

Utilizing TikTok in Improving English Skills: A Case Study of Vietnamese University Students


Do Thi Yen Linh^{1*}, Huynh Nhut Khoa²

¹ An Giang University, Vietnam

² Bangkok University, Thailand

* Corresponding author's email: doyenlinh0108@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: TikTok, English learning, Vietnamese university students, MALL

This study aims to explore the role of the social media platform TikTok in improving the English skills of Vietnamese university students. Data were collected through a cross-sectional survey completed by 105 student participants from universities across Vietnam, from the north to the south of the country. The study focused on students' perceptions of TikTok's role in enhancing their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as its influence on their motivation and confidence in using English for daily communication. The results showed that most students considered TikTok an effective platform for improving their English, with the greatest improvements reported in speaking and listening skills. In addition, students' motivation and confidence in using English were significantly increased after using TikTok to practice. Findings suggest that social media platforms such as TikTok can support formal English language education and enhance learner engagement outside traditional classrooms.

Introduction

The importance of learning English for Vietnamese university students

English has emerged as a global language and plays an essential role in enabling people to interact and integrate into society (Nguyen, 2019). Thanks to it, we can talk about any topic anywhere, regardless of our ethnicity or nationality. Owing to English's widespread use, several countries, including Vietnam, have made English a foreign language for all students at all educational levels and the main language of instruction for a range of subjects (Van & Duong, 2022). Dang et al. (2021) described the English learning process: in primary school, students are initially encouraged to learn one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. At the secondary and high school levels, their English proficiency will be developed so that, when they enter university, they can communicate with people from around the world. In most Vietnamese universities, English is used as an entrance requirement to screen candidates, and as an introductory subject for students, and before graduating, students must achieve a certain

level of English set by the school (Nguyen, 2019). Therefore, for students at academies in Vietnam, learning English is essential not only for admission and graduation but also for preparing for their future careers.

The penetration and development of TikTok as a new method of learning English

TikTok, a Chinese-developed application with the domestic name "Douyin," has generated excitement among social media users worldwide because of its featured function, which allows creators to generate short-form videos (Boffone, 2022). Today, netizens are accustomed to the term "short-form content," and TikTok has become a global phenomenon in which young people find their preferred type of entertaining videos (Feldkamp, 2021). Such videos have captured the attention of millions of people, particularly among younger generations (Aldabhy, 2022). Owing to its widespread dissemination, TikTok is now considered not only an entertainment platform but also a mobile-assisted language-learning tool for English language learners, owing to its accessibility and user-generated content that supports traditional learning methods. Moreover, TikTok's algorithms, designed to personalize content based on users' preferences, increase exposure to English-language content and support the acquisition of English knowledge (Fitria, 2023).

Purpose of this research

Based on the research mentioned above, TikTok is considered an effective tool for students in the language learning process due to its ease of use, time-saving, creativity, and recreational value. Many Asian countries are conducting thorough investigations into TikTok to assess its effectiveness in students' English learning. Meanwhile, Vietnam, which widely adopts English as a foreign language, has not conducted much research on the effectiveness of this platform. This highlights the need for articles that provide data on TikTok use in academic settings. This paper further examines another perspective on Vietnamese university students' use of TikTok to improve their English proficiency.

Significance of the study

This research is valuable as a reference for university students seeking effective strategies to enhance their English language skills through social media. By investigating their peers' perceptions and practices, the study empowers students to make informed decisions about how to incorporate TikTok into their learning journeys. Understanding the effectiveness of learning English through TikTok will also prompt educators to consider this platform and to integrate it into educational settings. This research serves as a steppingstone toward a deeper understanding of how social media platforms can be used to foster language learning in the digital age.

Literature Review

The importance of social media in improving English skills

Since 2019, COVID-19 has severely affected the face-to-face education system worldwide (UNESCO, 2020). Citizens were restricted from gathering around to hold conversations or exchange messages, schools were closed, and students were quarantined due to social distancing. It hindered students' opportunities to practice and enhance their English skills through in-person interactions with peers and teachers (Rashid & Yadav, 2020). As a result, numerous online methods for learning English have been developed and adopted by teachers and instructors worldwide as an optimal alternative. According to Taj et al. (2016), language studies have benefited greatly from the increasing use of smart gadgets, especially mobile-

assisted language learning, which has the potential to broaden language learning beyond the traditional classroom.

Pham et al. (2023) stated that it is unquestionable that social media plays a key role in making things more straightforward. Particularly for language learning, the use of mobile applications in general and social media in particular has increased at an unprecedented rate in recent decades due to significant technological breakthroughs (Van & Duong, 2022). They also stated that social media is widely used by younger generations; thus, it is reasonable to expect that using this technology will improve the vocabulary knowledge and English proficiency of English learners in specific circumstances.

Introduction of TikTok

TikTok is a social media platform for short videos owned by ByteDance and developed by Zhang Yiming in 2016. Domestically known as Douyin, this program became a phenomenon in China. Due to its immense popularity, Douyin has spread to many nations under the new name TikTok (Pratiwi et al., 2021). It is a short-form mobile video platform that allows users to produce videos often lasting 15-60 seconds and share them with the larger TikTok community, which has emerged as an important social media platform in this day and age (Li et al., 2021). Lindsley (2022) noted that TikTok is particularly popular among the traditionally hard-to-reach 18–29 age cohort, as evidenced by data from the United States. 32.5% of users are aged 10–19, and 29.5% are aged 20–29. Therefore, TikTok can be considered as a networked public: it is a digital space constructed by networked architecture and contributed to by user communities that diversify its mediated environment (Boyd, 2007). Globally, TikTok is available in 150 countries and has 800 million monthly active users, with over 2 billion downloads. It was also the most downloaded smartphone app in 2018 and 2019, surpassing Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram (Perez, 2018).

TikTok's popularity and usefulness in language learning among university students in Asia

In Asian countries that teach English as a second or foreign language, TikTok has established its position among university students in the digital era. Xiuwen and Razali (2021) stated that the popularity of TikTok among Chinese international undergraduate students has led them to use it as a learning tool. In Indonesia, Sarkila et al. (2024) as well as Simanungkalit and Katemba (2023) indicated TikTok as an easy-to-use feature of TikTok among students. Specifically, they pointed out that anyone can use it, such as for the reuse of the platform's videos, unlimited learning experience, joy and relaxation when learning, and ease of exploring native English speakers' content. In Thailand, Luangmang (2023) found that TikTok can be used as a teaching and learning tool in the classroom. Both teachers and students can adopt this tool in order to leverage the learning process.

In Malaysia, Abdullah et al. (2023) reported that TikTok is an effective tool for boosting language skills and is widely accepted by students nationwide. In Vietnam, another EFL country, TikTok is widely used, and it demonstrates usefulness through helping students sharpen their English for school (Ngo, 2024; Nguyen & Tran, 2024).

In Indonesia, Simanungkalit and Katemba (2023) reported that students mostly agreed that learning through TikTok can greatly improve their vocabulary, pronunciation, and conversation by following the example of the speaker in the video. Researchers mention duet challenges as a crucial factor contributing to TikTok's uniqueness. Zaitun et al. (2021) found that using the TikTok app to learn English is highly engaging and effective at boosting students' confidence and language proficiency, as evidenced by the sharp rise in their test scores.

Xiuwen and Razali (2021) from China examined TikTok's effectiveness in English learning, finding that the platform offers opportunities for short video sharing, which may be particularly effective for English as a foreign language (EFL) undergraduates learning English communication skills. In the listening and speaking sector, TikTok enables EFL young learners to develop their listening and speaking in English by accessing short videos that teach English-language communication. In terms of reading and writing abilities, Zeng and Gopez (2025) indicated that TikTok offers English-learning resources on popular subjects that help pupils improve their vocabulary and grammar, thereby becoming more proficient readers and writers of English.

Not only in school, but students can also use TikTok as a platform for self-study anytime, anywhere. In Malaysia, Tan et al.'s (2022) research found that students can learn at their own pace, grasp the material, and advance toward a deeper understanding of English concepts and structures through TikTok. They can also learn how to express themselves inside and outside of the classroom.

In Vietnam, TikTok use is widespread, and students, particularly university students, prefer it as an effective tool for learning English (Nguyen & Tran, 2024). Their findings demonstrated that students generally held positive views of TikTok for enhancing their speaking abilities through vocabulary development. TikTok is also considered a tool that increases motivation and confidence when learning English, as Pham et al. (2023) reported that duet videos on TikTok are an effective way for students to learn adjectives, as they enjoy creating them. In addition, helps students remember English adjectives while simultaneously providing them with inspiration and fun. Tran (2023) also describes TikTok as a good tool for learning English. The author found that using TikTok videos as an English-learning approach improved students' retention of English vocabulary. Not only students but also teachers can use this platform to help learners learn how to use and interact with TikTok (Tran, 2023).

Research gaps

In Vietnam, there is limited research on how university students use TikTok as a tool for studying English. While TikTok's popularity and potential for English language learning are unquestionable, and there has been a lot of research from countries using English as a foreign language (EFL), such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, etc., the number of studies specifically exploring how Vietnamese university students utilize the platform for English language acquisition remains limited. This limitation of localized research, in contrast to the numerous investigations in neighboring EFL countries, underscores the need for further exploration into the specific contexts and practices within the Vietnamese educational landscape (Nguyen & Tran, 2024). This study will serve as a reference for university students seeking a scientific review of learning English via TikTok and for further study of TikTok.

Research theory

This study adopted Hug's (2005) microlearning theory to explore how TikTok, a mobile-assisted language learning tool, supports language learning. The microlearning theory emphasizes that learners are able to improve language skills through brief, focused, and repetitive content. The largest advantage of this method is cognitive, as Lopez (2024) found in his research that students can acquire substantial knowledge from various sources; therefore, the perceived knowledge will be more varied and robust than in traditional learning, where students learn from 1 material. Gabrielli et al. (2017) indicated that microlearning theory is the future as technology is widely applied worldwide. They also stated that in a classroom setting, students can learn effectively without feeling overwhelmed. Another study by Silva et al. (2025)

found that microlearning can enhance motivation, performance, and classroom interaction when combined with digital tools such as short films, mobile applications, and online platforms. It also supports collaborative learning and the growth of digital skills. Therefore, this theory aligns with TikTok's features, and this study will investigate how effectively TikTok supports students' English language development.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey was created to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the attitude of Vietnamese university students when using TikTok as a medium to learn English?
2. What English skills do Vietnamese university students improve by using TikTok?

Methodology

Design of the Study

This study employed a quantitative research method, using a single questionnaire (administered in English and Vietnamese) to collect data from university students in Vietnam. To ensure the questionnaire's validity and reliability, the researchers will collect responses from a random sample of students across three regions of Vietnam: the North, Central, and South.

Data collection and analysis

The researchers developed a questionnaire in Google Forms comprising three main sections. Attendees would receive a link to a Google Forms survey created by the researchers to assess the effectiveness of TikTok for English learning, and they would complete it. The collecting data process lasted for one month, from March to April, 2025.

The first section collected educational data through 4 questions: year in school, TikTok use, university, and region. The second part investigated their habits and attitudes when using TikTok to enhance their English skills, using six questions adapted from Pham et al. (2023), who studied the attitudes of university students at Van Lang University, Vietnam. The measurement was based on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

In the last section, six questions were adapted from Nguyen and Tran (2024), which examined the improvement of speaking skills through TikTok. In this section, students answered questions about the skills they improved through learning on TikTok. The measurement was based on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

In the questionnaire, the researchers included concentration-checking questions (e.g., "Choose the Red color" and "Choose the Purple color"). After collecting all results, the study would use IBM SPSS Statistics 26 to analyze the data, verify the findings, and draw conclusions.

Participants

The questionnaires were initially distributed to 111 Vietnamese university students. After excluding invalid responses, the final sample comprised 105 Vietnamese university students from the North, Central, and South regions of Vietnam who had used TikTok for learning English. All of them are learning English as a foreign language at their universities. The

respondents are divided into 4 groups, including freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. All of the demographic data are shown in the tables below.

Table 1

Status of students attending the research

Status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Freshman	9	7.6	7.6	7.6
Sophomore	36	34.3	34.3	41.9
Junior	9	6.7	6.7	48.6
Senior	51	48.6	48.6	97.1
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

Table 2

Using TikTok rates of participants

Answer	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	6	5.5	5.5	5.5
Yes	105	94.5	94.5	100.0
Total	111	100.0	100.0	

Tables 1 and 2 displayed that among the 105 respondents, the majority were seniors, with 51 people seizing 48.57% in total, followed by 36 university sophomores, who accounted for 34.29%; 8 freshmen took hold of 7.62%; juniors, with 7 students, grasped 6.67%; and finally, 3 graduate students grabbed 2.85% in total. TikTok is widely used by most of the students attending the survey, with 94.5%, and a part of 5.5% reported that they have not used it at all.

Table 3

Geographical information of participants

Area	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
North area	28	26.7	26.7	26.7
Central area	9	8.6	8.6	35.2
South area	68	64.8	64.8	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

In terms of geographical areas in Table 3, most respondents were from the South area (64.76%), followed by the North (26.67%) and the Central (8.57%).

Table 4*TikTok using duration daily of participants*

Time using daily	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-2 hours	69	65.7	65.7	65.7
3-4 hours	14	13.3	13.3	79.0
5-6 hours	3	2.9	2.9	81.9
Less than 1 hour	17	16.2	16.2	98.1
More than 6 hours	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

Regarding the time Vietnamese university students spend on TikTok daily, the largest proportion (65.71%) reported spending 1-2 hours. Other students using TikTok for less than 1 hour daily seized 16.19%; from 3 to 4 hours, 13.33%; from 5 to 6 hours, 2.86%; and more than 6 hours, 1.90% in total.

Table 5*Preferred video duration on TikTok*

Video duration	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Under 15 seconds	10	9.5	9.5	9.5
15 - 30 seconds	40	38.1	38.1	47.6
31 - 45 seconds	32	30.5	30.5	78.1
46 seconds - Under 1 minute	10	9.5	9.5	87.6
1 - 1.5 minutes	5	4.8	4.8	92.4
More than 1.5 minutes	8	7.6	7.6	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

Mentioning learning English specifically, the study asked a question about the duration of English learning videos that the students prefer when browsing TikTok. A great part of the respondents reported that they are prone to consuming English learning content for 15-30 seconds, seizing 38.10%, and 31-45 seconds, with 30.58%. Both the under 15-second and 46-second to 1-minute video formats received the same results of 9.52% from the students. The rest of the students reported that they prefer videos lasting from 1 to 1.5 minutes (4.76%) and more than 1.5 minutes for each video (6.67%).

Results/Findings

Table 6

Reliability of the questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha		Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.801		0.791	12

The Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire was found to be $\alpha = 0.801$, which was proved reliable due to Hair (2014).

Attitude of Vietnamese university students when using TikTok as a medium to learn English

Table 7

Satisfaction when using TikTok as a medium to learn English

Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	1.9	1.9	1.9
Disagree	4	3.8	3.8	5.7
Neutral	19	18.1	18.1	23.8
Agree	65	61.9	61.9	85.7
Strongly Agree	15	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

To investigate students' attitudes toward learning English on TikTok, the authors created a question asking them to rate their satisfaction with using TikTok as a tool for studying English. According to Table 6, the proportion of students satisfied with the platform was 61.9%, the highest among all. Another 14.3% of pupils strongly approved of TikTok as a platform for sharpening their English skills. In contrast, a small group of students who were dissatisfied with learning on TikTok selected 3.8% as unsatisfying and 1.9% as strongly unsatisfying. Additionally, 19 students expressed uncertainty about how they felt when using the platform, accounting for 18.1 percent.

Table 8

Willingness to apply knowledge learned on TikTok into daily communication

Option	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Always	5	4.8	4.8	4.8
Often	47	44.8	44.8	49.5
Rarely	8	7.6	7.6	57.1
Sometimes	45	42.9	42.9	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

Table 9*Willingness to recommend TikTok as a medium to learn English to others*

Answer	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	38	36.2	36.2	36.2
No	10	9.5	9.5	45.7
Yes	57	54.3	54.3	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

After learning English from TikTok videos, the students were asked about their willingness to apply what they had learned in real communication situations. Respondents reported the frequency with which they applied English knowledge from TikTok in daily communication, with 44.76% indicating "often," 42.86% "sometimes," 7.62% "rarely," and 4.76% "always." The researchers continued to investigate university students' willingness to introduce TikTok as an English learning method to others. The results showed that more than half of the respondents (54.29%) stated they would recommend TikTok as a method for learning English, while 36.19% were uncertain, and 9.52% would not recommend it.

*English skills improved by using TikTok***Table 10***Item Statistics of the questions investigating English skills improved by using TikTok*

No.	Content	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	N
1	Learning English on TikTok improves my listening skill	3.87	4.0	0.721	105
2	Learning English on TikTok improves my reading skill	3.19	4.0	0.606	105
3	Learning English on TikTok improves my writing skill	2.94	3.0	0.745	105
4	Learning English on TikTok improves my speaking skill	3.70	3.0	0.887	105
5	TikTok increases my confidence to use English for communicating	3.51	4.0	0.921	105
6	TikTok increases my motivation to learn English beyond the classroom	3.73	4.0	0.891	105

In Table 10, there were 4 main English skills, including listening, reading, writing, and speaking, and 2 further abilities, including confidence to use English and motivation to learn English beyond the classroom. 2 skill improvements received strong student advocacy: listening and speaking, with mean values of 3.87 and 3.70, respectively. The other 2 skills which are reading and writing skills, had the mean values of 3.19 and 2.94 for each. Confidence in using English to communicate had a mean of 3.51, and motivation to learn English beyond the

classroom had a mean of 3.73. The standard deviation of 6 questions ranged from 0.606 to 0.921 in all 105 responses.

Table 11

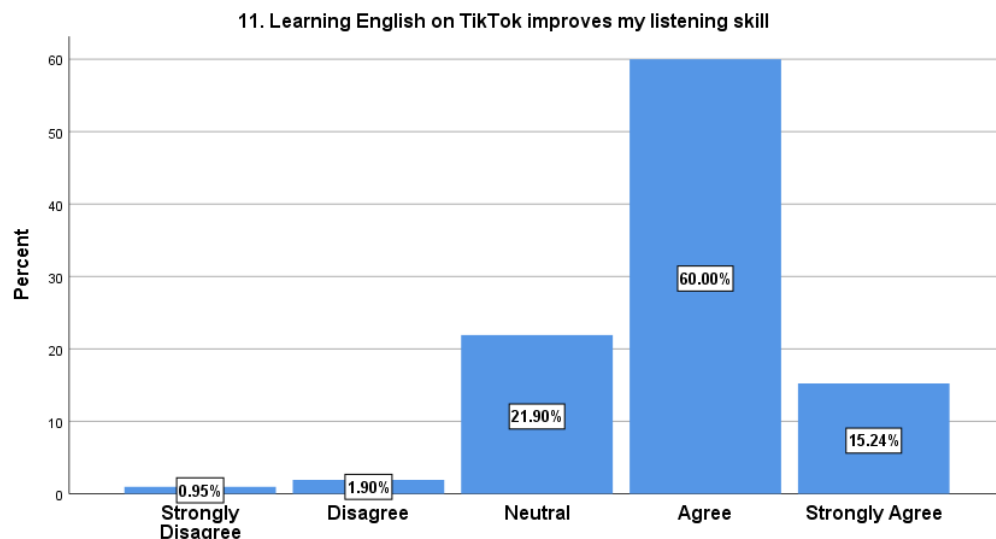
Inter-Item Correlation Matrix of the questions investigating English skills improved by using TikTok

No.	Content	11. Learning English on TikTok improves my listening skill	12. Learning English on TikTok improves my reading skill	13. Learning English on TikTok improves my writing skill	14. Learning English on TikTok improves my speaking skill	15. TikTok increases my confidence to use English for communicating	16. TikTok increases my motivation to learn English beyond the classroom
1	Learning English on TikTok improves my listening skill	1.000	0.169	0.218	0.404	0.495	0.498
2	Learning English on TikTok improves my reading skill	0.169	1.000	0.387	0.213	0.167	0.255
3	Learning English on TikTok improves my writing skill	0.218	0.387	1.000	0.425	0.366	0.397
4	Learning English on TikTok improves my speaking skill	0.404	0.213	0.425	1.000	0.729	0.483
5	TikTok increases my confidence to use English for communicating	0.495	0.167	0.366	0.729	1.000	0.602
6	TikTok increases my motivation to learn English beyond the classroom	0.498	0.255	0.397	0.483	0.602	1.000

Listening skills

Figure 1

Rates of improvement in English listening skills after using TikTok

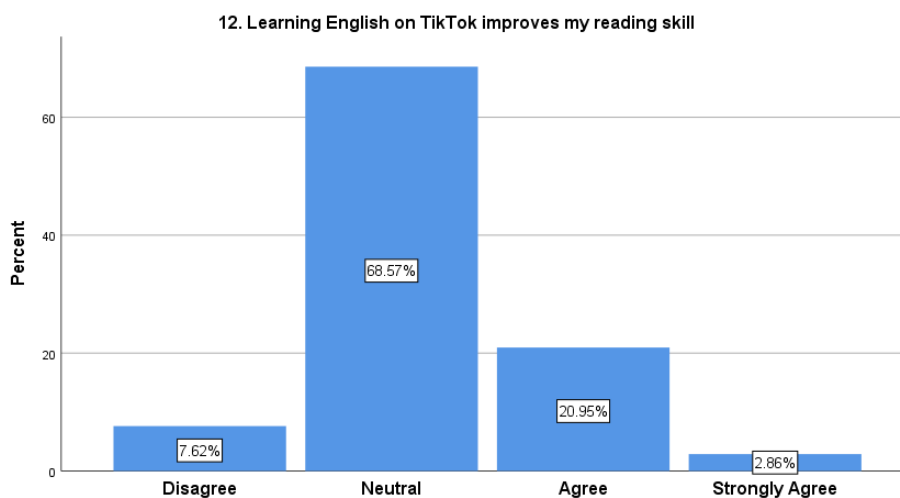


According to Figure 1, a large proportion of respondents (60%) confirmed that studying English on TikTok improves their listening abilities, while 21.90% stated that they were on the neutral side. 15.24% of the total students emphasized that TikTok has effectively leveraged their listening skills. Small percentages of pupils who did not agree with the effectiveness of TikTok in enhancing skills were 1.9% Disagree and 0.95% Strongly Disagree. According to the mean and median values of 3.87 and 4.00 in Table 10, respectively, listening skill was reported to have a strong relationship with students' motivation to learn English beyond the classroom and with students' confidence in using English for communication, with correlation coefficients of 0.498 and 0.495 in Table 11.

Reading skills

Figure 2

Rates of improving English reading skill after using TikTok

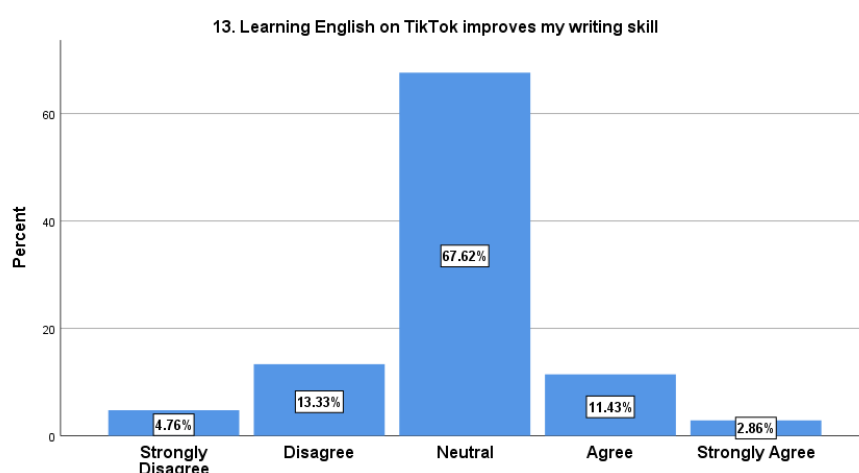


Regarding the advantage of TikTok in assisting students with their reading skills, as demonstrated in Figure 2. Specifically, 68.57% of students reported holding a neutral opinion regarding the use of TikTok to enhance their reading abilities. Combining the mean and median values of 3.19 and 3.0 for each in Table 10, it is strongly confirmed that the respondents were on the neutral side. However, the Agree and Strongly Agree rates were 20.95% and 2.86%, respectively. A small proportion (7.62%) of students did not consider TikTok a platform for sharpening their reading skills.

Writing skills

Figure 3

Rates of improvement in English writing skills after using TikTok

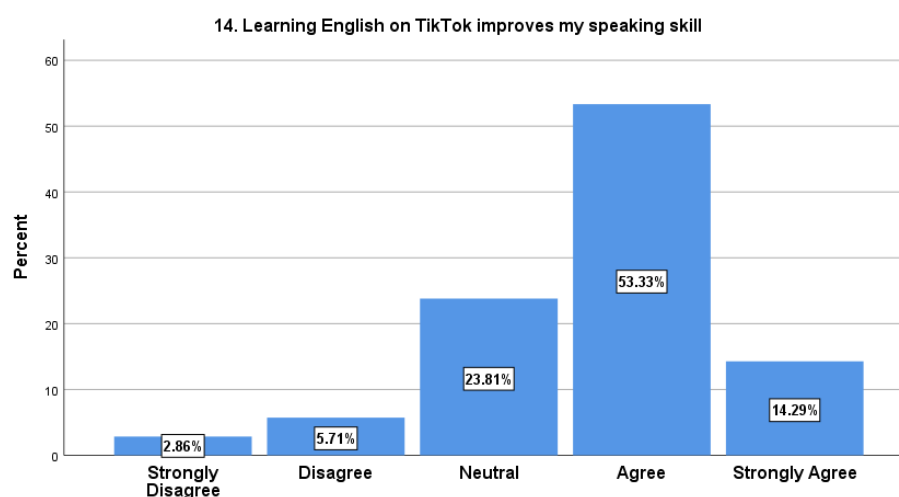


The study continued to assess the advantage of TikTok in helping students enhance their writing ability. Most of the students chose the neutral option, with the rate being 67.62%. There was a recognition of improvement in writing skills, especially displayed by Agree and Strongly Agree percentages of 11.43% and 2.86%, respectively. However, TikTok may not be as strongly recommended in terms of improving writing ability because of the larger disagreement rate (13.33% disagree, and 4.76% strongly disagree).

Speaking skills

Figure 4

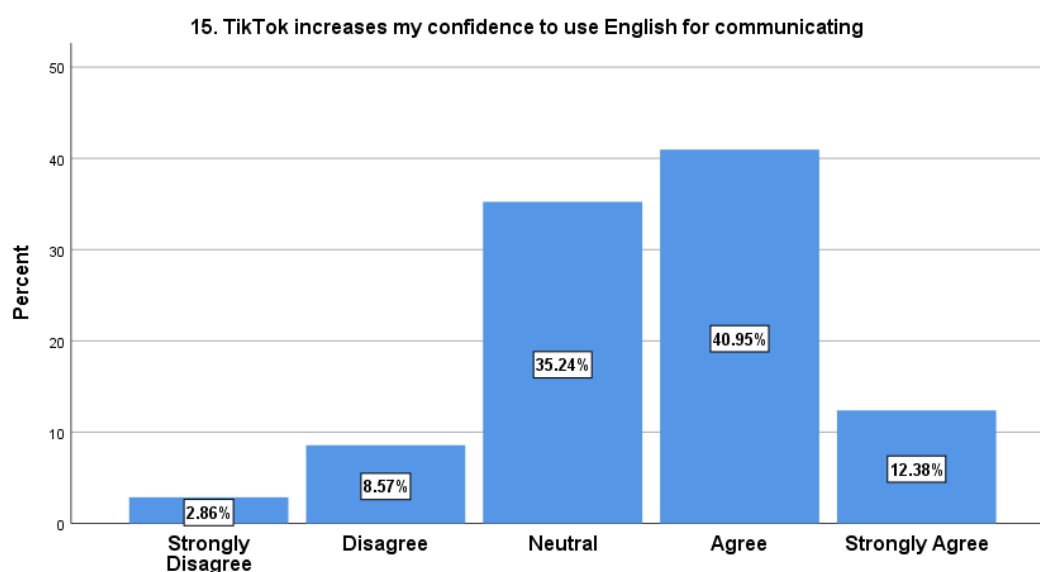
Rates of improvement in English-speaking skills after using TikTok



Regarding speaking skills, many respondents agreed that TikTok enhances their speaking skills, with "agree" and "strongly agree" percentages of 53.33% and 14.29%, respectively. Even though disagreement persisted, with rates of Strongly Disagree and Disagree at 2.86% and 5.71%, respectively, they accounted for only small parts of the total sample. In addition, 23.81% of students were unsure whether they could improve their writing skills by using TikTok. According to Table 11, speaking skills are strongly linked with the confidence of students when using English, displaying a correlation value of 0.729, and motivation for further English learning, with a value of 0.483.

Figure 5

Confidence in daily communication



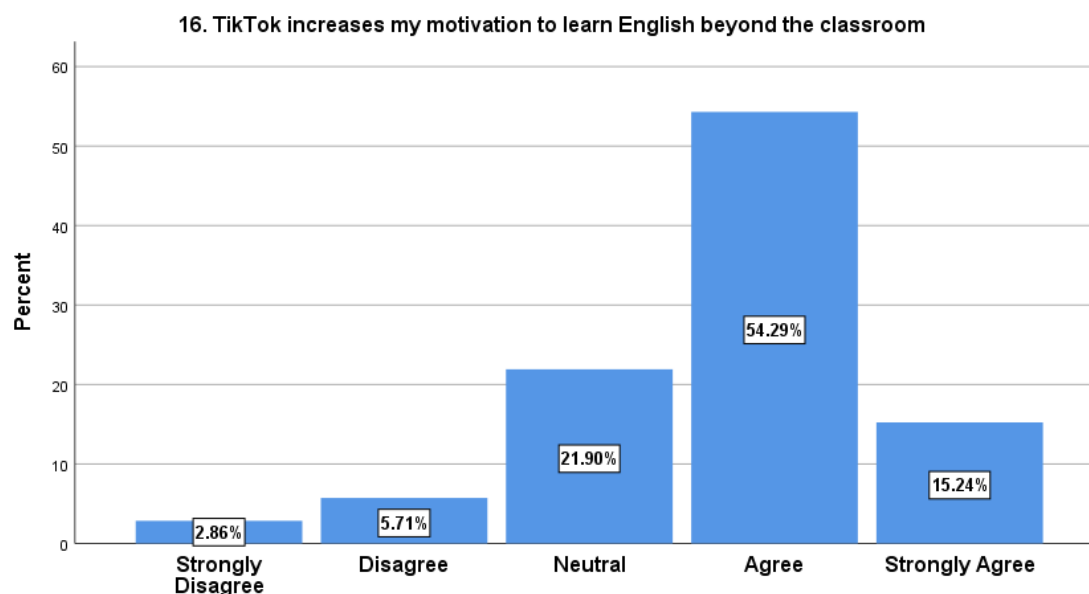
Confidence in daily communication after using TikTok

To further investigate whether students become more confident in daily conversations by using TikTok for practice, the researchers asked them to evaluate their communication confidence after using the platform and analyzed the results to draw a precise conclusion. A majority of respondents (40.95% agree and 12.38% strongly agree) supported the statement that TikTok helps them feel more confident in communicating with others. However, a significant number of students (35.24% in total) remained neutral, indicating that they did not clearly perceive TikTok's effectiveness in enhancing their communication confidence. A small group of students expressed disagreement regarding TikTok's role in boosting their confidence, with 8.57% disagreeing and 2.86% strongly disagreeing. Overall, TikTok has a positive effect on students' communication confidence.

Motivation to learn English beyond the classroom

Figure 6

Motivation improvement to learn English beyond the classroom after using TikTok



In the last part of the questionnaire, the authors asked the students to evaluate whether TikTok inspires them to learn English after their main English class and synthesize their points of view. Over half (54.29%) of the respondents agreed, and another 15.24% strongly agreed that TikTok increases their motivation to learn English after class. Over one-fifth of the students (21.90%) had a balanced view of this platform's role in helping them learn English beyond the class. In contrast, a small group of pupils show their dissatisfaction with the statement (5.71% disagree and 2.86% strongly disagree).

Discussion

The results of the studies

Attitude of Vietnamese university students toward using TikTok for learning English

Vietnamese university students widely use TikTok for English learning, with 94.5% of participants engaging with the platform, particularly seniors aiming for B1 proficiency required for graduation. TikTok's simplicity, as noted by Sarkila et al. (2024), makes it accessible, especially for the 18-29 age group (Lindsley, 2022). Most students (65.7%) spend 1-2 hours daily on TikTok, exceeding the global average of about one hour (Duarte, 2026). They prefer short-form videos (15-45 seconds), consistent with Tan et al. (2022) and Xiuwen and Razali (2021), who highlight the effectiveness of concise content for short attention spans and English proficiency. Students frequently apply knowledge acquired through TikTok to daily communication, with 54.3% willing to recommend it, supporting Pratiwi et al. (2021) and Sarkila et al. (2024) in characterizing its growing role as a learning tool.

English skills improved through practicing on TikTok

Regarding listening ability, TikTok has received strong support from attendees: 60% agree and 15.24% strongly agree that it significantly enhances their listening skills. Moreover, with a correlation of 0.498 between listening and improvement in motivation, it is highly likely that if

a student successfully improves their listening skills through TikTok, their motivation to learn English will also increase. Therefore, TikTok is considered a platform that helps university students improve their English listening skills. The same conclusion was reached by Sarkila et al. (2024), who stated that TikTok offers opportunities for students to develop their English skills, including listening. To enhance the effectiveness of TikTok in the listening sector, Xiuwen and Razali (2021) stated that English-language learning materials in the short-video format on TikTok could be used to help young learners improve their English listening.

Regarding reading ability, more than 68% of students selected the neutral option, indicating uncertainty about whether TikTok is a useful tool for improving their reading skills. However, TikTok may have improved students' reading skills, as over 20% of students reported it helped them sharpen their reading skills. This result, in contrast to Zeng and Gopez's (2025) research, found that students' reading fluency significantly improved when they used TikTok to practice their reading. Moreover, using TikTok as a teaching tool in higher vocational applied writing courses can enhance students' creativity and improve their learning outcomes. Writing skill also showed the same pattern as reading skill, receiving a large number of neutral responses from respondents, accounting for over 67% in total. It means that they neither confirmed nor denied that TikTok is helpful for writing skills, but they did not underestimate the platform.

More than 53% of students endorsed TikTok for improving speaking skills. Moreover, when the speaking ability of a student has been boosted, the confidence in using English and motivation to learn this language can be significantly improved, as the correlation value between speaking skill and confidence as well as motivation was 0.729 and 0.783, respectively. Therefore, TikTok is highly advocated for sharpening the speaking skills of Vietnamese university students. This finding aligns with that of Sarkila et al. (2024), who state that TikTok provides opportunities for students to improve their English skills, including speaking, grammar, pronunciation, and acquiring new English vocabulary. Xiuwen and Razali (2021) also confirmed that TikTok significantly enhances students' speaking skills, particularly pronunciation, through a range of platform materials. Tan et al. (2022) noted that the Duet feature contributes to TikTok's popularity as a tool for learning to speak. Specifically, Tan et al. (2022) affirmed that TikTok has a positive impact on pupils' English proficiency, as they can practice the language in real-world situations accessible through TikTok's duet challenge concept. If TikTok improves speaking skills, it is very likely to also boost users' confidence in using English.

Among Vietnamese university students who used TikTok to improve their English, 40.95% agreed that TikTok helped them increase their self-confidence in daily communication. Thus, TikTok appears to be an effective tool for boosting students' confidence in using English. This conclusion aligns with Zaitun et al. (2021), which emphasized that using the TikTok application for English learning is highly interactive and effective in improving students' confidence and skills.

In terms of motivation to learn English, over 54% of students agree that TikTok inspires them to learn English in and out of the classroom. Therefore, TikTok is considered a platform that amplifies Vietnamese university students' motivation to sharpen their English skills beyond their main English classroom. It also supports an environment for learning English inside and outside the classroom. Similarly, Taj et al. (2016) concluded that students can learn to manifest themselves in and out of the classroom environment. Pham et al. (2023) reached the same conclusion: language studies have benefited greatly from the increasing use of smart devices, which have the potential to broaden language learning beyond the traditional classroom and make it easier.

Overall, the findings suggest that TikTok plays a positive role in supporting English language learners, particularly in listening and speaking. In addition, the students' motivation and self-confidence are leveraged when using the platform as a practice space. However, there is a need to improve content on reading and writing to provide a more comprehensive learning experience.

Conclusion

Main findings from the study

Attitude of Vietnamese university students toward using TikTok for learning English

The findings showed that most Vietnamese university students used TikTok for 1-2 hours daily, nearly an hour more than the global average reported by Duarte (2026). Therefore, university students in Vietnam engage with TikTok's content more frequently than normal users. In terms of their favorite types of English learning videos, students tend to consume short-form videos, particularly 15–30 second videos, followed by 31–45 second videos, more than those exceeding 1 minute. This suggests that short-form videos appeal more to students than longer ones, and that concise content is more effective when it aligns with students' short attention spans. The students demonstrated a strong tendency to apply knowledge acquired on TikTok to real-life communication, and TikTok has become a tool for improving their daily English conversation.

English skills enhanced by using TikTok

Through statistical analysis, the researchers found that when Vietnamese university students use TikTok as a MALL method, their English proficiency improves in multiple areas, particularly listening and speaking, which received the most students' endorsement. In terms of writing and reading skills, TikTok showed positive results by assisting a portion of students in improving their listening and reading abilities. However, some students disagreed, noting little improvement in writing and reading skills after using TikTok. Therefore, TikTok creators should produce more content that focuses on developing university students' listening and reading skills.

The research concluded that TikTok has demonstrated a clear positive effect on students' daily communication in English, improving their confidence after using the application. Moreover, TikTok was considered a useful tool for inspiring university students in Vietnam to learn English both within and beyond the classroom. By providing opportunities for self-practice and interpersonal practice, students can now use English both inside and outside the classroom.

Implications and Contributions

By conducting research on the effectiveness of TikTok in improving English skills among Vietnamese university students, both teachers and students can gain a broader understanding of how to apply social media applications in English language learning within Vietnamese educational institutions. Among learners, those who use TikTok for entertainment are also aware that it can help them sharpen their English skills, in addition to its recreational function. Accordingly, the application can serve as both a platform for students to learn English and a space for them to relax after hours of study. Through various functions that assist students, such as shadowing, duets, and language challenges, TikTok creates an active learning environment. Boredom will be minimized, and productivity will be maximized. With teachers and instructors, instead of assigning paper homework after English class, they can now cheer up their students by asking them to use English to actively express themselves on TikTok. As a result, the

classroom can be a modern and engaging environment that encourages students to attend class more effectively.

Limitations of the study

A limitation of this study is the small number of students that can be investigated in Vietnam; the focus is only on university students, and the study does not examine differences in the experiences of students at different levels. Because the study employed a quantitative research method, the researchers examined only the behavior and outcomes of their English learning process on TikTok. To explore the reasons behind it, further study should incorporate qualitative methods. The next limitation is about the number of respondents. Because this study collected only 105 responses, it is impossible to generalize to the opinions of all university students in Vietnam. Last but not least, the learning environment (formal vs. informal) may influence how students interact with TikTok; students in less formal settings may have different motivations and outcomes. Differences in access to technology and internet connectivity may affect how students in different areas use TikTok to learn.

Recommendations for Further Research

First, in domestic settings, a larger sample size could be used to draw more accurate conclusions. As the number of students increases, more opinions will be collected. Based on this, the effectiveness of TikTok for learning English will be examined across various student groups with different ages, educational backgrounds, and English proficiency levels. Qualitative data should also be collected as a more solid source to conclude the effectiveness of TikTok in helping students improve their English skills. Specifically, further research can elucidate the rationale for that improvement, thereby yielding more profound conclusions.

Secondly, the study found that TikTok is highly regarded for English listening and speaking skills, whereas it showed a more neutral profile in reading and writing. Therefore, in further research, authors can investigate why TikTok is highly beneficial for listening and speaking skills. On the other hand, with reading and writing skills, researchers can more deeply investigate the reasons why TikTok receives limited approval from students; from that, they can identify solutions to help students fully improve their English proficiency.

Teachers' perspectives on TikTok in education also warrant future study, particularly its incorporation into instruction. Teachers may raise concerns about the quality of TikTok content, such as disinformation or errors. Alternatively, research on support tools might examine how instructors perceive TikTok as a learning tool, enabling students to use English in informal contexts. These points would shed further light on how TikTok may be utilized effectively in language learning, as well as the problems and opportunities the platform presents.

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Biodata

Do Thi Yen Linh is an English Teacher in Vietnam. With over 4 years of English-language teaching experience, she specializes in English-language education and educational technology. The research interests include digital learning platforms, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), and learner motivation in EFL contexts.

Huynh Nhut Khoa is a master's student at Bangkok University in Thailand, specializing in Global Communication. With a preference to carry out research on how people, especially students, use English in their daily life, including work and study. He is simultaneously a part-time English teacher, teaching students from elementary to junior high school.