

# The Use of Tiktok to Teach Speaking in Descriptive Text

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## Abstract

The English learning process in Indonesia faces significant challenges, particularly in the speaking aspect, where students experience difficulties in comprehension and fluency. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of TikTok as a learning tool to improve students' speaking abilities, focusing on comprehension and fluency. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing the Mann-Whitney U test for data analysis. Two student groups were involved: one group was taught using TikTok, while the other group followed traditional teaching methods. The results revealed a significant difference in learning outcomes between the two groups. The TikTok group achieved an average learning outcome of 22.18, whereas the non-TikTok group scored an average of 12.82. These findings indicate that TikTok is an effective medium for enhancing speaking skills, particularly in comprehension and fluency. The study demonstrates the potential of incorporating social media platforms like TikTok into language learning, offering a more engaging and interactive approach.

**Keywords:** Speaking, TikTok, Instructional Media



By Authors

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## Introduction

The acquisition of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia remains a significant challenge, particularly in speaking skills. Previous studies have highlighted that Indonesian students face difficulties in mastering grammar, speaking, listening, writing, and reading <sup>1</sup>. Effective EFL programs require skilled instructors; however, issues such as instructor discomfort, non-interactive teaching methods, and lack of expertise significantly hinder the learning process <sup>2</sup>. Given that

<sup>1</sup> Muflih A Zufar and Dwi Astuti, "Analysis of Logical Thinking Ability of Students 1G Madrasah Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta Academic Year 2022/2023," *Math Didactic Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika* 9, no. 1 (2023): 60–70.

<sup>2</sup> Chun Lai, "The Influence of Extramural Access to Mainstream Culture Social Media on Ethnic Minority Students' Motivation for Language Learning," *British Journal of Educational Technology* 50, no. 4 (2018): 1929–1941.

spoken English demands active engagement and interaction, educators must explore more effective strategies to foster students' language proficiency, especially in speaking <sup>3</sup>.

Speaking, as defined, is an interactive process involving the production, reception, and processing of information <sup>4</sup>. It is a productive skill that demands systematic verbal utterances and a clear understanding of its underlying components <sup>5</sup>. Key aspects of speaking include comprehension, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation <sup>6</sup>. This research focuses on enhancing comprehension and fluency, using TikTok as a pedagogical tool, aligning with current digital trends where students are more engaged through interactive media <sup>7</sup>.

Comprehension refers to understanding the meaning conveyed by a speaker, while fluency is the ability to articulate thoughts smoothly without unnecessary pauses <sup>8</sup>. This study explores the enhancement of these components through innovative teaching methods. As emphasized by Cahyaningrum et al., comprehensibility plays a crucial role in fostering mutual understanding, while fluency supports continuous speech flow during communication <sup>9</sup>.

Instructional media is an essential tool in modern pedagogy, serving to effectively deliver lesson materials and clarify complex concepts <sup>10</sup>. The rise of social media platforms, such as TikTok, holds considerable potential in enhancing educational experiences due to their interactive nature and widespread appeal among students <sup>11</sup>. TikTok's audiovisual characteristics offer an innovative avenue for language practice, enabling students to engage with spoken English in a dynamic and enjoyable manner <sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Harto Malik et al., "Identification of Barriers and Challenges to Teaching English at an Early Age in Indonesia: An International Publication Analysis Study," *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. 1 (2021): 217–229.

<sup>4</sup> Doris Dippold et al., "Taking ELF off the Shelf: Developing HE Students' Speaking Skills through a Focus on English as a Lingua Franca," *Linguistics and Education* (2019); Novela Ananda and Hastini Hastini, "A Study on Self-Confidence Impact of ELF Students' Speaking," *Journal of General Education and Humanities* (2023); Dr. Fadiel Mohammed Musa, "Evaluating ELF Students' Speaking Skill at Tertiary Level," *International Journal online of Humanities* (2021).

<sup>5</sup> Muneera Muftah, "Impact of Social Media on Learning English Language During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Psu Research Review* 8, no. 1 (2022): 211–226.

<sup>6</sup> Shek Kam Tse et al., "A Longitudinal Investigation into the Chinese Language Development of Non-Chinese Speaking Preschoolers in Hong Kong," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* (2021); Ana Gallego et al., "Examining the Relationship between Public Speaking Anxiety, Distress Tolerance and Psychological Flexibility," *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science* (2020); Judith J. Voogt et al., "Speaking up, Support, Control and Work Engagement of Medical Residents. A Structural Equation Modelling Analysis," *Medical Education* (2019).

<sup>7</sup> Missi T Astuti, Shalawati Shalawati, and Sitti Hadijah, "Learning English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia: Senior High School Students' Motivation and Challenges," *Al-Isblah Jurnal Pendidikan* 14, no. 4 (2022): 7001–7016.

<sup>8</sup> Siti A Nuraini, Sudiran Sudiran, and Hartono Hartono, "Enhancing Speaking Skills of Non-English Major Students: Evaluating the Impact of Sociodramatic Games," *Veles Voice of English Language Education Society* 7, no. 3 (2023): 765–774.

<sup>9</sup> Rasman Rasman, "To Translanguage or Not to Translanguage? The Multilingual Practice in an Indonesian Efl Classroom," *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 7, no. 3 (2018): 687; Nikmatus Solikhah and Muhammad J Sofi, "Teacher's Strategies for Stimulating EFL Students' Active Learning in an Indonesian Senior High School," *Erudita Journal of English Language Teaching* 3, no. 2 (2023): 144–155.

<sup>10</sup> Woro E Sitoresmi and Nina A Damayanti, "The Syllabus Evaluation: Our Discovery Island 5–Student Book Published by Pearson Education," *Jurnal Jendela Pendidikan* 2, no. 03 (2022): 459–464.

<sup>11</sup> Kireina Utomo et al., "Pre-Service Teacher's Perspective on the Use of Communicative Learning Methods: A Case Study on Foreign Language Teaching (English-Japanese)" (2023).

<sup>12</sup> Dzakia Tunnisa, Murni Mahmud, and Kisman Salija, "Investigating Teacher's Sense of Humor in Indonesia," *International Journal of Language Education* (2019): 99–114.

The features of TikTok, such as music integration, video effects, and collaborative tools, offer opportunities to promote student creativity. In particular, the duet feature enables students to practice speaking by pairing their voices with others, fostering collaborative learning experiences<sup>13</sup>. This research aims to leverage TikTok's features to improve speaking skills, encouraging students to consistently engage in creative language practice.

This study investigates the effectiveness of TikTok in enhancing comprehension and fluency in EFL, contributing to existing literature on social media's role in language acquisition<sup>14</sup>. It seeks to provide practical insights for educators interested in incorporating technology into their teaching practices.

Recent studies have documented TikTok's influence on students' speaking skills. Wahyu et al. found significant improvements in students' language abilities with TikTok use<sup>15</sup>, while Hartini et al. observed a marked impact on speaking capabilities, supported by statistically significant findings<sup>16</sup>. Despite these promising results, there is limited research examining specific aspects of speaking skills, particularly comprehension and fluency. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of these components in the context of learning descriptive texts using TikTok.

The integration of TikTok into language instruction represents a forward-thinking approach to language teaching, responding to the challenges of traditional methodologies and aligning with current technological trends in education<sup>17</sup>. Engaging students through trending media such as TikTok promotes active learning, enhancing their language acquisition in a more interactive and innovative environment.

The inclusion of TikTok in EFL learning offers new opportunities for language instruction, addressing pedagogical demands and fostering student engagement. This research aims to explore TikTok's potential as a tool for improving speaking skills, particularly comprehension and fluency, contributing to the ongoing discourse on the role of technology in language education<sup>18</sup>.

## Methods

This study adopts a quantitative research design, employing a quasi-experimental approach to investigate the effectiveness of TikTok as a medium for improving English speaking skills among Indonesian students. The quasi-experimental design is particularly suitable for this research because it allows for comparisons between an experimental group and a control group while

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<sup>13</sup> Siti To'ifah and Fatimah Sari, "An Exploration of University Students' Challenges in Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) During COVID-19 Pandemic," *Teknosastik* 20, no. 2 (2022): 113.

<sup>14</sup> Ulin Ni'mah, "Case Study: The Role of Learning Strategies, Personality and Motivation in the Second Language Acquisition: Writing Proficiency of a Somalian Student," *Journal of English for Academic and Specific Purposes (Jeasp)* 3, no. 1 (2020): 43–55.

<sup>15</sup> Rebaz B M Nuri et al., "Pedagogical Effects of Social Media on Iraqi Kurd EFL Learners," *Arab World English Journal* 7, no. 1 (2021): 202–216.

<sup>16</sup> Caroline V Katemba, "Theatrical Performance and English as a Foreign Language Learning," *Ekspressi Seni Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Dan Karya Seni* 23, no. 2 (2021): 462.

<sup>17</sup> Nurul Fitri, Nina Afrida, and Cut I Meutia, "English Foreign Language Teachers' Perception on the Use of Information and Communication Technology in Teaching English at SMKN 3 Langsa," *Jolcc* 2, no. 1 (2024): 1–17.

<sup>18</sup> Zhongzheng Zhao et al., "Social Media and Academic Success: Impacts of Using Telegram on Foreign Language Motivation, Foreign Language Anxiety, and Attitude Toward Learning Among EFL Learners," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (2022).

acknowledging the challenges related to controlling external variables that may influence the outcomes<sup>19</sup>.

The participants in this study consist of first-year English language students from SMKN 1 Trowulan, selected based on purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the sample met specific criteria essential for the research objectives. Consequently, two classes were designated: Class 10 A served as the experimental group, while Class 10 B functioned as the control group. A total of 34 students participated in the study, comprising an equal distribution of students from both classes, ensuring a relevant sample for analyzing the impact of TikTok on their speaking skills.

Data collection involved both pre-test and post-test assessments to measure the speaking skills of the students before and after the intervention. The research utilized a single-group pre-test and post-test design, which is an established method in quasi-experimental research. This method involves assessing participants' speaking skills through a standardized test prior to the implementation of the TikTok-based instructional intervention, followed by another assessment after the intervention has been conducted Dewi & Nugraheni<sup>20</sup>.

The instruments used for data collection included structured speaking tests, designed to evaluate students' comprehension and fluency in English speaking. The tests were developed to align with the objectives of the research, focusing specifically on evaluating speaking skills in response to TikTok-based learning activities. The speaking tests were administered under controlled conditions to reduce variability and ensure reliable measures of student performance.

Data analysis was conducted using the Mann-Whitney test, an appropriate non-parametric statistical method. This choice was necessitated by the preliminary analysis indicating that the data distributions were not normal and homogenous, rendering parametric tests unsuitable. The Mann-Whitney test allowed for a robust comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores of both the experimental and control groups, facilitating the evaluation of the efficacy of TikTok as a learning medium for enhancing speaking skills.

The intervention consisted of a series of TikTok-based learning activities that encouraged active engagement among students. These activities integrated the use of TikTok's features to promote dynamic interaction and collaborative learning, aimed at enhancing both comprehension and fluency aspects of speaking. Students in the experimental group were encouraged to create and participate in speaking tasks using TikTok, providing an engaging platform conducive to practicing their speaking skills in a socially relevant context.

This research employs a systematic quantitative approach to explore the impact of TikTok on speaking skills, utilizing well-defined methods for participant selection, data collection, and analysis. By employing a quasi-experimental design and focusing on specific language skill

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<sup>19</sup> N C Ramos and J V Berrocoso, "Social Media in Higher Education: Systematic Review of the Literature (2018-2023)," *International Journal of Educational Research and Innovation* 2024, no. 21 (2024), <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85200038387&doi=10.46661%2Fijeri.9602&partnerID=40&md5=9164b15de50f42319145e337445fdcef>.

<sup>20</sup> I Dewi and Aninditya S Nugraheni, "Media Mind Mapping Untuk Meningkatkan Pemahaman Materi Kalimat Berpol,," *Guru Tua Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 5, no. 2 (2022): 31–40.

components, this study aims to contribute valuable insights into innovative language teaching methodologies in a contemporary educational landscape.

Result And Discussion

Result

The primary objective of this research was to investigate whether the use of TikTok could significantly improve students' speaking skills, with a focus on comprehension and fluency. In this study, TikTok served as the independent variable, and speaking skills were the dependent variable. The data from the experimental group (which used TikTok) and the control group (which did not use TikTok) were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test, as the data did not meet the assumptions of normal distribution, requiring a non-parametric test.

The participants in this study were first-year English language students at SMKN 1 Trowulan, selected through purposive sampling. This method ensured that participants met specific criteria relevant to the research goals. The students were divided into two groups: Class 10A (experimental group) and Class 10B (control group). A total of 34 students participated, with an equal distribution across both groups, ensuring a balanced and representative sample for the research.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to assess the differences in post-test scores between the two groups. The results are summarized in Table 1, which presents the mean ranks and the sum of ranks for both groups:

| Table 1: Mann-Whitney Rank Test        |    |           |              |
|----------------------------------------|----|-----------|--------------|
| Class                                  | N  | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
| Post-test results (control group)      | 17 | 12.82     | 218.00       |
| Post-test results (experimental group) | 17 | 22.18     | 377.00       |
| Total                                  | 34 |           |              |

From Table 1, it is evident that the experimental group (those who used TikTok) achieved significantly higher post-test scores, with a mean rank of 22.18 compared to the control group's mean rank of 12.82. The difference in mean ranks (9.26) highlights a substantial impact of TikTok on students' speaking outcomes. The sum of ranks for the experimental group was 377.00, while the control group had a sum of ranks of 218.00, further indicating a notable disparity between the groups.

In order to further analyze the data, the Mann-Whitney U test results are provided in Table 2, which details the statistical analysis of the post-test scores for both groups:

Table 2: Mann-Whitney Test for Students' Speaking Skills

| Test Statistic | Value   |
|----------------|---------|
| Mann-Whitney U | 65.000  |
| Wilcoxon W     | 218.000 |
| Z              | -3.319  |

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.001 |
| Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)] | 0.005 |

The Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.001 is well below the critical threshold of 0.05, which confirms that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) should be rejected. This result supports the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), indicating that there is a significant difference in the speaking skills of students between the experimental and control groups. Specifically, TikTok's use significantly improved students' speaking abilities, particularly in the areas of comprehension and fluency.

## Discussion

The findings of this study offer significant insights into the effectiveness of TikTok as a medium for improving speaking skills, specifically in the areas of comprehension and fluency, among Indonesian EFL learners. The results align with the growing body of research on the use of social media platforms, such as TikTok, in language learning, but with a more focused exploration of how TikTok affects specific aspects of speaking. This research contributes to the existing literature by narrowing the scope of investigation to comprehension and fluency, areas critical to achieving proficiency in spoken English.

The findings of this study are consistent with earlier studies, such as those by Wahyu et al.<sup>21</sup> and Hartini et al.<sup>22</sup>, which demonstrated that TikTok enhances speaking skills through its engaging, interactive nature. Wahyu et al.<sup>23</sup> found significant improvements in language abilities attributed to TikTok, similar to the outcomes observed in the present study. The experimental group in this study showed an average learning improvement of 9.26 points compared to the control group, suggesting that TikTok's audiovisual features, such as music integration and video effects, help engage students in a more meaningful, interactive manner, which is conducive to learning<sup>24</sup>. The current study validates these findings by focusing specifically on comprehension and fluency, which have been shown to be two of the most challenging aspects of speaking skills for EFL learners<sup>25</sup>.

The theoretical framework of communicative language teaching (CLT) emphasizes the importance of interaction and real-world communication in language acquisition<sup>26</sup>. TikTok's interactive features, such as the duet function, enable students to engage in real-time, authentic communication with their peers and with content creators. This dynamic interaction likely contributes to improved comprehension, as students are required to process spoken language in

<sup>21</sup> Riswan T R I Wahyu, Nihta V F Liando, and Rinny S Rorimpandey, "The Implementation of TikTok as Media Teaching to Improve Students' Speaking Ability" 2, no. 12 (2023): 1551–1564.

<sup>22</sup> Reni Hartini, Ari Fajria Novari, and Tatu Munawaroh, "The Effect of Using TikTok Application towards Students' Speaking Skill at the Tenth Grade Students of SMKN 5 Pandeglang in Academic Year 2022/2023," 2023-11-16.

<sup>23</sup> Wahyu, Liando, and Rorimpandey, "The Implementation of TikTok as Media Teaching to Improve Students' Speaking Ability."

<sup>24</sup> Tunnisa, Mahmud, and Salija, "Investigating Teacher's Sense of Humor in Indonesia."

<sup>25</sup> Malik et al., "Identification of Barriers and Challenges to Teaching English at an Early Age in Indonesia: An International Publication Analysis Study."

<sup>26</sup> Jack C Richards and Theodore S Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (Cambridge university press, 2014).

various contexts and apply it actively. Similarly, fluency is fostered as students practice articulating their thoughts more smoothly and coherently while participating in collaborative tasks on TikTok. These findings are in line with Nuraini et al.<sup>27</sup>, who define fluency as the ability to express oneself without hesitation, an aspect that TikTok's structure supports by encouraging students to speak continuously in a low-pressure environment.

In comparison to previous studies, such as those by Dewi<sup>28</sup>, this study makes a more direct contribution by isolating specific components of speaking skills—comprehension and fluency—and analyzing how TikTok influences them. While past studies, like those by Irawan<sup>29</sup> and Zhou<sup>30</sup>, have demonstrated TikTok's effectiveness in improving general language skills, this research contributes by offering a detailed examination of how TikTok improves two critical components of speaking that are often overlooked in broader studies. The specific focus on comprehension and fluency in the context of learning descriptive texts is a novel approach that expands our understanding of how TikTok can be used to enhance language learning.

Moreover, the present study highlights the interactive and creative aspects of TikTok that appeal to students in the digital age. Social media platforms, especially TikTok, are widely used by students outside of the classroom, making them a familiar and engaging tool for language learning. This resonates with the findings of Fitri et al.<sup>31</sup>, who emphasized the potential of social media as a pedagogical tool to bridge the gap between traditional language teaching and the needs of contemporary learners. By using a platform that students already engage with regularly, educators can foster a more natural and comfortable learning environment, which increases motivation and engagement. This approach aligns with the current shift towards student-centered learning, which prioritizes active participation and creative expression.

The findings of this study also have important pedagogical implications. By using TikTok as a teaching tool, educators can create more interactive and engaging learning experiences that go beyond traditional, passive learning methods. TikTok's multimedia features provide students with the opportunity to practice speaking in ways that are both fun and academically relevant, enhancing both their comprehension and fluency. Moreover, the collaborative aspects of TikTok—such as the duet function—promote peer interaction, which is crucial for language development<sup>32</sup>. This social interaction encourages learners to communicate more effectively and provides them with immediate feedback, which is essential for improvement.

However, despite the promising findings, there are challenges associated with using TikTok as an instructional medium. For instance, students may face difficulties balancing the creative aspects

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<sup>27</sup> Nuraini, Sudiran, and Hartono, "Enhancing Speaking Skills of Non-English Major Students: Evaluating the Impact of Sociodramatic Games."

<sup>28</sup> Yohana Puspita Dewi, "Use of TikTok Application to Enhance Students' Speaking Skill," *Journal Corner of Education, Linguistics, and Literature* 3, no. 2 (2023): 92–99.

<sup>29</sup> Yoki Irawan, "Situating Islamic Values in English Language Teaching," *Islamika Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 20, no. 01 (2020): 95–103.

<sup>30</sup> Yonghong Zhou, "Impacts of Social Media on Language Learning: A Review of Literature" (2021).

<sup>31</sup> Fitri, Afrida, and Meutia, "English Foreign Language Teachers' Perception on the Use of Information and Communication Technology in Teaching English at SMKN 3 Langsa."

<sup>32</sup> Rebecca L. Gómez and Louann Gerken, "Infant Artificial Language Learning and Language Acquisition," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 2000.

of TikTok with the academic objectives of the lesson. Some students may struggle with the self-directed nature of the tasks or may find it challenging to integrate the content of the lesson with their personal creativity. Future studies could investigate how to structure TikTok-based tasks more effectively to ensure that academic goals are met while still allowing for creativity and engagement.

The findings of this research reinforce the growing body of evidence suggesting that TikTok is an effective tool for enhancing students' speaking skills, especially in the areas of comprehension and fluency. The use of TikTok as a pedagogical tool in this study supports the theoretical underpinnings of communicative language teaching by providing an interactive, authentic environment for students to practice speaking. This study contributes to the existing literature by offering a focused analysis of TikTok's impact on specific aspects of speaking and by demonstrating how digital platforms can be effectively integrated into modern language teaching practices. Future research should continue to explore the long-term effects of TikTok on language acquisition and consider how it can be used alongside other instructional tools to maximize its educational benefits.

## Conclusion

This study investigated the effectiveness of TikTok as a pedagogical tool for enhancing students' speaking skills, specifically focusing on comprehension and fluency. The findings clearly indicate that TikTok has a significant positive impact on students' speaking abilities compared to traditional methods. Students in the experimental group, who used TikTok in their learning activities, exhibited higher speaking proficiency, particularly in comprehension and fluency, than those in the control group. These results underscore TikTok's potential as a dynamic and engaging learning medium, which can foster greater interaction and creativity among students, enhancing their overall language skills.

The study's findings contribute to the broader conversation surrounding the integration of digital tools, particularly social media platforms like TikTok, in language education. By offering an interactive and immersive environment, TikTok provides a unique opportunity for students to practice language in a more socially relevant and engaging context. This aligns with contemporary educational trends that prioritize student-centered, technology-driven learning environments. Furthermore, this research builds upon previous studies, focusing specifically on comprehension and fluency—two critical aspects of language proficiency that are often underexplored in the context of social media-based language learning.

However, while this study provides compelling evidence for the effectiveness of TikTok in improving speaking skills, it also highlights areas for future exploration. Future research could investigate how TikTok's interactive features impact other aspects of speaking, such as pronunciation and grammar. Additionally, long-term studies could explore the sustained effects of TikTok-based learning on students' speaking proficiency and overall language acquisition. It would also be valuable to examine the role of educator facilitation in maximizing the effectiveness of TikTok as a teaching tool, ensuring that the platform's potential is fully realized within the classroom setting.

The implications of this research for the field of education are far-reaching. As educational institutions continue to embrace digital technologies, the use of platforms like TikTok can significantly enhance language learning experiences. By integrating such platforms into the curriculum, educators can tap into students' interests, motivate them to engage with language learning in innovative ways, and develop their speaking skills more effectively. Furthermore, the flexibility and accessibility of TikTok enable learners to practice speaking outside the classroom, fostering continuous learning and skill development.

This research demonstrates the potential of TikTok as an effective tool for improving speaking skills in English language learners, particularly in terms of comprehension and fluency. The findings underscore the value of leveraging social media as an educational resource, with the potential to transform traditional language learning practices. By continuing to explore and integrate such digital tools into education, we can open new avenues for student engagement and language acquisition in the digital age.

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