TikTok for Assisting Low-Motivated EFL Students in English Conversation at One of Private Vocational Schools in Ciamis

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Abstract

The study highlights the need to accommodate individual preferences and comfort levels in using the TikTok applications for language learning. This study aims to investigate the difficulties students face in performing English conversations and to analyze the students' perceptions of using the TikTok application to perform English conversations. The present study employed qualitative paradigm using the type of case study and was conducted at one of the vocational schools in Ciamis. Additionally, the researcher used interviews and observation to answer the research objectives. The study discovered that students faced several challenges in creating content. Technical issues, such as video errors and slow upload times, were common obstacles. Additionally, environmental factors, such as background noise, often interfere with the quality of their videos. On a personal level, difficulties with language proficiency and a lack of confidence in content creation further complicated the process. These challenges underscore the importance of providing support and guidance for integrating TikTok as an educational tool effectively. However, the findings showed that TikTok has an appeal as an English language learning medium, particularly in developing speaking skills and boosting student confidence. A highly positive student responds to learning to speak through the TikTok Application because it fosters enthusiasm, motivation, and comfort in English conversation performance.

Keywords: *Speaking; TikTok Application; MALL; English Conversation*

Abstrak

Studi ini menyoroti perlunya mengakomodasi preferensi individu dan tingkat kenyamanan dalam menggunakan aplikasi TikTok untuk pembelajaran bahasa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kesulitan yang dihadapi siswa dalam melakukan percakapan bahasa Inggris dan menganalisis persepsi siswa dalam menggunakan aplikasi TikTok untuk melakukan percakapan bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan paradigma kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus dan dilakukan di salah satu SMK di Ciamis. Selain itu, peneliti menggunakan wawancara dan observasi untuk menjawab tujuan penelitian. Studi ini menemukan bahwa siswa menghadapi beberapa tantangan dalam membuat konten. Masalah teknis, seperti kesalahan video dan waktu upload yang lambat, merupakan kendala umum. Selain itu, faktor lingkungan, seperti kebisingan latar belakang, sering kali mengganggu kualitas video mereka. Pada tingkat pribadi, kesulitan dalam kemahiran bahasa dan kurangnya rasa percaya diri dalam pembuatan konten semakin memperumit proses tersebut. Tantangan-tantangan ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya memberikan dukungan dan panduan untuk mengintegrasikan TikTok sebagai alat pendidikan secara efektif. Namun temuan menunjukkan bahwa TikTok memiliki daya tarik sebagai media pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, khususnya dalam mengembangkan keterampilan berbicara dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa. Respon siswa terhadap pembelajaran berbicara melalui Aplikasi TikTok sangat positif karena menumbuhkan semangat, motivasi, dan kenyamanan dalam melakukan percakapan bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Berbicara, Aplikasi TikTok, MALL, Percakapan Bahasa Inggris.

INTRODUCTION

The development of computer and internet technology has greatly contributed to language learning, especially in speaking. Speaking skill as one of the four basic skills of language is more challenging in the 21st century so that the teaching speaking must meet the 21st century skill (Leonita et al., 2023; Menggo et al., 2019). Accordingly, Menggo et al. (2019) report the fact that lack of vocabulary still becomes the obstacles for students in Indonesia; thus, the inclusion of video as a tool for learning is more preferable. Meanwhile, (Brown, 2004) states that speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed, those observations are invariably colored by the accuracy and effectiveness of a test taker's listening skill, which necessarily compromises the reliability and the validity of an oral production test. In foreign language learning, speaking ability is said to be the most essential basic skill to communicate, it can also be said to be the most difficult skill. It was further emphasized that in language learning, it is very important for every student to master speaking skills both inside and outside the classroom. Thus, to communicate from one person to another, of course, one must have basic skills in speaking.

However, every student has a different perception about speaking. Not all students perceive speaking as having the same feeling. Many students judge speaking as a difficult subject to be learned. Several obstacles lead students to have problems in learning to speak. Many students lack vocabulary and do not know what to say in English. Moreover, (Penny Ur, 2016) states that students are afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at by their classmates. So, they consider speaking to be a difficult skill to practice. In light of the problem, it is important to improve the students' speaking skills. As a result, it is expected of English teachers to think about and take steps to improve their students' speaking skills. (Karpovich et al, 2021) said that speaking in a foreign language requires a lot of practice and exercise to become more proficient. To effectively instruct students, it is essential to employ various teaching methods. Students mastery of speaking abilities is critical because speaking skills allow students to articulate and convey the views or ideas of others (Cetak, 2023). They are intended to choose the appropriate media, make comprehensive preparations, and prepare well in order to engage the students in communication. Given these challenges, it is crucial to understand the various dimensions involved in improving speaking skills, including the theoretical and practical aspects of English conversation.

The study of English conversation involves several key aspects, including the importance of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse factors and the role of strategy, interaction, accuracy, and fluency in effective communication. According to (Okpala, 2020), conversation is useful for teaching oral English skills, considering learner profiles, needs analysis, and communicative events and materials. In English conversation skills, linguistic competence forms the foundation, including grammatical knowledge and discourse understanding. Sociolinguistic factors, such as cultural familiarity, are crucial role in appropriate language use. (Brown, 2001) cites that when someone can speak a language, it means that he can carry on a conversation reasonably competently. In addition, he states that the benchmark of successful acquisition of language is almost always the demonstration of an ability to accomplish pragmatic goals through an interactive discourse with other

language speakers. Learners employ various strategies to enhance their speaking abilities, while interaction provides essential practice opportunities. Both accuracy and fluency are important for effective communication. A balanced approach incorporating different focus areas is recommended in teaching and learning. Technology-assisted learning can provide valuable feedback to learners. Dialogue theory emphasizes interactive teaching methods, particularly in primary education. These elements combine to create a comprehensive framework for developing and improving English conversation skills, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of language learning and the importance of practical application in real-world contexts (Hellermann et al., 2019).

Innovative learning media is one method of implementing 21st-century learning. Teachers use learning media as a tool in the teaching and learning process. (Sharma, 2020) states that 1) teachers use learning media as a tool in the teaching and learning process, and 2) social media applications are useful tools for improving EFL students' English language skills and motivation to learn. While innovative learning media plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning process, it is equally important to consider another key factor, i.e. motivation. As will be discussed later, motivation significantly impacts students' enthusiasm and drive to learn, particularly when it comes to speaking skills in English. Motivation seems to play a vital role in the teaching and learning process. It gives great influence for students to encourage themselves to learn eagerly.

Actually, all of students have different motivation in learning speaking. Students' motivation can be seen from their efforts in achieving goals (Brown, 2007), the way they participate in the classroom, and their enjoyment of the school (Collie & Martin, 2019). Students with high motivation in learning speaking will push themselves to speak up. Motivation is one of the most important factors that will influence students' English achievements or performance. Achievement is the result of an activity that has been done, created by students. It becomes a measurement whether the students success or failure in learning. If it can affect students learning and performance, surely it will influence students' learning achievement. Thus, motivation can be considered as an individual's inclination, energy, direction, and drive with respect to learning and achievement.

To effectively harness motivation in the learning process, teachers must also consider the appropriate use of media that aligns with students' needs and interests. The first thing the teachers must do in effective use of media is to find and select media that meet children's learning needs and attract children's interests. Learning media is included in the category of mobile learning based learning media (Dressman et al., 2023). As a learning media that can be operated anytime and anywhere, Tiktok is effective to improve students' learning activity and speaking skill (Ferstephanie, & Pratiwi, 2022; Herlisya, & Wiratno, 2022). Learning media in the form of Tiktok application can be run on mobile devices based on android and ios.

The Tiktok app is a medium that can be used for creative learning. The majority of today's youth are familiar with this application. (Ferstephanie & Lady Pratiwi, 2022) states that Tiktok application and its features are widely used throughout the world. Tiktok is not just for teenagers. However, everyone from the elderly to small children are familiar with this application because it has become a medium for the larger community to express their personal and life experiences. According to (Dewi, 2023) to encouraging interaction between teachers and students, increasing student knowledge, and increasing student enthusiasm, this application technology can help language teachers deliver more enjoyable lessons. Evaluation of the results of

this training shows that the TikTok application can function as an educational tool that supports and enables the process of teaching and learning English in the classroom.

There are previous studies that relate to the present research focused on the use of TikTok, and its impact on speaking ability (Asio et al., 2023; Qodarsih et al., 2023; Ratnawati, 2019; Marleni, 2021; Dewi, 2023; Ferstephanie & Lady Pratiwi, 2022). Those previous studies provide the practitioners a fruitful insight on the effectiveness of Tiktok in improving speaking skill. Meanwhile, (Ratnawati, 2019) emphasizes the beneficial value of motivation in learning to speak. However, none of them carry out research directly involving low-motivated EFL students in speaking strategy, namely, conversation. Therefore, the present research tries to fill the gap by carrying out research under the title "TikTok for Assisting Low-Motivated EFL Students in English Conversation (A Case Study at One of Private Vocational Schools in Ciamis)."

The fundamental goal of this study is to find out students' difficulties students in performing English conversations and the way they perceive the TikTok application to perform their English conversations. The findings from this research should provide senior high school English teachers with a wealth of helpful information that they can use both theoretically and practically (Info, 2023). Teachers might use theoretical material as a guide when teaching English to students to improve their speaking skills. Furthermore, (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021) asserted that the use of Tiktok in language learning has the potential to improve students' speaking ability. This study can also provide helpful information to English teachers who are developing an alternative program at their schools to help students improve their speaking skills through TikTok.

RESEARCH METHODS

The design of this study is qualitative. Qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribing to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). By concentrating on a case study, this type of qualitative research appears suitable for addressing the research objectives because it deals with a rich description of a case which is narrated in a chronologocal events (Cohen, 2007). This research was conducted at one of the vocational schools in Ciamis, West Jawa, Indonesia. Participants who were under pseudonym (J, I, D, and W) in this research consist of four female tenth-grade students in one vocational school in Ciamis who were selected due to the accessibility and . The researcher used a purposive sampling technique because they were considered giving an edequate data (Sugiyono, 2017, as cited in Wijaya, 2020).

The researchers collected data through interviews, as an important way for researchers to check the accuracy of to verify or refute the impressions he or she has gained (Fraenkel et al., 2011). The researcher utilized semi-structured interviews as (Magaldi & Berler, 2020) claim that the semi-structured interview, despite its topical trajectories provided before the interview, enables a researcher to go deep for a discovery. The interview process used four open-ended questions items that are administered in English and *Bahasa Indonesia*. The first two interview questions were utilized to check students' experiences in learning English conversation through the Tiktok application; and the others two interview questions were employed to find out their strategies for overcoming the challenges they faced so that their experience would be beneficial in learning English. By focusing on students' experiences, the interviews identify obstacles in using TikTok for language learning while also gathering valuable information on student-driven solutions.

The second instrument used in this study is observation checklist adapted and modified from

https://www.modelteaching.com to reveal the students' difficulties in perfornming their oral presentations. As a form of data collection, the advantage of observation is the opportunity to help the researchers to record information that occurs in a place, study actual behavior, and study individuals who have difficulty voicing their ideas (Creswell, 2011). The purpose of this observation is to assess low-motivation students to enhance their confidence during English language learning. The researcher observed a video-making conducted by four students and collected artifacts which were the screenshots of their English converasation videos. In this case, an artifact is any sort of material product of cultures including photographs and diaries (Howitt, 2016). Additionally, the researcher used an observation checklist adopted from Model Teaching 2022 to evaluate their oral presentation skills, which include accuracy, pronunciation, enunciation, inflection, projection, tempo, and filler avoidance. This evaluation aims to identify the student's strengths and weaknesses, allowing the researcher to determine which aspects need further development.

Regarding the data analysis in a qualitative study, it fundamentally entails analyzing, synthesizing, and reducing the data the researcher obtains from many sources into a cohesive description of what is observed or otherwise discovered gained (Fraenkel et al., 2011) . The data obtained from interview and observation were analyzed through various methods (Creswell, 2011) such as recorded, transcribed, coded and interpreted. Meanwhile, the observation results were analyzed through transcribing

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher described the result and discussion comprising two major results and discussions of this study. They are based on the research question provided by the researcher that will be elaborated in the following discussion:

Students' perceptions on learning to speak to perform English conversation by using the TikTok application

Using a semi-structured interview, the researcher analyzed the strategies to identify how students perceive the TikTok apps for English speaking. Through a semi-structured interview, the researcher was able to gather accurate information and determine whether or not the initial questionnaire response was pertinent. Four students in grade 10 at one of Ciamis' vocational schools participated in the interview.

The interview results from the first to the four questions shows that the students perceived positively on learning speaking to performed English conversations through the TikTok application. Based on the provided information, it appears that using TikTok as a tool for English language learning has both positive impacts as can be seen from the following Excerpt 1: " *... its easy because the conversation content is interesting…it makes me more confident…I have access to lots of conversations content and the responses*." (A condensed version of students' interview). Regarding the encountered challenges, the evidence is revelaed from the follwoign Excerpt 2: "*The challenge or obstacle is an error when taking the video...we have to change and retake video. ... the process of uploading a video sometimes takes so long.., sometimes there's a lot of noises around...Consequently, it requires a repetition*." (A condensed version of students' interview).

Also, the application seems to improved motivation to practice the English language. Students reported feeling more comfortable expressing themselves when facing a camera rather than in face-to-face interactions, and they appreciated features like response text that aided their

conversation skills, as given in the following Excerpt 3: "*...this application enhances my motivation because I'm interested in using this application for learning speaking... it makes me more confidence so it can increase my motivation...I enjoyed to take TikTok videos for conversation and this motivates me...*"

Based on the first finding of the interview session, the student's answers offer valuable insights into their preferences and experiences with the TikTok application. The students in speaking class need to be able to convey their intentions to others. It is relevant to what (Brown, 2004) stated that one of the most important communication skills is the ability to speak, especially when exchanging information. The result of this study provides valuable insights into the use of TikTok as a tool for English language learning, particularly for developing conversation skills. The semi-structured interviews with four 10th-grade vocational school students in Ciamis generally perceived positively the platform's educational potential, while also highlighting some challenges. When using the Tiktok app as a learning media is useful for increasing creativity in students. It is line in (Basri, 2024) that in the online learning process using the TikTok application, educators are the main actors who plan, direct, and carry out these activities. Students consistently reported that using TikTok for English learning was easy and engaging. The app's content format, which typically features short, digestible videos, appears to align well with students' learning preferences and attention spans. This ease of use is crucial in educational technology adoption, as it reduces barriers to entry and encourages regular engagement with the learning material.

A significant result was the app's role in boosting students' confidence and reducing anxiety associated with speaking English. It links to (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022) who has conducted the research, it examined that the use of Tiktok application is not only to improve students' speaking skills but also, this application can motivate students to become more confident. Apart from being entertainment, TikTok can increase one's creativity. Students will be trained by themselves to be creative people by following trends and editing the content they have created. The format of creating videos facing a camera, rather than engaging in direct face-to-face conversations, seemed to create a psychological buffer that made students feel more at ease. This aspect of TikTok could be particularly valuable for students who experience high levels of language anxiety, which is a common barrier in second language acquisition. A key theme that emerged was the app's ability to increase student motivation. The enjoyable nature of creating and watching TikTok videos appeared to intrinsically motivate students to practice their English skills more frequently. This motivation could potentially lead to more self-directed learning, with students taking the initiative to practice and improve their language skills outside of formal educational settings. This increased engagement is crucial for language learning, as regular practice is essential for skill development and retention.

Despite the challenges, the same result from the study by (Zaitun, et al, 2024) showed that using TikTok application as a medium for speaking subjects significantly increased students' confidence and provided new experiences in expressing ideas freely. Students reported numerous benefits, including increased confidence in speaking English, expanded vocabulary, enhanced motivation to improve language skills, and a more enjoyable learning experience. The interactive nature of TikTok and the variety of content available made the learning process more engaging compared to traditional classroom methods. This suggests that TikTok could be particularly effective in promoting autonomous learning and encouraging students to engage with English outside of formal educational settings. The enjoyable nature of creating and watching TikTok videos intrinsically motivated students to practice their English skills more frequently, potentially leading to more self-

directed learning and increased engagement in language learning activities.

In conclusion, this study reveals that TikTok has significant potential as a tool for English language learning, particularly in developing speaking skills and boosting student confidence. Its ability to increase motivation, provide a comfortable practice environment, and offer an enjoyable learning experience aligns well with modern educational theories that emphasize student engagement and active learning. However, the implementation of TikTok in educational settings should be approached thoughtfully, with strategies in place to address the challenges identified. As digital platforms continue to evolve, further research will be crucial in understanding how best to leverage these tools for educational purposes.

Students' challenges in performing English conversation by using TikTok Application

The second result is to find out the challenges students face in using the Tiktok application to stimulate their speaking ability with the second question. Implementing TikTok as a tool for English language learning in Class X has revealed both promising aspects and areas for improvement in students' oral presentation skills. The observation conducted on May 13, 2024, provided valuable insights into the performance of students J, I, D, and W across various dimensions of oral communication. It is in line with (Suseno, 2024) in that students in speaking class need to be able to convey their intentions to others. It is important to boost the use of a language for communication. Nevertheless, many students face problems when practicing speaking. The result of the observation checklist will be shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Observation checklist of students challenges result

Oral Skill	Accuracy				Pronunciation				Enunciation				Inflection				Projection				Tempo				Filler Avoidance			
Description	Does the student speak with few to no mistakes?				Can student correctly sound out the spoken words?				Can student speak clearly?				Does the student modulate his or her voice approximately to match the text?				Does the student's voice carry at an appropriate volume?				Does the student maintain an appropriate rate of speech				Does the student avoid phrase like "um"?			
	Y	M	S	R	Y	M	S	R	Y	M	S	R	Y	M	S	R	Y	M	S	R	Y	M	S	R	Y	M	S	R
Student J			✓				✓				✓			✓						✓			✓			✓		
Student D			✓			✓				✓				✓				✓					✓				✓	
Student I			✓				✓				✓			✓				✓					✓				✓	
Student W			✓			✓					✓			✓				✓				✓					✓	

Notes :

Y : Yes

M : Mostly

S : Sometimes

R : Rarely

Based on the observation above, we can draw several conclusions about their oral presentation skills. Students D and W demonstrated stronger performance across most skills than J and I. D, and W showed consistent proficiency in pronunciation, enunciation, inflexion, and projection. They maintained an appropriate tempo more frequently and occasionally avoided filler words. In contrast, J and I displayed more inconsistent performance. They showed occasional

proficiency in accuracy but struggled with pronunciation and enunciation. I occasionally modulated their voice, while J used inflexion more frequently. J and I had difficulties maintaining appropriate tempo, though they performed well in avoiding filler words. It's worth noting that all students showed room for improvement in various areas. Accuracy was an area where all students demonstrated only occasional proficiency, indicating a need for further practice in speaking without errors. The observations also highlight the variability in individual performance across different skills, suggesting that targeted instruction and practice in specific areas could benefit each student's oral presentation abilities.

The observation revealed interesting student performance patterns across different speaking skills. It is relevant to what is claimed by (Harmer, 2008) if students want to speak fluently in English, they need to pronounce phonemes correctly, use appropriate stress and intonation patterns, and speak in connected speech. The result highlights areas of struggle, such as accuracy, pronunciation, and enunciation, with some students performing better in these areas than others. Individualized instruction and practice in phonetics and clear articulation are crucial for improving students' clarity in speech. Additionally, skills like inflexion, projection, and controlling speech tempo are important for effective communication, especially in contexts like TikTok videos. Avoiding filler words is also essential for maintaining fluency and professionalism in speech.

Using TikTok as a platform for English conversation practice introduces opportunities and challenges. On one hand, it provides a familiar and engaging medium for students to practice their speaking skills. The short-form video format encourages concise and impactful communication, valuable skills in many contexts. On the other hand, the pressure of recording oneself and the potential for a wide audience can increase anxiety and affect performance. To address these platform-specific challenges, educators could consider incorporating strategies such as gradual exposure to recording, starting with audio-only recordings before moving to video, and providing opportunities for multiple takes and editing (Ricarda, 2024). This approach could help students become more comfortable with the format and focus on improving their language skills rather than being overly concerned with the technical aspects of video creation.

Lastly, the integration of technology like TikTok into language learning reflects the changing landscape of communication in the digital age (Pei & Nian, 2024). As students engage with these platforms, they practice traditional speaking skills, develop digital literacy, and adapt their communication styles to new media. This dual focus on language and digital skills prepares students for the diverse communication challenges they will face in their academic and professional futures. The TikTok video format presented unique challenges, including time constraints and potential performance anxiety, which may have impacted the students' delivery. To address these issues, targeted practice focusing on individual weaknesses, peer learning opportunities, regular recording sessions, and workshops on delivery techniques are recommended. Additionally, integrating more authentic speaking scenarios and providing guidance on effectively using technology for presentations could help students adapt their skills to various communication contexts. Overall, this exercise highlighted the need for continued practice and attention to delivery techniques in speaking, particularly when adapting to new media formats like TikTok.

Despite the fact that challenges were also identified, such as technical issues, environmental factors, and personal difficulties in content creation, it can be concluded that students were happy, motivated, and excited about English conservation. TikTok has significant potential as a tool for

English language learning, particularly in developing speaking skills and boosting student confidence. Students generally found the app easy to use and engaging, with its short video format aligning well with their learning preferences. Key benefits included increased confidence in speaking English, expanded vocabulary, enhanced motivation, and a more enjoyable learning experience. Notably, the app's ability to increase student motivation emerged as a crucial theme. The enjoyable nature of creating and watching TikTok videos appeared to intrinsically motivate students to practice their English skills more frequently, potentially leading to more self-directed learning. The implementation of TikTok in educational settings requires careful planning and support to address these challenges. In general, the study validates that employing the Tiktok application for English conversation as a tool for language learning has yielded positive results, fostering students' engagement, motivation, and overall language learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The present study discusses some important issues pertinent to the use of technology in in improving students' engagemnet, teaching and learning activity and speaking ability. Particularly, the use of Tiktok offer several benefits, including increased confidence in speaking English, a more engaging and enjoyable learning experience, and improved motivation to practice the language. It indicates that TikTok, as a media for teaching, can motivate students to learn more about English speaking skills. The study reveals generally positive perceptions of using TikTok to learn English conversation skills. Students find the application easy to use, engaging, and beneficial for increasing their confidence in speaking English. They report several advantages, including expanded vocabulary, enhanced motivation, and a more enjoyable learning experience than traditional methods. Despite technical issues and difficulties in content creation, the overall impact on student motivation and engagement is highly positive. Additionally, TikTok offers an engaging platform for language practice. Still, it presents unique challenges that can be addressed with targeted interventions, peer support, and regular practice, ultimately enhancing students' speaking abilities and preparing them for diverse communication scenarios in the digital age. To sum up, the findings of this study showed that TikTok has significant potential as a tool for English language learning, particularly in developing speaking skills and boosting student confidence.

RECOMMENDATION

The researcher suggests that teachers should be more creative and selective in using unique learning media, such as TikTok, to enhance student interest and speaking abilities, thereby creating a conducive learning environment that supports better learning outcomes and increased student achievement.It is suggested for the next researcher to conduct the related research with a larger number of participants and different methodology to obtain more in-depth and specific results regarding using TikTok for assisting low motivated EFL students in English conversation.

THANK-YOU NOTE

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