

THE INFLUENCE OF TIKTOK ON EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The growing use of social media has transformed the way students learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Among various platforms, TikTok has emerged as a popular tool that provides engaging and accessible learning content. This study aimed to investigate students' perceptions of TikTok as an English learning tool and examine its influence on their motivation to learn English. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Quantitative data were gathered through an online questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with students. The findings revealed that students generally held positive perceptions of TikTok for English learning. Approximately 65%–80% of participants agreed that TikTok is useful, accessible, and easy to use for learning English. Students reported that TikTok helped them improve vocabulary, pronunciation, and language exposure through authentic and engaging content. In terms of motivation, around 70% of participants indicated that TikTok increased their interest and encouraged them to engage more actively in English learning activities. Interview results further showed that TikTok's entertaining content, short-video format, and personalized recommendations contributed to a more enjoyable and flexible learning experience. Although some students identified distractions from non-educational content, the overall findings suggest that TikTok can serve as an effective supplementary learning resource that enhances both students' perceptions and motivation in learning English.

Keywords: TikTok, EFL learning, students' perception, learning motivation, English language learning.

INTRODUCTION

The use of technology in the classroom has drastically changed how people learn in the digital age. In particular, social media platforms, which provide both pleasure and educational opportunities have become an indispensable element of students' everyday life. TikTok, which offers brief, interesting, and interactive video content that can aid in language acquisition, is one of the most well-liked platforms among young learners today (Zeng & Greenfield, 2022). From being a completely entertaining app, TikTok has developed into a platform that supports informal learning, especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Numerous content producers post instructional films about vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and everyday English conversations. These brief films give students flexible and entertaining access to real-world language information, which could

increase their interest in the learning process (Anderson, 2023). Two key elements that affect learning results in EFL instruction are students' motivation and perception. The term "perception" describes how students understand and assess TikTok as a learning tool, regardless of whether they find it to be helpful, efficient, or just entertaining. The internal and external elements that motivate students to participate in educational activities are related to motivation (Alakrash & Razak, 2021).

Positive perceptions toward the use of TikTok may increase students' motivation to learn English, as they find the platform enjoyable, accessible, and relevant to their daily lives. However, unfavorable opinions, such as concerns about the veracity of the content or interruptions, can make them less inclined to use TikTok for learning (Omar & Dequan, 2022). Additionally, TikTok's flexibility promotes independent learning, enabling students to learn at any time and from any location. This autonomy promotes students to take charge of their own education, which is regarded as a crucial component of contemporary language instruction (Hwang & Fu, 2023). TikTok also provides personalized content through its algorithm, which exposes users to videos based on their interests. Because they consistently get pertinent English learning content, this feature can boost students' engagement and maintain their motivation (Montag et al, 2021). However, there are drawbacks to using TikTok for EFL instruction despite its benefits. Students may be easily distracted by non-educational content, and the brief length of films may limit the depth of learning. As a result, it's critical to investigate how students view TikTok and how it affects their desire to study English.

To understand the operational framework of this platform in language acquisition, it is essential to examine its relevance to core language skills, such as speaking, listening, and writing. One of the most important and productive abilities for learning English as a foreign language (EFL) is speaking. It entails the capacity to use proper vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, and fluency to convey thoughts, opinions, and feelings through spoken language (Leong & Ahmadi, 2021). Speaking is essential to language learning because it enables students to interact with others in everyday contexts. Opportunities for interaction, exposure to real-world language use, and constant practice are all necessary for the development of speaking abilities (Derakhshan et al., 2021). Social media sites like TikTok have become alternate resources for honing speaking abilities as a result of the development of digital technology. In a creative and engaging setting, TikTok allows users to make quick films, mimic conversations, and perfect pronunciation (Sari & Wahyudin, 2022).

Several recent studies indicate that TikTok can enhance students' speaking abilities. Students are encouraged to develop spoken content, which enhances their vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation. Learners can connect with real-world language resources thanks to TikTok's interactive features (Putri et al, 2023). Additionally, pupils feel more at

ease practicing speaking in TikTok's low-anxiety learning environment. This laid-back environment lessens the anxiety of making mistakes, which is frequently a significant obstacle when speaking English (Fathi & Rahimi, 2022). Students' speaking growth is also aided by the repetitive practice of recording and re-recording videos. By using this method, students can assess their own performance and progressively increase their confidence and speaking accuracy (Yusuf & Arfiandhani, 2023). Furthermore, peer interaction on TikTok, such as comments and feedback, can motivate students to improve their speaking skills. Because it motivates students to actively engage in communication, social interaction is crucial to language learning (Zhao & Wang, 2022). As a result, TikTok may be regarded as a useful extra resource to aid in the development of speaking abilities in EFL instruction, especially when it comes to boosting students' self-assurance and involvement.

In addition to speaking, listening is an essential receptive skill that entails comprehending spoken language, including pronunciation, intonation, and meaning. According to Rost (2021), it forms the basis for the development of other linguistic skills, including speaking and writing. Because of variations in pronunciation, speech rates, and foreign terminology, learners may find listening difficult in EFL environments. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2021), students must be exposed to real-world listening materials in order to enhance their comprehension. Through brief films with native or skilled speakers, TikTok offers genuine listening input. Learners can acquire acquainted with natural language use by watching these films, which frequently feature real-life conversations, narratives, and explanations (Safitri & Khoiriyah, 2022).

Frequent exposure to brief English movies can enhance students' listening comprehension, according to research. Students who listen frequently are better able to identify pronunciation patterns, comprehend accents, and decipher meaning (Rahmatika & Fikri, 2023). The combination of audio, visual elements, and subtitles in TikTok videos also enhances comprehension. Visual cues and on-screen text support learners in understanding the context of the spoken language (Hsu, 2022). Moreover, TikTok encourages repeated exposure to similar types of content through its algorithm. This repetition allows learners to reinforce their listening skills over time and gradually improve their understanding of spoken English (Montag et al., 2021). Students generally perceive TikTok as an enjoyable and engaging platform for practicing listening. The entertaining nature of the content motivates them to consume English videos more frequently, which contributes to their listening improvement (Anderson, 2023). Therefore, TikTok can serve as an effective medium for enhancing listening skills by providing accessible, authentic, and engaging listening materials.

Furthermore, writing is a useful language skill that entails using proper syntax, vocabulary, and structure to convey ideas in written form. It is crucial for fostering critical thinking and linguistic precision in students (Hyland, 2021). Writing enables students to

arrange their ideas and express them coherently in EFL classes. Additionally, it enhances learners' comprehension of linguistic structures and allows them to reflect on how they use language (Nguyen & Habré, 2022). Although TikTok is primarily a video-based platform, it also supports the development of writing skills. Students frequently compose dialogue, captions, or scripts before making videos, which forces them to arrange their thoughts in English (Sari & Wahyudin, 2022).

According to research, TikTok can improve pupils' writing abilities, especially in terms of originality and succinctness. Students are urged to create clear and succinct written content because TikTok videos are brief (Putri et al., 2023). Students' vocabulary and grammatical precision also increase as a result of writing scripts and captions. Learners gain increased familiarity with language structures by producing content on a regular basis (Fathi & Rahimi, 2022). Additionally, TikTok enables children to experiment with language use by fostering creative expression. Students' drive to write can be boosted by this creativity, which also makes studying more pleasurable (Zhao & Wang, 2022). Writing development can also be aided by comments from peers. Students can enhance the quality of their work by getting advice and corrections from other users (Yusuf & Arfiandhani, 2023). To sum up, TikTok can be a helpful tool for improving writing abilities, particularly when it comes to helping students become more creative, succinct, and involved in their writing assignments. After all, when we use TikTok as a platform for learning English, we're bound to be writing whether as users or creators.

Overall, previous studies indicate that TikTok can support the development of various English language skills, including speaking, listening, and writing. The app also offers an engaging and interactive learning experience for students. However, most studies tend to focus on specific language skills rather than examining students' perceptions and motivation simultaneously. Despite its advantages and challenges, further investigation is still needed to understand how students perceive TikTok and how it affects their motivation. However, previous studies have not specifically examined students' perceptions and motivations simultaneously in the context of TikTok use among EFL learners in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to explore how students perceive TikTok as a learning tool and how it influences their motivation in learning English through questionnaires and interviews.

METHOD

1. Research Design

This study applies a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. A mixed-methods design is highly appropriate for this study as it allows the researcher to capture broad statistical trends regarding students'

motivation and perception through quantitative data, while simultaneously exploring deep, detailed individual experiences and contextual narratives through qualitative data. The quantitative component utilizes a descriptive survey approach, while the qualitative component employs a thematic phenomenological approach to understand the authentic experiences of the participants.

2. Participants / Subjects

University students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) are the study's participants. They are especially chosen from among students who have used TikTok to learn English and are familiar with the platform. In order to guarantee that participants may offer pertinent and significant answers based on their real experiences, This criterion is very important because it ensures the accuracy of the data.

This study involves between 40 and 50 students as participants. For small-b scale educational research, this sample size is thought to be sufficient, especially when integrating quantitative and qualitative methods. It enables the researcher to gather both broad trends and detailed information about students' motivation and perspective. This study uses purposive sampling technique, where participants are selected based on specific criteria. Being active TikTok users and having accessed English-language learning content on the app are among the requirements. This approach aids the researcher in concentrating on subjects who are directly related to the study's goals (Etikan & Bala, 2021).

The selected participants are expected to share their perceptions regarding the usefulness, effectiveness, and credibility of TikTok as a learning tool. They must also explain why they are utilizing TikTok to get better at English. The researcher hopes to gather precise and pertinent data that accurately depicts EFL learners' actual experiences using TikTok for language learning by choosing participants who possess these qualities.

The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies to ensure its validity. Respondents were drawn from a variety of groups, ranging from junior high school students to college students. However, the respondents for the questionnaire and interviews were predominantly college students.

3. Instruments

Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were the two methods used in this study to collect data. To better understand the challenges of the research, these two techniques helped in gathering data and narratives. Google Forms was used to distribute the questionnaire online so that participants could easily access and complete it. Twenty statements comprising ten statements regarding students' responses and ten others regarding what inspires them were divided into two sections.

Agree, Strongly Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree were the five options on the scale used to measure responses.

This questionnaire helps determine how students view the use of TikTok as a learning tool and how it affects their motivation to learn English. Additionally, this questionnaire helps convert students' responses into numerical data for research. In addition to filling out the questionnaire, some students were also interviewed. The purpose of these interviews was to learn more about the students' perspectives, challenges, and experiences in using TikTok to learn English. The interview questions focused on how students view TikTok, their learning experiences, and their sources of motivation. This data complements the overall picture by supplementing the results from the questionnaire.

4. Data Collection Procedure

This study's data collection process is carried out in a number of methodical steps. The questionnaire and interview guidelines are among the research instruments that the researcher first develops. These tools are thoughtfully crafted to support the goals of the study. Second, the chosen participants receive the questionnaire via an online tool called Google Forms. After carefully reading each statement, participants are asked to select the response that most accurately expresses their thoughts on using TikTok to learn English. Third, after compiling the findings of the questionnaire, the researcher selects a number of participants for the interview. Participants are free to expand on their thoughts because the interviews are semi-structured. The researcher offers open-ended questions on students' perceptions, motivations, and experiences utilizing TikTok for English language learning during the interview process. This method aids in the acquisition of more comprehensive and detailed data. Ultimately, all information gathered from the questionnaire and interviews is arranged and ready for examination.

5. Data Analysis

This study uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. The quantitative data is obtained from the questionnaire, while the qualitative data is derived from the interviews. The questionnaire data is analyzed using descriptive statistics. The researcher calculates the frequency and percentage of each response category, including Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. This analysis helps to identify general trends in students' perception and motivation.

The results of the quantitative analysis are presented in the form of tables or charts to make the data easier to understand. These visual representations help in interpreting the findings clearly and systematically. Meanwhile, the qualitative data from the interviews is analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher identifies key

ideas, patterns, and themes from the participants' responses. This method is widely used to analyze qualitative data in educational research (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The researcher carefully reviews the interview transcripts, categorizes similar responses, and interprets the meaning behind students' statements. This process provides deeper insights into students' experiences and perspectives. Finally, the results from both quantitative and qualitative analyses are combined to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research findings. This integration allows the researcher to answer the research questions more effectively and accurately.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The quantitative findings of this study were obtained from an online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms to students who actively use TikTok as part of their English learning activities. The questionnaire focused on two major variables: students' perceptions of TikTok as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning tool and its influence on their learning motivation. The descriptive statistical analysis revealed that students generally responded positively to the use of TikTok for learning English. Table 1 summarizes the overall distribution of the students' responses regarding these variables.

Table 1. Students' Questionnaire Responses on TikTok Usage

Type of Variables	Description	Skill / Aspect Targeted	Percentage
Students' Perception	Measuring how students understand and assess TikTok as an English learning tool	Usefulness, accessibility, and user-friendly platform	65% - 80%
Learning Motivation	Analyzing internal and external elements that drive students to participate in activities	Intrinsic interest, active engagement, and comfortable learning	Approx. 70%

Based on the survey data presented in Table 1, the majority of students demonstrated a favorable perception of TikTok as a platform for learning English. Approximately 65% to 80% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that TikTok is useful, easily accessible, and user-friendly for educational purposes. Students perceived TikTok as a convenient medium that allows them to access English learning materials anytime and anywhere through their mobile devices. This accessibility was considered one of the major advantages of using TikTok, particularly for students who prefer flexible learning environments. Only a small number of respondents expressed negative perceptions toward TikTok, mainly because they found the platform potentially distracting due to the abundance of non-educational content available.

The positive perception of TikTok was also supported by the qualitative findings obtained from interviews. Many participants explained that TikTok provides engaging and interactive content that helps them understand English more easily. One participant stated that learning English through TikTok is enjoyable because the videos are short, concise, and less monotonous compared to traditional classroom materials. The participant further explained that TikTok enables learners to explore various topics according to their interests, making the learning experience more personalized and meaningful. Another student mentioned that TikTok helps them learn new vocabulary and expressions in authentic contexts, allowing them to understand how English is used in everyday communication. These responses suggest that students appreciate the platform's ability to present learning materials in an attractive and accessible format.

The findings indicate that TikTok serves not only as a social media platform but also as an effective supplementary learning resource. The short-video format encourages students to focus on specific learning objectives without feeling overwhelmed by lengthy explanations. Moreover, visual and auditory elements integrated into TikTok videos facilitate comprehension and retention of language input. This finding is consistent with Anderson (2023), who argues that social media platforms can enhance language learning by providing engaging, accessible, and learner-centered educational content. The interactive nature of TikTok also supports autonomous learning by enabling students to choose content that matches their individual learning needs and preferences.

In addition to students' positive perceptions, the findings reveal that TikTok significantly contributes to students' motivation to learn English. Approximately 70% of the participants agreed that TikTok increased their interest in English learning and encouraged them to participate more actively in learning activities. Students reported that they felt more comfortable engaging with English content on TikTok because the learning process was integrated into an environment they already enjoyed using for entertainment and social interaction. As a result, students were more willing to watch English-language videos, practice pronunciation, learn new vocabulary, and improve their listening skills without feeling pressured.

The interview data further reinforced these findings. Several participants stated that TikTok motivates them to learn English because the content is entertaining, relevant, and closely related to their daily lives. One participant explained, "I often watch English videos on TikTok without feeling forced, so I learn naturally. After watching several videos, I become interested in learning more English expressions and vocabulary." Another participant mentioned that TikTok continuously recommends English-related content through its algorithm, which encourages them to remain engaged with English learning materials. The personalized recommendation system allows students to encounter

educational content regularly, thereby maintaining their interest and supporting continuous learning.

These findings support the theory proposed by Alakrash and Razak (2021), who emphasize that motivation plays a crucial role in determining success in language learning. When learners experience enjoyment, interest, and comfort during the learning process, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward language acquisition and maintain consistent learning behaviors. Furthermore, the findings align with the perspective of Montag et al. (2021), who argue that algorithm-driven platforms can enhance user engagement by delivering personalized content that matches users' preferences and interests. In the context of language learning, this personalization can increase exposure to target-language content and strengthen learning consistency over time.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of TikTok Features Enhancing EFL Students' Perception and Motivation

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework explaining how TikTok's features contribute to enhancing students' perceptions and motivation in learning English. Features such as short-form videos, accessibility, interactive content, authentic language exposure, and personalized recommendations work together to create a positive learning experience. These features not only improve students' perceptions of TikTok as a learning tool but also strengthen their intrinsic motivation to engage with English learning activities. Consequently, students become more willing to explore English content independently and develop their language skills beyond the classroom environment.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that TikTok has considerable potential as a supplementary platform for English language learning. Students perceive TikTok as an accessible, engaging, and effective learning resource, while its interactive and personalized features contribute significantly to increasing their motivation to learn English. The combination of positive perceptions and enhanced motivation suggests that TikTok can support students' language development by creating a more enjoyable, flexible, and learner-centered learning experience. Therefore, educators may consider integrating

TikTok-based activities into EFL instruction to complement traditional teaching methods and promote greater student engagement in the learning process.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that students generally have a positive perception of TikTok as a learning tool and that the platform significantly enhances their motivation to learn English. The questionnaire results indicate that approximately 65%–80% of the participants agreed that TikTok is useful, easily accessible, and simple to use as a medium for English language learning. Most students considered TikTok not only as a source of entertainment but also as an effective educational platform that provides opportunities to improve their language skills. Although a small proportion of respondents expressed concerns regarding distractions from non-educational content, the majority viewed TikTok as a beneficial learning resource that supports their English learning process.

The positive perception of TikTok was further confirmed through the interview findings. Several participants explained that TikTok offers engaging, interactive, and visually appealing content that makes learning English more enjoyable. One participant stated that learning English through TikTok is fun because the videos are short, interesting, and less boring compared to traditional learning materials. The participant also mentioned that TikTok allows learners to explore topics according to their individual interests, making the learning experience more personalized. Another student highlighted that TikTok helps them learn new vocabulary in a practical and enjoyable way through real-life examples and authentic language use. These responses indicate that students appreciate the flexibility and convenience provided by the platform, which enables them to access educational content anytime and anywhere.

The findings suggest that TikTok creates a supportive learning environment by presenting information in a concise and entertaining format. The short-video feature allows students to focus on specific learning objectives without feeling overwhelmed by lengthy explanations. As a result, students are more likely to engage with English-language content and maintain their interest in learning. These findings are consistent with Anderson (2023), who argues that social media platforms such as TikTok can facilitate language learning by providing engaging, accessible, and learner-centered content. The platform's interactive features, including captions, comments, and content-sharing options, also contribute to a more dynamic learning experience. In addition to fostering positive perceptions, TikTok was found to play an important role in increasing students' motivation to learn English. The questionnaire data showed that approximately 70% of the participants felt more motivated to learn English when using TikTok. Many students reported that they became more interested in English-language content and were more willing to practice their language skills after regularly engaging with educational videos on the platform.

Furthermore, students indicated that TikTok encouraged them to participate actively in learning activities without feeling pressured, which is an important factor in sustaining long-term learning engagement.

The interview results further support this finding. One participant explained that they frequently watch English videos on TikTok voluntarily and learn naturally without feeling forced. Another participant emphasized that TikTok's recommendation algorithm continuously suggests English-related content based on previous viewing preferences, which helps maintain their interest and engagement in learning. This personalized learning experience encourages students to interact with English content more consistently and reinforces their language development over time. These findings support the argument of Alakrash and Razak (2021), who emphasize that motivation is a crucial determinant of success in language learning, particularly when learners experience enjoyment and comfort during the learning process. Moreover, the findings align with Montag et al. (2021), who highlight that algorithm-based social media platforms can enhance user engagement and promote continuous learning behavior.

Overall, the results demonstrate that TikTok serves a dual function as both a learning resource and a motivational tool for English language learning. Its accessible, interactive, and personalized features help students develop positive perceptions toward English learning while simultaneously increasing their intrinsic motivation to engage with the language. Consequently, TikTok has the potential to become an effective supplementary tool for supporting English language learning among students in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated students' perceptions and motivation toward the use of TikTok in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The results demonstrate that the majority of students see TikTok favorably as a learning resource. They view it as interesting, approachable, and beneficial for enhancing their comprehension of English. Additionally, TikTok makes students feel more engaged and at ease when learning through engaging and pertinent content, which greatly boosts their motivation. Additionally, the findings show that TikTok can help with language skill development, especially when it comes to exposure to vocabulary, pronunciation, and common English usage.

Nevertheless, several difficulties were also noted, such as the limited depth of learning because of the little video duration and distractions from non-educational content. As a result, TikTok can be a useful additional learning resource in EFL settings. Technology is advised that students use TikTok sparingly and that teachers think about incorporating technology into lessons in an organized and supervised manner. It is

recommended that future studies use a bigger sample size to examine the long-term effects of TikTok on students' language skills.

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