

STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS ON USING TIKTOK FOR ENGLISH LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate students' experiences and opinions on using TikTok for English learning. A qualitative case study design was employed involving 30 second-grade senior high school students at Sukma Bangsa Pidie. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis, while the interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings showed that most students perceived TikTok as a useful and comfortable supplementary medium for learning English. TikTok supported vocabulary development, listening skills, and pronunciation through exposure to authentic English content and was considered enjoyable and engaging. However, challenges such as distractions from non-educational content and limited opportunities for active language production, particularly writing, were also identified. Overall, TikTok could serve as an effective supplementary medium for English learning when used appropriately, and both students and teachers were encouraged to use it selectively to maximize its educational benefits while minimizing potential distractions.

Keywords: English learning; Students' experiences; TikTok; Qualitative study

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of the internet and social media websites has brought significant changes in how information is disseminated and consumed. Traditionally, corporations held the power to control brand narratives and influence consumer perceptions. However, the rise of social media has shifted this control to customers, enabling them to share their opinions and knowledge about products and services publicly (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020). Social media platforms serve as powerful tools for consumers to express their experiences, influencing not only other potential buyers but also the reputation of brands themselves (Babić Rosario et al., 2020).

One of the most prominent social media platforms in recent years is TikTok. Initially popularized as a platform for entertainment, TikTok has evolved into a versatile medium that offers educational content, including language learning. For adolescents, especially senior high school students, TikTok presents an engaging and interactive way to practice English through various types of content such as song lyrics, educational challenges, and pronunciation tips.

TikTok's algorithm curates content based on user interactions, making it possible for students to be consistently exposed to English-related material. This feature creates an opportunity for language acquisition outside the traditional classroom setting, as users can encounter authentic language usage in a fun and relatable context (Al-Said, 2021). However, while TikTok offers potential as a language-learning tool, it also poses challenges. The entertaining nature of the platform may distract students from educational content, requiring them to develop self-regulation strategies to maximize learning while minimizing distractions.

Moreover, TikTok's brief and concise video format, though effective for delivering bite-sized information, may not provide comprehensive lessons that cover complex grammatical structures or writing skills. Nevertheless, TikTok can function as a supplementary learning tool, particularly beneficial for auditory and visual learners who thrive on engaging and concise content (Wijaya, 2022).

Recognizing the educational potential of TikTok, some English teachers and content creators have established channels dedicated to language instruction. These channels utilize creative and humorous approaches to present English lessons, combining entertainment with education. Examples include short quizzes, vocabulary challenges, and pronunciation exercises, making TikTok an appealing alternative for students seeking interactive learning experiences.

Furthermore, senior high school students of Sukma Bangsa Pidie have been using TikTok primarily as an entertainment platform, where they access various types of engaging content. On the other hand, smartphones have become indispensable tools in supporting their learning process, allowing students to access educational materials and applications that aid their studies. While TikTok is primarily known for entertainment, the widespread use of smartphones among students suggests the potential to leverage both for entertainment and as an effective learning tool.

While TikTok was initially popularized as a platform for entertainment, it has since evolved into a medium that offers educational content, including language learning. For adolescents, particularly senior high school students, TikTok presents a dynamic and engaging way to practice English through interactive and relatable content. Despite its growing potential as a learning tool, the effectiveness of TikTok in facilitating language acquisition remains underexplored. Existing research has primarily focused on the impact of social media in general, leaving a gap in understanding TikTok's specific role in language learning. To address this gap, the present study aims to investigate the experiences and perceptions of senior high school students regarding TikTok as a medium for learning English. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights into how students utilize TikTok for language learning.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore students' experiences and opinions on using TikTok for English learning. The research was conducted at Sukma Bangsa Pidie and involved 30 second-grade senior high school students as the participants. The

participants were selected because they were active TikTok users and had prior experience accessing English-related content on the platform.

Data were collected using two instruments: a Likert-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was designed to obtain an overview of students' perceptions regarding the use of TikTok for English learning, including its usefulness, comfort, and perceived impact on language skills. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis to identify general trends in students' responses.

To gain deeper insights into students' experiences, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants. The interviews focused on students' personal experiences, perceived benefits, challenges, and opinions related to learning English through TikTok. The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. This approach allowed the researcher to identify recurring patterns and meaningful themes related to students' experiences.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, data triangulation was applied by comparing findings from the questionnaire and interviews. Ethical considerations were addressed by informing participants about the purpose of the study and ensuring the confidentiality of their responses.

3. Result and Discussion

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented and discussed based on data obtained from the questionnaire and interviews. The findings focus on students' experiences and opinions regarding the use of TikTok for English learning, including their perceptions of its usefulness, comfort, engagement, and challenges. The questionnaire results provide a general overview of students' responses, while the interview data support and deepen the interpretation of the findings by illustrating students' personal experiences in using TikTok as a supplementary medium for learning English.

3.1 Questionnaire Findings

This section presents the findings from the Likert-scale questionnaire, which explored students' opinions and experiences regarding the use of TikTok for English learning. The questionnaire consisted of 23 statements covering aspects such as frequency of use, perceived usefulness, effectiveness, platform features, and engagement with English content. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis, including frequency, percentage, mean scores, and categorized interpretation. The results were presented in charts accompanied by narrative explanations and were organized thematically to address the research questions concerning students' perceptions and the effectiveness of TikTok in supporting English learning

Students' Views on the Usefulness and Comfort of Learning English through TikTok

The questionnaire results revealed that most students held positive views regarding the usefulness and comfort of learning English through TikTok. A large proportion of students agreed that TikTok was a good, effective, and supportive platform for English learning, indicating their openness to using social media beyond entertainment purposes. Students also perceived TikTok as providing an enjoyable and varied learning experience, which contributed to higher engagement compared to more traditional learning approaches. In addition, the majority of respondents considered TikTok a safe and supportive environment due to its wide range of educational content and interactive community. Students further acknowledged that TikTok's features—such as captions, hashtags, comments, and personalized content—supported their informal and independent English learning. Although some students expressed neutral responses regarding their comfort level, the overall findings suggest that TikTok was generally perceived as a useful and comfortable supplementary medium for learning English.

Students' Experiences with TikTok for English Learning

The questionnaire findings showed that most students had positive experiences using TikTok for English learning. A majority of respondents reported that they learned English while using TikTok and felt more confident after watching English-related educational content. Students also perceived TikTok as providing a fun and varied learning experience, which contributed to higher engagement and enjoyment in learning English. In addition, most participants viewed TikTok as a useful and supportive platform that facilitated English learning through exposure to diverse content, despite its informal nature. Students generally felt safe and comfortable using the platform due to its supportive community and availability of educational creators. Furthermore, many students expressed their intention to continue using TikTok to improve their English skills, indicating that the platform was perceived as a valuable supplementary medium for ongoing English learning.

Distractions and Focus While Using TikTok

The findings indicated that students had varied experiences regarding distraction and focus while learning English through TikTok. Some students reported feeling distracted, as shown by those who agreed and strongly agreed that TikTok could distract them during learning activities. However, nearly half of the students selected a neutral response, suggesting that their level of distraction depended on the type of content accessed and their purpose when using the platform. Meanwhile, the results related to difficulty in maintaining focus showed that a larger proportion of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that many were able to stay focused while learning English on TikTok. The presence of neutral responses in both charts

implies that occasional distractions were experienced by some students, but overall, TikTok did not consistently hinder students' ability to focus on English learning.

Frequency of Exposure to English Content

The findings indicated that most students had frequent exposure to English content on TikTok through watching videos and reading English captions and comments, showing that the platform provided consistent input for informal English learning. However, students' English language production on TikTok was relatively limited, particularly in writing comments, as many reported rarely or never doing so. Students were more comfortable writing captions in English and occasionally using English for communication on the platform, suggesting that TikTok supported receptive skills more effectively than productive skills. Overall, while TikTok offered substantial exposure to English, it was less successful in encouraging active language production, especially in written form.

TikTok's Role and Effectiveness as an English Learning Tool

The findings showed that most students used TikTok as a source for English learning at least occasionally, with many reporting that they sometimes, often, or always relied on the platform to access English content. This indicates that TikTok was not merely viewed as an entertainment platform but also functioned as a supplementary tool for language learning. In addition, a considerable number of students reported sharing English learning content from TikTok with their peers, suggesting that the platform facilitated informal peer learning and the exchange of educational materials. Overall, these results highlight TikTok's role as an accessible and effective supplementary medium that supported English learning through repeated exposure and social interaction.

3.2 Interview Findings

The interview findings revealed that students generally perceived TikTok as a useful and comfortable medium for learning English. Participants highlighted the platform's practicality, accessibility, and flexibility, as well as the availability of diverse English learning content such as pronunciation guides, vocabulary explanations, grammar tips, songs, and daily conversation videos. TikTok's visual and audio features enabled students to observe pronunciation and intonation directly from content creators, which supported their understanding. Students typically used TikTok for learning English in informal situations, such as at home or during free time, allowing learning to occur naturally outside the classroom. Although perceptions of effectiveness varied, most students agreed that TikTok could support English learning when used selectively and seriously. Reported learning outcomes included improvements in vocabulary, listening skills, pronunciation, basic grammar, and limited exposure to writing. Furthermore, most participants

expressed willingness to continue using TikTok and to recommend it to others, indicating positive attitudes toward the platform as a supplementary English learning tool.

3.3 Discussion

The findings of this study indicated that students perceived TikTok as a useful and comfortable medium for learning English. Students reported that TikTok was easy to access, enjoyable, and flexible, allowing them to engage with English content anytime according to their personal needs. This finding suggests that TikTok supports informal learning beyond the classroom and enables students to access English materials in a more relaxed and self-directed manner.

This result aligns with Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, which emphasizes that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input in low-anxiety environments. TikTok provides short English videos that are often accompanied by visuals, subtitles, and contextual cues, making the input easier to understand. In addition, Mayer's (2001) Multimedia Learning Theory supports this finding by explaining that the integration of audio, text, and visuals enhances learners' comprehension and retention. The combination of these elements on TikTok appears to facilitate students' understanding of English in an informal learning setting.

In terms of language skill development, students in this study reported improvements mainly in listening, speaking, and pronunciation. Many students stated that they frequently listened to English videos, imitated words or sentences spoken by content creators, and repeated expressions they encountered on TikTok. This repetitive exposure helped them become more familiar with English sounds, vocabulary, and pronunciation patterns. These findings indicate that TikTok primarily supports receptive skills and oral language development rather than productive writing skills.

This result supports the findings of Suryaningsih et al. (2025), who reported that TikTok contributes significantly to learners' oral communication skills, particularly listening and speaking. Similarly, Li and Hafner (2023) found that engaging with English content on TikTok increased learners' confidence in speaking. However, while their study focused on university students who actively created content, the present study reveals that high school students benefited even as passive viewers. This shows that meaningful language learning can still occur through observation and imitation without active content production.

Furthermore, the limited improvement in writing skills reported by students aligns with Dashti and Abdulsalam (2025), who argued that social media platforms tend to have a stronger impact on listening and speaking skills than on writing. In this study, students rarely mentioned writing development, indicating that TikTok may not sufficiently encourage written language production. Therefore, while TikTok is effective for exposure and oral practice, writing skills may still require more structured instruction in formal classroom settings.

Another important finding of this study is the motivational impact of TikTok on students' English learning. Many participants described learning English through TikTok as enjoyable, creative, and relevant to their daily lives. The entertaining nature of short videos, combined with trendy and relatable content, encouraged students to engage more frequently with English materials. This suggests that TikTok can enhance students' willingness to learn by reducing boredom and increasing interest.

This finding is consistent with Suryaningsih et al. (2025), who stated that TikTok's creative and trend-based content increases students' motivation to participate in English learning activities. However, this study extends previous research by showing that motivation can still emerge even when students act mainly as content consumers rather than creators. In other words, simply watching, listening, and imitating English content on TikTok can still foster positive learning attitudes and motivation among high school student.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

4.1 Conclusion

The findings showed that most students perceived TikTok as a useful and comfortable medium for learning English. The platform mainly supported listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills, while improvements in writing were limited. Students also reported increased motivation and engagement because TikTok made English learning more enjoyable and relevant to their daily lives. In addition, exposure to different accents and cultural contexts helped broaden their intercultural awareness. Despite its benefits, challenges such as distractions and inconsistent educational content were identified. Overall, TikTok has strong potential as a supplementary tool for English learning when used selectively and supported by proper guidance.

4.2 Suggestions

The study contributes to digital language learning research by focusing on Indonesian high school students, a group that has received less attention than university learners. The findings showed that even when students mainly acted as content consumers, TikTok still provided meaningful linguistic and motivational benefits. This suggests that TikTok can function as a complementary tool for English learning when supported by digital literacy and teacher guidance.

Implications of the Study:

- **For Students:**
Students are encouraged to use TikTok not only for entertainment but also as a learning resource by selectively engaging with English educational content and practicing pronunciation and expressions.

- For Teachers:
Teachers may integrate TikTok into English learning activities, such as assigning students to watch, reflect on, or create short English videos to increase motivation and active learning.
- For Schools/Educational Institutions:
Schools should promote digital literacy programs to help students critically evaluate content and use social media responsibly for educational purposes.

Theoretical Contribution:

This study reinforces Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985), which emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input in language acquisition, and Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory (2001), which highlights the role of combining text, audio, and visuals in enhancing learning. The findings also support previous studies showing that TikTok facilitates motivation and oral language practice (Li & Hafner, 2023; Suryaningsih et al., 2025), while extending these insights to secondary school learners who predominantly consume content.

Suggestions for Future Research:

- Future studies may involve larger and more diverse samples to allow broader generalization of findings.
- Further research could examine the role of students as active content creators and compare learning outcomes with those of passive viewers.
- Comparative studies between TikTok and other digital learning platforms are also recommended.

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