

EXAMINING TIKTOK INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' ENGLISH-SPEAKING SKILLS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Keywords

TikTok
Social media use
Speaking skill
Digital learning
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Abstract

This study aims to examine whether there is a significant correlation between TikTok social media use and students' English-speaking skills. In the digital era, social media has become widely used by students and is often associated with language learning practices. This research employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The participants were 31 third-semester students of the English Education Study Program at KH. A. Wahab Hasbullah University. Data were collected through a questionnaire measuring TikTok usage and a speaking test assessing students' speaking skills. The data were analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation. The findings showed that the correlation coefficient was $r = -0.1734$, indicating a very low negative correlation. With $df = 29$ and an r -table value of 0.355 at the 5% significance level, the obtained r -value was lower than the critical value. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted, meaning that there is no significant correlation between TikTok use and students' English-speaking skills. These findings indicate that students' use of TikTok does not necessarily contribute to the improvement of speaking skills, as it is mostly used for entertainment rather than for educational purposes.

Keywords: TikTok social media, English speaking skills, Quantitative correlational research, Pearson product-moment, Higher education language learning

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INTRODUCTION

The integration of digital technology in education has considerably transformed conventional learning practices, particularly in language learning. From a theoretical perspective, Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) suggests that digital tools can facilitate language acquisition by providing authentic input, interactive practice, and exposure to natural language use (Indriani et al., 2024). Within this framework, social media platforms such as TikTok are expected to support speaking skill development when learners actively engage with language content.

In the digital era, social media has become an essential part of students' daily activities and offers new opportunities for language exposure and practice (Pratiwi et al., 2022). Various platforms provide authentic input, interactive communication, and flexible learning environments that may support the development of English skills. Among these platforms, TikTok has attracted increasing academic attention due to its short-form video format, which enables users to access and create engaging content concisely and interactively (Rininggayuh et al., 2024).

In recent years, the rapid development of digital communication technology has also influenced students' learning behavior and communication patterns. Many students spend a considerable amount of time accessing social media platforms for entertainment, interaction, and information sharing. This phenomenon creates opportunities for integrating social media into educational contexts, especially in language learning. Social media platforms provide authentic learning resources that allow students to interact with real-life language use beyond classroom environments. Through digital media, learners can access pronunciation models, conversational expressions, listening materials, and vocabulary usage more flexibly and enjoyably. Compared to conventional learning media, social media tends to create more engaging learning experiences because students are already familiar with its features and daily usage. Therefore, many researchers have begun investigating the role of social media in supporting language learning development, particularly in improving communication skills.

TikTok is not only used for entertainment but has also been recognized as a potential medium for language learning. Its features, such as video creation, audio-visual content, and interactive tools (e.g., comments and duet), allow users to engage in communicative activities and be exposed to real-life language use. In the context of speaking skill development, TikTok offers various types of content that can support learning, including pronunciation practice videos, daily conversation clips, storytelling content, and role-play scenarios. Through these types of content, students can imitate native speakers' pronunciation, practice expressing their ideas orally, and respond to conversations using interactive features such as duet or comment sections. These activities encourage more active speaking practice and contribute to improving students' fluency and confidence in using English.

Speaking skill is widely recognized as one of the most essential productive skills in English language learning because it enables learners to communicate ideas, opinions, feelings, and information orally in real-life situations. However, speaking is also considered one of the most difficult skills to master, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Many students experience difficulties in speaking English due to limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation, lack of confidence, fear of making grammatical mistakes, and limited opportunities for authentic communication practice. Rahmawati et al. (2023) explained that students require continuous speaking practice and interactive learning environments to improve communicative competence effectively. In many EFL contexts, students rarely use English outside the classroom, which limits their exposure to spoken English and affects their speaking performance.

In addition, speaking performance involves several important components, including pronunciation, grammar, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Continuous exposure to authentic English communication is believed to support speaking development because

students can imitate pronunciation patterns, sentence structures, and conversational expressions naturally. Siregar et al. (2025) revealed that repeated exposure to English-speaking content through digital platforms positively contributes to students' pronunciation awareness and speaking fluency. Through interactive media, learners may practice speaking more independently and confidently in less stressful learning environments.

Previous studies have reported positive findings regarding the use of TikTok in language learning. Rita and Subekti (2023) found that students generally perceive TikTok as an engaging and helpful platform for vocabulary learning. Novianingsih et al. (2023) revealed that TikTok-based instruction significantly improved students' speaking performance. In addition, Nurjanah and Hamid (2024) showed that TikTok can enhance students' motivation and speaking development.

Several other studies have also highlighted the educational benefits of TikTok in language learning contexts. Zaitun et al. (2021) found that TikTok increased students' confidence in speaking because learners felt more comfortable practicing English through short-video content and interactive speaking activities. The study also revealed that students became more motivated to improve their pronunciation and fluency after frequently engaging with English-speaking content on TikTok. Similarly, Sari et al. (2024) reported that English conversation content on TikTok helped students improve their fluency, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, and self-confidence in speaking English. In addition, Putri (2022) stated that TikTok supports students' speaking skill development through authentic English content and communicative learning experiences.

Furthermore, Adhani et al. (2023) explained that TikTok provides authentic English content and communication opportunities that may support students' speaking development. The researchers found that students perceived TikTok as an engaging and helpful platform for practicing pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. Another study conducted by Annapis (2024) demonstrated that students who frequently engaged with English-related TikTok content experienced improvement in vocabulary mastery, pronunciation awareness, and speaking motivation. Similarly, Romsis et al. (2023) emphasized that TikTok can support speaking fluency development because students are exposed to authentic communication models and interactive speaking activities through short-form videos.

In addition, several researchers have emphasized that TikTok supports autonomous learning. Students can independently select educational content according to their interests and learning preferences. Through repeated exposure to English videos, students may improve their listening comprehension, pronunciation accuracy, and speaking confidence more naturally. The entertaining nature of TikTok content may also reduce students' anxiety during language learning activities and create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere compared to traditional classroom methods.

However, most previous studies have focused on experimental designs or students' perceptions in structured learning contexts. There is still limited research examining the relationship between students' natural use of TikTok in their daily lives and their English-speaking skills without instructional intervention. Although previous studies have reported positive findings regarding TikTok-assisted learning, most focused on experimental teaching methods or classroom interventions in which TikTok was intentionally integrated into instructional activities. In those studies, researchers commonly investigated the effectiveness of TikTok as a teaching medium designed to improve students' language performance in controlled learning situations. However, relatively few studies have specifically examined students' natural use of TikTok in their daily lives without direct instructional treatment from teachers or researchers (Rita & Subekti, 2023; Sari et al., 2024).

This issue is important because many students use TikTok primarily for entertainment rather than academic learning purposes. Students may spend a considerable amount of

time watching English-related content, such as conversation videos, pronunciation tutorials, storytelling clips, or motivational speaking content. However, it remains unclear whether such informal exposure significantly contributes to the improvement of speaking skills. Therefore, further investigation is needed to determine whether students' daily engagement with TikTok content has a meaningful relationship with their English-speaking performance.

In the Indonesian context, where English is learned as a foreign language, speaking skill is often considered one of the most challenging aspects due to limited opportunities for real communication (Sala et al., 2023). Although students frequently use social media, including TikTok, their engagement is generally oriented toward entertainment rather than academic purposes. Therefore, it is important to examine whether such informal exposure has any meaningful relationship with students' speaking skills.

This study aims to examine whether there is a significant correlation between TikTok social media use and students' English-speaking skill. This study focuses on analyzing the relationship between variables rather than measuring the effect of instructional treatment. The novelty of this research lies in investigating TikTok usage as a natural daily activity and its association with speaking skill, providing a different perspective from previous studies. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research question: Is there a significant correlation between TikTok social media use and students' English-speaking skills? Based on the research question above, the following hypotheses were formulated: H_0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant correlation between TikTok social media use and students' English-speaking skills; H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant correlation between TikTok social media use and students' English-speaking skills.

METHOD

The method used should be accompanied by references; relevant modifications should be explained. The procedure and data analysis techniques should be emphasized in the literature review article. The research stages should be clearly stated.

This study employed a quantitative approach using a correlational research design to examine the relationship between TikTok social media use and students' English-speaking skills. Correlational research is used to determine the degree of association between two variables without manipulating them (Mistar, 2023). In this study, TikTok usage was treated as the independent variable (X), while students' English-speaking skill was the dependent variable (Y).

The study was conducted at the English Education Study Program of KH. A. Wahab Hasbullah University during the 2025 academic year. The participants consisted of 31 third-semester students selected using a purposive sampling technique, as they were considered relevant to the research objectives. These students were chosen because they actively use TikTok and are in the process of developing their English-speaking skills.

The participants were considered appropriate for this study because they frequently interact with social media platforms, particularly TikTok, in their daily activities. In addition, third-semester students were selected since they had already experienced several speaking-related courses, making them suitable participants for examining the relationship between TikTok usage and speaking skill development.

Data were collected using two instruments: a questionnaire and a speaking test. The questionnaire was used to measure students' TikTok usage, which is represented by several indicators as presented below:

Table 1. Indicators of TikTok Usage

No	Variable	Indicator	Item Number
1	TikTok Usage (X)	Accessing English-language content	1, 2, 7, 8
2		Learning vocabulary through TikTok	3, 9
3		English pronunciation imitation	4, 10

4	Perceived usefulness of TikTok in learning	5, 11
5	Confidence after using TikTok	6, 12

In this study, TikTok usage is conceptually defined as a unidimensional construct that reflects how students engage with the platform for English learning purposes. Although the indicators appear to measure different aspects, namely behavioral components (accessing English-language content, learning vocabulary, and imitating pronunciation) and perceptual components (perceived usefulness and speaking confidence), they collectively represent a single construct. The behavioral indicators capture the frequency and type of engagement, while the perceptual indicators capture students' subjective evaluations of TikTok's educational value. Both dimensions are theoretically aligned because they describe how students interact with TikTok and what they gain from that interaction in relation to English speaking development. This conceptualization is supported by previous studies on social media use in language learning, which recognize that usage encompasses both observable actions and internal perceptions (Fauziah et al., 2023; Syahputra, 2024).

The questionnaire items were developed based on relevant theoretical frameworks and adapted from previous validated instruments. Specifically, items 1, 2, 3, and 9 were adapted from Fauziah et al. (2023), which explored how students acquire vocabulary through TikTok and Instagram. Items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12 were adapted from Syahputra (2024), which emphasized TikTok's role in enhancing pronunciation, educational benefits, and speaking confidence. All items were then reviewed and validated by expert judges to ensure content validity. The instrument employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to disagree (1) strongly (Boone & Boone, 2012).

Students' English-speaking skills were measured through a speaking test in which participants were asked to deliver a short oral presentation on a familiar topic (i.e., "Holiday"). The topic was selected because it relates to students' daily activities and personal experiences, thereby encouraging natural communication. Each participant was given approximately 3-5 minutes for preparation before delivering the oral presentation. The presentation itself lasted approximately 5-8 minutes per participant. The assessment was conducted individually in a quiet classroom setting to minimize distractions.

The speaking performance was assessed using five indicators: fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension, as shown in Table 2. The scoring rubric used in this study was adapted from standard speaking assessment criteria commonly used in English language teaching (Brown, 2001).

Table 2. Speaking Assessment Criteria

Indicator	No	Criteria
Fluency	1	Many pauses, hesitations, and frequent stops while speaking
	2	Some pauses and hesitations that interfere with fluency.
	3	Fairly fluent, with only a few minor pauses.
	4	Fluent with a few minor errors.
	5	Very fluent, speaking continuously without significant pauses.
Pronunciation	1	Many pronunciation errors that make it difficult to understand.
	2	Some pronunciation errors that sometimes interfere with understanding.
	3	Pronunciation is fairly clear with a few errors.
	4	Clear pronunciation and easy to understand.
	5	Very clear and natural pronunciation, like a native speaker.
Grammar	1	Many grammar errors, making it difficult to understand.
	2	Some grammar errors that affect meaning.
	3	A few minor errors, but meaning is still understandable.

Vocabulary	4	Few grammatical errors, does not affect meaning.
	5	Grammar structure is correct and well varied.
	1	Very limited vocabulary, difficult to express ideas.
	2	Vocabulary is not very varied, often repeats words.
	3	Vocabulary is quite good, can explain basic ideas.
Comprehension	4	Vocabulary is quite extensive, can explain fluently.
	5	Very extensive vocabulary, appropriate to the context
	1	Does not understand or cannot explain daily activities.
	2	Understands a little, can only explain a small part of activities.
	3	Understands fairly well, can explain basic activities.
	4	Understands well, can explain activities coherently.
	5	Understands very well, can explain activities in detail and naturally.

The speaking performance was assessed by a single rater (the researcher), which may introduce potential scoring bias. This limitation should be considered when interpreting the findings. Future research is encouraged to involve multiple raters to establish inter-rater reliability and reduce potential subjectivity in scoring.

Before data collection, the questionnaire was validated through expert judgment using Aiken's V index to ensure its content validity. Two expert lecturers in English language education from Universitas KH. A. Wahab Hasbullah evaluated the instrument based on five aspects: relevance of statements to research indicators, clarity of language, relevance to the theory used, relevance of content to research objectives, and consistency between items. The validation results showed that the overall Aiken's V coefficient was 0.85, which falls into the "high validity" category (Ilyana et al., 2025). All questionnaire items achieved acceptable validity values (ranging between 0.75 and 0.875) and were considered appropriate for measuring students' TikTok usage in this study.

Reliability and normality tests were not conducted in this study. The instrument was validated through expert judgment using Aiken's V index, which focuses on content validity rather than internal consistency. Regarding the Pearson correlation analysis, it is considered robust to violations of normality for descriptive correlational studies without inferential generalization (Noviana et al., 2023). The researcher acknowledges these as limitations that should be addressed in future research.

The data collection procedure was conducted in several stages. First, the researcher administered the questionnaire to the participants to obtain data on TikTok usage. Second, a speaking test was conducted to measure students' speaking skills. Finally, all collected data were compiled and prepared for analysis.

Data analysis was performed using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables (Mistar, 2013). This study focused on correlation analysis to examine the relationship between variables without applying any experimental treatment. The obtained correlation coefficient (r) was then compared with the critical value (r -table) at a 5% significance level. If the obtained value was higher than the critical value, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted; otherwise, the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted, indicating no significant correlation between TikTok use and students' English-speaking skills.

RESULT

The results should be presented in the same part, clearly and briefly. The research results could be supplemented with tables, figures, or graphs (separate writing terms) to clarify. Avoid presenting similar data in a separate table. The analysis should address the stated gap. The qualitative data, e.g., interview results, should be discussed in paragraphs. The references contained in the introduction should not be rewritten in the discussion. A comparison to the previous studies should be presented.

This section presents the findings of the study on the correlation between TikTok social media use and students' English-speaking skills. The data were obtained from 31 third-

semester students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas KH. A. Wahab Hasbullah.

The descriptive statistics for both variables are presented as follows. For TikTok usage (Variable X), the total score from 31 respondents was 1,058, with individual scores ranging from a minimum of 14 to a maximum of 51. The mean score for TikTok usage was 34.13, with a standard deviation of approximately 9.75. For English-speaking skill (Variable Y), the total score was 527, with individual scores ranging from a minimum of 11 to a maximum of 25. The mean score for speaking ability was 17.00, with a standard deviation of approximately 3.42. These results indicate that students' TikTok usage varied considerably, while their speaking performance showed relatively moderate variation.

The collected data were analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation to determine the relationship between the two variables. The analysis revealed that the correlation coefficient (r) between TikTok usage and students' English-speaking skills was -0.1734. This value indicates a very low negative correlation, suggesting a weak inverse relationship between the two variables.

To determine the statistical significance, the obtained r -value was compared with the critical value (r -table) at a significance level of 5% with degrees of freedom ($df = 29$). The r -table value was 0.355. Since the obtained r -value (-0.1734) was lower than the critical value (0.355), the correlation was not statistically significant. The p -value was calculated as $p > 0.05$ (specifically $p = 0.352$), and the 95% confidence interval for the correlation coefficient ranged from -0.486 to 0.185. With a sample size of $N = 31$, these results confirm that there is no significant correlation between TikTok usage and students' English-speaking skills. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is rejected.

The result of the correlation analysis is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Correlation between TikTok Usage and Students' English-Speaking Skill

Variable	N	r- value	r-table	Interpreation
TikTok Usage & Speaking Skill	31	-0.1734	0.355	Not Significant

Based on the speaking assessment results, most students demonstrated moderate speaking ability. Several participants were able to express their ideas clearly and fluently, while others showed limitations in vocabulary use, pronunciation accuracy, and grammatical structure during their speaking performance. These results indicate that students' speaking abilities varied among participants.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that there is no significant correlation between TikTok social media use and students' English-speaking skills, as evidenced by the correlation coefficient ($r = -0.1734$, $p = 0.352$, $N = 31$), which falls into a very low negative category. This result suggests that the intensity of TikTok usage among students does not necessarily contribute to the improvement of their speaking skills.

The empirical finding of this study is straightforward: there is no statistically significant correlation between TikTok usage and speaking performance. Any explanation of why this result occurred remains interpretive and should be treated as a possible explanation rather than a conclusion drawn directly from the data.

One possible interpretation is that students may use TikTok primarily for entertainment rather than for intentional language learning. However, it is important to note that this study did not directly measure students' purposes for using TikTok. The questionnaire captured frequency and types of engagement (e.g., accessing English content, imitating pronunciation) but did not explicitly ask whether students used TikTok for entertainment or learning. Therefore, the interpretation that students use TikTok mainly for

entertainment is a plausible explanation but remains speculative and should be confirmed by future research.

Similarly, while this study found no significant correlation, it did not directly measure whether students engaged in passive or active use of TikTok. The questionnaire included items on imitating pronunciation and accessing English content, which could indicate some level of active engagement. However, the data do not allow a clear distinction between passive consumption (e.g., watching videos without speaking) and active practice (e.g., creating content or speaking along). Consequently, attributing the findings to passive use remains an interpretation rather than an empirical conclusion.

The results of this study differ from those of previous research that reported positive effects of TikTok on speaking skills (Novianingsih et al., 2023; Nurjanah & Hamid, 2024). A more detailed explanation of why these differences exist is required. The primary difference lies in the research design. Previous studies employed experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which TikTok was intentionally integrated into structured instructional activities. Students in those studies received guided speaking tasks, TikTok-based assignments, and monitored practice opportunities.

In contrast, the present study employed a correlational design that examined students' natural, everyday use of TikTok without any instructional intervention. Therefore, the positive effects reported in previous studies likely resulted from structured guidance and intentional learning activities. In contrast, the absence of correlation in this study reflects students' independent, unstructured use of the platform. This distinction suggests that TikTok's effectiveness depends heavily on how it is used (with or without instructional support), not merely on exposure to the platform itself.

This explanation is consistent with the findings of Rita and Subekti (2023), who noted that TikTok does not consistently support students' English development when the platform is used mainly for entertainment rather than intentional learning. The present study aligns with that observation, as most participants appeared to engage with TikTok for non-academic purposes.

These findings align with the Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) framework introduced earlier, which emphasizes that digital tools require active engagement to be effective. Consistent with Mistar (2013), language acquisition depends on meaningful practice, not merely media exposure.

Based on the findings and interpretations above, educators should guide students in using social media more effectively for language learning. Instead of using TikTok only for entertainment, students should be encouraged to engage in productive activities such as creating English content, practicing pronunciation, and interacting with other users in English. By doing so, TikTok may become a more meaningful learning medium that potentially contributes to the development of speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to investigate whether a significant correlation exists between TikTok social media use and students' English-speaking skills. The findings demonstrate that no statistically significant relationship was identified, as the correlation coefficient indicates a very low negative association between the two variables. The specific contribution of this study lies in examining students' natural use of TikTok without instructional intervention, unlike previous experimental studies that focused on structured TikTok-based activities. These findings suggest that the intensity of TikTok usage alone was not associated with the development of students' speaking skills in this sample. In other words, exposure to English content through TikTok was not accompanied by higher speaking performance in this study. From a pedagogical perspective, these findings highlight the importance of guiding students to utilize social media more effectively as a learning medium rather than merely for entertainment purposes. Educators are encouraged to design learning activities that integrate social media in a more structured and interactive

way to support language development. However, this study has several limitations, particularly in terms of the relatively small sample size and the focus on a single group of students within one study program, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.

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