

The Students' Perception towards TikTok as a Tool to Improve Speaking Abilities in EFL Context

Aswinda Darwis^{1a*}

¹ STAI DDI Pinrang, Indonesia

Email: aswindadarwis77@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author

DOI:

ABSTRACT

Keywords:
Students' perception; Tiktok; speaking Abilities; EFL Context

Since technology is developing so quickly these days, everything is reliant on it, which has an impact on all domains of live including education. TikTok is a popular educational media platform that many students use to learn English. Information regarding the efficacy and inefficacy of TikTok as an English language learning platform for EFL is provided in this article. Finding out how students perceive about utilizing TikTok as a learning tool to enhance their speaking abilities in EFL is the goal of this article. A qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry design is used in this study. Data was collected using semi-interview form. Five students from the Islamic College of DDI Pinrang were chosen to be participants. The result of this study showed both positive and negative perception of students towards using TikTok as a tool or medium for learning English, For positive perception, students generally perceive TikTok as an useful tool for improving their speaking abiliy, they find themselves enjoyable, motivated, convenient, and accessible. However, by using TikTok in learning English can also be distracting since some of the contents may not be suitable for a classroom setting. Moreover, some students spend too much time on the application. Therefore, to maximize the benefits of TikTok for learning English, students need to be self-disciplined and manage their time effectively.

Article Info:

Submitted:
20/9/2024
Revised:
30/9/2024
Published:
23/10/2024



This work is licensed under [a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International \(CC BY-SA 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning English in the country where the language is not used as the language of instruction is quite difficult to implement. However, in recent years, the rapid technological change has made the teachers' and students' teaching and learning process a little different. In fact, researchers and educators have used technology to support language instruction and learning for a long time (Shadiev & Yang, 2020). Yet, the utilization of technology in education has not been maximized.

In this digital era, the use of technology, particularly social media has become an important part of everyday life, including in the world of education. According to some researches, social media in education promotes student participation and other aspects of learning (O'Boyle, 2014). Many social media can be used as effective learning media to facilitate the teaching and learning process. There are 4 main functions of social media, namely entertainment, socialization, information, and academics. Therefore, when the social media is used in the context of EFL, it presents several opportunities for students to advance their English language proficiency (Zam Zam Al Arif, 2019).

The four English language proficiency skills students need to grasp are speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Sri Kuning, 2020). Speaking is a highly difficult task for students of all ages, especially when it's in a foreign language. To achieve what people want to convey, people must choose correct and appropriate language, with good language speech so that the words conveyed can be understood, therefore people need to have good speaking skills.

However, in learning and improving speaking skills, students often experience difficulties. Many studies have been conducted related with the issue. A study entitling Students' Difficulties in Speaking English. (A Case Study in SMKN 3 Sorong). The study has indicated that the main difficulties encountered by student while speaking English were caused by linguistic factors, for instance: lack of vocabularies, poor pronunciation and lack of grammar knowledge. The second problem that students have while speaking English was caused by nonlinguistic factors (psychological factors), for instance: fear of making mistake, low motivation, shyness, anxiety, mother tongue use. However, the psychological factors contributed less than linguistics factors. In conclusion that linguistic factor is the most dominant difficulties encountered by the twelfth year students of SMKN 3 Sorong while speaking English.

From the many difficulties faced by students, the role of social media in learning activities is quite influential, The use of social media can also make it easier for teachers to prepare material and enable students to be more prepared to take part in lessons so that learning objectives are easier to achieve (Prabawati et al., 2021a) Therefore, the involvement of social media in teaching and learning activities really helps teachers and students facilitate the continuity of learning.

One of the social media is TikTok. TikTok, TikTok was first introduced by Zhang Yiming in 2016 and is owned by ByteDance. Initially TikTok was known as Douyin, Due to its rapid development, Douyin quickly gained popularity in China and expanded

to several other countries under the new name TikTok. In 2017, TikTok made its debut in Indonesia. Since then, a wide range of people in Indonesia have used Tiktok, including teenagers and the elderly. Many teenagers who are still in school use TikTok after school hours; you could argue that Tiktok diverts their attention because the app has a lot of features that are age-appropriate. such as sharing videos, live, duets, and many more features, besides that, TikTok has many users who come from various countries, apart from sharing entertainment content, there are many native speakers who share English teaching content on TikTok and students can use the duet feature with teachers or native speakers to improve their English skills.

Some students may feel more comfortable speaking in front of a camera than speaking in front of a class, because TikTok allows them to record videos in a more relaxed atmosphere and without direct supervision. This can affect the way they practice speaking, provide freedom of expression, and provide an opportunity to correct mistakes without feeling embarrassed or afraid of being evaluated directly. However, there are also students who find it difficult to utilize TikTok for learning purposes. The limited duration of the video may be an obstacle to convey material comprehensively. In addition, the influence of social pressure or fear of public judgment can also be inhibiting factors in using TikTok as a learning tool.

Therefore, by considering both positive and negative perception of students' towards TikTok as a tool for learning purposes, the effectiveess of of TikTok as a tool to support language learning, especially in improving students' speaking skills still need to be investigated. Do students really feel the benefits of using TikTok in learning to speak? What are their perceptions of using TikTok in this context? This article aims to answer these questions by exploring students' perceptions of TikTok as a tool to improve speaking skills.

This current study has some relevant results on the use of TikTok in promoting English speaking skill (Zaitun et al., 2021) showing that the utilization of TikTok could increase students' confidence in speaking English. In addition, some studies found that TikTok videos had improved students' speaking skill in English (Cagas, 2022; Mandasari et al., 2022; Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). These studies in fact focus on the use of TikTok in the contexts of junior high schools and higher education in teaching speaking skill.

Therefore, this article aims to investigate students' perceptions of STAI DDI Pinrang towards using TikTok as a tool to improve speaking skills in the EFL context. By gathering the views and experiences of students, it is hoped that the findings of this study can provide insights into the effectiveness and challenges of using TikTok in

English language education, as well as its contribution to learning innovation in this digital era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with Clandinin's (2006) narrative inquiry, which aims to uncover English students' perceptions of TikTok as a tool for enhancing speaking abilities in an EFL context. Finding out how much tiktok influences students' speaking abilities and how they view tiktok media as an English language learning aid is the primary goal of this study.

The participants in this research were English language education students who had passed the speaking course. The 4th and the 6th semester students were taken as samples in this research to find out their influence and perceptions regarding the use of TikTok as a medium to help improve their speaking skills. In collecting the data, the researcher carried out interview. The interview method was used to reveal students' direct experiences and perceptions of the effectiveness of using TikTok in improving their speaking skills. Through a series of in-depth interviews, with several guided questions asked during the interview. This article will also present findings from interviews with students that highlight the transformation of TikTok use from mere entertainment to an effective tool for practicing speaking in the target language. These are some questions that may be developed during the interview:

1. What do you think about using TikTok as a tool for learning to speak English?
2. Do you feel more motivated to practise speaking in English when using TikTok? Why is that?
3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of using TikTok compared to traditional learning methods in terms of improving English speaking?

To analyze the data, the researcher employed methods outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first step is reading the students' perception in multiple times in order to comprehend the content more thoroughly. The step is intended to examine how students view TikTok as a tool for improving their English speaking abilities, as well as their opinions on its efficacy, motivation, benefits, and drawbacks. The second is that patterns pertaining to the subject of the study have been found, coding has been done, and a comprehensive knowledge of the data has been attained. The next stage is to gather or classify similar statements in order to find developing themes. The last step is to arrange issues according to the students' motivational factors and the benefits and drawbacks of using TikTok to learn English.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The students' perception towards TikTok as a tool to improve speaking ability.

1. Does the student use TikTok to learn English?

P.1: *"Yes, I use TikTok to support me in learning English since I feel that the application is engaging and accessible. I watch videos that invite me to speak English as well, such as conversation and acting .TikTok contains videos that can make learning fun and relatable. I like the variety of content from vocabulary tips to pronunciation exercises and the ability to see real-life examples of language in use. In short, TikTok is effective to do in independent learning because we can choose the content that we like so that it excites me to do it".*

P.2: *"Yes, I use TikTok everyday , I follow the accounts that are intended to provide knowledge about the English language.I like the TikTok videos because they help me with listening practice, and I can hear how people really talk in English, not just textbook English. It also gives me ideas to practice speaking and writing in English.". Moreover, TikTok as a medium for learning foreign languages is very effective because I see a lot of contents from native speakers on TikTok, so from there I can learn how to speak English like them, Whereas the use of TikTok as a learning medium must be truly supervised because we are afraid of being distracted by other contents that is not for learning."*

2. Students' perceptions about TikTok motivate them in learning English.

P.1 : *"Yes, Using TikTok motivates me in learning English for it is very visual and creative. Through TikTok videos, I feel easier to remember new words or phrases because they often use funny videos or animations. In addition, seeing other people practicing speaking English really motivates me to improve my speaking too.*

P.2 : *"Yes, of course. TikTok has many native speakers who share tips and lessons in short and engaging videos. It helps me to improve my listening skills, and I can see how English is used in real conversations. Moreover in TikTok, language influencers and public figures speak in English, which motivates me to learn English and aspire to become as fluent as them".*

P.3: *Yes, learning English through TikTok can motivate me because there is always new content videos provided consistently by the content creator. The videos can be in form of vocabulary challenges, grammar tips, slang explanations, or cultural insights.*

3. Students' perceptions about the effectiveness of TikTok as a medium for improving speaking skills.

P.1 : *"From my point of view, TikTok provides me with the opportunity to practice speaking English in everyday situations and from a variety of native speaker, so I can learn how to do it in a friendly and peaceful manner, It's also nice to be able to edit the words or phrases that I use in the video. In this way, I am able to increase my self-confidence and make myself more self-assured at all times, learning pronunciation through TikTok makes my speaking skill is better now. I also increased a lot of my new*

vocabulary from native speakers and I really like learning slang in English and at the same time practicing how to pronounce. However, TikTok does not always provide enough time for practicing because the videos on TikTok are too short, I can't work out for longer periods of time. "Moreover, there is a lot of content on TikTok that is not always accurate or focuses too much on informal language, so sometimes I get confused by the inappropriate use of words or phrases in formal situations."

P.2 : "Yes, I watch TikTok videos to improve my speaking, there are many videos where people practice English conversation, and I try to repeat after them to improve my pronunciation. Sometimes, I even record myself speaking and compare it to native speakers."

4. The advantages and disadvantages of TikTok as a medium for learning English, especially speaking.

P.1: I think the advantages of utilizing TikTok as an English learning tool is that TikTok is more up to date, so I'm not left behind. In TikTok, I can learn the slang terms that native speakers use today, which makes my speech sound really interesting. In addition, many creators use conversational language and real-life scenarios, helping students learn practical speaking skills relevant to everyday situations. While the disadvantage is TikTok is not specifically made for educational and learning materials, therefore things like dancing content and other unhelpful stuff could distract us"

P.2: I feel TikTok is very flexible when it comes to learning English because I can learn whenever and wherever I want, rather than having to go to the classroom. Moreover, students can expose themselves to various English accents and speaking styles from around the world, enhancing listening comprehension and pronunciation. However, the disadvantage is that tiktok is not an offline application, so we need an internet connection to access it. Additionally, there is a lot of other entertainment content on TikTok that can divert our attention in addition to English-language and educational content.

Discussion

1. The student use TikTok to learn English.

From the results of the interviews above, participants stated that they use TikTok in learning English. They assumed that using TikTok as a tool for language learning is very effective. This finding in line with research conducted by (Lee Mei & Abdul Aziz, 2022) Most of the students interviewed felt that using TikTok as a medium for learning English was very effective and would be beneficial for all parties because it would trigger their curiosity and encourage them to continue learning the language. This shows that besides students using TikTok as entertainment, they also use TikTok as a medium for seeking knowledge and the involvement of TikTok in learning English greatly influences students' interest in learning English.

2. Students' perceptions towards TikTok motivate them in learning English.

From the results of the interview above, the students feel motivated learning English by using TikTok as an English learning tool, especially to practice speaking because they can learn English directly from native speakers, public figures, and language influencer. In other words, seeing other people practicing speaking English really motivates them to improve their speaking skill too. This finding is in accordance with the previous study conducted by Titik Komariyah et al., (2022) Students found moderate advantages in motivating themselves to learn and improve speaking skills on TikTok, as the platform connects users with native speakers for duet practice. Most students express interest in using TikTok for educational purposes as it offers a fun and engaging way to improve their English language skills. These results are strengthened by findings from research conducted by (Rasyid et al., 2023) state that the Most students express interest in using TikTok for educational purposes as it offers a fun and engaging way to improve their English language skills.

3. *Students' perceptions about the effectiveness of TikTok as a medium for improving speaking skills.*

From the results of the interview above, it can be inferred that students have both positive and negative perception toward using TikTok as a tool to improve their English-speaking skills. Tiktok influences their speaking skills. This finding is also in line with the findings in research conducted by Hadi & Indriani (2021) found that all students in their research agreed that TikTok could improve speaking and writing skills, students also thought that studying on TikTok was not boring and it made them motivated and confident in their speaking and writing skills. It is supported by (Farisca Adhani et al., 2023) state that students think that watching videos on TikTok that are in English even though they are not educational content, can improve an individual's speaking skills. TikTok provides many features that can be used as a tool to practice English speaking skills. P1 believes that TikTok is indeed effective in being used as a medium to improve speaking. She feels that her speaking ability is getting better when she learns using TikTok. Moreover, there is a lot of contents on TikTok that is not always accurate or focuses too much on informal language, so sometimes she gets confused by the inappropriate use of words or phrases in formal situations. Meanwhile, P2 stated that there are many videos in TikTok where people practice English conversation, and she can try to repeat after them to improve her pronunciation by recording herself and then compare hers with native speakers.

4. *The advantages and disadvantages of TikTok as a medium for learning English, especially speaking.*

From the interview above, it can be concluded that students stated that there are advantages and disadvantages to using TikTok as a learning tool. P1 said that studying on TikTok can make your speaking cooler because TikTok is more up-to-date with the times, while according to P2, the advantages of using TikTok as a learning medium are

TikTok can be used anywhere and anytime, this result is in line with the results of research conducted by (Addinna, 2022) stating that we can learn anywhere and anytime using TikTok as long as we have access, and we don't need to spend much money. Meanwhile, for the disadvantages of using TikTok, P1 and P2 provide the same statement that the TikTok application has a lot of entertainment content because TikTok is not an application specifically designed for education, so other entertainment content can divert students' learning focus. This result is also in line with the research findings carried out By (Addinna, 2022) The participants stated that their challenge in using TikTok as a learning medium was that they were easily distracted by other entertainment content and that sometimes the videos were so fast that they could not grasp the meaning of the video.

CONCLUSION

The result of this study shows that TikTok offers interesting potential as a tool to improve students' speaking skills. With its interactive and creative features, TikTok can create opportunities for students to practice speaking in a more relaxed and enjoyable way. However, the effectiveness of TikTok as a learning tool depends on how students perceive and utilize it, as well as the challenges that may arise in using this platform. Therefore, it is important for educators to understand students' perceptions of TikTok and identify appropriate strategies to maximize the benefits of this platform in developing speaking skills.

This study is expected to provide clearer insights into the extent to which TikTok can be integrated into the language learning process, especially in terms of developing students' speaking skills. With a better understanding of students' perceptions, teachers and educators can be more effective in designing learning methods that utilize technology and social media to achieve optimal results.

REFERENCES

- Addinna, A. (2022). *Students' Perception on the Use of TikTok for Learning English*. 11(4).
- Farisca Adhani, O., Nur Fadhillah, A., Auliya Yahya, R., & Wintolo, T. (2023). *EFL Students' perceptions on the use of TikTok in improving speaking skill*. *English Education: Journal of English Teaching and Research*, 8(2), 180–188.
<https://doi.org/10.29407/jetar.v8i2.21005>
- Lee Mei, K., & Abdul Aziz, A. (2022). *Students' Perception on Using Tiktok Application as An English Learning Tool*. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 11(4), Pages 166-190.
<https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i4/15403>

- Maji, E., Samanhudi, U., & Mokoagouw, M. E. (2022). *Students' difficulties in speaking English:(a case study in SMKN 3 Sorong)*. *Soscied*, 5(1), 95-109.
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Pergamon Press Inc.
- Nasichah, A. H. (2023). *Analyzing students' perception about the use of TikTok application to enhance students' speaking skills at UIN Prof. KH Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto*. *ELITE JOURNAL*, 5(1), 101-110.
- O'Boyle, I. (2014). *Mobilising social media in sport management education*. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 15, 58–60.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2014.05.002>
- Prabawati, A., Am, S. A., & Am, S. A. (2021a). *The Students' Perception of the Online Media Used by the Teacher in Learning English*. 1(3).
- Rasyid, F., Hanjariyah, H., & Aini, N. (2023). *TikTok as a Source of English Language Content– Perceived Impacts on Students' Competence: Views from Indonesia*. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 22(10), 340–358.
<https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.10.19>
- Shadiev, R., & Yang, M. (2020). *Review of Studies on Technology-Enhance Language Learning and Teaching*. *Sustainability*, 12(2), 524.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su12020524>
- Sri Kuning, D. (2020). *Applications of Social Media to Learn Speaking*. *Edukasi LinguaSastra*, 18(1), 77–85.
<https://doi.org/10.47637/elsa.v18i1.227>
- Titik Komariyah, Winda Sulistiowati, Lisa Arifatul Fajri, & Nugraheni Allatif. (2022). *The Implementation of TikTok Application to Learn Speaking Skill in English Language Teaching (ELT)*. *Conference on English Language Teaching*, 2, 142–154.
<https://doi.org/10.24090/celti.v2.43>
- Zam Zam Al Arif, T. (2019). *The Use of Social Media for English Language Learning : An Exploratory Study of EFL University Students*. *Metathesis: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching*, 3(2), 224–233.
<https://doi.org/10.31002/metathesis.v3i2.1921>