

Examining Students' Perceptions of Indonesian High School Students on the Use of TikTok in Learning English

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Abstract

With the availability of mobile devices and Web 2.0 technologies, various networking apps have become essential to English language learning (ELL). TikTok, a global app similar to YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter, is becoming increasingly popular. TikTok is a video-sharing app that allows users to produce and share content while discovering material from other users. TikTok has yet to be thoroughly researched for educational purposes. However, some research suggests that social media can help language learners. This study evaluated Islamic school students' perspectives on using TikTok to learn English to enhance four English skills. In this study, 55 high school students from an Islamic country participated in an online quantitative research survey. The information was gathered using a Google Forms questionnaire. According to the research, students were enthusiastic about utilizing TikTok as a visual aid in enhancing their English skills. Writing was discovered to be the least likely of the four English skills to develop using TikTok Apps. Besides, students also stated a high preference for watching native English channels rather than local channels when learning English. As a result, TikTok has the potential to affect pupils' English proficiency positively. As a result, students and teachers can mix social networking apps to enhance English teaching and learning. Further research may be performed to look at students' voices, in the future teachers' views, and an experimental classroom design.

Keywords: social networking application; TikTok; English as a foreign language; teenagers

Introduction

The availability of social networking platforms that allow for the creation of content, the sharing of information, and interactive contact are now almost limitless because of the advancements made in Web 2.0 technology

(Zeng et al., 2010). As a result of improved technology and the increased use of smart mobile devices, various social networking programs have emerged, each with its specific type. Facebook is an example of a social networking site, whereas YouTube and Instagram provide a multimedia exchange. This research focused on TikTok, a brief video distributing users to produce and share content while discovering material from other users.

According to global market information, TikTok was the ninth most downloaded app globally between 2010 and 2019. It was ranked

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as the second-highest purchased application on the App Store and the Google Play Store in 2019 (Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2021). In Indonesia, TikTok had over 100 million users in 2019, making it one of the nation's most important social media platforms (Ismael Zabala-Shigui & Agustín Banda-Casa, 2022; Renes & Strange, 2011). These studies have crucial implications for English educators and students, but Indonesia's social media scene is distinct. Because some significant social media sites are unavailable in Indonesia, homegrown social networking apps such as TikTok were developed to meet the needs of Indonesian clients while competing with global apps. Educators and researchers are investigating how these apps might be utilized to improve English language training. WhatsApp, the most popular instant messaging program in Indonesia, has lately been studied for its ability to enhance students' writing and speaking skills and enthusiasm to learn. However, no research has been conducted on the use of TikTok as an educational tool in the teaching of English as a second language (Arroyo González et al., 2021).

TikTok is a video-sharing app that enables creators to create videos from 15 seconds to 5 minutes. This feature fits the present pattern of rapid information collection. It allows video creators to make their content more impactful. As a result, TikTok has attracted a large number of English educators who provide valuable English learning materials for EFL teaching and learning, potentially making it a useful tool for educators and English learners both inside and outside the classroom (Sukmawati & Nensia, 2019).

Learners' motivation to learn English has improved because of social media such as

Facebook, Twitter, and others platforms (Ubaedillah et al., 2021). Facebook, the world's most popular social networking application, launched in 2004, has been shown to improve students' writing, reading, and oral communication skills and their motivation and confidence to learn English. Twitter, another popular social media network, has also investigated for educational uses in English language teaching and learning. Most students enjoy using Twitter to increase their language skills and motivation. However, there are also disadvantages to using social media for English learning, including the risk of employing informal language in formal writing tasks, insufficient teacher preparation and supervision, Internet access, and student distraction (Adnan, 2020; Fata et al., 2022).

Video devices in language classes can be quite useful, particularly in communicative language learning, which places a premium on authentic conversation. Audiovisual resources are any recorded audio or video content used for language learning, including but not limited to conversation, voice, music, video, PowerPoint presentations, and graphics. According to Dias-Trindade et al. (Dias-Trindade et al., 2021), integrating realistic audiovisual aids in English classrooms can improve language learners' understanding of theoretical concepts, learning motivation, and language skills.

In internet-based applications, social media applications are used as an interactive way for various needs. TikTok is related in the context of language acquisition, particularly in the digital age. It might be considered a subset of mobile learning or a distinct subject with parallels to computer-assisted language

learning and mobile learning. Digital social media provides language teachers and students with numerous opportunities to learn regardless of time or location and access to many English language learning materials and resources via mobile devices such as MP3 or MP4, tablets, and smartphones. TikTok, as one of the social media apps, can increase students' vocabulary, hearing, reading, and understanding, according to numerous studies (Dias-Trindade et al., 2021).

Informal language learning outside of the classroom has shown a major effect on language learner progress in addition to formal language learning in the classroom (Hobbs, 2017). Effective learning strategies are necessary for successful language acquisition outside of the classroom. Although there are numerous definitions, learning strategies refer to the approaches, methods, and techniques students use to acquire knowledge and regulate their language learning skills. The Oxford classification is widely used to divide language learning processes into explicit (memory, cognitive, and compensatory) and indirect (affective, social, and metacognitive) techniques.

The key functions of social networking software are entertainment, sociability, information, and academics. The academic goal has become increasingly essential as educators have begun to employ social networking platforms to better language teaching and learning (Escrura Mayaute & Salas Blas, 2014). Language learning films, for example, ranked second in popularity on TikTok in 2019 (Elekaei et al., 2020; Ismael Zabala-Shigui & Agustín Banda-Casa, 2022). However, many studies have investigated how social media influence

language learners' proficiency and skills. However, relatively few have investigated how language learners perceive TikTok in EFL learning. This study aims to bridge the gap by focusing on Islamic high school students' perceptions of using TikTok to learn English skills.

Method

By adopting a quantitative research approach, this research utilized a survey-based methodology to assess and discern the students' perceptions of using TikTok to promote English skills (Block et al., 2002; Nassaji, 2015). The researchers used a survey instrument to understand how students define the factors influencing their English competence via the TikTok mobile application.

Instrument

The current study employed a closed-ended questionnaire as the instrument to gain data collection. The participants were given a ten-question questionnaire about students' perceptions of using TikTok to improve their English skills. Later, the questionnaire was shared through Google Forms. The questionnaire constituted two sections: one focused on collecting demographic data (including variables of gender, names, academic major, course, age, email addresses, and phone numbers), and the second encompassed a Likert-type scale incorporating ten items. Respondents were required to express their level of agreement with each item on a numerical scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree). To ascertain the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, the inter-rater reliability, and content validity, it underwent a thorough

scrutiny process involving the research team and an invited specialist in the field. The critiques and suggestions offered by the reviewers were judiciously integrated into the finalized version of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then administered to a carefully selected sample of 55 students who voluntarily consented to participate in the study. These students were drawn from diverse academic majors (science, social science, and religious major) to ensure a representative cross-section of academic backgrounds.

Participants

The participants were assigned using the purposive sampling method. This method was used to obtain a sample of participants who have met the characteristics (such as being aged 15-17, using TikTok daily, Learning English in Islamic schools, and agreeing to sign a consent form) of this study. Fifty five EFL students acquiring EFL from two Islamic high

schools in Indonesia voluntarily participated in this study. Along with the invitation, a formal letter elucidating the objectives of the questionnaire was provided, emphasizing the significance of their responses. Participants were given detailed instructions to complete the questionnaire correctly. The questionnaire's careful design, high response rate, and clear instructions and explanations ensure data reliability and validity.

Of the respondents, 12 (representing 21.5%) were males, while the remaining 43 (comprising 79.5% of the cohort) were females. The age distribution of the participant pool ranged from 15 to 17 years. The demographic characteristics of the participant sample demonstrate its connection with the research aims, confirming its suitability in addressing the gender diversity of students. A detailed presentation of the participants' demographic data is provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Participants' demographic data

Total number of participants	
Gender	
a. Male students	12 (21,5 %)
b. Female students	43 (79,5%)
Average age	15-17 years old

Data Collection

For data collection in this study, a structured questionnaire was utilized, adapted from the works of Blidi, 2016; Nguyen & Habók, 2021. They provide a degree of anonymity, which makes them particularly suited for eliciting potentially sensitive information (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2022; Tawafak et al., 2021).

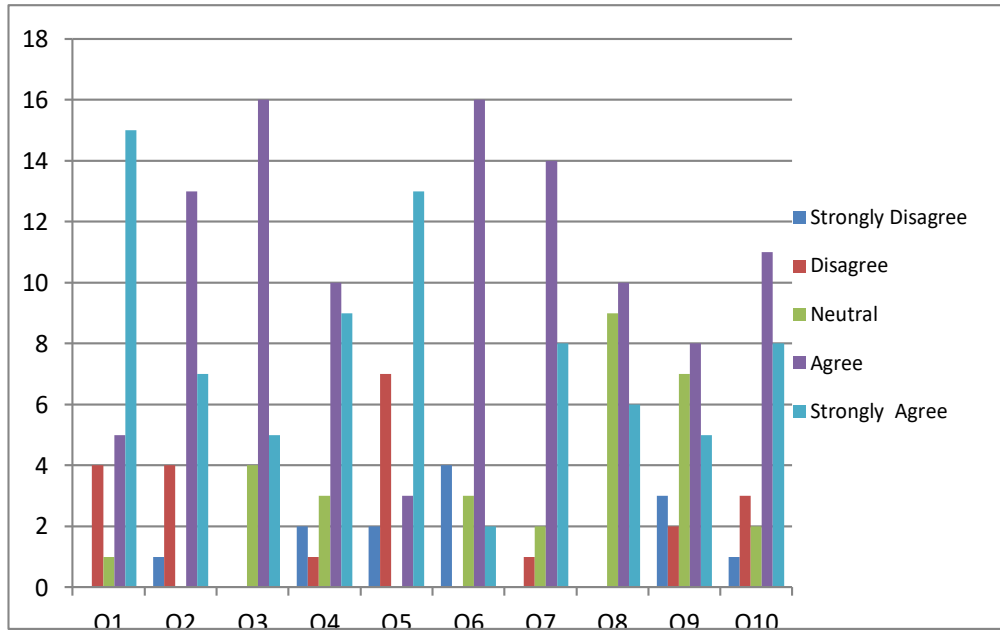
The questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms, with each participant granting explicit consent. There were ten questions provided to the respondents. The questionnaire received a 100% response rate, indicating high involvement and readiness to contribute to the scientific endeavor. Participants received a personalized email to foster completion of the questionnaire, and pertinent information about

the study and its objectives were disseminated via social media platforms.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Table 1
TikTok improves ways of learning English



The table 1 depicts the questionnaire results with ten questions in total. The items of the questions were provided as follows:

1. I prefer Native English channel of TikTok to improve my English
2. I prefer Local Channel of TikTok to improve my English
3. TikTok helps me to learn "Speaking Skill"
4. TikTok helps me to learn "Listening Skill"
5. TikTok helps me to learn "Reading Skill"
6. TikTok helps me to learn "Writing Skill"

7. TikTok helps me to learn "Grammar"
8. TikTok assists me to learn English in a fun way
9. I don't know how to select profile/channel in TokTok to improve my English
10. TikTok is a media only. I prefer to study in regular ways at school with teachers

Thus, the table below illustrates the result of each question.

English skills improved by the students through the Native English Channel

The first question on the questionnaire is to ascertain the division of qualifications among

the research respondents. Respondents were asked whether they were more interested in watching the Native English Channel in TikTok.

Based on the questionnaire, students prefer to select Native English TikTok videos.

Table 2
Improving English through the Native English Channel

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
	Disagree	4	7.3	7.3
	Neutral	7	12.7	12.7
	Agree	25	45.5	45.5
	Strongly Agree	19	34.5	34.5
	Total	55	100	100.0

English skills improved by the students through the Native English Channel

Respondents were asked whether they were more interested in watching local

Channels on TikTok in the second question on the questionnaire. Based on the questionnaire, students tend to choose the Local English Channel.

Table 3
Improving English through Local Channel

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	12.7	12.7
	Disagree	10	18.2	18.2
	Neutral	0	0	0
	Agree	24	43.6	43.6
	Strongly Agree	14	25.5	25.5
	Total	55	100	100.0

Table 4
Learning English speaking skills through TikTok

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0
	Neutral	5	9.1	9.1
	Agree	30	54.5	54.5
	Strongly Agree	20	36.4	36.4
	Total	55	100	100.0

The effectiveness of TikTok in assisting students to improve speaking skills

The third question on the questionnaire is to ascertain the division of qualifications among the research respondents. Respondents were asked if the TikTok app is efficient in assisting the respondents in learning English-speaking skills. Based on the questionnaire, students have positive opinions about using TikTok as a platform to improve speaking skills.

The effectiveness of TikTok in assisting students to improve their listening skills

The fourth question on the questionnaire is to ascertain the division of qualifications among the research respondents. Respondents were asked if the TikTok app is efficient in assisting the respondents in learning English listening skills. Based on the questionnaire, students have highly positive opinions of using TikTok to improve listening skills.

Table 5*Learning English listening skills through TikTok*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	7.3	7.3
	Disagree	3	5.4	5.4
	Neutral	9	16.4	16.4
	Agree	22	40	40
	Strongly Agree	17	30.9	30.9
	Total	55	100	100.0

The effectiveness of TikTok in assisting students to improve their reading skills

The fifth question on the questionnaire is to ascertain the division of qualifications among the research respondents. Respondents were

asked if the TikTok app is efficient in assisting the respondents in learning English reading skills. Based on the questionnaire, most students positively perceive using TikTok to improve reading skills.

Table 6*Learning English reading skills through TikTok*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	7.3	7.3
	Disagree	8	14.5	14.5
	Neutral	5	9.1	9.1
	Agree	10	18.2	18.2
	Strongly Agree	28	51	51
	Total	55	100	100.0

The effectiveness of TikTok in assisting students to improve their writing skills

The sixth question on the questionnaire is to ascertain the division of qualifications among the research respondents. Respondents were asked if the TikTok app is efficient in assisting

the respondents in learning English writing skills. Based on the questionnaire, students

positively perceive using TikTok to improve writing skills.

Table 7
Learning English writing skills through TikTok

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	18.2	18.2
	Disagree	0	0	0
	Neutral	15	27.3	27.3
	Agree	25	45.4	45.4
	Strongly Agree	5	9.1	9.1
	Total	55	100	100.0

The effectiveness of TikTok in assisting students to improve grammar skills

The seventh question on the questionnaire is to ascertain the division of qualifications among the research respondents. Respondents

were asked if the TikTok app is efficient in assisting the respondents in learning English grammar skills. Based on the questionnaire, students positively perceive using TikTok to improve grammar skills.

Table 8
Learning English grammar skills through TikTok

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
	Disagree	5	9.1	9.1
	Neutral	7	12.7	12.7
	Agree	27	49.1	49.1
	Strongly Agree	16	29.1	29.1
	Total	55	100	100.0

Table 9
Learning English in a fun way through TikTok

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0
	Neutral	20	36.4	36.4
	Agree	27	49.1	49.1
	Strongly Agree	8	14.5	14.5
	Total	55	100	100.0

TikTok is a platform to learn English in a fun way

The eighth question on the questionnaire sought to ascertain the division of qualifications among the research respondents. Respondents were asked if the TikTok app is helping them pleasantly learn English. Based on the questionnaire, students have positive perceptions of using TikTok to learn English in a fun way.

Selecting TikTok English Channel to improve students' English skill

The ninth question on the questionnaire is to ascertain the division of qualifications among the research respondents. Respondents were asked if they find it hard to select the TikTok channel to improve their English skills. Based on the questionnaire, students sometimes get confused about choosing the TikTok English channel to improve their English.

Table 10
Selecting TikTok channel to improve English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	12.7	12.7
	Disagree	5	9.1	9.1
	Neutral	13	23.6	23.7
	Agree	17	31	31
	Strongly Agree	13	23.6	23.7
	Total	55	100	100.0

Students' perception of learning English through online platforms or face to face class

Therefore, the last question on the questionnaire sought to ascertain the division of qualifications among the research

respondents. Respondents were asked whether they preferred to study English in regular classes at school or through online platforms such as TikTok. Based on the questionnaire, most students prefer to learn in a face-to-face classroom to utilize an online platform.

Table 11
Learning English through online platforms (TikTok)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	5.4	5.4
	Disagree	7	12.7	12.7
	Neutral	8	14.5	14.5
	Agree	20	36.4	36.4
	Strongly Agree	17	31	31
	Total	55	100	100.0

Discussion

In face-to-face situations, learners frequently feel pressured to infiltrate pre-existing friend groups; however, this is not the

case with online interactions, which provide students the ability to choose their friends (and the possibility of being chosen as friends) and give students the option of also being chosen as friends (Gherheş et al., 2021; Silviyanti, 2014; Soffer & Nachmias, 2018). Students can pick and select who of their classmates they want to continue communicating with depending on the beliefs they have in common. They do not have to be afraid to speak their minds simply because they are always in the company of popular kids. According to Adnan (2020), students who participate in distance learning report feeling a sense of closeness with their fellow students, which they believe influences the quality of their education, particularly regarding the development of social identity. Thanks to online communication, students have more flexibility regarding the kinds of people they can communicate with. Guanter et al. (2015) mention that with technology, the classroom can accommodate more people, and participation can be more evenly distributed (Hima et al., 2021; Khoshsima & Khosravi, 2021; Kumalawati et al., 2021). It is much more likely that the moral meaning of peer engagement will be reached through social networking mediated by computers and other forms of technology. Everyone has an equal opportunity to participate (if they have access to the necessary technologies) (Elmahdi & Hezam, 2020; Escobar Fandiño et al., 2019).

Students can be judged more based on the content of their contributions rather than their skin color, financial standing, or any other feature. It is made possible by the fact that technology gives students the ability to participate in communities that are both active and varied. Despite this independence,

students still want direction when developing relationships online. According to Walther and Bunz (2005), six rules should be followed to improve virtual group trust, liking, and performance. They recommend that members of the particular group begin communicating with one another as soon as possible, not long after joining the particular group. Second, there needs to be consistent and frequent interaction between all members. Third, the authors suggest that members of a cooperative project with tasks to be completed should multitask (rather than planning what needs to be done, delegating the jobs, and carrying out the assigned duties). The fourth need for group members is to state unequivocally that they have read the contributions made by other members on a discussion board or some other kind of online media.

Numerous scholars have investigated the effectiveness of social media on second-language acquisition. Mpungose (2023) discovered that social networking apps benefit most EFL students by boosting their English language skills and motivation. For instance, social media, in particular, has been found to boost college-level English vocabulary skills (Weepiu Samekash, 2020; Zezarwati et al., 2022). Similar to this study, several studies found that students had favorable sentiments toward using social media to write in English. Afterward, social networks have been shown to improve students' willingness to read in English and their listening and speech (Cárdenas et al., 2010; Yunita & Maisarah, 2020). Furthermore, several researchers have explored using various social media apps as educational aids for teaching and learning English (Bensalem & Alenazi, 2022; Moreira Aguayo et al., 2020).

Similarly, as one of the popular social media, TikTok positively impacts young learners to gain new knowledge and improve their English skill through native or local channels.

In contrast to environments where people interact in person, where messages can be acknowledged indirectly and in context, the online environment necessitates deliberate interaction in written discussions (Costado Dios & Piñero Charlo, 2021). It is necessary to ensure that a textual non-response to an online message is not misconstrued as a lack of acknowledgment of the communication. The fifth and final item is connected to the fourth in that members of the group are required to detail how they react to the message of another member of the group. According to the authors, non-response in a face-to-face scenario, where silence may be interpreted in the context of nonverbal clues, can be harder to comprehend in an online setting. It is in contrast to a face-to-face setting.

In conclusion, the authors recommend that to cultivate a sense of mutual reliance among members of online groups, the groups should, as a means of establishing due dates for important activities, then strictly stick to those dates. Suppose the objective is to finish a group project as part of an evaluation, for instance, establishing and adhering to deadlines for group members to finish the many tasks that must be done to finish the project. In addition, it would be an excellent way to create trust and encourage group members to trust one another (Novitasari & Addinna, 2022; Rojabi, 2020).

In addition, TikTok has various advantages in improving students' English skills, such as being easy and free to access, having an abundant

native and local English Channel, and being a joyful medium to learn. Students can easily save videos or re-watch and practice them. Therefore, learning English through an online platform (TikTok) also has some drawbacks, including the need for internet quotas, difficulty selecting an appropriate channel that supports students in learning English, and network issues that can interfere with their accessing the application (Lin et al., 2023; Novitasari & Addinna, 2022).

Conclusion

According to the findings, most students, irrespective of their grade level, were excited about using TikTok to learn English to promote four English skills. The writing was the slightest aspect that potentially improved through Tiktok. Furthermore, native English creators are chosen as a source for developing English skills. TikTok can be utilized in the classroom to supplement Standard English teaching techniques, strengthening classroom activities, motivation, and English abilities. TikTok can be used as an English learning approach outside the classroom to widen knowledge, gain access to factual information, and cultivate an enthusiasm for learning. Although the study found that using TikTok for English learning was beneficial, students identified concerns that EFL teachers should address. English in the future might select the learning materials that suit students to learn EFL.

The present study provides practical advice for EFL teachers, students, and TikTok software administrators. The practical advice for EFL teachers can be highlighted regarding the variety of content, where teachers can supply a mix of educational content with students'

needs in learning English. However, the study has certain drawbacks, such as a limited sample size and a lack of more experimental verification. Future studies could use sample data and more extensive studies to obtain more representative and meaningful results.

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