

## UNDERSTANDING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY THROUGH TIKTOK

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengalaman siswa sekolah menengah pertama dalam mempelajari kosakata bahasa Inggris melalui TikTok, dengan menanggapi keterbatasan penelitian yang membahas bagaimana pelajar muda memandang platform tersebut sebagai media pendukung pembelajaran bahasa. Studi ini dianggap penting mengingat meningkatnya penggunaan platform video pendek di kalangan siswa generasi digital serta kebutuhan akan alternatif pembelajaran kosakata yang lebih menarik dibandingkan metode tradisional. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terbuka sebagai tahap penyaringan awal serta wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan empat siswa yang memiliki pengalaman menggunakan TikTok untuk pembelajaran kosakata. Analisis tematik diterapkan untuk mengidentifikasi pola-pola yang berulang dalam respons partisipan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa memandang TikTok sebagai media yang menarik, mudah diakses, dan mendukung retensi kosakata, terutama karena fitur multimodal yang mengombinasikan visual, audio, dan teks tertulis. Klip dengan teks terjemahan, konten berbasis musik, dan cuplikan film pendek dinilai efektif dalam meningkatkan pemahaman dan daya ingat kosakata. Meskipun demikian, siswa juga melaporkan sejumlah tantangan, seperti ketidakakuratan makna kata, kualitas audio yang kurang jelas, keterbatasan akses internet, serta algoritma yang membatasi paparan terhadap konten edukatif. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa TikTok memiliki potensi yang signifikan sebagai media pendukung pembelajaran kosakata, namun efektivitasnya sangat bergantung pada penggunaan yang terarah untuk menjamin akurasi, relevansi, dan keterlibatan pembelajaran yang berkelanjutan.

**Kata Kunci:** TikTok, kosakata Bahasa Inggris, belajar lewat sosial media, siswa sekolah menengah pertama.

### ABSTRACT

This study investigated junior high school students' experiences in learning English vocabulary through TikTok, addressing the limited research on how young learners perceive the platform as a supplementary language-learning tool. The study was considered necessary due to the increasing use of short-video platforms among digitally native students and the need for engaging alternatives to traditional vocabulary instruction. A qualitative case study design was employed, and data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire used for initial screening and semi-structured interviews with four students who had prior experience using TikTok for vocabulary learning. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring patterns across participants' responses. The findings revealed that students perceived TikTok as engaging, accessible, and supportive of vocabulary retention, thanks to its multimodal features that combine visuals, audio, and written text. Subtitled clips, music-based content, and short-film excerpts were particularly effective at enhancing comprehension and memorability. Despite these advantages, students reported challenges, including inaccurate word meanings, unclear audio, unstable internet access, and algorithm limitations that reduced exposure to educational content. Overall, the study demonstrated that TikTok had meaningful potential as a supplementary medium for vocabulary learning. Nevertheless, its effectiveness depended on guided use to ensure accuracy, relevance, and sustained educational engagement.

**Keywords:** TikTok, English vocabulary, social media learning, junior high school students.

## INTRODUCTION

During the pandemic, technology was crucial in transforming how people live, work, and learn. With schools and offices closed, many activities shifted online, and technology became a key tool for staying connected and continuing daily tasks. Technology is advancing rapidly, as seen in the growth of many key areas, including education (Asfihana, 2022; Mufidah et al., 2022; Ramadani, 2022). For example, students started using online platforms to attend classes, complete assignments, and communicate with teachers and classmates. This rapid shift showed how technology could help overcome challenges and improve access to education and information.

Technology became essential for maintaining and improving education (Yansyah, 2022; Sari, 2021). Social media is a part of technology or a platform that provides space for online communication and social connection, sharing information, ideas, and interests. Social media offers students access to visual, auditory, and textual content. It is well-established that learners tend to retain information more effectively when presented with graphics, videos, and other moving images (Soeharto, 2024).

TikTok is a social media platform that allows users to create, watch, and share short videos with various themes. Launched in 2016 in China under Douyin, the application was later known as TikTok in the international market. TikTok was developed by the Chinese technology company ByteDance. Initially, the application was designed to provide a platform for users to create and share short videos. However, over time, TikTok has developed into a broader platform, covering various types of content such as entertainment, dance, selling, and even education.

Recent research has explored TikTok's role in education, suggesting that it could be a powerful tool for educators to connect with students and enhance learning outcomes. For example, a study by Dwipa et al. (2024) found that TikTok can be a valuable tool for students looking to improve their English language skills. Another study by OJOTULE Uchenna O. (2024) stated that Junior High School students can benefit from using TikTok to improve their English vocabulary. Additionally, these findings suggest that TikTok has the potential to be a valuable tool for language learning, particularly for younger learners who are already familiar with the platform.

Despite the growing interest in TikTok's educational potential, there is a notable lack of research focusing on its application in improving English vocabulary among junior high school

students. Most existing studies have concentrated on TikTok's general educational benefits or its use in higher education, leaving a significant gap in understanding how this platform can be effectively utilized for younger learners to learn English vocabulary. Recognizing that digitally native junior high school students require innovative and engaging methods to sustain their interest in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly in non-English speaking environments, this research explores the potential of TikTok as a supplementary educational tool (Opas, 2023).

Furthermore, while some studies have explored TikTok's role in vocabulary acquisition, there is limited research on how junior high school students perceive its effectiveness in learning English vocabulary. For instance, a Thorvik (2023) study suggested that although students might know specific words used on TikTok, their overall language understanding may be limited. Most existing studies focus on TikTok's general use in education or language learning (e.g., speaking skills). However, few specifically investigate its role in English vocabulary acquisition among junior high school students.

Additionally, while some research highlights TikTok's engagement value, there is limited exploration of students' detailed perceptions, both positive and negative, regarding vocabulary learning through this platform. This gap in research highlights the need for a comprehensive study that investigates students' perceptions of TikTok as a tool for learning English vocabulary, particularly among junior high school students at a crucial stage of language development.

This research conducted to explore junior high school students' perceptions of TikTok as a tool for learning English vocabulary. TikTok has become one of teenagers' most popular social media platforms, known for its short-form videos, interactive challenges, and creative content. Students are constantly evolving, and as they are the group most enthusiastic about digital tools and online platforms, educators should consider this. It is important to recognize that students learn effectively from videos, images, texts, and various sources (Arbain, 2022). These features make it a potentially engaging and effective platform for learning, especially for vocabulary acquisition, which often requires repetition and contextual understanding. By examining students' perceptions, this research aims to provide insights into how TikTok can be a supplementary tool in English language learning, particularly for vocabulary development. Understanding students' views is essential, as their attitudes toward a

learning tool can significantly influence their engagement and learning outcomes.

Additionally, this research seeks to fill the gap in research regarding the use of TikTok specifically for educational purposes, particularly in English vocabulary learning. While TikTok is widely used for entertainment, its potential as a learning tool remains underexplored, especially among junior high school students. By doing so, this study contributes to the growing discussion on technology-enhanced language learning and provides practical recommendations for educators interested in integrating TikTok into their teaching practices. Ultimately, the findings of this research are expected to support the development of innovative and engaging strategies to improve English vocabulary learning for junior high school students in the digital age.

This study aims to explore junior high school students' perceptions of using TikTok as a tool for learning English vocabulary. Specifically, the research seeks to answer two key questions: First, what are junior high school students' perceptions of using TikTok for learning English vocabulary? Second, what are the advantages and challenges of using TikTok for vocabulary learning according to junior high school students? By addressing these questions, the study aims to gain insights into how TikTok is perceived as an educational tool and to understand the benefits and limitations of incorporating such a digital platform into language learning. The primary objective of this research is twofold: to explore junior high school students' perceptions of using TikTok for learning English vocabulary and to examine the advantages and challenges they encounter as a learning tool for vocabulary acquisition.

## METHOD

### 1. Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative research design, specifically a case study approach, to investigate students' perceptions of using TikTok in learning English vocabulary. Qualitative research offers a distinct approach to scholarly inquiry, focusing on text and image data through unique analysis methods and diverse designs (Creswell, 2021). The qualitative approach is chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of students' perspectives, experiences, and challenges in integrating TikTok into their vocabulary acquisition. A case study is particularly suitable as it investigates a

specific group or phenomenon within its real-life context (Creswell, 2021). In this research, the focus is on a particular group of students: 8th-grade students at Junior High School in Banjarmasin, and their perception of TikTok as a learning tool.

The study aims to understand how TikTok influences student engagement and motivation in vocabulary learning. A case study design is selected over a narrative approach because the goal of this research is not to construct chronological life stories, but rather to explore a real-life phenomenon in depth within its natural context, which aligns with the characteristics of case study research (Creswell, 2016). Focusing on how students perceive and respond to TikTok in a specific learning context. Data was collected through multiple sources, such as semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and literature, allowing the researcher to capture detailed insights and uncover emerging themes from participants' responses

### 2. Setting

The research was conducted at Junior High School in Banjarmasin, a public junior high school located in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. The setting was chosen because the school has implemented digital tools in teaching English and many students are known to actively use TikTok, making it a suitable environment to investigate the integration of popular media with language learning.

The data collection took place over two consecutive days in May 2025 during regular school hours. The open-ended questionnaire was distributed on the first day, while interviews with selected participants were conducted on the second day

### 3. Participant

The participants of this study were eighth-grade students from a junior high school in Banjarmasin. The selection process began with an open-ended questionnaire distributed to all 36 students. The questionnaire was used solely to identify students who had prior experience using TikTok specifically for learning English vocabulary. The open-

ended items invited students to describe their experiences in detail. Examples of the questions included: “How often do you use TikTok, and for what purposes?”, “Have you ever learned English vocabulary from TikTok? If yes, please explain your experience.”, “What types of English content do you usually encounter on TikTok?”, and “How useful do you find TikTok for learning English vocabulary? Please describe.”

In this study, participants were categorised into two groups: experienced and non-experienced users. The experience group refers to students who have previously used TikTok specifically for learning English, whether regularly or occasionally, such as watching vocabulary-related videos, pronunciation tutorials, or other educational English content. Meanwhile, the non-experienced group consists of students who never or rarely use TikTok for learning and primarily use it for entertainment.

This categorisation was essential to ensure that the students selected for the interview phase had sufficient exposure to TikTok as a learning tool. It also allowed the researcher to identify the extent of students’ engagement with TikTok for educational purposes, thereby strengthening the credibility of the data and supporting a more accurate interpretation of students’ perceptions.

Table 1. Participant

		Experience	Non-Experience
Male	16	1	15
Female	20	3	17
Total	36	4	32

Based on their responses, four students demonstrated greater experience and detailed, diverse perceptions regarding the use of TikTok for vocabulary learning, leading them to be selected for interviews.

The purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that the selected participants could provide rich, relevant, and diverse information concerning the research topic (Etikan, 2016). The selected participants included students with varying levels of English proficiency and different TikTok usage patterns.

The differences in English proficiency were identified from their responses to the open-ended questionnaire, particularly

the clarity, accuracy, and depth of their explanations of English vocabulary encountered on TikTok. Students who demonstrated the ability to recognise and describe vocabulary in greater detail were considered to have higher proficiency levels, while those who provided simpler or more limited explanations were considered to have lower proficiency levels.

Additional information from the English teacher regarding students’ general language performance also supported this categorisation. Their TikTok usage patterns were determined by the frequency and purpose of their engagement, the types of English-related content they reported viewing (such as songs, movie clips, or vocabulary videos), and the extent to which they used the platform for casual entertainment versus intentional vocabulary learning. These variations allowed the researcher to select participants who could provide diverse and meaningful perspectives on the use of TikTok for learning English vocabulary.

#### 4. Data and Source of Data

The data in this study were obtained from two primary sources, namely an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The open-ended questionnaire was administered to all eighth-grade students to gather general information about their experience using TikTok for English vocabulary learning. Before its distribution, the questionnaire underwent expert validation by two lecturers in English education to ensure content relevance, clarity, and alignment with the research objectives. Minor revisions were made based on their feedback, and the instrument was piloted with five students from a different class to confirm its clarity and appropriateness. This process strengthened the questionnaire’s content validity and improved its reliability by ensuring that the items elicited consistent and meaningful responses.

Following the questionnaire phase, four students were selected for semi-structured interviews to obtain deeper insights into their experiences and perceptions. The selection was conducted using purposive sampling, with specific criteria set to ensure the relevance of the

participants. These criteria included: (1) having prior experience using TikTok to support English learning, (2) providing detailed and coherent responses in the questionnaire, and (3) demonstrating the ability to articulate their opinions clearly during preliminary screening. These criteria allowed the researcher to select participants who could offer rich, informative, and diverse perspectives regarding the use of TikTok for vocabulary learning. The semi-structured interviews provided nuanced explanations, personal reflections, and contextual understanding that complemented the questionnaire data.

## 5. Procedure of Data Collecting

The data collection was carried out in the following stages:

### a. Open-ended Questionnaire

An open-ended questionnaire was given to all students in the Grade 8. This instrument was designed to explore their general perceptions and habits regarding the use of TikTok for learning English vocabulary. The questions allowed students to describe their experiences freely.

### b. Selection of Interview Participants

After analyzing the responses from the questionnaire, four students were selected using purposive sampling. The main criteria included the clarity of their answers, level of engagement with TikTok for learning, and their ability to express ideas.

### c. Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews were then conducted with the four selected students. The interviews lasted approximately 20–30 minutes each and were audio-recorded with participants' consent. The interviews were conducted in a comfortable and private setting within the school to make participants feel at ease and to allow them to speak openly.

### d. Transcription

After the interviews, the recordings were transcribed word-for-word for further analysis.

## 6. Data Analysis

The analysis in this qualitative study followed a thematic analysis approach, which involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The steps are as follows:

### a. Familiarization

The researcher read the questionnaire responses and interview transcripts several times to gain a comprehensive understanding.

### b. Coding

Important words, phrases, and ideas that appeared frequently or were especially meaningful were marked as initial codes.

### c. Generating Aspects

Codes were grouped into broader aspects. These aspects reflect the main aspects of students' perceptions of using TikTok in learning vocabulary. These aspects will help interpret students' overall perceptions of TikTok's role in vocabulary learning. The findings will be presented descriptively, supported by direct quotes from participants to validate the conclusions. The analysis aims to provide a clear understanding of how TikTok influences English vocabulary acquisition from students' perspectives. This aligns well with any qualitative research project that seeks to understand complex research questions (Dawadi, 2020).

Table 2. Generating Aspects Number Key Aspect Previous Study

No.	Key Aspect	Previous Study
1.	Perception of TikTok as a Learning Tool	"Students' Perception on Using Tiktok Application as An English Learning Tool (Lee Mei & Abdul Aziz, 2022)."
2.	Engagement and Motivation	"The Utilization Of Tiktok for Learning Motivation and Language Mastery (Dhea Vaniastuti Soeharto, 2024)."
3.	Content Preferences	"A Phenomenon of English Content Tiktok Videos as a Resource in Learning English Vocabulary (Muflihah et al., 2024)"

4.	Perceived Advantages	"Junior High School Students Perception Toward English Videos on Tiktok to Improve Their Vocabulary Mastery (Wardani, 2022)."
5.	Challenges and Limitations	"Exploring the Impact of TikTok on Second-Language Vocabulary Acquisition: Benefits, Challenges, and Learner Perceptions (Dr. Fatema Alharthy, 2022)."

d. Interpreting

The themes were interpreted and connected to previous literature and the research objectives.

e. Triangulation

The use of multiple sources, namely questionnaires, interviews, and related studies, provides data triangulation, increasing the credibility and validity of the findings (Patton, 2002).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### RESULTS

The results of this study reveal that using TikTok as a learning tool significantly impacts junior high school students' vocabulary acquisition in English. Through open-ended questionnaires and interviews, students reported positive experiences, highlighting TikTok's ability to make vocabulary learning more engaging compared to traditional methods like textbooks. Students appreciated TikTok's multimedia approach, which combines visuals, audio, and text, helping them remember new words more effectively.

Students particularly enjoyed short, entertaining formats like music clips, movie snippets, and accent-related content. Videos with subtitles were most helpful, allowing students to read along while hearing correct pronunciation. TikTok's range of vocabulary also provided new words not typically found in textbooks. However, challenges were identified, such as inconsistent internet access, unclear audio, and algorithm-related issues, where desired content rarely appeared on their "For You Page." Some students also reported losing motivation when non-educational content dominated their feeds.

These results align with previous research on digital learning tools, which suggests that short-form video platforms like TikTok enhance

engagement and retention through interactive and visually stimulating content (Alfitri, 2024; Sahoo & Khuntia, 2024). However, the study highlights the need for stable internet infrastructure and better content discoverability to maximize TikTok's educational potential.

### 1. Overview of Data Collection

A total of 36 students participated in the open-ended questionnaire. Based on their responses, four students were selected for unstructured interviews due to the richness and relevance of their answers. Demographic details of the participants are provided in the table below.

Table 3. Demographic of Participants

Participant Code	Gender	Age	Experience using TikTok
S.1 A	Female	14	5 Years
S.2 B	Female	14	6 Years
S.3 C	Female	14	6 Years
S.4 D	Male	14	4 Years

### 2. Results of Open-ended Questionnaire

Table 4. The Finding of Open-ended Questionnaire

No.	Question	Source	Answer
1.	Do you think TikTok helps you learn English vocabulary?	"Enhancing Secondary School Students' English Vocabulary Through The Use Of Tiktok Application (OJOTULE Uchenna O., 2024)"	S.1: Yes, because there are many educational videos in English. There we can learn new vocabulary that we don't know yet. S.2: Yes, because there are many videos about education, one of which is English. There we can learn new vocabulary for beginners easily. S.3: Yes, because through the "for you page" there are foreigners who make videos using English so that I can understand English. S.4: Yes, because it is easy to access, and the way it is discussed is unique, making the

			audience interested. People in the comments column are usually also helpful and easy to understand.
2.	Why do you prefer learning English on TikTok over other platforms?	"Edutainment of Using TikTok in Learning English Vocabulary a Case Study of Secondary Student (Zein et al., 2024)"	S.1: Easy to access so that it makes the learning process easier. S.2: Can make us more proficient so that the knowledge gained can be useful in the future. S.3: Sometimes other platforms are limited or rarely use English as a means of English education. S.4: Because it is usually easy to understand and the discussion is more relaxed and exciting, and the way of discussing it is also unique.
3.	What type of TikTok content do you watch or imitate to learn vocabulary?	"Enhancing Secondary School Students' English Vocabulary Through The Use Of Tiktok Application (OJOTULE Uchenna O., 2024)"	S.1: English song and quote videos. S.2: English song video. S.3: English songs like from singers Ariana Grande, Lauv, Lil Jay and English videos. S.4: Video songs because they are easier to remember.
4.	What's the biggest benefit you get from learning vocabulary on TikTok?	"Edutainment of Using TikTok in Learning English Vocabulary a Case Study of Secondary Student (Zein et al., 2024)"	S.1: Learn new vocabulary. S.2: I can watch while learning vocabulary easily. S.3: I can find out vocabulary that I have never known before. S.4: I can learn new vocabulary, understand the use of

			grammar, and make me understand more about English.
5.	What challenges do you face when using TikTok to learn vocabulary? Give examples.	1. "Enhancing Secondary School Students' English Vocabulary Through The Use Of Tiktok Application (OJOTULE Uchenna O., 2024)" 2. "Edutainment of Using TikTok in Learning English Vocabulary a Case Study of Secondary Student (Zein et al., 2024)"	S.1: There is, because usually there are still words that do not match the meaning. S.2: Yes, we can't tell if what we say is the same as what is in the video, sometimes we think we have said it correctly when in fact it is wrong. S.3: I have difficulty understanding grammar in English because it is very difficult without a direct mentor. S.4: Yes, because usually there are some misleading comments, such as giving the wrong meaning so that it creates trust issues.

Based on those answers from the participants, we can conclude that:

- a. All participants agreed that TikTok helps learn English vocabulary. They mentioned that TikTok offers many educational and English-language videos, especially from native speakers, making it easier to discover and understand new words. The content is not only informative but also interesting and easy to access. Some also found the comment helpful section for learning from others.
- b. Students prefer TikTok because it is simple to use and more fun compared to other learning platforms. TikTok offers more English-related content, and the delivery of information is more relaxed and easier to understand. Some students also believe it helps improve their English

- skills in a way that feels natural and enjoyable.
- c. The participants mostly watch English songs and videos that include quotes or spoken English. They mentioned that music videos from popular artists like Ariana Grande and Lauv help them remember vocabulary more easily. Song-based content is their favorite because it is fun, catchy, and easier to recall.
  - d. The primary benefit students get is learning new vocabulary easily and enjoyably. Some also mentioned that TikTok helps them improve their grammar and overall understanding of the English language. It allows them to learn without pressure while being entertained at the same time.
  - e. Despite its benefits, students mentioned some challenges. Sometimes the meanings of words in videos or comments are incorrect or confusing. Others struggle with grammar because it is not always explained clearly, and there is no teacher to help. Misleading comments or pronunciation mistakes can also cause misunderstandings.

Based on the open-ended questionnaire responses from four junior high school students, several key insights were revealed regarding their perceptions of using TikTok as a medium for learning English vocabulary. All four participants expressed an optimistic view, acknowledging TikTok as a helpful tool due to the abundance of educational and English-related content. They particularly appreciated the platform's accessibility, engaging presentation style, and the presence of English-speaking content creators, which allowed them to encounter and absorb new vocabulary naturally through the "For You Page."

When asked why they preferred TikTok over other platforms, the students mentioned its ease of access, fun and relaxed content delivery, and the unique and engaging way of presenting English materials. Unlike other platforms that are perceived as more limited, TikTok's format seems more relatable and enjoyable for them. In terms of content, students mainly engaged with English song videos and inspirational quotes,

often mentioning popular artists like Ariana Grande and Lauv as sources of vocabulary learning. They found that music-based content made vocabulary easier to remember and imitate.

The main benefit highlighted was the opportunity to discover and learn new vocabulary in a way that feels effortless and entertaining. Additionally, one student noted improved understanding of grammar and overall English comprehension. However, challenges were also acknowledged. These include confusion over word meanings, mispronunciation issues due to a lack of feedback, difficulty grasping grammar without direct guidance, and misleading or incorrect information in comments, which could hinder learning or create misconceptions.

These initial findings provide a rich foundation for the upcoming interviews, which will delve deeper into students' experiences and perspectives on TikTok as an educational tool in vocabulary acquisition

### 3. Perception of TikTok as a Learning Tool

Most students see TikTok as a helpful tool for learning English vocabulary. They think it is fun, modern, and fits their daily habits. Many students believe that TikTok makes learning feel less boring and more natural because they already use it often.

Source for questions on this point: "Secondary-school Students' Perspectives of Utilizing Tik Tok for English learning in and beyond the EFL classroom (Yang, 2020)."

- a. How do you feel about using TikTok to learn English vocabulary?

This question was asked to understand how students emotionally respond to using TikTok as a tool for learning English vocabulary. It explores their general feelings, such as happiness, comfort, or interest, when using TikTok for educational purposes, especially when the content is related to learning new English words.

(S.1: "I experience a sense of ease when utilizing it.") Student 1 felt relaxed and at ease when using TikTok to learn vocabulary. This

shows that TikTok creates a learning environment that feels natural and not stressful for them.

(S.2: *“My level of satisfaction is largely influenced by the emotional tone expressed within the content.”*) Student 2 enjoyed the learning experience, especially when the videos had positive or exciting emotions. This means that how the creator expresses feelings in the video (like enthusiasm or humor) can affect how the student feels.

(S.3: *“I derive pleasure from utilizing it contingent upon the nature of the content.”*) Student 3 said that she felt pleasure, but it also depended on the type of content. If the video was engaging or fun, they felt more positive. If not, the experience might be less enjoyable.

(S.4: *“I experience a sense of pleasure and ease.”*) Student 4 felt both pleasure and ease when learning with TikTok. This suggests a strong positive emotional reaction, where the student finds learning both enjoyable and easy.

Most students felt positive emotions such as happiness and comfort when using TikTok to learn English vocabulary. However, their enjoyment often depended on the type of content they watched. Videos that were expressive, engaging, or well-made made students feel more interested and emotionally connected to the learning process.

These responses show that TikTok is not only helpful but also emotionally supportive for vocabulary learning, especially when the content is fun and emotionally engaging.

- b. Do you think TikTok is more helpful in remembering new words than traditional methods (such as books)? Explain why.

This question aims to determine whether students believe that using TikTok is more effective than traditional tools like textbooks for learning and remembering English vocabulary. It helps us understand how modern digital media compares to older learning methods in terms of

effectiveness, interest, and memory retention.

(S.1: *“I find it considerably beneficial due to its ease of accessibility.”*) This student believes that TikTok is helpful because it gives easy access to learning materials. They find it convenient to search for vocabulary content on TikTok, which saves time and effort compared to finding the same in books.

(S.2: *“It is beneficial, as listening to videos is more accessible than writing in books. Furthermore, written materials do not provide immediate feedback on pronunciation accuracy, whereas TikTok offers more explicit guidance through direct pronunciation examples.”*) This student sees TikTok as very useful, mainly because it includes sound and pronunciation. They feel that listening to words helps more than writing them down. TikTok gives clear pronunciation models, which books cannot provide.

(S.3: *“This approach is beneficial because conventional methods primarily involve reading, whereas TikTok enables learners to both watch and listen in real time, thereby making the learning experience more engaging.”*) This student prefers TikTok because it allows them to both see and hear the words. They think this makes learning more interesting and enjoyable than just reading from a book.

(S.4: *“It is beneficial, as it enhances retention and increases engagement.”*) This student finds TikTok more memorable and fun. The visual and audio features of TikTok make the learning experience more engaging, which helps in remembering vocabulary.

All four participants unanimously agreed that TikTok is more beneficial than conventional methods for memorizing new English vocabulary. They highlighted several key advantages: TikTok allows for convenient access to educational content (S.1), delivers clear pronunciation examples and listening exercises (S.2), and creates a more engaging and dynamic learning

experience compared to traditional text-based approaches (S.3). Additionally, it enhances retention and makes the learning process more enjoyable (S.4). These findings suggest that students prefer and benefit from a multimedia-rich learning environment, which they perceive as more effective than relying solely on textbooks.

#### 4. Engagement and Motivation

Students showed a strong sense of engagement and motivation when learning English vocabulary through TikTok. Most participants described the experience as fun, exciting, and more enjoyable than traditional methods like books or classroom lessons. They felt that TikTok made learning easier to understand and remember, primarily through songs, repetition, and creative content. Some students enjoyed the freedom to explore various topics. In contrast, others liked how familiar content, like songs or movies, would reappear on their For You Page (FYP), helping them remember new words. Although one student still appreciated classroom learning, the majority found TikTok to be a more flexible and motivating platform that keeps them interested in learning English vocabulary. Source for questions on this point: *“Using TikTok as a Tool for English Vocabulary Learning in the EFL Context (Alshreef & Khadawardi, 2023).”*

- a. Is learning vocabulary through TikTok more fun? Why?

This question was designed to find out whether students enjoy learning English vocabulary more through TikTok than through traditional methods like textbooks or classroom lessons. It also aimed to explore why students may feel that way, focusing on their emotions, engagement, and the learning experience itself.

(S.1: “Engaging with content on TikTok is more accessible and stimulating; however, classroom learning offers an equally enjoyable experience.”) This student finds TikTok to be fun, easy, and exciting for learning vocabulary. However, they still enjoy classroom learning

and do not see one method as better than the other. This reflects a balanced perspective. TikTok adds fun, but classroom learning still holds value for them.

(S.2: “Learning through TikTok is engaging, whereas learning through books can be relatively monotonous due to the limited scope for exploration.”) This student clearly prefers TikTok, saying it is more fun than learning from books. They feel that TikTok gives more space to explore different topics and learning styles. The student appreciates TikTok’s flexibility and multimedia features, which make learning feel less restricted.

(S.3: “The experience is enjoyable due to its engaging nature and ease of retention, particularly when encountering English songs. Moreover, songs previously heard may reappear on the FYP, thereby reinforcing recall.”) This student enjoys learning through TikTok because the content is both exciting and memorable. They highlight the role of music and repetition (through the FYP feature) in helping them remember vocabulary better. This shows how TikTok’s algorithm and sound-based content help reinforce learning naturally.

(S.4: “I find the experience more engaging and stimulating, as the creator employs a distinctive approach to discussing the topic.”) According to participants, using TikTok as a medium for learning English vocabulary provides a more engaging and motivating learning experience. This is due to the distinctive approach the creators use to present the material, which can increase student engagement and interest.

- b. What kind of TikTok content (e.g., songs, challenges, or sketches) helps you learn new words the most?

This question was designed to explore students’ preferences for specific types of TikTok content that support their vocabulary learning. The goal is to identify which formats (e.g., songs, quotes, videos, accents,

etc.) are the most effective and enjoyable for junior high school students when learning new English words.

(S.1: *"I consider content such as English quotations to be beneficial, and numerous TikTok creators disseminate such content."*) The student mentioned that content like English quotes is the most helpful. They noted that many TikTok creators share this type of content. This suggests the student benefits from short, memorable phrases that are easy to understand and repeat. English quotes often contain useful vocabulary in a meaningful context.

(S.2: *"Videos containing English subtitles, such as film excerpts and educational video clips focused on vocabulary acquisition, facilitate my learning of new English words."*) This student prefers videos with English subtitles, such as movie cutscenes or clips that focus on learning English vocabulary. This indicates the importance of visual and textual support. Subtitles help learners connect spoken and written words, and movie scenes provide real-life context.

(S.3: *"I prefer English TikTok content about accents like the British accent because I like watching Harry Potter movies."*) The student enjoys English TikTok content about accents, especially British accents, because they like watching Harry Potter movies. This shows how personal interests (like favorite movies) influence learning. The student is engaged by pronunciation and speaking styles, which also helps in understanding different word forms.

(S.4: *"I have a preference for content such as English songs and movie clips."*) This student mentioned English songs and movie clips as the most helpful content. This highlights how rhythm, melody, and real-life dialogue support vocabulary retention. Songs and clips often repeat key vocabulary, making it easier to memorize.

The participants identified various types of TikTok content that

aid their English vocabulary acquisition. A recurring theme was visual and contextual learning, where students prefer videos with subtitles or movie clips that demonstrate word usage in authentic contexts. Additionally, audio-based content, such as English songs and accent tutorials, was highlighted as enjoyable and beneficial for enhancing listening and pronunciation skills. Many students also emphasized the importance of personal interest, explaining that they learn more effectively when the content aligns with their hobbies or favorite media, like *\*Harry Potter\** or music. Furthermore, short-form content, including quotes and brief clips, was noted for its memorability and ease of repetition. In general, the students find the learning process most effective when the material is both engaging and applicable to real-life situations.

## 5. Content Preferences

The interview findings show that all participants strongly preferred TikTok videos with subtitles when learning English vocabulary. Subtitled videos helped them follow the spoken language more easily, understand meanings faster, and remember new words more effectively. Several students also mentioned the added value of translations and pronunciation guides, which supported them when the video audio was unclear or when they wanted to learn how to say the words correctly. These preferences reveal that junior high school students benefit most from videos that combine visual, written, and spoken language. Subtitles serve as a bridge between what students hear and what they read, making vocabulary learning more effective and engaging. This suggests that educational TikTok content should prioritize clear and readable subtitles and, where possible, include pronunciation or translation support to enhance vocabulary acquisition. Source for questions on this point: "Utilizing English TikTok as A Media In Learning English Vocabulary: University Students' Perspective (Jessica Ruth Melvira Simanungkalit & Katemba, 2023)."

- a. What types of TikTok videos (e.g., word explanations, subtitled clips) are most effective in helping you learn?

This question was designed to understand what kind of TikTok content students find most useful when learning English vocabulary. It helps identify which video formats—like those with subtitles, explanations, or visuals—are more effective in helping students understand and remember new words.

(S.1: *“The use of subtitled video clips is advantageous, as it enables the immediate comprehension of the displayed text through simultaneous reading.”*) The student said that subtitled video clips are more helpful because they allow viewers to read and understand the text instantly. This shows that the combination of visuals and written words helps students connect spoken English with its written form.

(S.2: *“I believe that the utilization of subtitles proves to be a more effective approach.”*) This student also mentioned that videos with subtitles are more effective. It suggests that seeing the words while hearing them improves understanding and retention.

(S.3: *“I consider subtitled video clips to be a more effective instructional medium.”*) The student preferred subtitled clips, calling them “more effective.” This supports the idea that subtitles give learners a better chance to follow along and learn the vocabulary correctly.

(S.4: *“I favor the utilization of video clips accompanied by subtitles.”*) This student chose “subtitled” as well. Their response aligns with the others and reinforces the importance of subtitles in vocabulary learning.

All four participants unanimously found that TikTok videos with subtitles are the most effective format for learning English vocabulary. They highlighted several key benefits, such as the ability to instantly see and comprehend the meaning of spoken words through subtitles. Additionally, subtitles enhance word recognition

and aid in learning correct pronunciation. The participants also noted that subtitled videos facilitate a stronger connection between spoken and written language. Interestingly, none of them mentioned word explanation videos or other content types, indicating a clear preference for subtitle-supported material. This finding underscores the importance of incorporating clear, readable subtitles in educational TikTok videos to maximize vocabulary learning outcomes.

- b. Do you prefer videos with subtitles, translations, or pronunciation guides? Why?

This question was designed to find out which types of video features help students the most when learning English vocabulary through TikTok. It explores how subtitles, translations, and pronunciation guides support their understanding and learning.

(S.1: *“I am inclined toward videos that contain subtitles, as I prefer to read the text directly while also noting the correct pronunciation.”*) This student prefers videos that include subtitles because they like to read the words directly. They also pay attention to how the words are pronounced. This shows that the student finds it easier to learn vocabulary when they can both read and hear the words clearly.

(S.2: *“I have a preference for employing subtitles.”*) The student said they prefer subtitles. This suggests that reading along with the video helps them understand and remember vocabulary better.

(S.3: *“I favor videos that include subtitles and translations, as the audio in some recordings may lack clarity. Subtitles facilitate comprehension, and translations provide additional support when the meaning of a sentence is not understood.”*) This student prefers videos that include both subtitles and translations. She said that sometimes the video’s audio is hard to hear, so subtitles are helpful. Also, when they do not understand the meaning of a sentence, translations are proper.

This response highlights the importance of both clarity (through subtitles) and meaning (through translations) for better comprehension.

(S.4: *"I prefer videos with subtitles and pronunciation guides, because I can better understand how to pronounce the words."*) This student prefers videos with subtitles and pronunciation guides. They said it helps them better understand how to pronounce the words. This indicates the student is focused on speaking skills as well as understanding word meanings.

All participants favored videos with subtitles, indicating that textual support plays a crucial role in vocabulary learning. Additionally, two students (S.3 and S.4) expressed a need for extra assistance, such as translations or pronunciation guides, to enhance their understanding. Subtitles were particularly useful in helping students keep up with the audio, especially when the speech was unclear or delivered too quickly. Pronunciation guides were also beneficial, as they aided students in correctly articulating new words. Furthermore, translations helped learners grasp the meaning of complete sentences, particularly when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. These findings highlight how multimedia elements in TikTok videos can significantly improve vocabulary acquisition for junior high school students.

## 6. Perceived Advantages

The interview results showed that students found several important advantages in learning English vocabulary through TikTok. All participants agreed that TikTok is easy to use, making it accessible and enjoyable for young learners (S.1, S.4). One student (S.2) pointed out that TikTok offers more up-to-date and varied vocabulary than traditional books or dictionaries, which are often limited in content. Another student (S.3) said that it is easier to search and discover specific vocabulary on TikTok, allowing for more personalized learning. These responses suggest that TikTok

helps students explore vocabulary in a flexible, modern, and student-friendly way. The platform not only makes learning simple but also encourages curiosity and supports independent vocabulary discovery, something that traditional classroom methods may not fully provide. Source for questions on this point: "Is TikTok an Effective Technology Tool in English Vocabulary Expansion? (Alghameeti, 2022)."

- a. In your opinion, what are the main advantages of learning English vocabulary through TikTok?

This question was asked to find out what students believe are the benefits of using TikTok to learn English vocabulary. It helps reveal how TikTok supports vocabulary learning in ways that traditional methods like *books* or classes might not.

(S.1: *"The advantage is that it is easy to use."*) The student said that one main advantage of TikTok is its ease of use. This shows that TikTok's user-friendly and straightforward interface helps students learn without difficulty.

(S.2: *"The advantage is that I can understand a lot more than what is in books, because not all the vocabulary in books or dictionaries is listed or is limited."*) This student mentioned that TikTok offers more vocabulary than books because books and dictionaries are limited and cannot include everything. This highlights that TikTok provides a wider variety of words and real-life usage examples, making it more informative and updated.

(S.3: *"When conducting a search, it becomes easier to locate various types of vocabulary of interest."*) The student said that it is easier to search for different kinds of vocabulary on TikTok. This suggests that TikTok allows personalized learning, enabling students to explore the vocabulary they are curious about or need at their own pace.

(S.4: *"From my perspective, it is more convenient to utilize."*) Like S.1, this reflects that the platform's design and format make it a comfortable

learning tool, especially for digital-native students. All students highlighted the user-friendly nature of TikTok, emphasizing its ease of use as a significant advantage for young learners. Beyond this, they noted several other key benefits, such as exposure to a broader range of vocabulary than traditional textbooks provide (S.2), as well as the freedom to search for and explore new words quickly and independently (S.3). These findings suggest that TikTok not only facilitates learning through its simplicity but also fosters curiosity and allows for personalized vocabulary exploration—features that are often lacking in conventional learning approaches.

- b. Is vocabulary from TikTok easier to remember than class lessons? Explain.

This question aims to explore whether TikTok helps students retain English vocabulary more effectively than traditional classroom methods. It focuses on memory and recall, looking at how often students are exposed to the content, the format of the presentation, and the level of personal interest involved.

(S.1: *"It is easier to remember vocabulary on TikTok because I can open the application every day, while at school, it depends on the subject, because English is only taught on certain days."*) The student explained that vocabulary from TikTok is easier to remember because they can access the app daily. In contrast, English lessons at school are only available on certain days. This response highlights the importance of frequent exposure. TikTok allows more consistent interaction with the language, making it easier to remember words.

(S.2: *"I find it easier to retain the information as it is presented through both visual and auditory channels, accompanied by concrete examples."*) This student mentioned that it is easier to remember vocabulary from TikTok because they can see and hear the words directly, especially with examples. This shows

how Visual and auditory learning on TikTok supports better memory through real-life examples and multimedia input.

(S.3: *"It is easier to remember vocabulary on TikTok, because when we like the video, we will be curious about the video again, and finally we will watch the video again, so it is easier to remember."*) The student said that when they like a TikTok video, they become curious and tend to rewatch it. This repetition helps them remember vocabulary more easily. Here, motivation and personal interest play a key role in recall. Liking and rewatching content increases repetition and strengthens memory.

(S.4: *"It is easier to remember because the content is repeated, so it sticks in the brain."*) This student explained that vocabulary from TikTok is easier to remember because it is repeated often, which makes it "stick" in their brain. This confirms the power of repetition in memorization. TikTok's algorithm and frequent content exposure reinforce learning naturally.

All participants unanimously agreed that vocabulary learned through TikTok is more easily retained compared to what they study in the classroom. Several key factors contribute to this phenomenon, including regular access and constant exposure to content (S.1), the effective use of visual and auditory aids (S.2), personal interest leading to repeated viewing (S.3), and the platform's algorithm-driven repetition (S.4). These findings indicate that TikTok enhances vocabulary retention by leveraging multimedia elements, sparking curiosity, and encouraging repeated engagement advantages that traditional classroom settings often lack due to their structured and less interactive nature

## 7. Challenges and Limitations

The interview results revealed several challenges faced by students when using TikTok to learn English vocabulary. A significant concern is the inaccuracy of some word meanings,

which may lead to confusion, as mentioned by S.1 and S.4. Although peer correction through comments or video stitches can sometimes help, this still shows the unreliable nature of some content. Technical problems such as unstable internet connections and poor audio quality were also common, causing students to replay videos multiple times to understand the material (S.2, S.4). Another issue, pointed out by S.3, is TikTok's algorithm, which may limit the appearance of English learning content when unrelated videos dominate the For You Page (FYP). This reduces motivation and makes it harder to stay focused on language learning. Furthermore, some students find it difficult to understand certain words on their own, especially when there is no explanation provided (S.4). Although one student (S.2) viewed TikTok very positively and did not see any limitations, most students recognized that TikTok's dependence on internet access, algorithm-driven content, and lack of content control can affect its role as an effective educational tool.

Source for questions on this point: "Students' Perception on Using Tiktok Application as An English Learning Tool (Lee Mei & Abdul Aziz, 2022)."

- a. What challenges have you encountered when using TikTok to learn vocabulary?

This question was designed to explore the obstacles or difficulties students face while using TikTok as a tool for learning English vocabulary. It helps the researcher understand the limitations of this digital platform in an educational context, especially from the perspective of junior high school students.

(S.1: "The problem is that sometimes the meaning of a word does not match the vocabulary.") This student experienced a problem with word meanings on TikTok. Sometimes, the definitions shown in the videos did not match the actual meaning. This highlights the issue of inaccurate or misleading content, which may confuse learners and affect their vocabulary development.

(S.2: "The problem is that the internet is sometimes unstable and

the sound quality is not clear, so you have to repeat the video several times.") The student said the main problems were unstable internet and unclear sound quality. Because of this, they had to replay the videos several times to understand the words. This shows that technical difficulties, such as poor audio and internet connection, can interrupt the learning process and reduce learning efficiency.

(S.3: "The obstacle is in the network, and English content is sometimes rarely passed through fyp, for example, when Indonesian language song content starts to come out often, English language song content becomes rarely passed through fyp. Because it rarely passes, I am too lazy to find out anymore.") This student also mentioned network problems. Additionally, they noted that English content was not always shown on their For You Page (FYP). When Indonesian content appeared more frequently, English content became rare, which made them feel less motivated to keep learning. This suggests that TikTok's algorithm may limit exposure to educational content over time, depending on viewing habits, creating a challenge in content consistency.

(S.4: "Sometimes there are some wrong meanings, so someone else corrects them, sometimes through comments or video stitches, and when the internet connection is slow, it becomes a bit difficult to access properly.") This student pointed out that some vocabulary meanings are incorrect, but sometimes other users correct them through comments or video stitches. The student also mentioned a slow internet connection as a barrier to smooth access. This reflects both content reliability issues and technological limitations, but also shows that peer correction through comments is one possible solution.

The interview highlighted several significant challenges students encounter while using TikTok for vocabulary learning. Some videos contain inaccurate word meanings, as noted by participants S.1 and S.4.

Additionally, technical issues such as poor internet connectivity and low sound quality often force students to replay videos multiple times (S.2, S.4). Another concern is TikTok's algorithm, which sometimes limits access to English-language content, making it difficult for learners to find useful material (S.3). This lack of relevant content can also reduce motivation, as mentioned by S.3. These findings suggest that although TikTok can be an engaging and helpful learning tool, its unregulated content, reliance on technology, and algorithmic restrictions may hinder the overall learning experience. This perspective is crucial when evaluating TikTok's potential as an educational platform.

- b. Does TikTok have limitations as a learning tool? If so, what are they?

This question was asked to explore whether students face any problems or challenges while using TikTok to learn English vocabulary. It helps identify if TikTok is a fully effective tool or if there are areas that limit its use as an educational platform.

(S.1: *"You need an internet connection to access it, and sometimes the specific vocabulary you are looking for is not widely available in search results."*) The student mentioned that using TikTok requires an internet connection, and sometimes it is difficult to find specific types of vocabulary. This shows that TikTok's access depends on internet availability, and its content may not always match the user's learning needs.

(S.2: *"As a learning tool, it has no limitations and is even more helpful for learning new vocabulary than through books."*) This student believed TikTok has no limitations. In fact, they said it is even more helpful than books for learning new vocabulary. This reflects a highly optimistic view of TikTok as a learning tool, suggesting that it offers broader and more engaging content compared to traditional materials.

(S.3: *"The audio is sometimes unclear. Sometimes a video clip gets cut off, so it is hard to find the next one."*) The student pointed out that the audio in some videos can be unclear, and videos are sometimes cut off, making it hard to follow or continue learning. This highlights technical issues related to video quality and continuity that can interrupt the learning process.

(S.4: *"Sometimes there are some words that I cannot understand."*) The student shared that sometimes there are words they cannot understand on their own. This response suggests that TikTok may lack explanation or support, especially when the vocabulary is unfamiliar or challenging.

The majority of students acknowledged that although TikTok can be beneficial for learning, it has certain drawbacks as an educational resource. One key limitation is its reliance on a stable internet connection, making it inaccessible without proper connectivity. Additionally, not all vocabulary topics are readily available or simple to locate, creating gaps in learning content. Technical problems, such as poor audio quality or videos abruptly ending, also negatively impact the overall learning experience. Furthermore, some students may find it challenging to grasp difficult words without additional explanations or support. However, one student (S.2) disagreed, stating that TikTok had no limitations and even considered it superior to traditional books. This difference in opinion highlights how individual experiences and expectations can shape perceptions of the platform's effectiveness.

## 8. Additional Comments

These are additional questions that I asked the participants to understand how often students are exposed to English content on TikTok and whether they use TikTok as a tool to improve their English vocabulary. These spontaneous questions help to explore students' natural experiences with English content, primarily through TikTok's algorithm (such

as the "For You Page" or FYP) and how they interact with English in unexpected ways, like reading the comments section.

**Does English content often pass by on your FYP?** (S.1: *"English content passes by my fyp almost every day*) This answer reflects how TikTok's algorithm works in recommending videos. TikTok uses a content recommendation system that tracks users' interests, interactions, watch history, and language preferences to personalize the "For You Page" (FYP). When a user often engages with or watches English-language videos, even for a short time, the algorithm begins to suggest similar content more frequently. This means that the more S.1 interacts with English content (by watching, liking, or even pausing longer on a video), the more the algorithm recognizes their preference and pushes related English videos to their FYP. As a result, exposure to English becomes more regular, which can indirectly support vocabulary learning through repeated contact with the language.

**Do you often see foreign content on your FYP?** (S.3: *"Yes, for example, Justin Hubner's content, I often watch his content. Besides that, the content of foreign couples."*) This student is exposed to international creators. Mentioning a specific person like Justin Hubner shows that they not only see but also follow and enjoy foreign content. This means they often hear natural English, which helps with listening and vocabulary skills.

**Have you ever learned vocabulary through the comments column?** (S.4: *"Yes, I have, I have checked the meaning too if I do not understand."*) This student uses the comment section as a learning tool. When they do not understand a word, they look up the meaning. This shows active learning behavior using real-life English content and figuring out words on their own.

## DISCUSSIONS

This study demonstrates that junior high school students generally perceive TikTok as a valuable and engaging tool for learning English vocabulary. The participants expressed feelings of happiness, comfort. They reduced anxiety when using the application (S.1, S.2, S.3, S.4), consistent with the findings of Mei & Aziz (2022),

who reported that TikTok's interactive features create a more relaxed learning environment than traditional classroom activities. Students also noted that TikTok made vocabulary learning more memorable than textbook-based approaches, mainly due to repeated exposure, visual cues, and pronunciation demonstrations. This aligns with Hafizh et al. (2025), Wardani (2022) and Asfihana (2022), who highlight the cognitive benefits of short-form video learning and its capacity to enhance vocabulary retention.

However, while several previous studies similarly emphasise TikTok's positive impact on language learning, other research presents more critical perspectives that challenge these findings. For example, Thorvik (2023) argues that students may recognise isolated vocabulary items from TikTok yet still lack deeper linguistic competence, as short videos often provide limited context and insufficient opportunities for meaningful language production. This perspective contrasts with the current study, in which students felt that TikTok improved their vocabulary comprehension. The discrepancy suggests that while TikTok may facilitate surface-level recognition of words, it may not fully support deeper language processing without guided instructional support.

Additionally, although students in this study appreciated TikTok's algorithm for repeatedly exposing them to English content, other scholars caution that algorithm-driven platforms can create content bubbles that limit linguistic diversity. Hu & Du (2022), for instance, argue that automated recommendation systems may prioritise entertainment-based content over educational material, reducing learners' opportunities to encounter structured vocabulary input. This concern resonates with the experience of participant S.3, who reported difficulty maintaining access to English-learning videos after the For You Page (FYP) shifted toward unrelated content.

Several participants also reported encountering inaccurate word meanings or misleading explanations (S.1, S.4). While this study supports Alharthy's (2022) warnings about misinformation in user-generated content, other research contends that social media platforms, including TikTok, can foster critical digital literacy when students actively evaluate content credibility. For example, Maulida et al. (2024) argue that exposure to varied online materials encourages learners to verify information and engage in reflective learning practices. This viewpoint offers an alternative interpretation of the challenges identified in this study, suggesting that inaccuracies may present opportunities to develop

learners' evaluative skills rather than purely as obstacles.

Despite these contrasting findings, the overall student response in this study remained highly positive. Participants reported that subtitled videos, film clips, and music-based content were particularly helpful in reinforcing vocabulary, which aligns with Wang & Yang's (2020) argument that multimodal learning enhances semantic recall. Interestingly, participant S.4 mentioned using the comments section to identify unfamiliar words, demonstrating an element of peer-supported learning and social interaction. Although some scholars view such informal interactions as unreliable, Muflihah et al. (2024) highlight that social media comment sections can function as collaborative learning spaces where learners negotiate meaning and clarify vocabulary use.

Overall, the present study contributes to the growing body of research on TikTok-based learning by supporting its motivational and multimodal benefits while also acknowledging concerns raised in other studies regarding superficial learning, unreliable content, and algorithmic limitations. These differing perspectives indicate that TikTok is most effective when integrated as a supplementary tool, accompanied by teacher guidance and critical evaluation strategies.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that junior high school students generally perceive TikTok as an engaging and beneficial supplementary tool for learning English vocabulary. Participants reported positive emotional responses, such as enjoyment, comfort, and reduced anxiety, when using TikTok for vocabulary exposure. These perceptions highlight the platform's multimodal strengths, including the combination of visual, auditory, and textual input, which supports memory retention and increases learners' motivation to engage with English content.

However, the findings also indicate that TikTok's effectiveness is not without limitations. Several students encountered inaccurate word meanings, unclear pronunciation, and instability in internet connections. Additionally, the personalised algorithm sometimes limited learners' access to educational content, reflecting concerns in previous research that algorithmic filtering may reduce the diversity of linguistic input. These challenges underscore that while TikTok can facilitate vocabulary recognition, it may not

consistently promote deeper linguistic comprehension without proper guidance.

Furthermore, contrasting perspectives from earlier studies suggest that TikTok may encourage only surface-level learning if used in isolation. The current findings support this concern, particularly when students rely heavily on user-generated content that lacks pedagogical structure. Nevertheless, the students in this study demonstrated meaningful strategies, such as rewatching videos, using subtitles, and consulting comment sections, indicating their ability to engage in autonomous and socially mediated learning.

Taken together, the results suggest that TikTok has significant potential as a modern, motivating tool for vocabulary learning, particularly for digital-native learners. However, the platform is most effective when used as a complementary resource alongside formal instruction, teacher guidance, and strategies that encourage learners to critically evaluate the accuracy and relevance of online content. Future studies should explore how structured pedagogical interventions, guided tasks, or teacher-mediated activities can maximise TikTok's strengths while mitigating its limitations.

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