

THE ROLE OF TIKTOK IN ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Maryam Jameelah

UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin, Banten, Indonesia
221230072.maryam@uinbanten.ac.id

Muhoiriah

UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin, Banten, Indonesia
221230075.muhoiriah@uinbanten.ac.id

Naf'an Tarihoran

UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin, Banten, Indonesia
nafan.tarihoran@uinbanten.ac.id

Abstract

The use of social media today has changed the nature of English language learning. One such social media platform is TikTok. This study aims to investigate the role of TikTok in enhancing English language skills using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. 22 studies published from 2020 to 2025 derived from ScienceDirect (1), ResearchGate (7), and Mendeley (14) are inspected to find out how TikTok influences undergraduate students' speaking, listening, vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation. The results indicate that TikTok is an effective tool that enhances English language learning and the students' language skills through its interactive features like duet challenges and short videos. Additionally, TikTok increases student engagement by blending entertainment with education. However, challenges such as distractions, informal language exposure, and the need for guidance highlight the necessity of supervision by teachers. In conclusion, TikTok serves as an engaging and effective tool for enhancing English language skills particularly in speaking, listening, and vocabulary acquisition among undergraduate students.

Keywords: digital education, English language learning, TikTok, speaking skills

INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in teaching methods, such as technology-based learning, inquiry-based instruction, and problem-centered approaches, have shifted the focus toward student-centered learning. Traditional ways of teaching English may no longer be sufficient, and educators must adapt to newer, more interactive, and student-focused strategies to ensure effective language learning (Imran et al., 2024). For instance, technology could be integrated into the classroom. Technology has continued to grow rapidly, and teachers are using it more to help students learn. It makes teaching easier and allows teachers to guide and support students more effectively and engagingly (Mdhlalose & Mlambo, 2023). The growth of technology nowadays are changing the way students learn language subjects and how they

develop such skills. The utilization of various teaching methods has led to significant changes in pedagogy. Therefore, it is undeniably true that students' ability to acquire language skills has been profoundly influenced by technology advancements that is becoming widely accepted by society today (Tarihoran et al., 2022).

Many believe that technology improves learning and that students need technological skills to succeed in society. Therefore, quality education now requires teachers to use technology effectively in their classrooms and to help students develop digital skills (Davies & West, 2014). Since the 1960s, technology has been used in second language teaching, mainly for repetitive language exercises through the drill-and-practice method. Since 2000, computer technology has been widely used to support reading, writing, literacy, and increasing cultural awareness. With the growth of multimedia and the Internet, technology has become essential to language classrooms. Many digital tools help improve language and communication skills, although some are more widely used than others (Li, 2017)

According to (Syarifudin & Ariawan, 2021) technology plays a vital role in various aspects of human life, particularly in education, where advancements continue to evolve. In the teaching and learning process, technology enables teachers to deliver lessons more effectively, create assessments, provide additional learning materials, and engage students. These innovations make learning activities more efficient, interactive, and appealing, eventually enhancing students' learning motivation.

One of the most significant innovations in language learning is the Internet. The Internet has made it easier for learners to access accurate English materials and communicate with native speakers, helping them improve both their language skills and cultural understanding. Platforms like online forums, social media, and virtual exchange programs allow students to practice English in real-life situations, making learning more practical. This connection enhances their language abilities and helps them feel part of a global learning community (Tabasi et al., 2024).

While technology has been growing with more tools for language learning, choosing the right ones and using them effectively can be challenging. Different teaching approaches can maximize the benefits of technology in language learning. Many teachers integrate these methods into their lessons to improve listening, reading, writing, speaking, and vocabulary. Having clear strategies or models for using technology supports teachers and helps students use these tools effectively. These strategies ensure that technology is applied in a way that enhances learning. Additionally, understanding how students learn with technology can help design better language learning activities and tools (Annet, 2024).

In recent years, the rise of short-form video platforms such as TikTok has changed how students interact with digital content, including language learning. As a short-form video-based social media platform, Tiktok has developed into a potential

tool in English learning. The platform offers interactive and authentic content that can improve students' motivation and language skills.

As an engaging and interactive platform, TikTok offers students unique opportunities to improve their English skills through authentic and immersive content. TikTok, which is acclaimed as a social media with short and visually appealing videos, is likely to align with modern learning preferences. Hence, unquestionably, TikTok has the potential to make language acquisition more accessible and enjoyable.

The use of TikTok in language learning is related to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) view. CLT emphasizes that language is acknowledged as a communication tool that is always related to the environment and surrounding, including the situation, participants, goals, location, and other factors that influence the interaction. Therefore, language teaching should largely focus on developing communication skills by paying attention to situation and context that influences the way people convey and understand meaning in conversation (Rambe, 2017). In today's digital age, CLT principles can be applied more widely through social media platforms such as TikTok, which provides an interactive and authentic environment for language learning.

According to (Mangaleswaran & Aziz, 2019), the utilization of the CLT approach through various communicative activities, such as pair work, role-playing, storytelling, card games, group work, and activities describing and telling pictures, encourages the improvement of students' speaking skills (Ilmudinulloh et al., 2022). In line with this principle, TikTok provides an environment that supports authentic and interactive communication practices.

Through the duet feature, students can practice speaking by imitating or responding to native speakers, which then will improvise the way they pronounce words. The stitch feature allows them to contribute to global conversations, while challenge-based activities encourage creativity and fluency in speaking. Thus, TikTok provides a platform for students to apply CLT theory in a digital context. It also enriches their learning experience with access to real-world communication, which supports more effective improvement of English language skills.

Another theory that aligns with the usage of TikTok in language learning is the Multimedia Processing theory. According to Mayer (Handriadi et al., 2025), the human brain processes information similarly to the way computer works. This implies that information received through the senses will be processed and stored in sensory, short-term or long-term memory, depending on its relevance.

Mayer stated that effective teaching should utilize various modalities, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, to enhance student understanding. Media such as diagrams, graphs, or animations assists students to easily comprehend complex concepts than through text only.

Mayer's multimodal approach to learning highlights that the usage of multiple senses such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic is crucial to enhance student understanding. This principle corresponds with TikTok infamous features, which integrates text, audio, video, and live interaction in one platform.

In the context of English language learning, TikTok can be an effective tool to implement the multimodal principle. For example, short videos with text and sound help students understand the relationship between pronunciation and spelling of words. Thus, TikTok creates an environment that supports multimodality which helps in improving students' understanding of English language and making learning more interactive and fun (Handriadi et al., 2025).

Recent studies have investigated TikTok's effectiveness in improving English speaking abilities among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. For instance, a study by (Diko Putri, 2022) found that the usage of TikTok has positively impacted students' speaking skills. The study highlights that not only TikTok made the educational environment more enjoyable and engaging, but also increased students' motivation and confidence. Similarly, a study by (Gunawan et al., 2023) indicated that TikTok could serve as an effective medium for enhancing students' speaking accuracy and fluency. This is shown by the students' scores increasing dramatically. These findings suggest that integrating TikTok into language learning positively influences the development of students' English proficiency.

On the other hand, this research differs from the previous studies because it employs a different approach, which is by utilizing a systematic review methodology. This research uses the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. By following this systematic approach, this research will gather insights from various sources to explore overall trends and patterns. The systematic review will also investigate different aspects of language learning beyond speaking skills, such as listening, vocabulary acquisition, and student engagement; hence, it will offer a more holistic understanding of TikTok's impact on English language learning.

Based on the context explained above, this systematic literature review aims to synthesize the existing literature on the role of TikTok in enhancing English language skills in various countries and the factors behind it. Therefore, the research questions in this study are: 1) What is the picture of TikTok research on undergraduate students at university? 2) What are the predictors of TikTok's benefits in ELT learning? 3) Which skills are most commonly utilized with TikTok in ELT?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a systematic review approach by following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, including identifying, screening, and selecting articles by the research topic. This

method. Ensures that the literature review is carried out comprehensively and transparently by international standards. At the identification stage, articles were collected through searches in various academic databases. Some of the databases used are ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, and Mendeley. These databases are selected based on the breadth of educational research coverage and peer-reviewed articles. ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, and Mendeley were chosen because they focus on educational research, provide various academic articles from multiple fields of science, and have a vast collection of research articles, including high-impact journals. To ensure the relevance of the search results, the search was conducted using various relevant keywords related to the research topic used, such as "TikTok in English Language Teaching," "TikTok in EFL," and "social media in language learning," along with their variations, with AND/OR operators to expand the scope of the results.

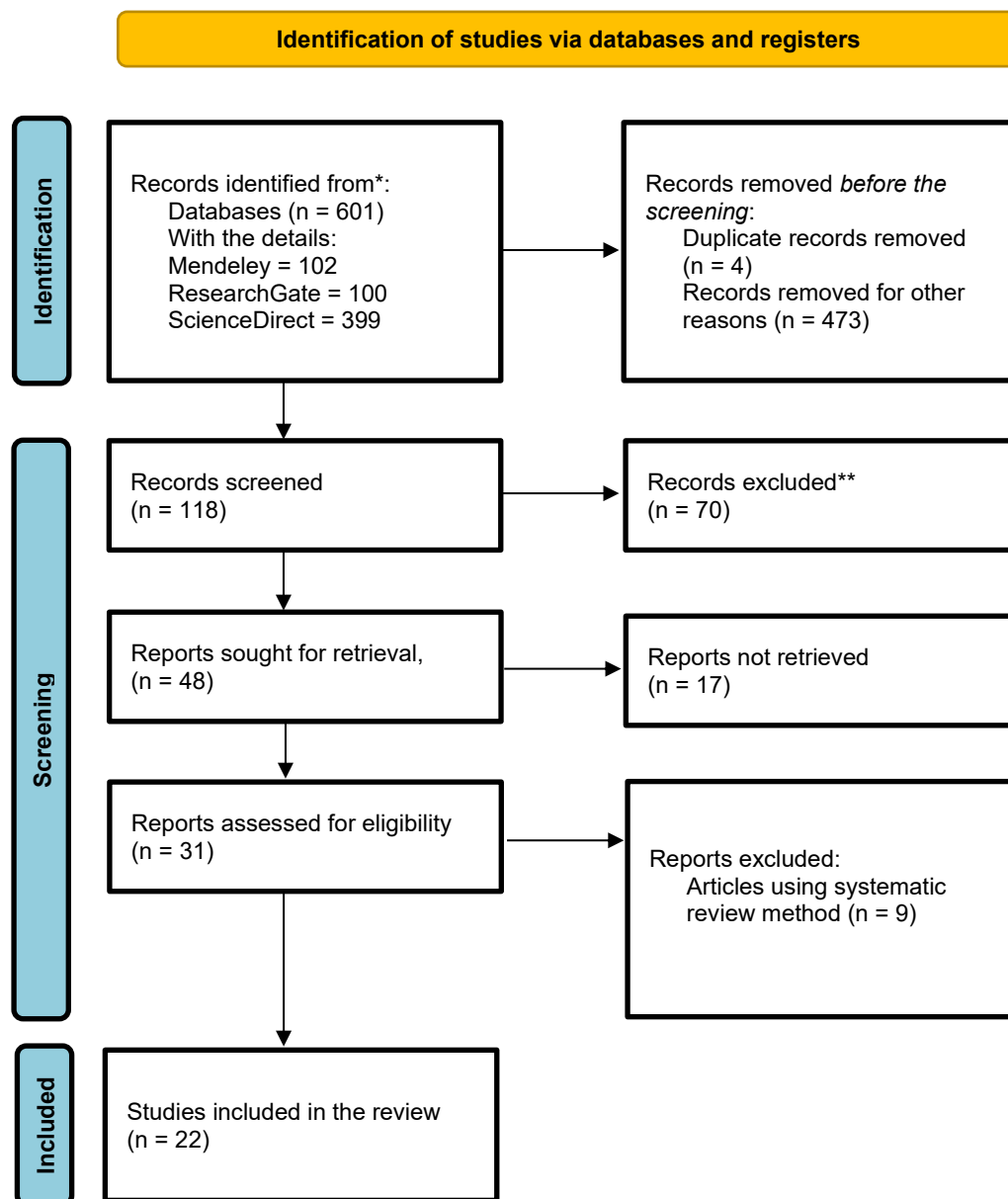
A primary reviewer conducted an initial search using a list of keywords compiled by the authors. The selection process applied to determine the relevance of articles found in the initial search included the following stages: a) Title review – If the title of an article indicated relevance to the research topic, the reference was recorded in Mendeley Desktop software. Next, The Mendeley Tools feature was used to detect and remove duplicates so that only one copy of each article was kept; b) Abstract review – If the abstract did not provide sufficient information according to the inclusion criteria, the article was not included in the study, c) Full-text review – Articles that had passed the previous stages were then read in their entirety for further evaluation. Articles that did not meet the exclusion criteria were still included in the systematic review, while those that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from the study.

This research review analyzes recent empirical studies based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) Articles indexed in academic databases such as ScienceDirect, Mendeley, and ResearchGate; (2) Articles published in the period 2020–2025; (3) Research focused on English language learning through the TikTok platform (4) Articles written in English; and (5) Original articles available in full text. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include: (1) Articles only abstracts without full texts. (2) Articles that do not discuss the main topic. (3) Articles that use the systematic review method.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the study's findings to address the research problem. The collected data is analyzed using a Systematic Review approach to the PRISMA guidelines.



A detailed summary of the results of the retrieved articles' results articles will be displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. The Role of TikTok in Enhancing English Language Skills.

N o	Authors/ Country	Main Characteristics	Variable	Study Design	Measure	Findings
1	(Apoko & Waluyo, 2025) Indonesia	108 EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students	Social media & English learning	A mixed-methods approach (quantitative and	Questionnaires & interview	Social media significantly improves English comprehension (86.12%),

				qualitative)		vocabulary mastery (87.96%), and speaking skills (86.11%).
2	(Susanto & Suparmi, 2024) Indonesia	20 students from the English Language Education	TikTok & English learning	Qualitative descriptive with purposive sampling	Questionnaires and interviews	Most students agreed that TikTok improved their English skills, especially their vocabulary and grammar comprehension.
3	(Tam, 2024) Vietnam	40 questionnaire participants, and nine interviewees	TikTok & speaking practice	Mixed methods (questionnaire and interview)	Statistical analysis and in-depth interviews	TikTok Duet helps improve students' pronunciation, fluency, and confidence
4	(Nasrudin et al., 2024) Malaysia	30 undergraduate students	TikTok & speaking skills	Quantitative & questionnaire	Descriptive statistical analysis	TikTok is a fun and interactive learning medium that helps improve speaking fluency.
5	(Asyrofi & Wati, 2024) Indonesia	8 final year students	TikTok & speaking skills	Qualitative with thematic analysis	Semi-structured interviews	TikTok increases students' confidence in speaking English and provides a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience.
6	(Rohman & Ulfa, 2024) Indonesia	Four sixth-semester students from the English Language Education	TikTok & speaking skills	Descriptive qualitative	Observation and interviews	TikTok is effective as a learning medium, it can increase enthusiasm for learning and increase self-confidence in speaking English.
7	(Alolayan et al., 2025) Saudi Arabia	First-year student in the English program	TikTok & listening comprehension skills.	Descriptive survey method	Comparison of two groups of students (high and low engagement)	Students who were highly engaged with TikTok educational content showed significant

						levels in TikTok educational content).	improvements in skimming, scanning, and critical listening skills.
8	(Hasby & Triskaya Angrum, 2023) Indonesia	First-semester students	TikTok learning English	&	Qualitative approach	Interviews	Most students find TikTok helpful in learning English.
9	(Hongsa et al., 2023) Thailand	60 students of the English language education	TikTok speaking skills	&	Mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative)	Speaking tests, questionnaires, & semi-structured interviews	TikTok effectively improved students' speaking skills
10	(Revesencio et al., 2022) Philippines	Most English Education students are 20 years old.	TikTok English grammar skills	&	Descriptive quantitative	Questionnaires	TikTok helps students discover and understand new words in English
11	(Lastari et al., 2024) Indonesia	31 second-semester students	TikTok speaking skills	&	Quantitative approach & quasi-experimental design	Pre-test, post-test, & questionnaire	TikTok improved students' speaking skills, with the average score increasing from 73.01 (pre-test) to 77.69 (post-test).
12	(Laili, 2023) Indonesia	47 students	TikTok English learning	&	Qualitative with an inductive approach	Observation, questionnaires, and in-depth interviews	TikTok improves listening, speaking, reading, writing, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.
13	(Merizawati et al., 2024) Indonesia	10 sixth-semester students	TikTok English pronunciation	&	Descriptive qualitative	In-depth interview	Most students stated that TikTok helped improve their English pronunciation and fluency skills.
14	(Kaban, 2023) Indonesia	40 undergraduate students	TikTok speaking skills	&	Classroom Action Research	Observation, interview, pre-test, and post-test	TikTok has been shown to improve students' speaking skills with an average score increase of 8.32 points
1	(Diko Putri,	20 students	TikTok	&	Qualitative	Questionnaire	TikTok effectively

5	2022) Indonesia		speaking skills	approach	es and interviews	improved students' speaking skills,
1 6	(Suripto et al., 2023) Indonesia	36 third-semester students,	TikTok & speaking skills	Descriptive qualitative	Observation	The combination of Project Based Learning method and TikTok effectively improves students' speaking ability and creativity in English
1 7	(Chuah & Ch'ng, 2023) Malaysia	60 undergraduate students	TikTok & speaking skills	quantitative and qualitative approaches	Participation in 12 TikTok voice-over challenges over two months and an online questionnaire	Students found this challenge helpful in improving pronunciation, intonation, and general speaking skills
1 8	(Rita & Subekti, 2023) Indonesia	116 Indonesian students	TikTok & vocabulary	Quantitative approach	10-item questionnaire	94% of students viewed TikTok as applicable for vocabulary learning (mean score: 40.25), while 47.4% were skeptical due to its social media nature.
1 9	(Hadijah et al., 2023) Indonesia	5 students majoring in English	TikTok as a self-learning tool for EFL students	Qualitative case study	Semi-structured interviews	TikTok helps improve speaking skills, motivation to learn English, and comprehension of grammar.
2 0	(Eleyana Abdullah et al., 2023) Malaysia	200 undergraduate students	TikTok & English learning	Quantitative	Likert scale questionnaire with 32 items	Students showed a high acceptance of TikTok in English learning, mainly due to its ease of access and interactive features.
2 1	(Wang, 2023) China	100 English students	TikTok & speaking	Quantitative	Questionnaire	TikTok helps increase student

			skills			engagement and creativity in speaking,
22	(Salazar-Rosas et al., 2023) Mexico	50 university students	TikTok & English learning	Qualitative exploratory	Observations & interviews	TikTok helps improve students' grammar, pronunciation, speaking confidence, and creativity

Analysis/Discussion (1000-1500 words)

The synthesis of the 22 studies in Table 1 reveals several key findings regarding the role of TikTok in enhancing English language skills, specifically for undergraduate students at university. The studies demonstrate that TikTok significantly contributes to speaking fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and student engagement. However, the effectiveness of TikTok varies depending on how it is used, with challenges such as distractions and informal language exposure being common concerns. Many students benefit from TikTok's interactive nature, which allows them to enjoy engaging with content that reinforces language learning enjoyably. At the same time, the unstructured nature of the platform means that learning outcomes can vary widely. These findings can be analyzed by the theories discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the literature review.

Many studies align with the principles of the CLT approach, which emphasizes real-life communication and interaction. For example, Researches by (Apoko & Waluyo, 2025) and (Hongsa et al., 2023) Spotlight that TikTok Add to speaking skills through synergistic features such as the duet and stitch tools. These features allow students to Participate in authentic conversations, similar to role-playing and pair-work activities Suggested in CLT (Mangaleswaran & Aziz, 2019). Alluring in real-time conversations and reacting to native speakers or peers helps students build belief in their speaking abilities, a necessary component of language acquisition.

Researches such as (Tam, 2024) and (Nasrudin et al., 2024) also emphasize that TikTok provides chances for students to practice speaking separately, improving their fluency and pronunciation over time. Investigation by (Asyrofi & Wati, 2024) (Ulfa, 2024) supports this by displaying that students who usually use TikTok for speaking practice demonstrate higher confidence and enthusiasm to communicate in English. Also, the study by (Chuah & Ch'ng, 2023) on TikTok voice-over challenges supports the idea that communicative activities Promote pronunciation and fluency improvements. When students mimic native speakers through duet or voice-over features, they improve their pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm, generating more essential speech. Likewise, (Suripto et al., 2023) Discover that using TikTok in project-

based learning intensify students' ability to communicate change as they begin and attending English content in an organized manner. Moreover, (Diko Putri, 2022) found that TikTok fosters speaking belief, as students feel more agreeable practicing in a low-pressure, self-paced habitat.

Moreover, some studies also strengthen the argument that technology eases language learning by producing it more available and charming (Davies & West, 2014). The findings from studies such as (Tam, 2024) and (Nasrudin et al., 2024) suggest that students see TikTok as a precious tool for improving their English proficiency, especially in speaking and listening. These studies mean that blended video, text, and real-world interplay contributes to an enveloping learning involvement that traditional methods may lack. Unlike customary classroom learning, which often depends on textbooks and organized lessons, TikTok gives a dynamic and synergistic space where students can capture with native speakers, practice pronunciation, and learn new vocabulary in a pure setting.

Likewise, studies by (Wang, 2023) and (Salazar-Rosas et al., 2023) establish that TikTok rises engagement and creativeness, advance supporting (Tabasi et al., 2024), who contend that technology gives students chances to practice English in real-life contexts. Students plunge themselves in the language more often by partaking in educational challenges, responding to questions, or watching English-language content, mainly to grow students' retention. Studies such as (Susanto & Suparmi, 2024) and (Hasby & Triskaya Anrum, 2023) mean that TikTok's synergistic nature motivates students to involve in more self-directed learning, which can improve motivation and abiding holding of language skills.

Alternatively, studies like (Laili, 2023) and (Hadijah et al., 2023) also found that the informality of TikTok content may at times create distractions. These findings line up with foregoing discussions on the challenges of technology in the classroom, which contend that teachers must provide students with ways to focus on appropriate content rather than the entertainment-based ones (Annet, 2024). In addition, the study by (Kaban, 2023) present another argument that suggests that while TikTok can be most interesting, students are feared to be learning passively if they do not actively apply the language in everyday lives.

Multimedia Processing Theory by Mayer (Handriadi et al., 2025) suggests that learning is more effective when students engage with multiple sensory. Studies by (Lastari et al., 2024) and (Merizawati et al., 2024), highlights that TikTok's combination of video, text, and sound helps in retaining students' vocabulary and improves students' pronunciation. When students interact with content that includes visual, auditory, and text, they use different ways of thinking to understand and remember information. This helps them absorb knowledge more effectively and strengthens their learning process.

Additionally, the research by (Revesencio et al., 2022) also supports the Multimedia Processing Theory by showing that grammar learning is more effective when students are exposed to short TikTok videos. Students who listen to spoken English while reading subtitles recognizes words better because they start to develop an ability to link spoken words with its written forms. Similarly, (Rita & Subekti, 2023) found that students acquire more vocabulary by regularly engaging with TikTok videos. This happens because the students are repeatedly exposed to authentic language context. This strategy makes learning more interactive and helps students retain new vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and understand grammatical structures more efficiently.

Despite the many benefits that it offers, TikTok still has its shortcomings. Several studies, including those by (Kaban, 2023) and (Rohman & Ulfa, 2024), found that TikTok has the risk of distraction due to the non-educational content. TikTok is mainly a platform with entertainment purposes. Therefore, making sure that students stay focused on educational videos is challenging. Furthermore, (Susanto & Suparni, 2024) and (Rita & Subekti, 2023) point out that although many videos from the app are beneficial, not all TikTok content is accurate or high-quality. Consequently, teachers' guidance is necessary to help students sort out appropriate videos for learning. This is important for students still developing their English skills, as students might get confused if they are exposed to incorrect grammar or informal expressions through the misleading videos from TikTok.

Additionally, studies by (Eleyana Abdullah et al., 2023) and (Alolayan et al., 2025) suggest that the way one student uses TikTok may differ to another. Some students prefer to use TikTok that have structured lessons with guidance by teacher, while others prefer fun and entertaining content that still emphasizes on learning. This shows that teachers need to help students select useful videos, assign meaningful tasks, and teach the students on how to evaluate the educational value of the videos that they watch. As a result, teachers can ensure that students are able to use the platform to its maximum potential, which will then benefit the students' English development.

This aligns with the argument by (Li, 2017) that technology should be implemented thoughtfully to achieve the best learning results. When used without guidance, digital tools like TikTok can lead to drawbacks such as distractions or ineffective learning. However, with guidance by teacher and task assignments, it can be assured that TikTok could remain as a beneficial resource rather than a source of problem. These strategies help students stay focused, apply what they learn in meaningful ways, and use the platform to reinforce their English language skills effectively.

CONCLUSION

The 22 studies obtained from ScienceDirect, Mendeley, and ResearchGate found that TikTok plays an important role in helping university students improve their English skills. It has become a popular and innovative tool in language learning, offering a fun and interactive way for students to engage with the language. Through its interactive features, TikTok provides opportunities for students to practice English in a natural and enjoyable way. The studies reviewed indicate that many students find TikTok helpful for improving their speaking, listening, and vocabulary skills, as well as boosting their confidence in using the language. It has been proven that not only that TikTok become a source of entertainment, but it can also support language learning effectively.

This review also highlights the factors that make TikTok effective for English language teaching. By combining video, sound, and text, TikTok makes learning more engaging and helps students practice skills like pronunciation, fluency, and listening comprehension. It encourages students to interact by using authentic material and practice in a more fun way. Speaking and listening skills are also benefited as students use features like duets to imitate and respond to others. However, the informal nature of TikTok means that teachers are required to guide students to carefully utilize the app in order to avoid distractions and ensure they focus on educational content. Overall, TikTok offers a creative and impactful way to learn English, making it a valuable tool for a digital-based language education.

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