



Utilizing TikTok in Enhancing Language Abilities: A Literature Review

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Abstract

This literature review examines the potentials and challenges of using TikTok as a pedagogical tool for enhancing language abilities. Drawing from studies published between 2019 and 2025, it presents research-based insights into how TikTok promotes engagement, creativity, and communication in language classrooms. The review also highlights limitations such as distraction, limited instructional depth, and the need for structured integration. Overall, this paper aims to provide educators and learners with a clearer understanding of how TikTok can be effectively utilized to support language teaching and learning. The findings suggest that while TikTok offers a highly engaging, authentic platform for practical language use and cultural exposure, its success is heavily dependent on a deliberate instructional design that mitigates distractions and integrates short-form content into broader curriculum goals. Ultimately, this review advocates for a balanced and informed approach to leveraging this popular social media platform for modern language education.

Keywords: TikTok, pedagogy, language abilities, literature review

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Introduction

Language teachers have been experimenting with new ways to teach and immerse learners in the language being taught, whether it be a physical or virtual activity. TikTok, a pedagogical learning tool, has been on the surface for quite a while now, has been integrated into several educational

settings or learning classrooms, ensuring that outcomes-based learning is integrated and embedded into language teaching, while keeping the students motivated, engaged, and enthusiastic to learn. Today's generation is considered digital natives, as they were born in an era where devices and platforms, including computers, mobile phones, and social media, are widely used (Yélamos-Guerra et al., 2022). These things are evidently seen during the COVID-19 pandemic when people are after the joy and entertainment that the virtual world can give. The aftermath of COVID-19 has drastically influenced the education landscape, especially the way people teach and learn. As online learning became a necessity, people became more reliant on using digital platforms like WhatsApp, Zoom, and Google Classroom (Mohd Basar et al., 2021). Due to these changes, TikTok—a platform primarily

known as a tool for self-representation and identity creation (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022), is now being used in learning institutions. According to (Muzammil et al., 2024), people found its unique short-form video format easy to make and convenient to share, arousing attention, making it a suitable tool for teaching and learning. Thus, it quickly attracted educators looking for innovative ways to connect with and motivate their students in a learning environment. With over 1.9 billion active users worldwide (Guamán Condoy et al., 2024), TikTok provides a unique platform for language classrooms as it enables teachers to leverage its engaging and creative content to promote participation and encourage meaningful language learning experiences. As we continue to lean forward, digital learning platforms contribute to student success by rendering education more accessible, flexible, engaging, and personalized (Zou et al., 2025). This application is a perfect fit, due to, aside from being free, students now are chronically online, ensuring that learners are familiar with the application being introduced. This paper aims to examine existing studies on the use of TikTok as a pedagogical tool, highlighting its potential to assist educators in enhancing students' speaking performance through TikTok-based activities.

Methodology

This literature review employed a qualitative descriptive approach by examining scholarly articles, reports, and credible online publications related to the pedagogical use of TikTok in education. Similar to the approach of (Simanjuntak et al., 2024); (Sahoo & Pradhan, 2025) the only difference is that this will be focusing on a general literature review, rather than following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses) guidelines. Further, studies were also sourced from databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Journals, focusing on works published between 2019 and 2025. This study makes use of thematic analysis with a systematic approach, having an assurance of a structured process in ensuring that there is consistency and reliability in the results (Naeem et al., 2023). Selected literature was analyzed and categorized thematically to identify patterns, insights, and gaps in current academic discussions. Three central themes emerged from this review: (1) language teaching and TikTok as a digital learning platform, (2) its pedagogical influence on learners' language abilities, and (3) pedagogical implications for educators integrating TikTok into language instruction.

Results and Discussion

1. Language Teaching and TikTok as a Digital Learning Platform

In 2016, a company in China named ByteDance, a Beijing-based company launched a short video app called Douyin. A year later, the company launched TikTok as an international version of Douyin (Abidin, 2020). Statista, a German online platform has reported that the creation of TikTok has led to an international hit, with TikTok being the most downloaded app back in 2021 and 2022 (Boffone, 2023). According to (Eliza & Amanda, 2024), although TikTok is a short video application, it has naturally received widespread attention due to its unique features. Due to the advent of TikTok,

people around the world have used it to cure boredom and now, even English language teachers use it as a tool for teaching. A study conducted in the Philippines found that the students were influenced by the content, video quality, and music, while their engagement was observed since students took action in commenting and reacting to TikTok videos (M. Ngilangil, 2022). This study can be a basis for the claim of Oxford Learning (2024), where they view TikTok as a future learning tool since students are easily engaged with its content, and that TikTok in-class is a valuable tool due to it can be a positive resource for learning. It was also noted that "TikTok is a powerful educational tool because it is both a learning platform and a social network" (Fitri Fajriani et al., 2024). (Kaur & Sulaiman, 2023) found that teachers have a positive view toward the integration of TikTok in English language teaching, and the proponents of the study have also suggested that researchers should investigate teachers' perceptions of TikTok-based learning. A similar study was conducted by (Hassan & Mohamad, 2024), and the researchers argue that although educators can create a more engaging and supportive language environment by capitalizing on the dynamic and multimedia-rich platform of TikTok, careful consideration and strategic planning of its implementation should also be considered to improve its educational outcome. (Ly, 2024) highlighted that the duties of English language teachers are situated and dynamic. Roles, in particular, are subject to alter in response to external influences. A teacher may reserve every role and, depending on the situation, switch between them. Students benefit when teachers create development programs that keep them up to date on the latest pedagogical techniques. Learning outcomes and student engagement can be improved in the classroom by introducing creative methods and fresh teaching strategies (Poudel, 2022). According to (R. B & M, 2024), teachers in English learning are responsible for not just managing and organizing English classes, but also collaborating and communicating with students. With this in mind, TikTok in language teaching is a great option, ensuring that the language teaching method is up to date and relevant.

2. TikTok's Influence on Language Abilities

Studies have highlighted TikTok's potential to enhance students' language abilities and learning performance. (Md Yunus et al., 2019) found that TikTok-based activities could assist students in improving their writing skills, while its integration with English as a Second Language (ESL) learners has effectively enhanced their listening skills (Adnan et al., 2021). Additionally, (Asio et al., 2023) found that integrating TikTok-based activities has improved the students' English-speaking skills. This shows that TikTok is versatile across different language competencies, as (Susanto & Suparmi, 2024) also suggested that TikTok, when used effectively, can offer an engaging, multimedia-driven approach to language learning. TikTok's broader impact on student motivation and classroom dynamics is also evident in existing literature. (Roth et al., 2021) found that TikTok can boost motivation and even promote healthy behavior, while (Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2021) highlighted that TikTok can stimulate creativity, curiosity, and student engagement in a compelling learning environment. This shows that if the proponents of this study were able to examine the reasons, benefits, and challenges that language educators are facing in the integration of TikTok-based activities, other educators may use the results of this study as a basis for integrating TikTok in a language classroom. In addition to this, (Tjiangrayudi B Alfaron et al., 2025) shows that aside from improving the speaking skills of students, it can also improve confidence through TikTok-based video-activity. (Mahendra et al., 2024) noted that the integration of TikTok in a classroom may result in a positive relationship between the students and their interests. (Niyomsuk & Polyiem, 2022) later agreed that the researcher found that TikTok increased students' learning performance and satisfaction. However, TikTok's use in classrooms is not without challenges; TikTok may also lead to distractions, a lack of detailed written explanations, and limited social engagement (Mamani Espejo, 2024). In addition to this, (Adelhardt & Eberle, 2024) highlighted that, although TikTok is an engaging tool for teenagers, distraction is also a factor to consider. Despite these drawbacks, studies by (Radin & Light, 2022) and (Putri, 2021) show that TikTok can be valuable in fostering

creative expression and exploration, demonstrating its potential for a balanced approach to education. Hence, being able to integrate TikTok effectively in the language classroom may result in the betterment of not only the learners but also the educators

3. Pedagogical Implications

(Canani & Zulli, 2022) have analyzed TikTok content about language learning and found that trends such as "Pronunciation Challenge" and "Don't say..." are commonly used in correcting mistakes usually made by Italian speakers. By applying these findings in a language classroom, teachers may utilize the Presentation-Practice-Production in teaching certain sets of vocabulary. (Fiallos et al., 2021) project TikTok as an educational tool rather than just being a source of entertaining videos. It was also noted that it gives the young and global audience access to a new format of short educational videos created by expert authors. (Khikmah et al., 2024) demonstrated that the integration of TikTok in a language classroom may reduce students' pronunciation errors. In the study of (Ningroom & Mandarani, 2024), "Stitch", a feature of TikTok, was used as a tool for improving students' speaking skills. The study found that the implementation of the stitch in the students' speaking skills had a strong effect. It was later defined that stitching a video includes the process of tapping the "Share" icon in the screen's lower right corner, for this action initiates a menu containing various sharing options. From this menu, select the "Stitch" feature to commence the stitching process. Researchers underscore the role of TikTok in a language classroom; being able to integrate it as a teaching tool would enable educators to have a much more engaging and active learning environment. After all, TikTok remains a versatile social media tool that has much to offer in the realm of creative communication and education (Abdul Aziz & Mohd Dali, 2023). (Rasyid et al., 2023) highlighted the need for practitioners in applied linguistics to also consider the use of TikTok in enhancing students' English competence. Previous studies suggest that the integration of TikTok often results in a positive outcome on the students' performance and motivation. In addition to this, (Diana Sarkila et al., 2024) noted that "The utilization of TikTok application is considered an effective learning tool to teach and improve knowledge, especially in English skill, while enjoying" (as cited in the Impact of TikTok Application). Studies like (Alshreef & Khadawardi, 2023) found that TikTok is effective for learning English, especially in vocabulary. Likewise, (Huanca, 2024) suggests that although tiktok is an effective supplementary tool for teaching English language, its dynamic nature is yet to be fully investigated. Based on the studies presented, although TikTok is often associated with a positive and active learning environment, it is still important to conduct proper measurements in integrating it as a pedagogical learning tool. Applying these studies to this paper can enable a deeper understanding of how language teachers perceive the process and outcome of the integration of TikTok-based activities in a language classroom.

Conclusion

The reviewed studies collectively demonstrate that TikTok has transformed from a mere entertainment platform into a meaningful educational tool for language development. Its interactive features encourage participation, confidence, and creativity, especially in improving speaking and communicative skills. However, the literature also cautions against relying solely on its entertainment appeal; without structure and clear objectives, its educational impact may remain superficial. Thus, effective use of TikTok in language teaching requires teacher supervision, purposeful content creation, and integration with established instructional strategies. Future studies may explore long-term learning outcomes and classroom models that balance engagement with academic rigor.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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