

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTION AND CHALLENGES OF USING TIKTOK AS CREATIVE PLATFORM IN LEARNING SPEAKING

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Abstract

TikTok, as a popular social media platform among the younger generation, offers a unique potential to support English language learning through interactive short video formats. This study aims to explore the perceptions of university students as well as the challenges faced regarding the use of TikTok as creative platform in learning speaking skills. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach involving twenty-six fifth semester students as research subjects. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaire and interviews to understand students' perception and challenges regarding the use of TikTok as creative learning platform in improving students' speaking. The research results show that the majority of students have a positive perception of for TikTok as creative learning platform for its effectiveness and enjoying learning. This study also revealed several challenges faced by students, such as internet connection issues and data quota as well as difficulty in maintaining focus while studying. The research demonstrates how digital creative platforms like TikTok can enhance access to innovative and effective learning methods, support the development of essential language skills, and address challenges related to technology infrastructure.

Keywords: Students Perception, Challenges, TikTok, Creative Platform, Speaking Learning.

Abstract

TikTok sebagai sebuah platform sosial media yang populer di kalangan generasi muda, menawarkan sebuah potensi yang unik untuk mendorong pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris melalui format video singkat yang interaktif. Penelitian ini bertujuan menggali persepsi dan tantangan yang dihadapi mahasiswa dalam menggunakan TikTok sebagai platform kreatif dalam mempelajari ketrampilan Berbicara Bahasa Inggris (speaking). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif yang melibatkan dua puluh enam mahasiswa semester lima sebagai subjek penelitian. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terbuka dan interview untuk memahami pandangan dan tantangan yang dihadapi mahasiswa saat belajar menggunakan TikTok sebagai platform kreatif dalam mengembangkan ketrampilan speaking mahasiswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas mahasiswa memiliki persepsi yang positif terhadap TikTok sebagai platform belajar kreatif karena keefektifan dan pembelajaran yang menyenangkan. Penelitian ini juga mengungkapkan beberapa tantangan yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa seperti masalah koneksi internet dan kuota data serta sulitnya mempertahankan fokus saat belajar. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bagaimana platform digital kreatif seperti TikTok dapat meningkatkan akses pada metode belajar yang inovatif dan efektif, mendukung pengembangan ketrampilan bahasa yang penting, dan mengacu pada tantangan terkait infrastruktur teknologi.

Kata-kata kunci: Persepsi Mahasiswa, Tantangan, TikTok, Platform Kreatif, Pembelajaran Speaking

INTRODUCTION

English is widely used for speaking, writing, and communication. Today, English is recognized as an international language (Assapari, 2019). As a global language, English naturally serves as a common means of communication that links people from different parts

of the world (Rahmat & Jon, 2023). This makes English language education very important in a global context. English language education is the process of enabling or improving proficiency in English, either as native speakers or second language learners. This process can be obtained through various learning methods, one of which is using technology. Technology has brought significant changes to English learning language over time. Traditional learning is frequently limited by the hours of formal schooling (Assapari & Hidayati, 2023). But technology has enhanced the way we learn anywhere, including outside of formal schools. The development of technology has transformed how we learn, teach, and interact in educational environments (Liriwati, 2023).

Technology has become an integral part of the learning process, offering various ways to enhance student learning experiences with extensive access to materials such as videos, articles, and e-learning platforms that enrich educational content. The popularity of mobile learning technologies as a whole is expanding by the increasing use of mobile applications for learning foreign languages (Gou, 2023).

One of the most popular social media platforms is TikTok. TikTok application is a social media platform that showcases short videos containing songs, dances, joining movements, and imitations of speaking (Agustin, 2021). It inspires users to be creative and engage with one another via distinctive features like duets and challenges, cultivating a sense of community and inclusivity among its extensive user base. Using TikTok to enhance speaking skills not only aids students in improving their skills but also makes the process more engaging (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022). TikTok has become a social media platform that is gaining popularity among young people, particularly Gen Z (Awang et al., 2022). This indicates that TikTok has the potential to be used as a learning tool, particularly in developing English-speaking skills.

One of the most crucial skills to hone to communicate effectively is speaking (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Speaking skills are one of the most important aspects of language learning. TikTok provides space for students to practice speaking enjoyably and interactively. With its creative features, students can create engaging content while practicing their English-speaking skills. TikTok can serve as a means to address the difficulties often faced by students in learning English. By packaging material in an attractive and easily accessible format, TikTok can help students feel more confident in speaking and communicating in English. Using this application to learn English is both fascinating and impressive. The creators don't just offer explanations and examples; students also provide challenges that make students feel more confident and motivated to practice what they've learned (Fitria, 2023).

TikTok as a platform for learning English has a lot of interesting potential. Researchers have observed that many content creators provide a variety of materials, including speaking, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. With short video formats and clear presentations, TikTok makes it easy for students to learn English anywhere and anytime. Interactive features like duets and creative effects enhance the learning experience. Therefore, this study aims to explore university students' perception of using TikTok to develop English-speaking skills, as well as the challenges they face in this process.

METHOD

The research belongs to descriptive qualitative approach, as it is conducted in specific settings in real life, with the aim of investigating and understanding phenomena: what happens, why it happens, and how it occurs (Fadli, 2008). Moreover, the descriptive form of research involves gathering, assessing, and drawing conclusions from the data (Sukmojati et al., 2023). In addition, qualitative focus on natural, real, subjective, and interactive

phenomena (Waruwu, 2023). From the two theories, the researcher concludes that qualitative research is a research approach conducted in a real-life context, aimed at investigating and understanding social phenomena in depth, in which the researcher is directly involved with the respondents.

This research was conducted at the UIN Mataram, specifically within the 5th semester of *Tadris Bahasa Inggris* (TBI) because they are actively involved in English language learning and possess sufficient digital literacy to use TikTok. The study involved students who have already used TikTok as a learning medium, providing in-depth insights into their experiences.

This research employed two data collection methods: a questionnaire and interviews, as well as document analysis, to gather the data necessary to answer the research questions. A research procedure based on descriptive data uses the real words or answers from participants, which are original, reflect the actual situation, cannot be changed, and are used to find the truth systematically (Yuhana & Aminy, 2019). The data from interviews and questionnaires will be analyzed descriptively and qualitatively using thematic analysis. The process begins with transcribing the data, then identifying and coding important sections according to the focus of the research, such as positive perceptions, challenges, and students' experiences. These codes are then grouped into main themes, for example, the benefits and obstacles of using TikTok for speaking learning. To ensure validity, the results from interviews and questionnaires will be compared (triangulation). In this way, the data can be interpreted systematically and in depth to answer the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' perception on using TikTok for speaking learning

a. TikTok boosts motivation to learn English through music.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of the respondents (16 students) stated that TikTok can boost motivation to learn English because of its music and content. TikTok can also help students to learn language aspects such as pronunciation and the meaning of vocabulary or idioms. This is supported by the following data: Favorite song (7 students), music content with good lyrics (6 students), fun and enjoyable (2 students), improvement in language skills (2 students). Meanwhile, only a few of the respondents (8 students) stated that TikTok has little or no effect on motivation to learn English.

The research results show that the latest music on TikTok can enhance motivation to learn English, especially through frequently listening to favorite songs and visually engaging content. Songs with meaningful lyrics and a combination of English content and music can spark interest in learning, although some respondents felt the impact was minimal or even non-existent, indicating that this effectiveness highly depends on individual preferences and how the content is presented attractively. This finding aligns with previous research that TikTok's use in music education led to a significant improvement in student engagement. Students showed greater enthusiasm and were more motivated to participate actively in class (Lestari & Andaryani, 2024).

b. TikTok increases confidence in speaking English.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (22 students) stated that TikTok can increase confidence in speaking by watching English content. TikTok can also help students improve vocabulary and speaking skills. Meanwhile, only a few respondents (2 students) stated that TikTok cannot increase confidence in speaking. This is shown by the following data: Students gain confidence by watching

English content (9 students) and practicing what they have learned (9 students). Some students improve by listening to English podcasts (2 students), while others believe TikTok can increase confidence (1 student) and enhance vocabulary and speaking skills (1 student). However, a few students feel it does not increase their confidence (2 students). The interview responses also support this. First student said "I feel a bit more confident after using TikTok. I can practice speaking regularly, and it helps me feel more comfortable communicating in class." Second student said "After using TikTok, I feel confident, but when speaking directly to someone, I feel much more confident." Third students said "After using TikTok, I feel quite confident because there is content that provides text to help us practice speaking, or sometimes TikTok content creators provide entertaining content for learning to speak."

TikTok can boost confidence in speaking English through exposure to English-related content, such as everyday expressions and public speaking tips. Practicing the learned material, including reading and conversation exercises, plays an important role in building confidence, although some respondents believe that TikTok does not significantly influence this aspect, indicating that personal factors beyond the content also play a role. This finding aligns with previous research that TikTok is effective for many people, but individual factors also play an important role in the increase of perceived self-confidence (Agustini, 2023).

- c. TikTok simulates the ability to make inferences and evaluations in English conversations.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (18 students) stated that TikTok can improve the ability to make conclusions and evaluations in English conversations through the video content and concepts provided. Meanwhile, only a few students (6 students) stated that TikTok cannot help simulate the ability to make conclusions and evaluations in English conversations. This is shown by the following data: Many students find it helpful through video content (10 students), and generally agree that it is beneficial (5 students). Others find support through the comment feature (1 student) and feedback (1 student). However, some students stated that TikTok was not helpful (6 students).

TikTok helps to train the ability to make conclusions and evaluations in English conversations, especially through videos with hidden meanings that stimulate message comprehension and vocabulary enhancement. However, there are different opinions because not all respondents feel assisted in developing inference and evaluation skills through this platform, indicating the importance of a more structured approach or more relevant content. This finding aligns with previous research that TikTok can serve as an effective platform for improving skills in drawing conclusions and making evaluations during English conversations (Sarkila et al., 2024).

- d. TikTok assists in interpreting implied meanings in English conversations.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (21 students) stated that TikTok helps in interpreting implied meanings in English conversations because it offers videos related to English content, translation features, the For You Page (FYP), opportunities to listen to video content, and chances to mimic conversations. Meanwhile, only a few respondents (3 students) did not feel the benefits of TikTok. This is shown by the following data: Many students find it helpful through videos showing English-related content (14 students), while others benefit from the translate mode (3) and the For You Page (FYP) (2 students). Some students improve by listening to video content (1 student) or by mimicking conversations (1 student).

However, some students felt that TikTok was not helpful or useful (2 students).

TikTok can help interpret implied meanings in English conversations through videos that combine audio, visual elements, cultural context, and hidden messages, as well as by utilizing the translation feature. The presence of translation features and content on the "For You Page" (FYP) is considered helpful, but some respondents feel that TikTok does not make a significant contribution to understanding implied meanings, indicating that this aspect requires deeper content exploration or a more interactive learning approach. This finding aligns with previous research that students feel more relaxed and more capable of understanding the hidden meanings in English conversations (Pratama & Hastuti, 2023).

- e. TikTok helps connect new information with existing English knowledge.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (20 respondents) stated that TikTok content helps connect new information with exiting knowledge through various means, such as content from people more experienced in English, simple explanations, translation features, content on the FYP (For You Page), English knowledge through content, similarities, word corrections, random information relevant to knowledge, and concepts. Meanwhile, only a few respondents had opinions about the previous issue (1 student) or did not feel the benefits (3 students). By the following data: English knowledge through content (12 students), through FYP (2 students), simple explanation (1 student), translate mode (1 student), word corrections (1 student), TikTok provides information random but relevant information (1 student), commented previous topic (1 student), concept (1 student), information related to knowledge (1 student), not beneficial (3 students).

TikTok facilitates the connection of new information with existing English language knowledge through content from experienced users and simple explanations. TikTok is also utilized as an educational medium to obtain information and knowledge about certain topics that are the goals of its users (Fanaqi et al., 2022). Everyday cultural content and short video formats on TikTok facilitate understanding of pronunciation (British vs. American), although some respondents feel the content is less relevant to their current knowledge, highlighting the importance of content personalization.

- f. TikTok makes English learning fun and engaging.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (23 students) stated that TikTok can facilitate enjoyable English learning through news and culture, expand vocabulary, and enhance understanding of everyday expressions. The aspects that support this include engaging content, easy-to-understand concept delivery, the introduction of everyday expressions, humorous elements that make learning more enjoyable, the role of innovative content creators, detailed information, and ease of finding learning materials. Meanwhile, only a few respondents (1 student) felt that it was not very helpful. According to the following data, TikTok's relevant and engaging content (16 students) helps in understanding English language concepts (2 students) and aids in learning everyday expressions (1 student). It also includes elements of humor that make learning more enjoyable (1 student) and features content creators who present engaging learning materials (1 student). Additionally, detailed information helps in gaining a deeper understanding (1 student), and searching for specific content on TikTok can support learning (1 student). However, 1 student stated that TikTok does not contribute to learning.

TikTok facilitates learning English in a fun way through news and culture, expanding vocabulary, and understanding everyday expressions. Diverse content

from various countries provided through learning tips and real language context attracts users' interest and enriches linguistic insights, utilizing interesting and authentic elements within the TikTok concept. This finding aligns with previous research that content attracts students' attention, especially educational videos that explain topics simply and concisely (Warini et al., 2021).

- g. TikTok improves understanding of various English accents and dialects.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (23 students) stated that TikTok content can improve students' understanding of various accents and dialects of English because students feel that watching and following content creators on TikTok increases exposure to English content with simple explanations, helps improve their understanding of various accents and dialects in English. Meanwhile, only a few respondents (1 student) did not feel the positive impact. The following data: The following content creators help learning (12 students), and TikTok provides relevant content (7 students). Explanations are simple and clear (2 students), and it increases exposure to English language content (1 student). Additionally, TikTok has the potential to improve learning (1 student), while 1 student stated that it does not contribute to learning.

TikTok enhances the understanding of various English accents and dialects through content from creators who provide many examples, with simple and clear explanations, as well as easily accessible videos about English accents or dialects, although some respondents did not provide a clear opinion. This finding aligns with previous research, TikTok media can improve students' English, especially in terms of English pronunciation (Suwanda et al., 2024).

- h. TikTok provides easy access to English learning content.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (22 students) feel that they enjoy the ease of access to English learning content because it is not only an entertainment platform but also an engaging learning tool. Meanwhile, only a few respondents (2 students) did not feel that way. This is supported by the following data: Enjoying the ease of access (22 students), did not (2 students).

The ease of access to English learning content on TikTok anytime and anywhere is greatly enjoyed by most respondents, as TikTok is not only a medium of entertainment but also an engaging learning platform, although there are some respondents who do not fully benefit from this ease of access. This finding aligns with previous research that shows that learning English on TikTok is more engaging and enjoyable since it provides engaging and easily accessible content (Widagsa & Fokatea, 2024). The other study also found that TikTok as a modern platform to learn can be an effective and enjoyable medium for learning English outside the classroom (Liriwati, 2023).

- i. TikTok generates interest through engaging video content.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (22 students) stated that TikTok videos about English are popular because of engaging content. Meanwhile, only a few respondents (2 students) did not feel the same way. This is supported by the following data: The content interesting (22 students), while did not (2 students).

The interest in engaging content in TikTok videos about English makes most students enjoy watching those videos, and some even become interested in watching English-language films. However, some respondents do not like watching TikTok videos about English because they find the content uninteresting. This finding aligns with previous research that shows that using TikTok can serve as an innovative and

engaging learning tool (Nurawaliyah & Sudarmaji, 2021).

- j. TikTok promotes relaxation and reduces stress in learning English.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (21 students) stated that TikTok can make students feel more relaxed and enjoy the process of learning English through TikTok. Meanwhile, only a few respondents did not feel the relaxation effect (2 students) or had no opinion (1 student). This is supported by the following data: Twenty (20) students reported feeling more relaxed and under less pressure. One (1) student feels relaxed but without lasting enjoyment, while another does not really experience these benefits (1 student). Additionally, one (1) student is unsure, and one (1) student does not find TikTok helpful for stress reduction.

Speaking English through TikTok makes most respondents feel more relaxed and less stressed because they can learn independently or anytime, and anywhere. Thus, it can boost confidence and make learning enjoyable without pressure or worry about judgment, although some respondents do not fully agree. This finding aligns with previous research that is TikTok is a learning platform that makes the learner enjoy (Laili, 2023).

- k. TikTok increases enthusiasm for practicing English speaking.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (19 students) stated that TikTok can make students feel more enthusiastic about practicing English. Meanwhile, only a few respondents (5 students) did not feel an increase in enthusiasm. This is shown by the following data: Seventeen (17) students felt more enthusiastic, not really (3 students), normal (1 student), and natural (1 student).

Most students feel more enthusiastic about practicing their English-speaking skills after using TikTok as a learning tool due to the platform's engaging and interactive nature. However, the random algorithm can sometimes be distracting, and some respondents did not feel a significant increase in enthusiasm. This finding aligns with previous research, which shows that teachers are very enthusiastic and motivated to improve speaking skills using the TikTok duet app (Anggreni et al., 2024).

- l. TikTok offers a comfortable learning experience with short video formats.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (22 students) stated that students feel comfortable learning English on TikTok using short video formats. Meanwhile, only a few respondents felt dependent on the explanations provided by the content creator (1 student) or uncomfortable (1 student). This is supported by the following data: Twenty-two (22) students felt comfortable, one (1) student felt reliant on explanations, and one (1) student felt uncomfortable.

The easy-to-understand short video format on TikTok makes most students comfortable learning English through this platform because the short format makes the content easy to understand, although there are some respondents who feel that this comfort depends on the explanation or even do not feel comfortable at all. This finding aligns with previous research that is using mini vlogs on TikTok in education to offer a solution to challenges in learning, particularly for students studying English as a second language (Bura et.al, 2025).

- m. TikTok provides a lot of free content for English language learning.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (23 students) stated that TikTok can provides a lot of free content for learning. Meanwhile, only a few respondents (1 student) did not know or did not have an opinion on this matter. This is show by the following data: TikTok provides a lot of free content (23 students),

did not know (1 student).

The availability of free content on TikTok that helps students learn English without additional costs is greatly appreciated by most students, making TikTok a cost-effective resource, although there was one respondent who did not have a clear opinion. This finding aligns with previous research that TikTok provides valuable free resources for learning English (Patty & Noiya, 2023).

The overall perception of students in the English Education Study Program regarding the use of TikTok for learning speaking skills is very positive. TikTok is considered an effective and engaging platform that enhances motivation, confidence, and speaking skills in English. Most students report that TikTok helps improve their vocabulary, pronunciation, and understanding of various English accents and dialects. The short video format, ease of access, and abundance of free content on this platform make the learning process enjoyable and easily accessible. In addition, TikTok encourages creativity, helps in interpreting implied meanings in conversations, and connects new information with existing knowledge.

Students also find TikTok beneficial for reducing stress during study sessions, increasing enthusiasm for practicing speaking skills, and providing interactive and culturally relevant content. Meanwhile, only a few respondents expressed concerns about dependence on content creators or limited impact, the majority view TikTok as a valuable tool for modern language education, offering an innovative way to practice and improve English speaking skills in a fun and interactive manner.

2. Challenges faced by the students using TikTok for speaking learning

Based on data analysis, the researchers found two main challenges faced by the students using TikTok for speaking learning namely data quotas and internet networks and the focus of learning. These challenges are described as following.

a. Data quotas and internet networks

Based on the interview results, it was found that all respondents complained about the instability of the internet connection that disrupted the learning process. These claims were shown by the following results of interview. For example, Student 3 mentions that "The issue of data quota usage, I feel reluctant to use my data quota to access TikTok because this app is known to consume a lot of data. Although I have switched to Wi-Fi in my boarding house, another challenge arises in Wi-Fi signals that are not always stable".

Hence it can be concluded that data quotas and internet networks have become significant obstacles. Respondents complained about the instability of the internet connection, which disrupts the learning process, and the high data usage when accessing the application. This shows that the quality of the internet connection greatly affects the effectiveness of TikTok as a learning tool. To maximize the learning experience, it is important to provide more stable and data-efficient Internet access.

Data quotas and internet networks present significant challenges, where respondents mentioned internet connection instability and high data consumption as obstacles to their learning process. This finding aligns with previous research that the TikTok application as a learning medium cannot be used anywhere, especially in remote areas, because it requires an internet connection (Fauziyah et al., 2022). This is because not all students have good internet connections and ample data quotas which directly affects the equality of access to digital learning resources.

b. Focus of learning

The use of TikTok as a learning platform among students faces significant challenges related to maintaining focus on studying. For example, Student 1 mentions that "I often get distracted from learning content to other interesting videos, which negatively impacts my concentration when learning speaking". In addition, Student 2 stated that "Although TikTok can be used for learning, I often gets caught up in entertainment content that reduces my focus". Lastly, Student 3 noted that "I also feel addicted to scrolling through the TikTok FYP, which often only provides entertainment without educational benefits, thus hindering the search for learning content, especially in improving speaking skills".

Second, maintaining focus on studying is also an issue that needs to be addressed. Many students feel distracted by the entertainment content on TikTok, which reduces their concentration on studying. Although TikTok has the potential as an educational platform, excessive use can reduce the effectiveness of the learning process. Therefore, strategies are needed to help students stay focused on learning content, such as more targeted content management and reduced distractions.

Another the challenges faced by students in learning to use TikTok is the focus of learning. Although many students watch the learning videos on TikTok, the "For You Page" (FYP) feature and addiction to watching variety of entertainment videos can distract them from the material being learned. This research is similar to previous research in that excessive use of TikTok can reduce students' concentration while studying (Aini, 2023).

CONCLUSION

TikTok is perceived positively by university students for enhancing speaking skills. The respondents mention that TikTok is an effective tool for enhancing English speaking skills, offering benefits such as improved vocabulary and pronunciation, increased engagement and motivation, and reduced stress. Its interactive and culturally relevant content makes it a valuable resource for language learners. Moreover, some challenges include by university students to use TikTok for their speaking skill development, namely unstable internet connection, which disrupts the learning process, and the high data usage when accessing the application. This indicates that the quality of the internet connection greatly affects the effectiveness of TikTok as a learning tool. To maximize the learning experience, it is important to provide more stable and data-efficient Internet access.

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