writing skills. TikTok's short-form video format and fast-paced nature may contribute to shorter attention spans and reduced focus on more traditional forms of reading and writing. Some students may become accustomed to consuming quick, surface-level content rather than engaging with longer texts that require deeper comprehension. Thus, TikTok provides an opportunity for students to engage with diverse forms of written content, such as short stories, poems, and informative captions. Watching videos with subtitles on TikTok can help students to improve their reading comprehension and expose them to new vocabulary (Rama et al., 2023). The students can pause the video when they come across a new word and try to understand its meaning from the context. Moreover, a study by Laili (2023) described that TikTok helps students to improve their writing skills as it engages students with posts by writing thoughtful comments, creating their own captions for photos and videos, and storytelling in a fun and interactive way.

Nevertheless, despite the potential advantages of English language learning and the increasing acceptance among students, there is a lack of extensive research on the effectiveness of TikTok as an English learning tool from the perspectives of students. Gaining an understanding of how students perceive this innovative strategy can offer significant insight into whether it can be successfully incorporated into English language classroom. Hence, this study aims to examine student' perspectives on using TikTok as a digital tool for learning English. Moreover, it will investigate students' perspectives towards this unconventional educational tool and evaluate their opinions regarding its effectiveness in improving their English language skills.

## **METHOD**

The present study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to examine students' perspectives on the role of TikTok as an online learning resource for enhancing their English language skills. The population of the study consisted of English language Education students of even semester, academic year 2022 – 2023 in an Indonesian Public University. The selection of participants was carried out through purposive sampling, with 20 students selected who actively use TikTok to improve their English skills. This process is done to ensure the participants can offer rich and insightful data.

To gather the data, this study used two methods, namely, a questionnaire and an in-depth interview. The primary data for this study came from a questionnaire on Google Forms, as it is simple and adaptable to collect data from the participants. While the secondary data came from in-depth interviews with 10 students participating in interviews. The questionnaire included five Likert scales ranging from strongly agreed, agreed, neutral, disagreed, and strongly disagreed. Moreover, the questionnaire was divided into four sections: 1) the student's perspectives on the use of TikTok to enhance English language skills; 2) the student's feelings on the use of TikTok as a digital tool for learning English; 3) the student's perspectives on the ease of TikTok for learning English; and 4) the student's challenges on the use of TikTok for learning English. At last, in-depth interviews were done to gather detailed and comprehensive information from the students related to their perspectives on using TikTok to enhance English language skills.

In order to determine the descriptive statistical analysis, the researchers in this study used the SPSS 16 program to analyze the data from the students-filled questionnaires. The perspective of students regarding the usage of TikTok in learning English was ascertained through the application of descriptive statistics, including calculating frequencies, means, standard deviation, and percentages, to understand the distribution of responses and identify trends. On the other hand, the collected data from in-depth interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis approach to reveal themes, sentiments, and perspectives expressed by students concerning TikTok's effectiveness for English learning. At last, after analyzing the data, interpret the results to draw meaningful conclusions, identify implications, and depict recommendations based on the findings from both the questionnaire and in-depth interview.

## **FINDINGS**

The findings of this study are arranged in this section into four categories covering the students perspectives on the use of TikTok, students feelings, students perspectives on the ease of TikTok, and students challenges on the use of TikTok for learning English.

### **Students Perspectives on the use of TikTok to enhance English language skills**

Based on the findings, it reveals that the majority of students generally respond positively to using TikTok as a digital tool to enhance their English language skills. First, among all of the students, it was reported that 95% of them respond strongly agree that TikTok has improved their listening comprehension. Second, learning English through TikTok, the vast majority of the students – 97,5% of them strongly agree and agree that TikTok has improved their speaking abilities. Third, more than 90% of students strongly agree and agree that TikTok has helped them their reading abilities. Then, interestingly, it was found that 97,5% of the students believe that TikTok enhance their writing skills when they interact with other users on TikTok.

Furthermore, it was found that 90% strongly agree and agree that through the visual content of TikTok, they can develop their grammar mastery. On the other hand, 85% students mentioned that they are strongly agree and agree that through TikTok, they are able to pronounce English words accurately. Finally, given the high percentage, it was found that 100% of students believe that learning English through TikTok, their vocabulary has grown. In regard to the students questionnaire responses are congruent with the data interviews. TikTok is regarded by students as a digital tool has improved their English skills and language components covering listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The results are reported in the Table 1 below.

No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	My English listening comprehension has improved after using TikTok.	50%	45%	5.0%	0%	0%
2	My speaking abilities are improved when I use TikTok to learn English.	42.5%	55%	2.5%	0%	0%
3	My reading abilities in English has improved because of TikTok.	45%	45%	5.0%	5.0%	0%
4	My English writing gets better when I interact with other users on TikTok.	47.5%	55%	2.5%	0%	0%
5	My English grammar mastery has improved because of TikTok's visual content.	50%	40%	5.0%	5.0%	0%
6	My English Pronunciation are improved accurately because of TikTok.	30%	65%	2.5%	2.5%	0%
7	My English vocabulary has grown after using TikTok.	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%

*\*SA-Strongly agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree*

Table 1. Students Perspectives on the use of TikTok to enhance English language skills

### Students feelings on the use of TikTok as a digital tool for learning English

In the following section of the questionnaire, students were asked to express their feelings about utilizing TikTok for English language learning. The results show that 100% of the students feel convenience to learn English when using TikTok as a tool for learning English. This is shown by 55% of the students strongly agree and 45% agree based on the results of their questionnaire. These results show that great majority of the students enjoyed using TikTok as a platform for learning English. Subsequently, 95% of students strongly agree and agree, and just a tiny number of students, especially 5% of students remained neutral about TikTok's ability to motivate them on their English learning endeavour.

Additionally, 90% of students (50% strongly agree and 40% agree) believe that TikTok can be a valuable and innovative platform for learning English. Additionally, 95% (70% strongly agree and 25% agree) of students also believe that using TikTok makes learning English more engaging and enjoyable. On the other hand, only 5% of students had no a similar respond. They were neutral and disagree that TikTok is engaging platform for learning English. In data interviews about students' feeling on the use of TikTok, they seemed to agree that TikTok makes them convenience and motivated in learning English. Moreover, they mentioned that TikTok may be a valuable and innovative English learning platform. The percentage of students feelings on the use of TikTok as a digital tool for learning are demonstrated in the following Table 2.

No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I feel convenience to learn English when using TikTok.	55%	45%	0%	0%	0%
2	I feel motivated to learn English when using TikTok.	45%	50%	5%	0%	0%
3	I believe that TikTok can be a valuable and innovative platform for learning English.	50%	40%	5.0%	5%	0%
4	I believe that using TikTok makes learning more engaging and enjoyable.	70%	25%	2.5%	2.5%	0%

*\*SA-Strongly agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree*

Table 2. Students feelings on the use of TikTok as a digital tool for learning English



### Students perspectives on the ease of TikTok for learning English

Students have shown highly favorable perspectives regarding the ease of TikTok for learning English. It can be seen that the majority of students, with over 95% (65% strongly agree and 30% agree) found that TikTok is user-friendly and easy to use for learning English. When it comes to the accessible of TikTok, totalling 80% students found that the content of TikTok is easy to access for all English levels of the learners. In other words, students can easily find TikTok content for learning English based on their English level.

Similarly, a total of 85% students think that it is easy to find relevant materials on TikTok. A small minority of 10% students remain neutral and 5% disagree. Finally, 90% of student find that TikTok's features that is interactive allowing them to practice using English in real-life communication. Considering data interview, it shown that students seemed to agree that TikTok is user-friendly and covers all the students with different levels of English. Besides, students stated that they can find relevant English materials and allow them to practice easily. The specific findings are displayed in Table 3.

No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I find TikTok is user-friendly and easy to use for learning English.	65%	30%	5%	0%	0%
2	I find TikTok content make it accessible for all English levels of the learners.	35%	50%	10%	5%	0%
3	I can find relevant English learning materials on TikTok easily.	55%	30%	10%	5%	0%
4	I find interactive features of TikTok allow me to practice in real-life communication.	60%	30%	5%	5%	0%

*\*SA-Strongly agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree*

Table 3. Students perspectives on the ease of TikTok for learning English

### Students challenges on the use of TikTok for learning English

Based on the findings presented in Table 4 below, it was found that 90% students disagree and strongly disagree that video on TikTok makes it difficult to understand the content. Only small percentage of students, 5% found it difficult to understand the content of video on TikTok and 5% remain neutral. Equally, over 85% students disagree and strongly disagree that TikTok provides limited interaction among user. While limited students, only 15% of them persist agree and neutral.

Further, small percentage of students – 30% agree that the informal language on TikTok may not always align with formal English learning objectives. On the other hand, 60% students think that informal language on TikTok align with formal English learning objectives. These overall results are similar to data interview. It reveals that the content and language used in TikTok videos are easy to understand and most of them are congruent with learning objectives. Moreover, they stated that they have a lot of opportunities to use and practice English by having interaction with others users. The presented data below is how students responded to challenges on the use of Tik for learning English.

No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I find that short video on TikTok makes it difficult to understand the content.	0%	5%	5%	50%	40%

2	I find the limited interaction opportunities on TikTok.	0%	5%	10%	35%	50%
3	I find that the informal language on TikTok may not always align with formal English learning objectives.	0%	30%	10%	40%	20%

*\*SA-Strongly agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree*

Table 4. Students challenges on the use of TikTok for learning English

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results of questionnaires and interview data, students believe that TikTok presents a promising platform for enhancing English language skills and language components comprising grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. TikTok exposes students to authentic, informal, and formal English native speakers use in various contexts. Besides, TikTok allows students to choose content based on their interests and learning goals. By selecting content relevant to their interests, students are more likely to stay engaged and motivated to improve their English skills. Numerous previous studies have also highlighted that TikTok benefits to students' listening skills. A result study investigating the implementation of TikTok in the listening class by Rahmawati (2022) showed that the TikTok application indicated a significant effect on students' listening skills before and after using TikTok in learning. They mentioned that TikTok helps their students who struggle with listening comprehension. In line with this, Sihombing (2021) found that students become more proficient listeners of English after using TikTok. In addition, many TikTok videos include subtitles or captions, which students can read along while listening, helping them associate spoken words with their written form and improving their overall language comprehension.

Another study also found that TikTok is believed improving students' speaking skills due to several reasons outlined in research findings. First, it provides a platform for students to practice speaking in a creative and engaging way, which can boost their confidence in expressing themselves verbally. Second, by creating and sharing videos on TikTok, students can enhance their fluency and accuracy in speaking English, as it encourages regular practice and communication (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022; Ahmad et al., 2023; Pratama & Hastuti, 2023). Similar to this, several studies conducted by Zahro (2023) and Nasichah (2023) found that the most students approved of TikTok and thought it could be one of the most effective ways to boost their speaking skills. Through TikTok, students also gained benefits such as easy speaking practice and increased self-confidence. Hence, through TikTok, students can observe and learn from their peers' speaking styles, techniques, content, and create a collaborative environment supporting their speaking development.

The results of this study also obtained that students find benefits of TikTok that can improve their reading and writing skills. It improves students' reading and writing in several ways. First, TikTok videos are typically short, which can help improve attention spans and focus when reading or writing. Second, students can showcase their creativity through storytelling, which can help develop narrative and writing skills. Next, it deals with visual learning. TikTok often includes visual elements that can aid in the comprehension and retention of information, which can be beneficial for improving reading skills (Syarifuddin et al., 2021). Also, it provides opportunities for users to engage with others, share ideas, and receive feedback, which can help improve communication and writing skills. It is supported by existing research, Rahmiaty (2023) who found that TikTok was discovered to be an interactive learning tool and has a significant influence on students' writing ability. The TikTok's interactive features, such as comments, collaborative writing, and challenges, allow students to actively participate in language learning, practice writing skills, engage in conversations, and receive feedback from peers.

Furthermore, this study also explores the impact of using TikTok on language skills development, including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. TikTok is believed to be a helpful tool for improving grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation for the following reasons. First, TikTok videos are concise and to the point, making it easier for students to focus on specific language elements such as grammar rules, new vocabulary words, and pronunciation nuances. Second, engaging with diverse content on TikTok can introduce students to new words and phrases, thereby contributing to vocabulary expansion and language enrichment (Bernard, 2021; Fauziyah et al., 2023; Pereira & Hitotuzi, 2023). Next, many TikTok creators use visual aids such as text overlays, graphics, or gestures to emphasize key points, which can aid in understanding grammar concepts and new words. Moreover, the engaging nature of TikTok encourages students to watch videos multiple times, which can reinforce correct pronunciation patterns through repetition. In line with these findings, Simanungkalit and Katemba (2023) found that by using TikTok, students benefited from simple speaking practice, picking up new words, better pronunciation and intonation, and finally increased students' confidence to use English.

In addition, based on the perspective of students, TikTok can be seen as an easy and accessible tool for learning English. Students find TikTok to be a fun and convenient entertaining platform, which can make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable. Besides, TikTok's interactive and fun nature motivates students to actively participate in learning activities, fostering creativity and innovation in their language use. Additionally, using TikTok for learning of English can greatly benefit as TikTok is a user-friendly platform for learning English. It offers a relaxed environment where they can explore language skills at their own pace while connecting with a global community of students and TikTok creators. These support research findings (Laili, 2023; Warini et al., 2020; Yovita & Purnamaningsih, 2022) that the TikTok application encourages students' motivation and excitement during learning sessions, which has a good impact on student's language skills. Apart from that, the short duration of TikTok makes it easy for students to learn English content at a time, making it less of burdensome compared to longer lessons or textbooks. Thus, it increases learning attentiveness and student participation in the classroom (Syamsi, 2022).

When it comes to the challenges of using TikTok, there are various challenges that students may face when using it for learning English (Anumanthan & Hashim, 2022; Asio et al., 2023; Pratiwi et al., 2023). They usually due to accuracy, language variety (formal and informal language), lack of interactivity, and the content that may not align to the learning objectives. In contrast, these issues were not found in this study. Language used in TikTok that is informal language can be beneficial for students, making them learn both formal and informal in English language, so that it can enrich their language. This was in line with aforementioned studies conducted by Mukhlif and Challob (2021), Fahdin (2021), and Fauziah et al, (2023). They indicated that TikTok helps students to learn a variety of English dialects in various setting both formal and informal settings, recalling new vocabulary and quickly identifying context, write comments to interact with each other with the purpose of enhancing writing skills and sustaining their vocabulary acquisition. It can provide benefits for students when they can choose the relevant materials based on their learning goals on TikTok and watch them repeatedly and actively engage by commenting on TikTok.

## CONCLUSION

This study explores students perspectives on the use of TikTok for English language learning. It also examines students' feelings, perspectives on ease, and challenges encountered when using TikTok. The results of this study reveal that students generally accept positively of the usage of TikTok as a valuable platform to learning and enhancing their English skills. Its nature that is engaging and interactive becomes a key factor in fostering students' interest and motivation in learning English. Students appreciate that TikTok is user-friendly, easy to access, and navigates numerous English language learning content. In addition, different from other studies that highlighted some challenges covering accuracy

and the use of informal English, students in this study believe that these issues can enrich their English, particularly for vocabulary expansion. Overall, this study suggests that TikTok can be a potential tool for learning English, offering students a creative and practical approach to enhance their English language skills.

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