

## **USING TIKTOK TO PRACTICE SPEAKING SKILLS: EXPERIENCE OF INDONESIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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**Abstract:** The rise of technology has led to an increase in the use of technology in education. There are a lot of platforms that can be used for a learning medium, one of them is TikTok. TikTok is a video-sharing app where users can watch or create short videos with various topics, including education. This research was conducted to find out students' experiences while using the TikTok platform as a learning medium to practice speaking skills. This research utilized a qualitative design with a case study as a method. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experience using TikTok as a learning tool, the research employed a combination of interviews and questionnaires as instruments. This research involved five English education department students as participants. The findings of this research revealed that all participants had a positive experience using TikTok as a learning tool to practice speaking. The study found that participants not only loved TikTok's easy navigation and engaging content but also appreciated its interactive features, particularly the "Duet me" challenge. In conclusion, TikTok is a valuable tool to facilitate students' learning experience in practicing speaking.

**Keywords:** TikTok; Speaking; university students experience

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Technology is developing rapidly. The rapid growth of technology has caused a revolution in English language learning, making social media a popular tool for learners both in and out of the classroom (Nasichah, 2023). This has a positive impact, which has resulted in many new breakthroughs including in the field of education, particularly in learning media. There are four skills that should be mastered in English and speaking is one of them (Nasichah, 2023). Speaking is the main way to do a social interaction between humans (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019). In an era in which communication is an essential skill, speaking is considered to be one of the most important skills in the context of English language teaching and learning in order to help students communicate well in this globalized world. Good communication skills lead students to achieve success in their respective fields (Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014; Rao, P, 2019). Previous research shows the ability to speak has an important role in showing someone's competency in a foreign language, since speaking is a crucial element in facilitating communication. Therefore, it is important to enhance students' speaking skills and competencies in order to facilitate interaction and communication skills (Arroba & Acosta, 2021). Based on the theories above, it can be concluded that speaking is an important ability that should be possessed by humans to communicate and interact with each other.

One of the benefits of internet-based technology (ICT) is creating affordance for learning English. Learning media should be updated to reflect the current trends in order to keep students

engaged and interested in both online and conventional learning environments. Online learning is a kind of remote education that utilizes ICT (Efriana, 2021). To teach speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic, face to face learning has been switched to online learning (Kuswoyo et al., 2022). Since the establishment of this regulation, technology has become an essential part in teaching and learning activities. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning was already being practiced in some educational institutions. It began to be widely used after the government imposed a lockdown and required all activities to be carried out from home including learning and teaching activities. Therefore, there was a significant increase in the number of educational institutions employing mobile applications for teaching and learning activities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Cagas, 2022). There are a lot of popular mobile apps used by educational institutions, for instance Google Classroom, Quizizz, Zoom, Youtube, and many more.

One of the most popular mobile apps these days among children and adults is TikTok (Afrellyanna, 2023). Essentially, TikTok is not an educational application, there are a lot of videos that are shown without any filters (Malik & Nurhadi, 2023). TikTok is a YouTube-like app, where users can upload a video on their account. The difference between TikTok and YouTube is the duration of the video that can be uploaded. TikTok only allows users to post short videos. In contrast to YouTube which can post videos with a long duration. TikTok is a platform where users can share any type of video they want, from funny clips, hobbies, health tips, education, travel diaries, music, dance, photography, and many more. All categories of videos are popular on TikTok and get a huge amount of attention from the public (Lindade, 2020). This platform provides a variety of video content where the creator is free to express themselves with creativity and innovation. TikTok's educational contents are usually an informal education in which the material presented can be a general or specific knowledge, depending on the content presented by the creator (Firamadhina & Krisnani, 2021). In addition, TikTok provides various features that can be used by all the users for instance duets, sharing, and challenges, that allow users to interact with each other from all over the world. Indeed, TikTok is a social media app that can be used to learn speaking skills, as it is currently very popular (Komariyah et al., 2022; Zaitun et al., 2021). One of TikTok's features is the "duet me" challenge. The "duet me" challenge is a popular feature for video collaboration that merges two separate videos into one frame (Pasaribu et al., 2022). The "duet me" challenge can be done in various ways. Pasaribu et al., (2022) used the "duet me" challenge feature by dueting singing English songs, whereas Damayanti et al., (2023) used it by storytelling in English. These features make TikTok a fun and engaging platform to use (Ferstephanie & Pratiwi, 2021).

With all the features offered by TikTok, as well as the large number of people who use the application, apart from being an entertainment platform TikTok can also be utilized as a good self-learning platform for students. In fact, Tiktok is proven to help students improve their speaking ability. A study found that using the TikTok platform as a learning media to learn English is a fun and effective way to enhance students' speaking confidence. It is shown by their significantly improved scores (Cagas, 2022). TikTok is a versatile social media platform that can be utilized to develop students' speaking skills, creativity, motivation and vocabulary (Rahmawati et al., 2023). TikTok is a social media platform that students can use to learn and improve their speaking skill in a creative and engaging way. On TikTok, students can freely express their ideas and creativity (Ferstephanie & Pratiwi, 2022).

Studies have shown that TikTok can be an effective tool for improving students' speaking skills. TikTok has its potential as an interactive learning medium to facilitate students' development of speaking abilities when integrated with appropriate teaching approaches and learning strategies (Cagas, 2022). However, this research takes a different approach by focusing on university students' experience on the use of TikTok videos as a learning tool for facilitating them to practice speaking. The results of this study will answer the question of how students experience using TikTok as a learning medium to practice speaking.

## **METHOD**

This research utilized a qualitative design with a case study as a method. The participants involved in this study were five English Education department students of the English language education study program. These participants were chosen based on several criteria. First, students should have a TikTok account. Second, students should have accessed English learning videos on TikTok. The aim of this research is to determine the experience of students regarding the use of TikTok as a learning media that can facilitate students in practicing speaking English. In order to achieve the aims of the study, the researchers used two types of instruments; an interview and a questionnaire. The interview consisted of ten questions that focused on speaking and TikTok-related topics and it was recorded through a voice recorder. The interview questions adopted from Komariyah et al., (2022). Whereas, The questionnaire was made using Google form and it contains five questions. There are some questions that are similar to the question in the interview. This is done to check the consistency of the participants' answers so that the results obtained from this study are expected to be valid. Additionally, to facilitate deeper and more comprehensive responses, the researchers conducted the interviews in Indonesian, the participants and authors' mother tongue.

There were ten questions in the interview session and five questions in the questionnaire. The data analysis consisted of three stages. The first stage included the analysis of students'

view of the importance of speaking skills. The second stage included the students' experience in using TikTok as a learning media to practice speaking. And the last stage included what are the benefits and challenges that students get while using TikTok as a learning medium to practice speaking. During the interview session, most of the participants mentioned the "duet me" challenge as one of TikTok features that helped them to practice speaking.

According to Fadli, (2021) cited in Creswell, (2008) the coding method of data analysis consists of five stages, including (1) Identify the most important and concise meaning of the data; (2) Ask what the data tells you and find the meaning of that information; (3) Start to categorize the data according to the context, perspectives, and social structure; (4) Develop a code list, consolidating similar meaning and eliminating redundancy to build a focused structure; (5) Finally, determine some themes or patterns. There are several types of themes, there are regular themes, which are themes that are already expected by the researcher.

**Table 1. Example of P2 data layout coding sheet**

| <i>Code</i>     | <i>Researcher</i>                      | <i>P2</i>  | <i>Theme</i>         |
|-----------------|--|--|----------------------|
| Solving problem | Share your opinion while using TikTok. | I once had difficulty pronouncing some English words and <u>then I used the TikTok app to help me improve my pronunciation.</u> There were many English content creators who helped me if I had difficulty and in the end I was able to speak English fluently after watching the videos on that platform. | Students' experience |

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results of the research will be analyzed and discussed. This study examined how five English education students experience using TikTok as a learning media to practice speaking through interviews and questionnaires. Each participant engaged in one-by-one interviews with the researcher, answering ten questions. Followed by the completion of the interview, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire containing five questions that had been prepared by the researcher. Based on their answers, it was found that they were helped by TikTok as a platform to practice speaking.

### *Students' view about speaking*

Based on the interview and questionnaire, all participants have a positive view of the importance of speaking ability. For example, P1 said Speaking skills are very important to master in this globalization era, because in this era many people use English as a language to communicate. Additionally, P2 stated speaking skills are very important because speaking skills support our ability to communicate.

*[In my opinion, speaking skills especially in this globalization era is very important. Because, many people use English at school, workplace or even in social interaction. So, in my opinion speaking skills are very important to master in this globalization era.] - P1*

[Speaking skills is a crucial skills because it helps to support our skills to communicate] -P2

These answers are in line with the previous research by Rao, P, (2019) which states that out of the four language abilities, speaking is the most crucial for effective communication in today's globalized society. Bahadorfar & Omidvar, (2014) emphasize that speaking is the most essential skill to be mastered, because it is an essential tool for communicating.

### **Benefits of TikTok for learning speaking**

These are some TikTok's content creators that were mentioned by the participants. Three out of five participants mentioned @zelynafah as their favorite English content creator. One of the participants mentioned @speakenglishwithzach. And the last one mentioned @Englishbygiovana as her favorite English content creator. Figure 1 shows the account pages of the creators.



Figure 1. TikTok's content creators account

Meanwhile, @englishbygiovana has the most viewed content among the other two creators. Her most viewed content reached 27,6 M. Her content is about how to make a correct sentence in English. In this context, the creator took an example of how to make the correct sentence to ask the uber driver to drop her off. And the correct sentence in her content is "Can you drop me off, please?". The second content that has the most views is from @zelinafah with 18,8 M viewers. Her content is about how to say some Indonesian phrases into English. An example like the one in her content is, the correct way to say "*Jangan main-main*" In English is not "Do not play-play" but "Do not play around". Another example from her content is, the correct way to say "Ibu kota" in English is not "Mother city" but "Capital city". And the third most viewed video is from @speakenglishwithzach, which is 9,5 M. His content contains the "duet me" challenge in the form of conversation with the theme of podcasts. Figure 2 shows the most viewed videos of the creators.

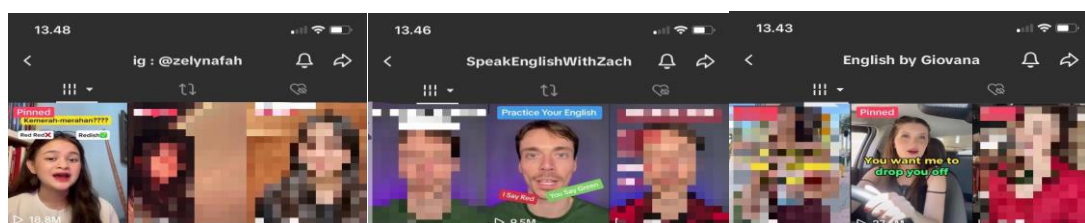


Figure 2. Most viewed videos of three TikTok's content creator



According to participants' answers, most participants found the “duet me” challenge as one of the TikTok’s features that can help them to facilitate practicing speaking. Figure 4 shows the sample of the duet me challenges.



Figure 3. “Duet me” challenge

“Duet me” is one of TikTok's features that enables users to collaborate with the original content creator. When using the “duet me” feature, users' video will appear on the left side, whereas the original content creator’s video will appear on the right side (Pasaribu et al., 2022). As shown in Figure 3, on the right side is the original content creator and on the left side is a TikTok user who is doing the “duet me” challenge. It can be seen in the Figure 3, the original content creator wrote “I say red” which means that the sentence written in red will be spoken by the original content creator. Then, he also wrote “You say green” which means that the Tiktok user will say the sentence that is written in green. These are some participant’s view about “duet me” challenge:

*[When I tried to find material related to speaking, a lot of duet videos appeared. So when the creator talks about sentence A, I have to read sentence B. I think it can help the process of learning to speak.] - P2*

*[TikTok has a dueting challenge feature like an interview. So, we can improve our speaking skills through that duet challenge.] - P5*

There are many ways to use the "duet me" challenge feature, for instance in Figure 3 where the “duet me” challenges are employed in the form of conversation. The “duet me” challenge can also be done as a duet using English songs, as demonstrated in the previous study by Pasaribu et al., (2022). In the context of the duet me challenge, users engage in simulated dialogues or sing along to English songs. This interactive format provides opportunities for oral practice. Additionally, the challenge encourages spontaneous language production, which encourages fluency and adaptability in speaking. Pasaribu et al., (2022) study specifically examined the effectiveness of the duet me challenge using English songs. Their findings revealed that incorporating English songs into the duet me challenge can improve students' speaking skills. Additionally, Damayanti et al., (2023) research explored the potential of TikTok’s “duet me” challenge for interactive storytelling. The stories used in their research were “The Grasshopper and The Ant” and “Friend in need, friend indeed”. The study showed that the teachers found it challenging to modify an original story into a one-minute interactive video. But, the journey of creating TikTok videos for storytelling has encouraged the teachers in this study to produce more educational videos. In conclusion, the duet me challenge, whether

implemented through conversations, English songs, or storytelling has proven to be a valuable tool for facilitating students to practice speaking.

According to the participants' answer in the interview session and questionnaire it can be concluded that there are four benefits that participants gained from the TikTok platform, i.e. adding knowledge and skill, solving problems, accessibility and interesting. The following paragraphs elaborate the participants' opinion about the benefits of using TikTok in instilling speaking skill.

#### **a) Adding knowledge and skill**

Some of the participants mentioned that TikTok indirectly gave them a new knowledge and skill. For instance, as P4 mentioned in her interview session that TikTok helped her to boost her self-confidence. P4 also mentioned in her answer in the questionnaire that using TikTok helped her to learn new things, because TikTok provides a variety of content.

*[In my opinion, TikTok helps me to improve my speaking skills. I become more confident to implement what I learn in TikTok] - P4*

*[The benefits I get are that I am entertained when I see funny content and by using Tiktok, I can learn new things, because there is a lot of content from various fields on TikTok.] - P4*

According to the participant's answer, it can be seen that TikTok helps her to gain new knowledge and skill. In this case, TikTok helps her to improve her confidence. Indeed, previous research confirms that using TikTok can enhance students' confidence in speaking English and make the learning process enjoyable (Cagas, 2022; Ferstephanie & Pratiwi, 2021). Likewise, learning English through TikTok gives students new experiences (Zaitun et al., 2021).

#### **b) Solving problem**

According to the participants' answer in the interview session. TikTok is one of the platforms that can help to solve her problem, especially problems in education. P1 said TikTok helped her to solve her problem in pronunciation and intonation in speaking English.

*[I have watched a content about "How to pronounce something" which in my opinion is my drawbacks for intonation and pronunciation, I can learn it from that application.] - P1*

It aligns with the findings of previous research from Nasichah, (2023) that participants viewed that TikTok can be a platform to practice pronunciation and non-verbal elements for instance, gestures, expressions, and intonation. This is due to the abundance of diverse fluent English content creators, allowing students to imitate their pronunciation, gestures, expressions and intonation. TikTok offers a lot of content to learn pronunciation, it helps students to avoid mispronunciation while speaking Komariyah et al., (2022).

#### **c) Accessibility**

According to the P1 answer, TikTok can be accessed everywhere and anytime. P3 added that TikTok is quite easy to operate. Additionally, TikTok has a feature to save and download the video so that users can rewatch the video as much as they want. This feature facilitates users who want to rewatch the video without having to search it from the TikTok search bar. It means that TikTok is easy and flexible to operate.

*[The benefit that I get when using the TikTok application is that there is a lot of educational content that is easily accessible, making it easier for me to learn anywhere and anytime]. P1*

*[In my opinion, the operation of TikTok is quite easy. Just download, open the application, like that]. P3*

Students in another EFL context also valued the convenience of learning English on TikTok, which allowed them to learn English anytime and anywhere, also they found that TikTok is an easy-to-use that makes the learning process enjoyable and engaging Afreliyana, (2023).

#### **d) Interesting**

According to the P1 answer in the questionnaire, she stated that TikTok made learning more fun because most of the videos use interesting animation. Additionally, P2 stated in her answer in the questionnaire that TikTok is an interesting platform. Additionally,

*[In my opinion TikTok is an interesting platform, because there are many various contents that we can see in that platform, from entertainment to educational content] - P2*

*[The benefits I get when using the TikTok application are the large amount of educational content that is easily accessible so that it makes it easier for me to learn anywhere and anytime, makes learning more fun because most of the videos use interesting animations, and can be a platform to practice because there are many motivational challenges that can be done in this application.]- P5*

Participants' responses align with the findings from Nasichah, (2023) who previously reported that students view TikTok as a fun and engaging tool for speaking practice. This perception contributes to their enjoyment of the activity and reduces boredom, potentially leading to more frequent English speaking practice. Due to its variety of features, TikTok is viewed as an interesting platform that can be implemented in English Language Teaching (ELT) Komariyah et al., (2022). TikTok provided an interesting and simple feature with unique effects in it (Ferstephanie & Pratiwi, 2021).

#### **Challenges in practicing speaking via TikTok**

Each platform has its benefits and challenges. The previous paragraph has discussed the benefits of TikTok. In addition, this paragraph will discuss the challenges experienced by participants while using TikTok as a learning medium for practicing speaking. There are two challenges experienced by participants i.e TikTok's algorithm and addiction. The following paragraphs elaborate the participants' opinion about the challenges of using TikTok in practicing speaking.

#### **a) Algorithm**

TikTok's homepage or well known as FYP (For Your Page) usually recommends a content based on its algorithm, which includes language used, location, user's interest, and the user's past activity (Malik & Nurhadi, 2023). However, participants found a difficulty in TikTok's algorithm. According to P1 and P2 answers in the questionnaire, TikTok's algorithm is unable to effectively filter a good content that is appropriate to get in the user's FYP. Additionally, there are many inappropriate contents that are easy to trending on TikTok.

*[TikTok has not been able to filter the content. In order that there may be videos that should not be watched by underage kids on their FYPs and they can easily access the video without being supervised by adults.]- P1*

*[One of the shortcomings of TikTok that I dislike is there are many low quality contents that can easily trend, while a useful contents are quite difficult to attract viewers]- P2*



Indeed, beside all of the positive side, TikTok sometimes shows inappropriate with sensitive contents videos in user's homepage or on TikTok it is well known as FYP "For Your Page" Afreliyanna, (2023). This might distract students from practicing speaking skill.

#### **b) Addiction**

As stated by P4 answer in her questionnaire answer in question four about the negative aspects of TikTok. She stated that TikTok can make people addicted to the point they become unaware to manage their time.

*[In my opinion, one of the shortcomings of the TikTok platform is that it can **make people addicted** to it. Because I usually **spend a lot of time watching** TikTok videos]" P4*

Likewise, TikTok's use of music creates a joy that is addictive and causes users to keep scrolling through the content in their FYP Firamadhina & Krisnani, (2021). Students especially who lacks of self-regulation might get addicted to "scrolling" the videos on TikTok.

#### **CONCLUSION**

According to the findings and result of this research, it can be concluded that all of the participants have a positive experience while using TikTok. The results of this research indicated that almost all of their experiences showed a positive experience on the use of TikTok as a learning medium to practice speaking. Most of the participants found TikTok engaging for practicing speaking because of its interesting features. One of the features that frequently mentioned by participants is "duet me" challenge. Beyond its features, TikTok viewed as an interesting platform because the content is compact, easy to understand, and use an interesting animation or effect that makes learning more fun. Analysis of participant responses reveals that TikTok can be a valuable tool to facilitate the learning experience if it is employed with content relevant to the subject matter. However, there are two challenges in using TikTok as a learning media that are felt by the participants. The algorithm of TikTok and addiction are some challenges participants felt in using TikTok.

A few suggestions for future research on this study's topic can be offered. This study only involved five participants. Therefore, future research might include more so that the various experience can be gathered. In addition, this study only focuses on students' experience in using TikTok as a medium for practicing speaking. Future research might focus on measuring the impact of using TikTok as a medium for learning speaking.

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