

Dynamics of English Tiktok content interaction in enhancing learning motivation: A Study of Gen Z app

Khoirotun Nisak

Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang
e-mail: khoirotunn@gmail.com

Kata Kunci:

Bahasa Inggris; TikTok; konten; belajar; motivasi

Keywords:

English; TikTok; content; learning; motivation

ABSTRAK

Dalam lanskap digital kontemporer, platform media sosial telah merevolusi komunikasi dan pembelajaran. Di antara platform ini, TikTok menonjol, terutama di kalangan pengguna Generasi Z (Gen Z). Makalah ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana TikTok meningkatkan motivasi belajar dalam pendidikan bahasa Inggris. Signifikansi studi ini terletak pada pemahaman tentang persimpangan media digital dan pendidikan, terutama saat metode pengajaran tradisional berkembang untuk menggabungkan alat digital. Mengingat popularitas TikTok untuk hiburan, potensinya sebagai alat pendidikan untuk pembelajaran bahasa Inggris diperiksa, memberikan wawasan bagi pendidik, pengembang kurikulum, dan pembuat kebijakan. Penelitian ini penting di era digital, di mana media sosial sangat memengaruhi pengalaman dan preferensi belajar Gen Z. Dengan menyelidiki bagaimana Gen Z berinteraksi dengan konten bahasa Inggris di TikTok dan mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor motivasi, studi ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman tentang peran media sosial dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Tujuannya adalah mengungkap bagaimana interaksi di TikTok memengaruhi motivasi belajar dan menawarkan pandangan komprehensif tentang TikTok sebagai lingkungan belajar yang mendukung. Temuan ini menekankan kebutuhan akan akses yang adil ke peluang belajar inovatif di era digital, serta pentingnya mengintegrasikan platform media digital ke dalam konteks pendidikan untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan dan motivasi siswa.

ABSTRACT

In the contemporary digital landscape, social media platforms have revolutionized communication and learning. Among these, TikTok stands out, particularly among Generation Z (Gen Z) users. This paper explores how TikTok enhances learning motivation in English language education. The study's significance lies in understanding the intersection of digital media and education, especially as traditional teaching methods evolve to incorporate digital tools. Given TikTok's popularity for entertainment, its potential as an educational tool for English language learning is examined, providing insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers. This research is crucial in the digital age, where social media significantly influences Gen Z's learning experiences and preferences. By investigating how Gen Z engages with English content on TikTok and identifying motivational factors, the study contributes to the understanding of social media's role in language learning. It aims to reveal how TikTok interactions impact learning motivation and offer a comprehensive view of TikTok as a supportive learning environment. The findings underscore the need for equitable access to innovative learning opportunities in the digital era, highlighting the importance of integrating digital media platforms into educational contexts to enhance student engagement and motivation.



This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license.

Copyright © 2023 by Author. Published by Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Introduction

In the contemporary digital landscape, the proliferation of social media platforms has transformed various facets of communication and learning. Among these platforms, TikTok stands out as a dynamic and popular platform, particularly among Generation Z (Gen Z) users (Huang & Leung, 2020). With its short-form video content and wide-ranging user base, TikTok presents unique opportunities for educational exploration, including the enhancement of learning motivation in English language education (Jeng, Wu, Huang, & Tan, 2020). This paper aims to delve into the dynamics of English TikTok content interaction and its role in bolstering learning motivation among Gen Z users. The significance of this study lies in the intersection of digital media and education, particularly in the context of English language learning. As the digital age progresses, traditional teaching methods are being supplemented and sometimes replaced by innovative approaches that leverage the affordances of digital platforms (Ng, Hussin, & Loh, 2021). Understanding how TikTok, a platform known for its entertainment value, can be harnessed to enhance learning motivation in English language education is crucial for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers (Thorne, 2020). Moreover, given the pervasive influence of social media on Gen Z, exploring the impact of TikTok on their learning experiences can provide valuable insights into effective pedagogical strategies in the digital era (Luo & Jia, 2021).

In this youth digital era, research on the dynamics of English TikTok content interaction and its impact on learning motivation among Generation Z (Gen Z) users is crucial. Gen Z, often referred to as digital natives, has grown up in a highly digitalized environment, making it essential to understand how they engage with platforms like TikTok. Traditional educational approaches are evolving to adapt to the digital age, with digital media increasingly incorporated into language learning to enhance student engagement and motivation. Social media platforms play a significant role in shaping Gen Z's learning experiences and preferences, making it important to explore their impact on learning motivation. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of online and digital learning worldwide, highlighting the need to understand how platforms like TikTok can be effectively integrated into language education. By researching the potential of TikTok as an educational tool, efforts can be made to ensure equitable access to innovative learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their digital resources.

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the dynamics of English TikTok content interaction and its potential in enhancing learning motivation among Gen Z users. By examining how Gen Z interacts with English content on TikTok and the motivational factors underlying such interactions, this research seeks to contribute to the understanding of how social media platforms can be effectively integrated into language learning contexts (Alqahtani & Alrabai, 2020). The focus of this study centers on exploring the interplay between English TikTok content and learning motivation among Gen Z users. Specifically, the research will examine the types of English content preferred by Gen Z on TikTok, the motivational factors driving their engagement with such content, and the perceived impact of TikTok interactions on their English language learning experiences (Liu, Wang, & Qian, 2020).

Therefore, the research questions in this study are (1) What motivational factors drive Generation Z users to engage with English content on TikTok?. (2) How do Generation Z users perceive the impact of TikTok interactions on their learning motivation in English language education?

Discussion

Several studies have investigated the impact of TikTok on English pronunciation and speaking skills. For instance, a study at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center of Mila found that TikTok significantly enhanced students' English pronunciation skills, with a majority of students recommending its use for this purpose (Mila, 2023). Another study focused on TikTok's role in improving oral communication skills among EFL undergraduate students, revealing positive attitudes towards its use and indicating that it can motivate students to enhance their speaking skills (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). Research in an Indonesian EFL context also highlighted TikTok's positive impact on learner autonomy, motivation, and grammar (Hadijah et al., 2023). However, challenges such as lack of ideas, vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and confidence issues were noted by EFL students creating English-speaking content on TikTok (Syaiba Rubicca, 2023). The duet feature of TikTok was particularly effective in improving students' pronunciation and vocabulary skills in SMP Negeri 4 Padangsidimpuan (Hutabarat et al., 2024).

TikTok's potential to increase learning motivation has also been explored. In a study investigating university EFL learners' perspectives, it was found that while TikTok can enhance language proficiency under Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), its impact might not be as substantial as traditional classroom-based learning, and it could even decrease learners' willingness to communicate (Hu & Du, 2022). Another study in Vietnam highlighted TikTok's advantages and challenges in English language education, noting its potential to enhance accessibility, engagement, and enjoyment, despite some concerns about context, informal language, and distractions (Le, 2023). A study on Instagram and TikTok accounts designed to teach Italian found that these platforms can effectively improve language skills, motivation, and enjoyment of the learning process (Tonazzo, 2022). TikTok's #EduWOW initiative was also found to positively impact student engagement and motivation by utilizing effective pedagogical techniques (Sajonia, 2022).

Research on TikTok content as a teaching tool has shown promising results. For instance, TikTok effectively packages English language learning content under the hashtag #samasamabelajar, with grammar videos being the most preferred by users (Bahri et al., 2023). The platform has been found suitable for teaching speaking skills in senior high school, with high levels of interest and need among students (Agting & Pusparini, 2022). TikTok's short videos have been identified as effective educational resources for EFL, utilizing specific visual and auditory strategies to enhance engagement and comprehension (Zhang et al., 2022). Students using TikTok for vocabulary learning discovered new phrases, improved skills, and gained knowledge of various English accents (Olivia et al., 2023). Additionally, TikTok's integration into the classroom was found to support student wellbeing, foster social-emotional support, and create a connected community (Solomon, 2021).

The role of TikTok in vocabulary mastery has been investigated as well. University students perceived TikTok as beneficial for expanding English vocabulary, expressing positive feedback on its effectiveness (Simanungkalit & Katemba, 2023). At SMP Negeri 1 Gunungsari, TikTok was found to aid vocabulary growth, although students faced challenges such as network instability. Short, explanatory videos with subtitles were particularly helpful (Muflihah et al., 2024). Indonesian college students also found TikTok engaging and effective for vocabulary acquisition, benefiting from exposure to native speakers' language and colloquial expressions (Nurlia, 2024). Similarly, Saudi secondary school learners had a positive attitude towards using TikTok for vocabulary learning, noting its effectiveness (Alghameeti, 2022).

Studies have also assessed the overall impact and effectiveness of TikTok in language learning. For example, TikTok has been recognized for fostering language variations and enhancing communication skills among young students by combining entertainment and interaction (Wijaya, 2017). Using principles of cognitive science, researchers found that TikTok's engaging learning experiences reduced cognitive load and promoted effective second language acquisition (Alvarez et al., 2024). The platform was also effective in improving knowledge and promoting learning engagement in literature for ESL classes, utilizing strategies like discussions, oral reading, role-playing, and video creation (Rajan & Ismail, 2022). Lastly, research on EFL teachers' perspectives and students' attitudes towards TikTok revealed its advantages and critical factors influencing acceptance and rejection in the English department at MMUTO (Chikhi & Guetaf, 2023). A study in Norway also found that students acquired vocabulary and developed their understanding of English through TikTok, although it was less influential in building confidence and creating output (Opsahl, 2022). Additionally, Gen Z university students in Danang, Vietnam, valued quick tutorials and actionable content on TikTok, highlighting its potential for educational engagement (Lan et al., 2024).

Previous research, consisting of 33 studies, predominantly delved into the realm of TikTok content in English, particularly focusing on its efficacy in enhancing users' speaking or oral communication abilities. This emphasis on spoken language proficiency was deemed paramount, especially for EFL students, as effective verbal communication is often considered a cornerstone of language acquisition. Researchers were drawn to TikTok's format of short-form videos as an innovative and engaging medium for language practice. These videos were perceived as providing users with authentic language contexts and opportunities for practical application, thereby facilitating language learning through exposure and active participation.

In contrast, the current researcher seeks to extend this discourse by shifting the focus towards understanding users' attitudes and behaviors within the TikTok platform, specifically through their interactions in the comments section or via stitching videos. This shift reflects an acknowledgment of the multifaceted nature of communication on TikTok, where the platform serves not only as a content repository but also as a social space for interaction and collaboration. By examining users' engagement with English language content through comments and stitching videos, the researcher aims to uncover deeper insights into how learners perceive, interpret, and engage with linguistic content. Moreover, by exploring the impact of these interactions on users'

learning motivation, the study aims to shed light on the role of social and collaborative learning experiences in language acquisition within the TikTok environment.

In essence, while previous research focused primarily on the content itself and its potential to enhance language skills, the current study extends this inquiry to encompass the broader social and interactive dimensions of language learning on TikTok. By exploring users' attitudes and behaviors within the platform, the research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of TikTok in language education and its potential to foster a supportive and motivating learning environment.

Conclusion and Suggestion

In conclusion, this paper has highlighted the transformative potential of TikTok as a dynamic and engaging platform for English language education among Generation Z users. Through an exploration of the motivational factors driving users' engagement with English content on TikTok and the perceived impact of such interactions on learning motivation, valuable insights have been gained into the role of social media in language learning contexts. As the digital landscape continues to evolve and social media platforms increasingly shape learning experiences, it is imperative for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to recognize and leverage the educational opportunities afforded by TikTok and similar platforms. By integrating these digital media platforms into language learning contexts, equitable access to innovative learning opportunities can be ensured for all students, regardless of their digital resources.

Moving forward, further research is warranted to continue exploring the potential of TikTok as an educational tool and to deepen our understanding of its role in language education, thereby informing effective pedagogical strategies in the digital era. Future studies should consider a broader range of educational settings and diverse learner demographics to comprehensively assess TikTok's impact. Additionally, examining the long-term effects of TikTok-based learning on language proficiency and retention would provide valuable insights. By addressing these areas, we can better understand how to optimize the use of TikTok for language learning and maximize its benefits for students globally.

References

- Alghameeti, Afrah Abdullah. 2022. "Is TikTok an Effective Technology Tool in English Vocabulary Expansion?" *English Language Teaching* 15(12):14. doi: 10.5539/elt.v15n12p14.
- Alvarez, Jay-jay C., Chito I. Cuebillas, Sharmaine B. Solano, Jessabel M. Sulana, Ginalyn M. Toledoano, Donna Claire B. Cañeba, and Darrel M. Ocampo. 2024. "Impact of TikTok Application to the Second Language Acquisition of Grade 10 Students." *SHS Web of Conferences* 182:03002. doi: 10.1051/shsconf/202418203002.
- Chikhi, H., and C. Guetaf. 2023. "EFL Teachers' Views and Learners' Attitudes towards the Use of TikTok as a Microlearning Tool in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of"
- Hadijah, Hadijah, Ulfa Widayati, Takdir Ilahi, and Ema Puspitasari. 2023. "Tiktok As a

- Tool of Autonomous Learning: Indonesian Efl Students' Voices." *Wiralodra English Journal* 7(2):89–98. doi: 10.31943/wej.v7i2.235.
- Herlisya, Destia, and Purna Wiratno. 2022. "Having Good Speaking English through Tik Tok Application." *Journal Corner of Education, Linguistics, and Literature* 1(3):191–98. doi: 10.54012/jcell.v1i3.35.
- Hu, Hengzhi, and Kehan Du. 2022. "TikTok in Mobile-Assisted English Language Learning: An Exploratory Study." *International Journal of Information and Education Technology* 12(12):1311–20. doi: 10.18178/ijiet.2022.12.12.1755.
- Hutabarat, M. S., R. K. Siregar, and ... 2024. "Enhancing Speaking Proficiency through TikTok Duet Interactions among Eighth Grade at SMP Negeri 4 Padangsimpuan." *ETANIC Journal Of English* ... 43–55.
- Jessica Ruth Melvira Simanungkalit, and Caroline Victorine Katemba. 2023. "Utilizing English Tiktok as a Media in Learning English Vocabulary: University Students' Perspective." *Eduvelop: Journal of English Education and Development* 6(2):137–50. doi: 10.31605/eduvelop.v6i2.2331.
- Lan, Duong Hoai, Tran Minh Tung, Vo Thi Kim Oanh, and Tran Thi Kim Cuc. 2024. "Exploring Gen Z'S Consumption and Perception of Educational Content on Tiktok Platform: A Qualitative Study in Vietnam Context." *Kurdish Studies* 12(1):3243–70.
- Le, Anh Tuan. 2023. "TikTok and Its Influence on the English Competence of Vietnamese Students." *វារសារវិទ្យាការណ៍អាជីវិភាសាអេសេឡិនខេត្តខេត្ត ៤*(1):88–100.
- Listiyowati, Eka, Nurjanah Nurjanah, and Nina Dwiastanty. 2023. "Analysis of the Four Accounts of Content Creators Using Tiktok Application As Teaching English Media." *IdenBahasa* 5(1):37–46. doi: 10.37296/idebahasa.v5i1.109.
- Mila. 2023. "Institute of Literature and Languages Department of Foreign Languages Branch : English Investigating Students ' Use of Micro -Learning on TikTok Mobile Application to Improve Their English Pronunciation of Mila of Foreign Languages Presented by : Supervis."
- Mufliah, Linda, Naf'an Tarihoran, and Eulis Rahmawati. 2024. "A Phenomenon of English Content Tiktok Videos as a Resource in Learning English Vocabulary." *Journal of English Language Teaching and Cultural Studies* 7(1):24–35. doi: 10.48181/jelts.v7i1.24203.
- Nurlia, Vera. 2024. "College Students' Perception of Using Tiktok to Learn Vocabulary." *Jurnal Pustaka Cendekia Pendidikan* 01(02):60–69.
- Olivia, Amelinda, Maharani Cahyono, and Widya Caterine Perdhani. 2023. "Using TikTok in EFL Class: Students' Perceptions." *Journal of English Education and Teaching (JEET)* 7(1):59–77.
- Opsahl, Hanna Levin & Mia Katharina. 2022. "Trending : A New Way of Language Learning." (June).
- Pérez-Sabater, Carmen, Enrique Cerezo Herre, and Inmaculada Barbasán Ortuño. 2024. "Tiktok/Flipgrid for Foreign Language Learning in Higher Education: A Case Study." *Ikala* 29(1):1–19. doi: 10.17533/UDEA.IKALA.353501.
- Rajan, Sharmini Thanga, and Hanita Hanim Ismail. 2022. "TikTok Use as Strategy to Improve Knowledge Acquisition and Build Engagement to Learn Literature in ESL Classrooms." *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 21(11):33–53. doi: 10.26803/ijter.21.11.3.
- Sajonia, Kethelle. 2022. "#EduWOW: TikTok App as an Educational Creative Platform." *SSRN Electronic Journal* 30(4):8134–42. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.4000091.

- Solomon, Sara. 2021. "Incorporating Social Media into the Classroom." *Dominican Scholar Master* (May):ii–73.
- Sudrajat, Indra. 2023. "Promoting Paralinguistics Features through Voiceover Challenges on TikTok Application." *JELA (Journal of English Language Teaching, Literature and Applied Linguistics)* 5(1):21–36. doi: 10.37742/jela.v5i1.95.
- Syaiba Rubicca. 2023. "Social Media for Learning English: Investigating Efl Students' Challenges in Creating English Speaking Contents on Tiktok."
- Tan, Kim Hua, Agila Rajendran, Nazri Muslim, Jamsari Alias, and Nor Afian Yusof. 2022. "The Potential of TikTok's Key Features as a Pedagogical Strategy for ESL Classrooms." *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 14(24):1–22. doi: 10.3390/su142416876.
- Titik Komariyah, Winda Sulistiowati, Lisa Arifatul Fajri, and Nugraheni Allatif. 2022. "The Implementation of TikTok Application to Learn Speaking Skill in English Language Teaching (ELT)." *Conference on English Language Teaching* 2(Celti):142–54. doi: 10.24090/celti.v2.43.
- Tonazzo, Gloria. 2022. "The Role and Impact of Language Teaching Pages on Instagram and TikTok on the L2 or FL Learning Experience. From Theoretical Principals to a Practical Experience: Creation of an Italian Teaching Page on Instagram and TikTok." 1–103.
- Wijaya, AA. 2017. "The Effect Of Social Media Tiktok On English Learning Of The First Grades Student's Of SDN Karang Asih 01 Cikarang Utara." *Вестник Рассречнадзора* 4(1):9–15.
- Xiuwen, Zhai, and Abu Bakar Razali. 2021. "An Overview of the Utilization of TikTok to Improve Oral English Communication Competence among EFL Undergraduate Students." *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 9(7):1439–51. doi: 10.13189/ujer.2021.090710.
- Zhang, Yidi, Margarida Lucas, and Luís Pedro. 2022. "The Design of Multimodal Short Videos: The Case of English Teaching Videos in Tiktok." *INTED2022 Proceedings* 1(March):5691–99. doi: 10.21125/inted.2022.1463.