

## A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF TIKTOK FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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### Abstract

*This systematic review examines the role of TikTok in English Language Teaching (ELT), with particular attention to its effectiveness in enhancing motivation, vocabulary acquisition, and speaking proficiency. Using PRISMA guidelines, this study analyzed 19 peer-reviewed empirical research articles published between 2020 to 2024, indexed in Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Mendeley, and Taylor & Francis Online. Findings indicate that TikTok fosters self-regulated learning and student engagement while facilitating interactive pronunciation and fluency practice. However, barriers to its optimal implementation include exposure to non-educational content, the absence of systematic integration, and the lack of instructor feedback. While TikTok cannot replace conventional teaching methods, it can be a valuable supplementary tool when combined with methodical instructional techniques. Future research should investigate its long-term impact on ELT, particularly in writing and listening skills, and propose instructional strategies for its integration into formal curricula. These findings underline the need for strategic implementation in English Language Teaching classrooms to contribute to the broader discourse on using TikTok in English Language Teaching.*

**Keywords:** English Language Teaching, Motivation, Speaking Skills, TikTok, Vocabulary Acquisition

### INTRODUCTION

Technology has become indispensable in English language learning in today's rapidly evolving digital era. The implementation of technology into English language teaching has long been regarded as an effective pedagogical technique (Singhal, 2004). As a driving force behind social and linguistic transformation in the digital age, technology has played a pivotal role in dismantling barriers to language acquisition (Tarihoran, 2020). Among the most widely used digital technologies, social media has revolutionized communication and learning processes (Bhatti, 2018). TikTok, a short-video sharing application, has recently garnered attention as an emerging platform for English language learning (Hanson, 2020).

Technological advancements in education have significantly influenced language learning and skill development. (Tarihoran, Nafan; Alhourani et al., 2022). One of the most transformative technological tools enabling user interaction, content sharing, and communication is social media. Social media serves as a digital communication platform that allows users to establish online communities, exchange ideas and messages, and share multimedia content such as images and videos (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012). In the contemporary educational landscape, social media plays a crucial role in facilitating language acquisition through interactive and collaborative materials. By utilizing online learning platforms like social media, language learners can expand their knowledge beyond the classroom and gain increased access to self-directed learning materials (Tarihoran et al., 2022).

TikTok is a digital platform where short videos are shared, allowing interesting content to be created, distributed, and consumed by users. Beyond entertainment, TikTok is also employed for marketing and educational purposes (Kaye et al., 2022). Its interactive elements, such as sound effects, filters, and engagement features like comments and challenges, encourage active participation in content creation. TikTok content can enhance English language learning by providing digestible information and free educational materials in an engaging video format, accelerating language comprehension (Suciani et al., 2023). The use of videos as a pedagogical medium fosters an enjoyable and less monotonous learning experience, thereby increasing student enthusiasm for language acquisition ('Aini et al., 2024).

Furthermore, TikTok has been recognized for its efficacy in enhancing English-speaking proficiency. TikTok, as part of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), encourages students to practice spoken English through self-produced videos (Hu & Du, 2022). However, further research is needed to evaluate its impact on intrinsic motivation. Prospective English teachers perceive TikTok as a valuable tool for vocabulary acquisition and suggest its potential as an effective teaching instrument in the future (Venalinda & Armanda, 2023). Despite its promising benefits, existing research also underscores the need for further investigation into TikTok's long-term implications. Excessive social media usage, particularly TikTok, may lead to distractions, with some students exhibiting addictive behaviors that negatively impact academic performance (Ali, 2023).

English Language Teaching (ELT) encompasses the pedagogical methodologies and theoretical frameworks involved in instructing English to non-native speakers. It includes curriculum design, instructional strategies, and evaluation techniques aimed at enhancing students' linguistic competencies in both academic and social settings (Ilka Kostka, 2018). The social dimension of ELT incorporates sociolinguistic, ethnographic, and psycholinguistic perspectives on Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), as well as literature on second language acquisition

(Candlin & Mercer, 2001). Technology-driven language learning approaches, such as TikTok, offer innovative techniques that enrich the student learning experience. Regarding vocabulary acquisition, TikTok facilitates vocabulary development through engaging and interactive video-based content (Alghameeti, 2022). The combination of visuals and music enhances vocabulary retention more effectively than conventional approaches. Moreover, TikTok not only stimulates learning motivation but also contributes to vocabulary expansion (Abhi Rama et al., 2023).

Despite the growing body of research highlighting TikTok's potential in ELT, fundamental questions remain regarding its efficacy and associated challenges. This study seeks to address key inquiries: How is TikTok utilized as a teaching tool in English language instruction? In what ways does TikTok enhance students' language proficiency? What challenges arise in the implementation of TikTok in English language learning?

This study aims to investigate the pedagogical applications of TikTok in English language instruction, assess its effectiveness in skill development, and identify potential limitations or obstacles in its use. Theoretically, the research contributes to the academic discourse on the role of social media as an instructional aid and the broader impact of technology on foreign language learning. Practically, the findings offer insights for educators seeking to integrate TikTok effectively into their teaching methodologies and for educational application developers aiming to enhance language acquisition features. By conducting a systematic review of prior studies, this research endeavors to provide a deeper understanding of TikTok's role in ELT, examining both its potential and its limitations within the context of English language learning.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This method section describes in detail how the research was conducted, including the sample description, data collection procedures, and study selection criteria used in this systematic review.

The sample in this study consists of scholarly articles that discuss the application of TikTok in English Language Teaching (ELT) to students. The articles analyzed in this systematic review were obtained from various academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Mendeley, and Taylor & Francis Online. The selection of articles was done using a systematic search approach using keywords such as "TikTok in ELT", "TikTok and English language learning", and "Using TikTok to teach English".

Once the articles were collected, a screening process was conducted to ensure that only studies that met the inclusion criteria were analyzed further. The articles used in this study covered a range of methodologies, whether quantitative,

qualitative, or mixed methods, which examined the effectiveness of TikTok in enhancing students' language skills.

The data collection process in this study was carried out by applying a literature search strategy based on PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*). Once the articles were collected from various academic databases, the first step was to remove duplicate articles to avoid double-counting in the analysis. Next, an initial screening based on title and abstract was conducted, where irrelevant articles were immediately eliminated.

In the next stage, the remaining articles were fully analyzed to ensure that the research conducted was in line with the focus of this study, namely the use of TikTok in English language learning at the tertiary level. Once the selection process was complete, the articles that met all the inclusion criteria were further analyzed using thematic analysis to identify the main patterns in the use of TikTok in ELT.

In this study, the instruments used were published scientific articles, so there was no direct primary data collection from the participants. However, the articles used have gone through a rigorous selection process by the inclusion and exclusion criteria previously set.

This study applied inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that only relevant and high-quality articles could be analyzed. The selected articles had to be indexed in Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Mendeley, and Taylor & Francis Online, and published in the 2020-2024 time period, to keep up with the latest developments in the use of TikTok for English Language Teaching (ELT). The studies described had to have a college-level student population, so the research findings were focused on the higher education level. In addition, only articles written in English, original research, and available in full-text form were included in this systematic review.

In contrast, some exclusion criteria were applied to filter out irrelevant articles. Articles that were only literature reviews without empirical data were excluded, as this research focuses on evidence-based studies. Studies that discussed TikTok in other educational contexts outside ELT, such as learning other subjects, were also not analyzed. In addition, studies involving school students or teachers as the main participants were excluded, as the focus of this study was university students. Articles that were meta-analyses, which only synthesized previous research without presenting primary data, were also excluded. By applying strict selection criteria, this study ensured that only the most relevant and data-driven studies were used in this systematic review.

Data was collected using a Systematic Review approach following the PRISMA guidelines.

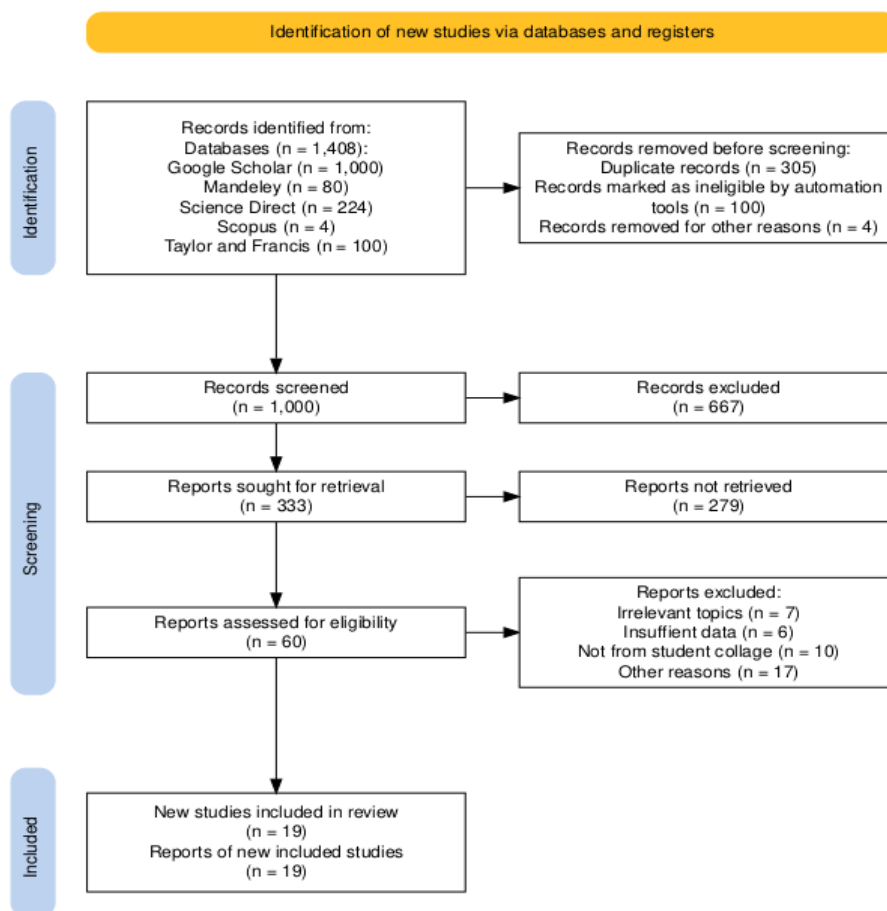


Figure 1. Identification of Studies Via Databases

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Findings (may be subtitles) (1500-2500 words)

TikTok has evolved from a mere entertainment platform into an innovative educational tool, particularly in the realm of English language learning. By leveraging short-form, interactive videos, TikTok enables students to explore, emulate, and practice speaking skills in a relaxed and immersive environment. Several studies have examined TikTok's efficacy in improving English proficiency, particularly in pronunciation, vocabulary retention, and speaking confidence.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of TikTok's impact on ELT, this study evaluates research published in the past five years. These studies not only highlight the benefits of TikTok as a learning aid but also underscore the challenges students face in utilizing the platform effectively. The following table presents a summary of the reviewed studies, including details on authors, research methodologies, participant demographics, and key findings.

Table 1. Articles Downloaded and Analyzed in this Study

No	Author/Country/Year	Main Characteristic	Study Design/Measuring /Variable	Findings
1.	Jayawardena (Sri Lanka, 2023)	50 first-year undergraduate s (Basic Competency Level)	Mixed-methods Study/Questionnaire, Focus Group Discussions, Interviews/TikTok, Speaking Skills	TikTok increased motivation to speak, reduced anxiety, increased confidence, improved attendance, and helped students practice speaking outside the classroom.
2.	Du Thanh Tran (Vietnam, 2023)	152 English Major students	Experimental Study/Pre-Post Test, Questionnaire, Interviews/TikTok, Vocabulary Learning	TikTok improved students' vocabulary retention and was positively perceived by both students and teachers as an effective learning tool.
3.	Salazar-Rosas, Sandoval-Palomares, & López-Salazar (Mexico, 2023)	50 university students	Mixed-methods Study/Video Creation Tasks, Questionnaire, Focus Groups/TikTok, English Proficiency	TikTok improves grammar, pronunciation, confidence and integrates into academic routines. It promotes creativity and critical thinking.
4.	Nguyen & Tran (Vietnam, 2024)	80 second-year English major	Mixed-methods Study/Interviews, Questionnaires/TikTok, Speaking Skills	TikTok positively impacts speaking skills and facilitates learning outside the classroom.
5.	Nor Eleyana Abdullah, Faizah Mohamad, Mafarhanatul Akmal Ahmad	200 Undergraduate Students	Quantitative Study/Questionnaire/TikTok, English Language Learning	TikTok was recognized as a language learning tool, with behavioral intentions driving its use. It enhances educational

	Kamal, Ilham Alia Mat Isa (Malaysia, 2023)			platforms and language learning.
6.	Rina Dagala Cagas (Philippines, 2022)	16 Criminology Students enrolled in an English language course	Pre-Experimental Design/Pre-Test, Post-Test, FGD/TikTok, Speaking and Grammar Skills	TikTok videos improved both speaking and grammar skills among criminology students.
7.	Diana Sarkila, Muhammad Hifdil Islam, Ririn Fatmawati (Indonesia, 2024)	Students at the University Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong	Qualitative Study/Questionnaire/TikTok, Speaking Skills	TikTok enhances speaking confidence, interactive learning, and supplementary materials, but distractions were noted as a drawback.
8.	Shiddiq Asyrofi, Ning Setio Wati (Indonesia, 2024)	Third-year undergraduate students from a private university in Lampung, Indonesia.	Qualitative, Thematic analysis/interview/TikTok, Speaking Skills	The study identified three key findings: students' enthusiasm for TikTok, its role in improving speaking skills, and its positive effect on speaking confidence.
9.	Nurul Huda Ibrahim, Suhaniz Ayuni Shafie, Intan Noorazlina Abdul Rahim (Malaysia, 2023)	University students (2nd semester)	Qualitative/A semi-structured interview/TikTok, Learning English	TikTok can motivate learners to persist in practicing English, leading to improved grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.
10.	Alifarga Kresnayoga Susanto & Suparmi (Indonesia, 2024)	Twenty participants from the 2022 English Language Education program	A descriptive qualitative/questionnaire and interviews/TikTok, English Language Skills	Thematic analysis showed that students used TikTok for various language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

11.	Elsa Dwipa Raden Ajeng, Nafiah Khoirunisa, Fajar Gibran Al-Haqq, Aghna Thurfah Aqila, Reza Anis Maulidya, (2024)	Third and fifth semesters of English language education	A qualitative/questionnaires and interviews with a self-designed survey plan/TikTok, English vocabulary	The study found that students responded positively to using TikTok for learning vocabulary. Its ease of use, diverse features, and interactive content enhance vocabulary expansion, making learning more engaging and effective.
12	Marco Canani, & Tania Zulli (China, 2022)	110 students at the “G. d’Annunzio” University of Chieti-Pescara	Quantitative Study / Survey / TikTok, ELT.	The motivation sparked by short videos and students’ perceived usefulness of these play a crucial role in developing effective EFL/ESL teaching strategies.
13.	Aswinda Darwis (Indonesia, 2024)	English language education students (The 4th and the 6th semester students)	A qualitative/in-depth interview/TikTok, Speaking	The study highlights TikTok’s potential to improve students’ speaking skills through its interactive and creative features, offering a relaxed learning experience. However, its effectiveness depends on students’ perceptions, usage, and the challenges.
14.	Athiyatul Hidayah (Indonesia, 2024)	Undergraduate students aged 20-22 years	A qualitative/Reflection sheets and semi-structured interviews/Self-regulated, TikTok	The study found that EFL students used metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral strategies to support their self-regulated pronunciation learning on TikTok. However, law



				motivation, distractions, and lack of immediate feedback hinder the process.
15	Narueta Hongsa, Pattharaporn Wathawatthana, Wannatida Yonwilad (Thailand, 2023)	60 EFL students (Public Speaking Class)	Mixed-methods Study/Speaking Test, Questionnaire, Semi-structured Interviews/TikTok, Speaking Skills	TikTok improved speaking skills, boosted creativity, and made learning enjoyable. Students viewed it positively and saw it as a new learning opportunity.
16	Hengzhi Hu & Kehan Du (China, 2022)	Higher education EFL learners	Mixed-methods Study (Exploratory Sequential Design)/Interviews, Survey/TikTok, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)	TikTok boosted extrinsic motivation for speaking but had minimal impact on overall proficiency, with learners expressing mixed views on its role in formal education.
17	Xi Chen & Haiying Kang, (China, 2023)	EFL students	Quantitative Study/Questionnaire/TikTok, Oral English	More than 70% of students believed TikTok helps address oral English problems related to pedagogy, teaching materials, and pronunciation. Recommended for integration into speaking classes.
18	Henny Merizawati, Luana Sasabone, Marnangkok Pakpahan, Naura Ariesta, McCarty Elliot (Indonesia, 2024)	10 English major students (6th semester) at Mahmud Yunus Islamic State University	Descriptive Qualitative Study/In-depth Interviews/TikTok, Pronunciation	TikTok improved pronunciation and fluency. Most students stated TikTok was effective, beneficial, and helpful in English pronunciation learning.

19.	Nadyah Rida Alshreef, Hanadi Abdulrahman Khadawardi (Saudi Arabia, 2023)	115 female students at King Abdulaziz University	Quantitative Study/Questionnaire/TikTok, Vocabulary	Most students had positive perceptions of TikTok for vocabulary learning. TikTok videos were found to be effective in increasing students' English vocabulary size.
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## Analysis/Discussion

The utilization of TikTok in English language learning is starting to attract attention as a relevant innovative media in the digital era. Based on the analysis of the articles reviewed, the findings show that TikTok has the potential to enhance English language proficiency, especially in the aspects of speaking, math mastery, and student learning motivation. TikTok's uniqueness as a short video-based platform opens up opportunities for students to learn interactively and independently, thus increasing their engagement in the learning process.

### TikTok as a Teaching Aid in the English Language Teaching

Several studies have shown that TikTok has been adopted as a tool in English language teaching, both in formal classroom contexts and as a platform to support independent learning. Teachers and educators use TikTok's interactive features, such as duets, stitching, and captioning, to help students improve their speaking and vocabulary comprehension. Nguyen & Tran (2024) stated that students are more enthusiastic in learning when given TikTok-based tasks, such as creating short videos featuring conversations in English or delivering monologues related to learning topics.

In addition, Jayawardena (2023) found that integrating TikTok into the ELT curriculum can significantly increase student engagement, especially as this method supports both visual and auditory learning styles. In this more flexible environment, students can re-watch videos to understand the material, correct their pronunciation, and compare their learning outcomes with peers. Sarkila et al. (2024) also highlighted that this platform can be used to train grammar comprehension contextually, for example, through the trend of educational videos that explain grammar rules in simpler and more applicable language.

### TikTok in Improving Students' English Proficiency

#### a. Improved Speaking Skills

The use of TikTok in teaching English has been proven to improve students' speaking skills, especially in terms of pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Hongsa et al. (2023) found that students who used TikTok in Public Speaking classes experienced significant improvements in confidence and fluency because they had the opportunity to practice and re-watch their recordings for self-evaluation. Nguyen & Tran (2024) also highlighted that TikTok enables practice-

based learning outside the classroom, so students can use English more often in real situations.

b. Vocabulary Mastery

The analysis results show that TikTok is also effective in expanding students' vocabulary mastery. Research conducted by Alshreef & Khadawardi (2023) and Salazar-Rosas et al. (2023) revealed that interactive video content helps students understand and remember new vocabulary. Exposure to everyday vocabulary through short videos makes the learning process more contextual and easier to apply, so students are faster in using new vocabulary in communication.

c. Motivation and Confidence

Findings from various studies also confirm that TikTok plays a role in increasing students' motivation and confidence in speaking English. Research conducted by Chen & Kang (2023) and Darwis (2024) showed that after using TikTok, students felt more confident in speaking English. The relaxed and less formal environment allows students to overcome their fear of public speaking and encourages them to be more expressive and creative in using English.

### **Challenges in Applying TikTok in English Teaching**

Although TikTok offers many benefits in English language teaching, several challenges must be considered to optimize its use in academic learning contexts. Some of the main obstacles found in this study include disruptions from non-educational content, limited feedback from instructors, and limited integration of TikTok into the formal curriculum.

a. Disruptions from Non-Educational Content

One of the main challenges in using TikTok as a learning medium is the distraction caused by non-educational content. As an entertainment-based platform, TikTok presents different types of videos that are not always relevant to English language learning. Sarkila et al. (2024) found that many students tend to be distracted by entertainment videos or viral trends, resulting in less study time. This hinders TikTok's effectiveness as a learning tool, especially if students do not have a clear strategy for accessing educational content. Therefore, teachers need to guide in choosing the right content and developing more structured TikTok-based learning activities.

b. Limited Feedback from Instructors

Another challenge found in this study is the lack of direct feedback from teachers, which makes it difficult for students to convey their language skills well. Hu & Du (2022) revealed that although TikTok can increase students' motivation to speak English, the absence of correction from teachers often makes students unaware of their pronunciation and grammar mistakes. In traditional learning, teachers usually provide feedback directly through face-to-face interaction, but in the context of TikTok-based learning, this mechanism is often not available. To address this issue, strategies such as the use of commenting features or duet videos are needed, where teachers can provide more specific feedback on students' practice videos.

c. Limited Integration into the Curriculum

Although TikTok is increasingly used in English language learning, the platform is still not fully integrated into the formal curriculum. Nguyen & Tran (2024) found that most teachers still face difficulties in incorporating TikTok as part of their learning strategies. Many schools and universities do not have specific guidelines regarding the use of social media in learning, so the use of TikTok is often supplementary and lacks a clear structure. For TikTok to be more effective in foreign language learning, there needs to be a clear structure.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this review, TikTok has great potential as an innovative English learning medium. The platform not only increases speaking abilities and vocabulary but also strengthens students' motivation, confidence, and autonomous learning. However, the use of TikTok in learning needs to be balanced with teacher guidance and purposeful learning strategies for the benefits to be maximized.

Research has also revealed that the integration of TikTok in English language instruction requires careful planning. Teachers are advised to guide how to select relevant educational content, assign video-based tasks, and provide regular feedback. TikTok can also be utilized as a project-based learning tool that stimulates student creativity and teamwork.

Additional studies are required to examine TikTok's influence on other language skills, including writing and listening. Long-term studies on how TikTok affects student motivation and engagement are also urgently needed. In addition, it is important to research how TikTok can be effectively integrated in the formal curriculum.

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