

THE FACES OF TIKTOK ENGLISH LEARNING INFLUENCERS OF EFL STUDENTS IN LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

English is a globally spoken language crucially taught at all educational levels in Indonesia. Despite its significance, many students struggle due to inadequate proficiency and practice, potentially dampening their motivation. Social media platforms like TikTok offer a promising avenue for language acquisition, hosting diverse educational content, including English learning videos. This study identifies TikTok English influencers as educational tools for students, exploring how these influencers enhance English proficiency among EFL students at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya. Using qualitative descriptive research, the study delved into EFL students' perspectives through interviews, documentation, and observations. The findings indicated a positive view among students regarding TikTok influencer accounts as effective learning media. Consequently, the study concludes that leveraging TikTok influencer accounts can significantly improve students' English language skills, underscoring TikTok's potential as a valuable educational resource in language learning contexts.

Kata kunci: *English learning influencers, TikTok, EFL students.*

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INTRODUCTION

English is a universal language that is spoken around the world. English has been widely known by many people and experts. English as language is used as a tool of expressing ideas of and sharing information from other people in the world (Tumengkol, Posumah, & Liando 2022) and (Parede, Mogea, & Andries 2020). The researchers additionally found the problem that the majority of students struggled with English due to their lack of proficiency and practice. Students' motivation and interest to push themselves to become fluent in English are diminished by this challenge in the ELT classroom.

The distribution of knowledge that inspires moral values, action, creativity, attitude, and motivation must be a priority for educators. Learning outcomes can be impacted by a variety of

factors, including learning media. According to Herlisya & Wiratno (2022), there are four main reasons people use social media applications: enjoyment, sociability, formativeness, and academics. It implies that social media can be used as a tool for language acquisition.

The utilization of suitable learning resources can also help learners' English abilities. Students typically enjoy unique things that fit into their daily life, such as using social media tools. The usage of social media in the sphere of education is not a recent development. In order to teach English writing skills, Herlisya & Wiratno (2022) used Instagram as a medium. AR, (2017) used Facebook as a medium for learning English as a foreign language. (Bouskid, 2019) used Twitter as a language tool in the ESL/EFL classroom. Yang, (2020) used TikTok as a medium for learning English.

The App Store and Google Play Store both allow users to download the TikTok social media app. TikTok is a Chinese social network and music video platform that was established in September 2016 and is Chinese in origin. This application was previously as Dou Yin in China, but its name was changed to TikTok because it is less well-known outside of China. This application was criticized by a number of parties within Indonesia itself since it was seen to frequently include derogatory content. But since the outbreak, a lot of people have downloaded this app to ease the burden of having to stay at home.

TikTok is an application that may be utilized as a learning medium as long as it is used appropriately. Over time, numerous content creators upload educational videos, scientific videos, and various other creative videos. This is corroborated by (Pratiwi, Ufairah, & Sopiha 2021), who wrote in her journal that "The research shows that the respondents had a positive attitude toward the TikTok application used it as an English language learning strategy to help and enhance literacy and speaking skills." The first researcher to use the TikTok app as a teaching tool was (Zaitun, Hadi, M. S., & Indriani, 2021). The program, according to her, "can be used as an interactive learning medium that can improve students' speaking ability with the use of appropriate methods and techniques".

The integration of TikTok in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students has brought about a remarkable revelation in English development. Additionally, TikTok's visually appealing content enables learners to link new words to scenarios and images, improving recall. In order to encourage students to actively employ recently learned terminology in original ways. This strategy has given training new life, making it more interesting and efficient than conventional techniques. It has also given students the confidence to become eager word learners.

As with other learning media, TikTok as a medium for learning English also has advantages and disadvantages in helping students to improve their English. Every student has a different perception of using TikTok as a medium for learning English. For this reason, this study aims to identify influencer accounts that can be used as learning media for students regarding whether

TikTok can help them learn English independently or not and how they learn from the application and to investigate how influencer accounts can improve students' English language proficiency the Dacotu influencer account is named after three countries - Canada, Mexico, Vanuatu. The last is to see the perspective of EFL students.

On January 17-18, 2024, the TikTok Dacotu influencer account has 2.1 million followers, the likes have 29.9 million, the most views are 3 posts, namely 13.4 million, 15.5 million, 13.3 million, the number of video posts of TikTok influencer account Dacotu is 1926. Based on this, the researchers interested in conducting research entitled "The Faces of TikTok English Learning Influencer for EFL Students in Learning".

METHODOLOGY

The type of this research is qualitative descriptive research. The qualitative refers to an exploration and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups come from to a social human problem (Creswell & Poth 2018). In this study, the problem of this research is about how can TikTok Dacotu influencer accounts English Learning improve students' English language proficiency. TikTok, it is part of qualitative research.

The aim of this research is to identify influencer accounts that can be used as learning media for students and to investigate how can TikTok Dacotu influencer accounts English Learning improve students' English language proficiency using TikTok application.

The research data for this study was obtained through interviews in the form of transcript as primary data. This research would rely on five students from English Language Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya as the key subjects or informants. The five English education students consist of different academic years such as 2 students from 2020, 1 from 2021 and 2 from 2022. This research uses interview statements collected from EFL students who follow English learning influencers on TikTok. The full interview transcripts serve as the source data. The technique of the data collection in this research is interview. The type of the interview is semi- structured interview. The semi-structured interview is a type of qualitative interview that allows data collection with greater flexibility to organize questions and participants can define their own experiences (Johnson & Christensen 2017). The steps of semi-structured interview are:

- Set goals and objectives, researcher can use guiding questions as a research questions concept;
- Design inquiry and try to keep it simple, concise, and say the question clearly. The importance of paying attention to word and choice Gather attendees. The determination is made to obtain qualitative data, selecting sources with reasons that have been considered Define the interview media. Determine the media that will be used in the

interview process. Prepare the time and tools used. In this study it is carried out directly, by recording all responses from the informant using a handphone recorder;

- Interview. Before the researcher conducted the interview and collected the interview results using a smartphone recorder. In addition, there are also the instruments of this research to collect of the data. The instruments are the list of questions shared to the interviewers.

The interview contains the description of individual assumptions about the current 27 circumstances (Alamri, 2019). Furthermore (Irani, 2019) argues that interview gives more opportunities for the researcher to gain detailed information that cannot be collected from the observation. These questions were modified from the Journal of English Language Teaching (Putri & Refnaldi, 2020) Thematic analysis is one of the ways that can be used to analyze qualitative data. This data analysis technique is very appropriate if a study aims to explore what really happens in a phenomenon. In particular, thematic analysis is used to identify patterns in an event that is the object of research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The Significant Role of Favorite Accounts in Learning English through TikTok

IA: One of the TikTok english learning influencer accounts that I usually use is the "Dacotu" account, so I often visit the account, because the Dacotu account is my favorite account when I want to learn English, the explanation he gives is very brief, very easy to understand, so at first, I didn't understand English so I understood better what the contents of the video he taught were.

One of the main TikTok influencer accounts that has influenced my English learning process is the TikTok account "Dacotu"; he provides clear and concise explanations that help me overcome difficulties in English. I often access my favorite account "Dacotu", it has simplified the difficult English problems and made learning English efficient and fun. Thanks to his approachable and friendly personality to TikTok viewers, Dacotu's account has been instrumental in improving my understanding of English.

B. Utilizing TikTok as a Tool for Learning English

AS: For the first way, we open the TikTok account first, after that we search for the "Dacotu" account, after that we look for the video we want, for example, reading challenge or practice reading after that we listen to the explanation from the video, what to do, what he should say, it's already clear in the video like there are instructions, then just follow the instructions what the person says, For example, we are told to repeat there is the word eraser we read eraser, there is also speaking too, the person will give a red or blue text line, for example the person reads blue then we read the red one like that, after that in addition to speaking and pronouncing, there is also listening, there we don't just listen and watch videos and that also improves our listening too.

Opening an account by searching for the TikTok account "Dacotu", then selecting the desired video - such as a reading challenge - is a major step in the TikTok learning process. Then clear instructions are heard by the user, who may be asked to repeat words or phrases. Then interaction is added through speaking exercises such as answering lines of colored text along with listening is included in the process, which makes learning more effective overall. Also, active participation in improving English skills has been guaranteed by TikTok "Dacotu"'s comprehensive approach to its viewers or followers.

C. Variants of Learning Materials

HA: So TikTok helps me in learning English, perhaps through content that encourages me to learn English through practice questions that I mentioned before, practice grammar questions, and then how to pronounce them, so TikTok teaches me how to improve my skills. Speaking, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

TikTok encourages me to participate in English exercises involving grammar, pronunciation, speaking, vocabulary, grammar ideas, which is very helpful in my English learning process. This interactive platform is a useful tool to gain widespread English proficiency as it provides an easy method to improve my English.

Discussion

1. The Significant Role of Favorite Accounts in Learning English Through TikTok

Based on the result above, it is clear that TikTok has become a popular platform for English language learning, especially through educational content from influencers like Dacotu (Fitria, 2023). Key points include the effectiveness of Dacotu's easy-to-understand content, the consistency of content updates which increases engagement, and the fun learning atmosphere (Suciani et al., 2023). The impact on learners includes improved comprehension, building interest in learning, and increasing confidence. TikTok as a learning medium features accessibility, variety of content, and the formation of a supportive learning community (Muvid, Sahibuddin, & 2023).

In conclusion, TikTok influencers, such as Dacotu, are effective in assisting English language learning with engaging content and supportive platform accessibility. The discussion can be extended by exploring comparisons with traditional methods, the challenges of learning through TikTok, the role of teachers and parents, and the ethics and credibility of content. This opens up insights into the utilization of social media for education.

2. Utilizing TikTok as a Tool for Learning English

Based on the above, it can be concluded that learning English through TikTok is an effective alternative, especially for beginners. TikTok presents a variety of interesting and interactive learning content, capable of increasing user motivation and understanding (Laili, 2023). Experts, such as (Kim, 2020), support this concept by detailing that effective language learning involves practice, interaction, relevant context, and comprehensible input.

Learning English through TikTok (Sari, Dollah, & Hasriani 2023) highlights practice, interaction, and feedback, all of which can be found within this platform. (Farisca Adhani et al., 2023) emphasizes the importance of context relevant to everyday life, something that TikTok successfully offers through actual and popular content. (Graziano, Assistant, & Banzato, 2022) highlighted the role of comprehensible input, which TikTok covers by presenting repetitive content.

In conclusion, while TikTok can be an effective tool, it is important to choose content according to English proficiency level, watch videos repeatedly, practice speaking and writing, and interact with other users for feedback. By following these tips, users can effectively improve their English skills through this platform.

3. Variants of Learning Materials

From the above, it can be concluded that TikTok is an effective tool for learning English, especially for beginners. This effectiveness lies in the variety of interesting and interactive learning content, capable of increasing user motivation and understanding.

According to Sharabati et al, 2022 practice, interaction, and feedback, all of which can be found on TikTok through content that can be practiced, interaction with other users, and feedback from influencers. Haslem (2022) highlighted the context relevant to everyday life, where TikTok successfully presents content related to popular or current affairs. Plutzer (2021) pointed out the role of comprehensible input, which TikTok achieves by presenting content over and over again.

In conclusion, learning English through TikTok is effective, but it is important to choose content according to English level, watch videos repeatedly, practice speaking and writing, and interact with other users for feedback.

Further explanation confirms that TikTok not only increases learning motivation through engaging content, but also helps learners learn in real daily contexts, as well as receive repeated English input for better understanding.

Thus, TikTok is not just an entertainment platform, but a potential learning tool to effectively improve English skills, especially by applying the right learning tips and methods.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of the research it can be concluded that TikTok influencer account namely “Dacotu” reveals a multifaceted landscape. For the Improving English skills such as: 1) Influencers and Favorite Accounts, it means TikTok account “Dacotu” is one of the students’ favorite Account; 2) Learning Methods, it makes students understand how to use TikTok influencer “Dacotu” content as a medium of English Learning; 3) Variants of Learning Materials, it means the variation of Dacotu’s content/videos can be the materials of English language learning skills.

The problem that occurred at EFL in English language department faced challenges in mastering English. The researcher also found the problem that the majority of students struggled with English due to their lack of proficiency and practice. Students' motivation and interest to push themselves to become fluent in English.

These challenges were linked to several factors, such as limited exposure to English language input, inadequate teaching methods. The utilization of suitable learning resources could also help learners' English abilities. TikTok English learning influencers were potential tool for EFL students, as it was widely used by students in Indonesia and offers a number of advantages, such as its ease of used, affordability, and interesting.

From the findings, the conclusion of this research found that the faces of TikTok English learning influencers in EFL students in learning English had a positive perspective. They believe that influencers accounts could be used as learning media for students. They also appreciated that influencer accounts could improve students’ English language proficiency.

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