

Exploring EFL Students' Perception on the use of TikTok in Vocabulary Learning beyond the Classroom

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study is to explore EFL Students' Perception on The Use of TikTok in Vocabulary Learning beyond the Classroom

Methodology: The study incorporates two types of data: information regarding the use of TikTok and perceptions of TikTok. Data were collected from second-grade students at a state senior high school in Tempuling through questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms, comprised sixteen statements prompting student responses. The questionnaire findings were corroborated through interviews with selected students serving as representatives. Data analysis followed the steps outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) and was thematically analysed to address the research questions.

Results: All students possess a TikTok account and utilise the platform to enhance their English vocabulary. Furthermore, students find learning English vocabulary through TikTok to be both facile and enjoyable. Additionally, they derive considerable benefits from employing TikTok for such learning and express a desire for their teachers to utilise the platform for English instruction in the classroom.

Applications/Originality/Value: While prior studies primarily examine TikTok's use for learning English within the classroom, this study highlights the use of the platform beyond the classroom and found that learning English vocabularies independently with the help of Tiktok beneficial for students and possible to be complementary to the classroom classical learning.

Introduction

Social media has had a significant impact on the lives of young people, who are the primary users of these platforms. Social media refers to websites and apps that enable users to create, share, and exchange various forms of content, information, ideas, interests, and expressions within online communities. It encompasses a wide range of internet-based and mobile services that facilitate online interactions, content creation, and community engagement (Dewing, 2010). Social media represents a new kind of media that allows people to connect and communicate using digital platforms (Manning, 2014). Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and one of the trending applications today, TikTok.

TikTok has gained immense popularity, with data from April 2022 indicating that it had 99.1 million monthly active users in Indonesia. It rose to become one of the most popular platforms in 2021-2022, ranking third in popularity after YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. Furthermore, TikTok experienced substantial growth in 2022, with over 500 million global users and more than 92.07 million users in Indonesia downloading the app (ByteDance, 2022). TikTok is known for its short video format, allowing users to create 15-60 second videos with a wide range of features like music, filters, stickers, and other creative tools (Rahardaya, 2021). These diverse features make TikTok a valuable platform, even for educational purposes. For instance, it can be used as a tool for learning English vocabulary, as students can watch videos and hear clear pronunciations in educational content.

There has been previous research on the use of TikTok for language learning, some of them are Bahri et. al., (2022) who reported that TikTok is proven to provide interesting and fun English learning material for students. TikTok videos allows them to choose the topic of vocabulary which student want to improve. And the students also agreed that TikTok helps them in learning English Vocabulary. Research by Hutami et. al., (2021) and Simanungkalit and Katemba (2023) also reported that students perceive positively on using TikTok for learning

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English. However, there are several aspects that still need to be improved, such as understanding the content and the effect of music in the learning context. With this in mind, TikTok can be an interesting addition to support learning, especially in terms of creativity and interactivity. Another research by Yang (2020) showed that secondary-school students held positive attitudes towards introducing TikTok as video aids into EFL classroom teaching meanwhile using it as an English learning strategy out of class. Furthermore, Fahdin (2020) and Fauziah et.al., (2023) showed students' positive feedback by of utilizing TikTok as language learning media that English content video easy to understand and easy to memorize various vocabularies. Afidah et al. (2021) reported that TikTok has good benefits in learning English for EFL students because it has a variety of features that can be used for various purposes to improve English skills. However, students perceive drawbacks in its use, namely that this application consumes quite a lot of data for students. In addition, Hastomo, et al, (2022) studied students' perceptions of using TikTok in learning English vocabulary by second-semester English department students at a private university, found out that almost all students were satisfied with using TikTok application for learning English vocabulary. The study also confirmed that TikTok videos allows students to choose the topic of vocabulary on their own needs. In line with this research is a research by Ining (2021) which indicated that the use of TikTok contributed positively to expand ESL students' vocabulary learning. Students learned many new vocabularies through various content found in TikTok, by utilizing its useful and handy features which provides sufficient audio, graphics, subtitles, and its 'save' function, aswell as through the authenticity of the videos.

Sinta and Zulfitri (2022) conducted a research to define students' experience of learning and memorizing vocabulary of adjective and showed that students perceive that tiktok duet video is very helpful for them in memorizing adjective vocabulary. Meanwhile, Syamsiani & Munfangati (2022) did a study to understand students' perceptions and the challenges students face in using Tiktok Videos for learning English and faound that there are various positive and negative perceptions among students about the use of tiktok videos for learning English. Another research by Wardani (2022) concluded that English videos on tiktok not only improving their vocabulary but also in their pronunciation, speaking skill, and etc. Similarly, Sofeny et al. (2022) reported that TikTok application is effective for the teachers who want to increase students' English vocabularies mastery.

This study, while aligning with prior research on students' perceptions of TikTok and its use in English learning, distinctively examines how students employ TikTok as a vocabulary learning resource outside the classroom and their perceptions of its efficacy as a learning medium.

Method

The qualitative data for this study encompass two types: information concerning the use of TikTok and insights into students' perceptions of TikTok. Data were gathered from second-grade students at a state senior high school in Tempuling through questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms, comprised sixteen statements prompting student responses. The questionnaire findings were corroborated through interviews with selected students serving as representatives. Data analysis followed the steps outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994), including data reduction, data display, and data conclusion. Information from the questionnaire and interview transcripts was thematically analysed to address the research questions.

Result and Discussion

The findings of this study address two research objectives i.e., how students use TikTok as a source of learning their vocabulary outside of class, and how they perceive its use for vocabulary learning outside the class.

How Students Use Tiktok as a Vocabulary Learning Resource Outside The Classroom

Data on TikTok account ownership revealed that 39 students (88.6%) possess their own TikTok accounts, which they actively manage. Additionally, 5 students (11.4%) access TikTok without personal accounts, either by using another individual's account or accessing the platform without logging in. Concerning usage duration, the majority of students (37) reported spending over two hours daily on TikTok. Furthermore, 7 students utilise other social media platforms for vocabulary learning, with some employing Google Translate to acquire new vocabulary. The high percentage of students owning TikTok accounts demonstrates the platform's widespread popularity among students, with many actively engaging with content creation and consumption. However, the presence of students accessing TikTok through alternate means suggests an additional cohort interested in the platform's content despite not maintaining personal accounts. Regarding usage duration, the significant portion of students spending more than two hours daily on TikTok indicates its role not only as an entertainment platform but also as a substantial learning resource..

How Students Perceive The Use of Tiktok as a Medium to Learn Their Vocabulary Beyond of The Classroom

The majority of students had a positive opinion regarding the effectiveness and experience of learning using this platform. Most students, reaching 86.2%, agree or strongly agree that learning vocabulary is made easier through the use of TikTok. This view shows the perception that content presented in short video formats on TikTok facilitates better understanding of vocabulary. Furthermore, approximately 70.5% of students found the vocabulary learning process more enjoyable when conducted through TikTok. This indicates that the use of visual elements and creative approaches in learning can increase student interest and involvement. Regarding the speed of understanding new vocabulary, the majority of students (68.1%) agree that TikTok allows them to understand new vocabulary more quickly than through books. This factor highlights the effectiveness of the video format in communicating information in a faster and more entertaining way.

More interestingly, almost 56.8% of students think that they can understand new vocabulary faster through TikTok compared to learning in the classroom. However, some students acknowledge that this perception may vary depending on the material being studied. The motivational aspect also appears in this analysis. Around 79.6% of students stated that videos on TikTok were more interesting and able to increase their learning motivation. This shows that the use of visual elements, brief interactions, and the unique style of presentation on TikTok can liven up the learning atmosphere. Not only is it effective and fun, students also feel that using TikTok is not boring. The data shows that 75% of students feel that learning through TikTok does not make them feel bored or bored. Overall, the results of the analysis illustrate that the majority of students have a positive perception of using TikTok as a medium for learning vocabulary outside the classroom. They feel that the video format, creativity and approach adopted by TikTok can effectively increase their understanding and motivation to learn.

In summary, students' perceptions encompass their preferences, feelings, attitudes, and challenges related to using TikTok as a medium for vocabulary learning outside the classroom. In detail, these are elaborated as follows:

When asked about their preference for learning English vocabulary through the TikTok platform, students expressed varied views and reasons. Some students seemed enthusiastic about taking the opportunity to enrich their vocabulary through this social media platform, while others preferred other learning methods.

"Understanding learning through social media can be quite easy. By comprehending the learning on social media, we can better understand the material presented compared to the time spent at school. Not only one subject, but many topics related to the learning can be studied on social media"

Student also likes the concept of learning through TikTok, especially because the content that appears is often in accordance with their interests and goes into the "For You Page" (FYP). This allows them to learn vocabulary that is commonly used in everyday conversation, including trending new words in English.

"I like it because it's easier to understand, and it's more often seen on the For Your Page (FYP). It's usually used when communicating with friends, and there's often educational content on the FYP about the latest words, like English language trends or slang."-Student 3

In regards to the ease of learning English vocabulary through the media is a topic that attracts the attention of students. Student thinks that understanding learning through social media is quite easy. Accordingly, materials delivered through social media is easier to understand than at school. He also emphasized that through social media, many materials relevant to learning can be learned, as what he said:

"To understand the learning through social media can be relatively easy. By comprehending the teachings on social media, we can better grasp the material presented than when in school. It's not just one subject, but many related topics can be learned through social media."

Moreover, student argues that learning through media is easier because it is instant and not monotonous. According to him, the delivery of material in the media is clearer and more interesting, making it easier to understand. Students also agree that learning through the media is easier, especially because explanations from the media can be more easily understood than explanations from the teacher, as what he said:

"Yes, it's easier. Learning English vocabulary through media is easier to understand compared to the explanations of teachers."

However, students also admit that learning through media has advantages and disadvantages. While looking at pictures can help with understanding, they also find difficult at times, as one of the students stated :

"I find it easy because I can directly see the images I'm learning, but sometimes I also find it a bit challenging."

Further, the students agreed that learning English vocabulary through media is an easy and effective approach. Social media, especially TikTok, is considered a useful tool for enriching vocabulary and understanding English in a fun way. Although there are several views about the advantages and disadvantages of learning through the media, the majority agree that the media plays an important role in facilitating the process of learning English. Besides, students expressed their hopes that their English teachers should use social media, especially TikTok, to teach English vocabulary since they see the benefits of adopting the platform as a learning tool.

Overall, TikTok has proven itself to be an interesting and effective learning tool for improving English vocabulary. Through short and creative videos, visual support, and a fun learning atmosphere, students can easily

access, understand, and remember learning materials. As the platform continues to develop, the possibility that TikTok will become an important part of education is growing.

The results of this study are in line with the previous study conducted by Ericha Tiara Hutami et. al., (2021) and Umar (2022) both of which reported that students tend to feel positive about using TikTok as a learning medium. However, there are several aspects that still need to be improved, such as understanding the content and the effect of music in the learning context. With this in mind, TikTok can be an interesting addition to support learning, especially in terms of creativity and interactivity. In addition, the findings of this study are similar with those of Afidah et al., (2021), Fahdin (2020), Ining (2021), and Yang (2020) in which showed students' positive feedback by of utilizing TikTok as language learning media that English content video easy to understand and easy to memorize various vocabularies.

In addition, the findings from this study confirms the theory about multimedia learning (Mayer, 2009). Accordingly, multimedia supports how the human brain processes learning and how to structure multimedia instructional practices to improve cognitive strategies to help people learn efficiently in this theory it is also said that people learn more deeply from words and pictures, this is what is referred to as the multimedia principle (Sorden, 2005). According to Mayer, the words here can be spoken or written, and images can also be in the form of all graphic forms such as illustrations, photos, animations, or videos. As a cognitive learning theory, this theory is also related to working memory. This working memory can store messages or information in a short period of time (short term memory). In the ever-evolving digital era, the learning approach has undergone a significant transformation. One innovation that stands out is the use of social media platforms such as TikTok as an effective learning tool. The principles of Mayer's Theory of multimedia learning paved the way for the use of TikTok in increasing students' understanding of English vocabulary in creative and interesting ways. The use of TikTok as an English vocabulary learning tool is very promising based on principles in multimedia learning theory. By combining visual elements, modality, continuity, coherence, limiting redundancy, and adapting to individual differences, TikTok can be an effective and efficient means of increasing students' understanding, retention, and engagement in learning English.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how students use TikTok as a source of vocabulary learning outside the classroom and how they perceive its effectiveness as a learning medium. The findings from the questionnaires and interviews shed light on various aspects of this phenomenon. In conclusion, this study underscores the potential of TikTok as a valuable medium for learning English vocabulary outside the classroom. Its visual and creative nature, coupled with the flexibility and entertainment it offers, aligns well with students' learning preferences. While challenges exist, the majority of students perceive TikTok as an effective tool for enhancing their vocabulary learning experience. As technology continues to shape education, TikTok stands out as a platform that can bridge the gap between traditional learning approaches and contemporary student expectations.

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