



Leveraging TikTok to Enhance English Speaking Skills among EFL Students

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Abstract

This study explores the potential of the TikTok application as an educational tool to improve English speaking skills among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. TikTok's immense popularity among youth, combined with its short video format and creative features, provides an engaging platform for interactive learning. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to assess the impact of TikTok on speaking proficiency, vocabulary acquisition, fluency, pronunciation, and overall learning motivation. Fifty EFL students participated in the study, which involved pre-tests, post-tests, video assignments, and surveys. Results indicated a significant improvement in speaking skills, with students demonstrating enhanced vocabulary, better pronunciation, and increased confidence in communication. Additionally, the app's entertaining and user-friendly nature helped reduce language anxiety and foster creativity. The findings underscore TikTok's potential as a supplementary tool in language education, particularly for fostering engagement and motivation in learning environments. Despite some challenges, such as content curation and managing screen time, TikTok offers a promising avenue for modernizing language instruction and enhancing learner outcomes.

Keywords: *TikTok, EFL Students, Speaking Skills, Vocabulary Development, Language Motivation, Digital Learning*

1. Introduction

Education is one of the many industries that have been transformed by innovations in technology. Social networking sites, which were once thought of as instruments for pleasure, are now cutting-edge teaching tools. The most popular of these is TikTok, which attracts younger audiences with its imaginative and succinct material. With over two billion downloads globally as of October 2020, TikTok has demonstrated its extensive reach and educational potential.

One of the key challenges in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education is addressing student disengagement and anxiety in speaking activities. According to (Sarah et al., 2024), EFL students often experience a lack of confidence due to traditional, monotonous teaching methods. The dynamic and engaging features of TikTok—including its short video format and creative tools—present a unique opportunity to mitigate these issues by providing a low-pressure, enjoyable environment for language practice.

According to (Titik Komariyah et al., 2022), TikTok's engaging qualities greatly lower student anxiety and create a favorable atmosphere for spoken English practice. This supports the findings of (Agustini, 2023), who discovered that by offering both visual and aural reinforcement, video-based platforms successfully improve language acquisition. Despite these findings, little research has been done specifically on TikTok's effect on speaking ability, which emphasizes the need for more investigation.

TikTok is a compelling tool for incorporating speaking exercises into normal daily activities because of its accessibility and conciseness. According to (Mandasari et al., 2022), students who used TikTok for descriptive and storytelling tasks shown a significant increase in their pronunciation and fluency. The app's features, like text overlays and subtitles, help users retain vocabulary by combining spoken language with visual components.

Additionally, TikTok's interactive features facilitate group learning by enabling students to interact with classmates through likes, comments, and duets. Such interactions foster a sense of community and motivate language learners to exercise their language abilities in real-world, meaningful factors (Introduction, 2024). TikTok's social features set it apart from other learning platforms and offer opportunities for encouragement and peer review.

Even though these studies show TikTok's guarantee, there are still a lot of unanswered questions about its wider implications for language learning. The majority of current research ignores the psychological and motivational aspects of speaking practice in favor of concentrating on vocabulary development or general language abilities. TikTok can boost students' creativity and confidence, but its ability to lessen speaking fear hasn't been thoroughly studied, claim (Hongsa et al., 2023).

This study is innovative since it takes a thorough approach to assessing TikTok's potential to improve EFL students' speaking abilities. In contrast to earlier studies, this one looks at particular facets of speaking, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency, while also examining psychological and motivational effects. The research attempts to offer a comprehensive explanation of TikTok's function in language instruction by addressing these aspects.

TikTok integration into language instruction also takes into account students' changing digital habits. Today's students are digital natives who are more inclined to interact with multimedia content than traditional textbooks, as noted by (Zaitun, Hadi, M. S., & Indriani, 2021). By combining language training to students' interests, TikTok makes the process more approachable and pleasurable. This connection could change the dynamics in the classroom and encourage long-term interest in language acquisition.

This study has three goals: first, to evaluate how well TikTok helps EFL students improve their speaking abilities; second, to look at how it affects learner confidence and motivation; and third, to find workable ways to include TikTok into curriculum. These objectives are in line with the more general goal of using digital tools to improve and modernize language teaching approaches. There are many advantages to incorporating TikTok into language instruction. (Rahmawati et al., 2023) claim that the interactive aspects of the software can increase student engagement by making learning fun. A sense of community is also fostered by the platform's encouragement of peer-to-peer engagement through likes, comments, and shares. But as (Mandasari et al., 2022) point out, in order to prevent possible distractions and guarantee content relevancy, efficient implementation necessitates systematic direction.

This study has important ramifications for students, educators, and legislators. TikTok gives academics a versatile tool for creating captivating speaking exercises that appeal to students' digital habits. These findings can be used by policymakers to encourage the incorporation of cutting-edge technologies into formal education institutions. TikTok provides learners with an easy-to-use platform to develop their creativity, confidence, and fundamental language abilities in a fun way.

Furthermore, for TikTok to be successfully integrated into education, issues like screen time control and content quality must be addressed. To optimize the educational benefits of the platform, instructors must curate pertinent content and give clear directions, as suggested by (Gunawan et al., 2023). By doing this, they can minimize TikTok's disadvantages while enhancing its potential. The following are the research questions for the study:

1. How much does TikTok help students improve their vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency when speaking English?
2. What effects does TikTok's incorporation into language instruction have on students' confidence and motivation?

2.Method

2.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 50 university-level EFL students enrolled in an English language program. Their ages ranged from 18 to 24 years, encompassing diverse proficiency levels from beginner to intermediate. The sample was selected through purposive sampling to ensure a mix of skill levels and digital familiarity. The inclusion criteria required participants to have access to smartphones and a basic understanding of social media platforms, particularly TikTok. This approach ensured the practicality of implementing TikTok-based learning strategies.

2.2 Data Collection

2.2.1 Instrument of Collecting Data

Questionnaires, interviews, and pre- and post-tests were the three primary tools used to collect data. Participants' speaking skills were assessed using pre- and post-tests, which concentrated on vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Based on accepted speaking evaluation standards, such as coherence, phonological control, and lexical resource, a rubric was created. A five-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaires to gauge students' motivation, self-assurance, and opinions on using TikTok as a learning tool. Lastly, in-depth qualitative insights into participants' experiences and opinions of TikTok as an educational tool were obtained through semi-structured interviews.

2.2.2 Techniques for Collecting Data

The data collection process involved three stages. First, participants completed a pre-test to establish a baseline for their speaking skills. This was followed by a six-week intervention where participants created and engaged with TikTok videos tailored to language learning objectives. During

this period, students were encouraged to produce content such as storytelling, role-plays, and descriptive tasks, leveraging TikTok's editing tools to enhance their presentations. Observations were conducted throughout the intervention to monitor engagement levels and identify challenges. After the intervention, participants completed a post-test and the Likert-scale questionnaire. Selected students also participated in semi-structured interviews to provide nuanced feedback on their learning experiences.

2.3 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the data analysis process. Descriptive statistics and paired t-tests were used to assess quantitative data from the questionnaires, post-tests, and pre-tests in order to gauge changes in motivation levels and advancements in speaking abilities. Significant gains in vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency were found by comparing the speaking test results. To find recurrent themes, such as perceived advantages, difficulties, and general satisfaction with TikTok as a learning tool, qualitative data from observations and interviews were coded and subjected to thematic analysis. This mixed-method approach guaranteed a thorough comprehension of TikTok's efficacy in improving the speaking abilities of EFL students.

3. Results

The results of this study show that after the six-week TikTok intervention, pupils' speaking skills significantly improved. The average speaking test scores rose from 65 in the pre-test to 78 in the post-test, according to quantitative analysis, demonstrating significant gains in vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. These conclusions were corroborated by survey data, which showed that 85% of respondents were more motivated and confident when speaking English. Qualitative information gleaned from interviews further demonstrated TikTok's effectiveness in establishing an imaginative, safe space that inspired children to try out new words and express themselves more freely. Students valued the platform's interactive elements, which improved their learning and lessened their language anxiety. These features included social interaction options and video editing facilities.

4. Discussion

1. Linking Results to Speaking Proficiency

The observed improvement in speaking skills can be attributed to TikTok's ability to engage students through its short video format and interactive features. These tools encouraged learners to focus on specific aspects of language use, such as vocabulary and pronunciation, which were reflected in their post-test performance.

2. Motivation and Confidence Enhancement

The survey findings demonstrated a significant increase in student motivation and confidence, with 85% of participants expressing positive feedback. This aligns with previous research by (Nasichah Hulwatun Alfi, 2023), who noted that social media platforms can create a stimulating learning environment that boosts learner enthusiasm.

3. Anxiety Reduction through Creative Expression

The reduction in language anxiety observed in this study highlights TikTok's unique contribution to EFL education. As (Titik Komariyah et al., 2022) emphasized, the informal and creative nature of TikTok allows students to rehearse and refine their speaking without the fear of immediate judgment.

4. Peer Engagement and Collaboration

TikTok's interactive features, such as likes, comments, and duets, provided students with opportunities for peer feedback and collaborative learning. This aligns with (Zaitun, Hadi, M. S., & Indriani, 2021), who highlighted the importance of community-building in language acquisition.

5. Improvement in Vocabulary Retention

The integration of text overlays and subtitles in TikTok videos supported vocabulary retention by linking visual and auditory elements. (Mandasari et al., 2022) observed similar benefits in their study, emphasizing the value of multimodal learning tools.

6. Addressing Diverse Learning Styles

TikTok's multimedia approach caters to a variety of learning styles, making it an inclusive tool for language education. Visual learners, in particular, benefited from the app's emphasis on video content and editing features.

7. Challenges of Content Curation

Despite its benefits, the study also highlighted challenges related to content quality and relevance. Educators need to play an active role in curating suitable material and providing clear guidance to maximize learning outcomes.

8. Managing Screen Time

Excessive use of TikTok can lead to potential distractions, necessitating structured activities and time management strategies. This reinforces the findings of (Gunawan et al., 2023), who stressed the importance of balancing entertainment and education in digital learning.

9. Long-Term Impact

While the immediate benefits of TikTok were evident, the study suggests the need for further research into its long-term impact on language proficiency. Future studies could explore the sustained effectiveness of TikTok as a learning tool over extended periods.

10. Implications for Curriculum Design

The findings of this study have practical implications for curriculum designers. Integrating TikTok into language programs can modernize teaching approaches and foster greater engagement among digital-native learners. This requires thoughtful planning to align the app's features with pedagogical objectives.

5. Conclusion

This study emphasizes TikTok's potential as a modern resource for enhancing EFL students' English speaking abilities. The interactive nature of the software increases motivation and lowers anxiety, while its captivating features promote vocabulary growth, fluency, and confidence. But for implementation to be successful, issues like screen time management and content curation must be resolved. In order to improve TikTok's capabilities for language instruction, future studies should examine long-term effects and similarities with other digital resources.

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