



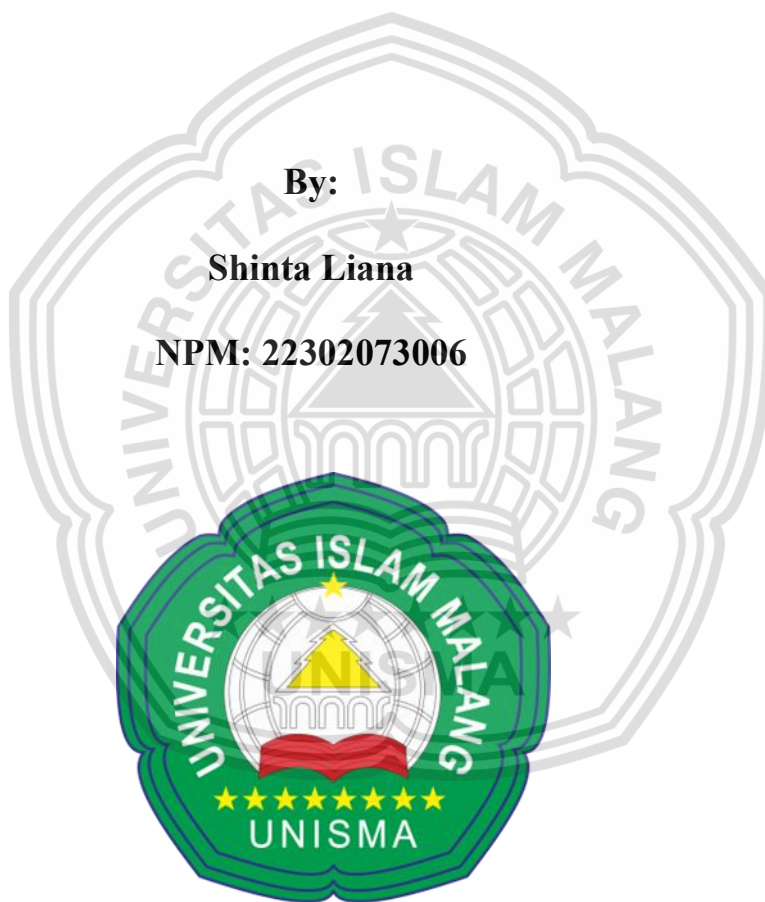
The Perceptions of English Education Students on The Use of TikTok as A Medium for Learning English

Thesis

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ABSTRACT

Liana, Shinta. 2025. *The Perceptions of English Education Students on The Use of TikTok as A Medium for Learning English*. Thesis, Magister English Education Department, Postgraduate Program, Universitas Islam Malang, Advisor: (1) Dr. H. Muhammad Yunus, M.Pd., (2) Dr. Dwi Fita Heriyawati, M.Pd.

Keywords: *TikTok, English Learning, Students' Perceptions, Learning Strategies*

This study investigates the perceptions of English Education students toward the use of TikTok as a medium for learning English. As digital platforms become increasingly embedded in students' lives, especially among Generation Z, the potential of informal learning tools like TikTok is gaining prominence. However, little is known about how prospective English teachers perceive and utilize this platform. Therefore, the study aims to explore students' attitudes toward TikTok and to describe how they incorporate it into their English learning routines.

This qualitative descriptive study involved 12 second-semester English Education students at Universitas Islam Malang. Data were collected through online questionnaires (both closed- and open-ended) and semi-structured interviews with four selected participants. Thematic analysis was used to examine students' perceptions, preferred content, learning strategies, and the challenges they faced in using TikTok for English learning.

The findings show that students generally hold positive perceptions of TikTok as an enjoyable, flexible, and motivating learning platform. They commonly accessed English content during leisure time, including videos on vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and speaking practices. Strategies used included saving and rewatching videos, mimicking pronunciation, taking notes, and interacting via duets and comments. Nonetheless, they also reported facing distractions, fast-paced content, and doubts about the accuracy of some materials.

In conclusion, TikTok demonstrates strong potential as a supplementary English learning tool that fosters autonomous, informal, and engaging learning experiences. However, the effectiveness of its use depends on students' ability to critically evaluate content and maintain focus on educational goals. With proper digital literacy and guided integration, TikTok can meaningfully support language learning both inside and outside the classroom.

ABSTRAK

Liana, Shinta. 2025. *Persepsi Mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris terhadap Penggunaan TikTok sebagai Media Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris*. Tesis, Program Studi Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Program Pascasarjana, Universitas Islam Malang. Pembimbing:

(1) Dr. H. Muhammad Yunus, M.Pd., (2) Dr. Dwi Fita Heriyawati, M.Pd.

Kata Kunci: *TikTok, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Persepsi Mahasiswa, Strategi Pembelajaran*

Penelitian ini mengkaji persepsi mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris terhadap penggunaan TikTok sebagai media dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Seiring dengan semakin melekatnya platform digital dalam kehidupan mahasiswa, khususnya Generasi Z, potensi alat pembelajaran informal seperti TikTok semakin mendapatkan perhatian. Namun, masih sedikit yang diketahui mengenai bagaimana calon guru bahasa Inggris memandang dan memanfaatkan platform ini. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi sikap mahasiswa terhadap TikTok serta menggambarkan bagaimana mereka mengintegrasikannya dalam rutinitas belajar bahasa Inggris mereka.

Penelitian deskriptif kualitatif ini melibatkan 12 mahasiswa semester dua Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Islam Malang. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner online (tertutup dan terbuka) serta wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan empat partisipan terpilih. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk mengkaji persepsi mahasiswa, jenis konten yang disukai, strategi pembelajaran, dan tantangan yang dihadapi dalam menggunakan TikTok untuk belajar bahasa Inggris.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa secara umum mahasiswa memiliki persepsi positif terhadap TikTok sebagai platform pembelajaran yang menyenangkan, fleksibel, dan memotivasi. Mereka umumnya mengakses konten berbahasa Inggris saat waktu luang, termasuk video tentang kosakata, pelafalan, tata bahasa, dan praktik berbicara. Strategi yang digunakan antara lain menyimpan dan menonton ulang video, menirukan pelafalan, mencatat, serta berinteraksi melalui fitur duet dan komentar. Namun demikian, mereka juga menghadapi hambatan seperti gangguan konsentrasi, konten yang terlalu cepat, dan keraguan terhadap keakuratan beberapa materi.

Kesimpulannya, TikTok memiliki potensi kuat sebagai alat bantu pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang mendukung pengalaman belajar secara mandiri, informal, dan menyenangkan. Namun, efektivitas penggunaannya bergantung pada kemampuan mahasiswa dalam mengevaluasi konten secara kritis dan menjaga fokus pada tujuan pembelajaran. Dengan literasi digital yang baik dan integrasi yang terarah, TikTok dapat secara bermakna mendukung pembelajaran bahasa di dalam maupun di luar kelas.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents: background of the study, research questions, research objectives, Significance of the study, scope of the study, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

The rapid development of technology in the 21st century has significantly transformed the way people communicate, interact, and learn. Social media, in particular, has become an integral part of daily life, especially among university students who belong to Generation Z. This generation is characterized by its high digital literacy and strong preference for visual and interactive content. As a result, many students today turn to social media not only for entertainment but also for educational purposes. According to Iqbal (2022), one platform that has gained exceptional popularity is TikTok, a short video application that allows users to share content in creative, concise, and visually engaging formats. Although initially known for dance trends and entertainment, TikTok has evolved into a dynamic space for sharing knowledge, including English language learning. TikTok's algorithm, which curates personalized content based on users' preferences, enables learners to access educational videos without actively searching for them.

In Indonesia, TikTok ranks among the most popular social media platforms, with over 109 million active users reported in early 2024 (Nurul, 2023). Among university students, TikTok is increasingly seen not only as a source of entertainment but also as a convenient platform to access short educational content,

including English language tips and tutorials. This widespread adoption in the local context makes it highly relevant to explore how students at Universitas Islam Malang perceive and use the application. This shift in the use of social media, especially TikTok, as a learning platform aligns with the current trends in informal and mobile-assisted learning environments. As described by Rahmawati and Puspitasari (2020), Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) offers learners flexibility and autonomy in accessing language content anytime and anywhere. The convenience of mobile devices, coupled with the engaging format of TikTok, makes it a viable platform for incidental and self-directed language acquisition. In addition to the flexibility offered by MALL, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Alshehri (2022) explains that users' acceptance of technology largely depends on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Understanding how students evaluate these aspects in TikTok can shed light on why they adopt it as part of their English learning strategies.

Recent studies have highlighted the benefits of using TikTok for learning English. Sari, Yulianti, and Ramadhan (2022) found that students perceived TikTok positively in terms of increasing vocabulary, improving pronunciation, and enhancing motivation to learn English. The study emphasized the value of audiovisual content in helping learners retain language input more effectively compared to traditional methods. Hidayati and Saputra (2021) argue that audiovisual-based media like TikTok is more engaging for students, particularly because of its informal tone and real-life examples. TikTok videos, often created by English teachers or native speakers, offer a variety of content such as grammar

explanations, idiomatic expressions, vocabulary challenges, and pronunciation tips. Some of the most-followed native speaker accounts like @englishwithgeet, @english.with.lucy, and @speakenglishwithzach produce concise lessons that feel personal and relatable to students. Additionally, Putra and Santosa (2022) point out that short-form content on TikTok supports sustained interest and motivation among learners. The content is perceived as less intimidating than traditional materials and allows for repetitive exposure to target language elements, which is crucial in second language acquisition. Warschauer and Liaw (2021) further emphasize that digital platforms contribute significantly to incidental learning, in which learners acquire language unintentionally through frequent exposure in informal settings. Watching TikTok videos from native speakers not only enhances listening skills but also promotes cultural understanding and authentic language use. Moreover, the interactive features of TikTok such as liking, commenting, and duetting encourage students to engage in English-based conversations in a low-pressure environment.

However, despite these positive perceptions, concerns remain about the reliability of user-generated content, the risk of distraction from non-educational videos, and the superficial nature of short-form materials, which may not fully support deep language mastery. Limited digital literacy could also hinder students' ability to critically assess and select quality educational content.

Previous studies have mostly centered around general language learners or secondary school students, and there remains a lack of research that specifically explores the perspectives of English Education students. English Education students differ from general EFL learners because they are not only learning English

for personal proficiency but also preparing to become future teachers. Their academic background exposes them to language acquisition theories, teaching methods, and digital pedagogy, which may shape more critical and reflective attitudes toward digital learning tools. Investigating their perceptions can thus provide insights into how such tools might later be integrated into formal teaching practices.

In response to this research gap, this study aims to explore the perceptions of second-semester English Education students at Universitas Islam Malang (UNISMA) regarding the use of TikTok as a medium for learning English. It also seeks to investigate how they use the application as part of their English learning process both in academic and everyday contexts. By focusing on this group, the study hopes to bridge the gap in current literature and offer practical insights for language educators and curriculum designers. The findings could inform strategies to integrate informal digital tools like TikTok into more structured learning environments, supporting autonomous, engaging, and contextually relevant English language acquisition.

1.2 Research Questions

From the background above, the researcher formulated the research question as follows:

- 1) What are the perceptions of English education students regarding the use of TikTok as a medium for learning English?
- 2) How do English education students use TikTok to learn English?

1.3 Research objectives

Based on the problems above, the objectives of this study are:

- 1) To explore the perceptions of English education students toward the use of TikTok as a medium for learning English.
- 2) To describe how English students use TikTok to learn English.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Considering the background and objectives outlined in the previous sections, this study holds several significant contributions. The significance can be seen from three main perspectives: students, educators, and future researchers.

1) For Students

This study encourages students to reflect on their own digital learning practices and become more intentional and critical in using social media for educational purposes.

2) For Educators

The findings may help teachers understand how to integrate digital platforms like TikTok into language instruction more effectively.

3) For Future Researchers

This study provides a foundation for future research on mobile-assisted language learning and social media integration in ELT.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

This research focuses on exploring TikTok as a learning medium among students in the English Language Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Malang (UNISMA). The scope of this study is to examine the perceptions of TikTok

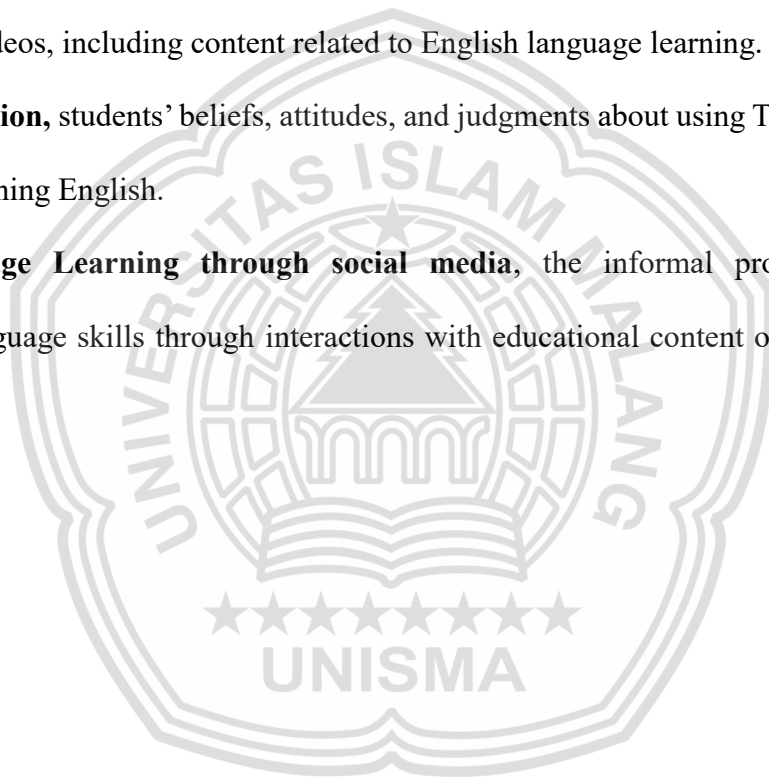
as a learning medium among English Language Study Program students at UNISMA. The limitations include, the researcher was unable to reach out to individual students when using TikTok, and the researcher was unable to direct the use of TikTok content for learning.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

TikTok, a mobile-based social media platform that enables users to share and view short videos, including content related to English language learning.

Perception, students' beliefs, attitudes, and judgments about using TikTok as a tool for learning English.

Language Learning through social media, the informal process of acquiring language skills through interactions with educational content on digital platforms.



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter presents: conclusions, and suggestions.

6.1 Conclusions

This study explored English Education students' perceptions of using TikTok as a medium for learning English and examined how they use the platform to support their language learning process. Based on the findings obtained from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, two major conclusions can be drawn.

First, most students hold positive perceptions toward the use of TikTok for learning English. They generally perceive the platform as motivating, enjoyable, and useful, particularly for vocabulary acquisition and informal writing practice. Students appreciate the flexibility TikTok offers, allowing them to access English content anytime and anywhere. They also feel that TikTok supports their confidence and reduces the anxiety often associated with formal language learning. These perceptions are consistent with recent research that highlights the role of digital media in enhancing learner motivation, enjoyment, and engagement.

Second, students use TikTok in various ways to support their English learning. The study identified six key patterns of usage: (1) TikTok is mostly used during free time and informal settings; (2) students prefer short, visually appealing content such as vocabulary videos, idioms, and pronunciation tips; (3) they apply active learning strategies such as saving videos, mimicking pronunciation, taking

notes, and interacting in comments; (4) they find the platform flexible and emotionally supportive; (5) they face several challenges such as distractions, fast-paced speech, and content credibility; and (6) they typically engage with English content on TikTok for 15–30 minutes per day. These patterns reflect a form of self-directed, incidental, and mobile-assisted learning, consistent with current trends in language education.

Overall, TikTok is perceived as an effective and relevant supplementary learning tool that complements formal English instruction. It supports informal, autonomous, and engaging learning experiences, especially when used strategically. However, to maximize its educational potential, learners need to be equipped with digital literacy skills and guided in selecting and evaluating content critically.

6.2 Suggestions

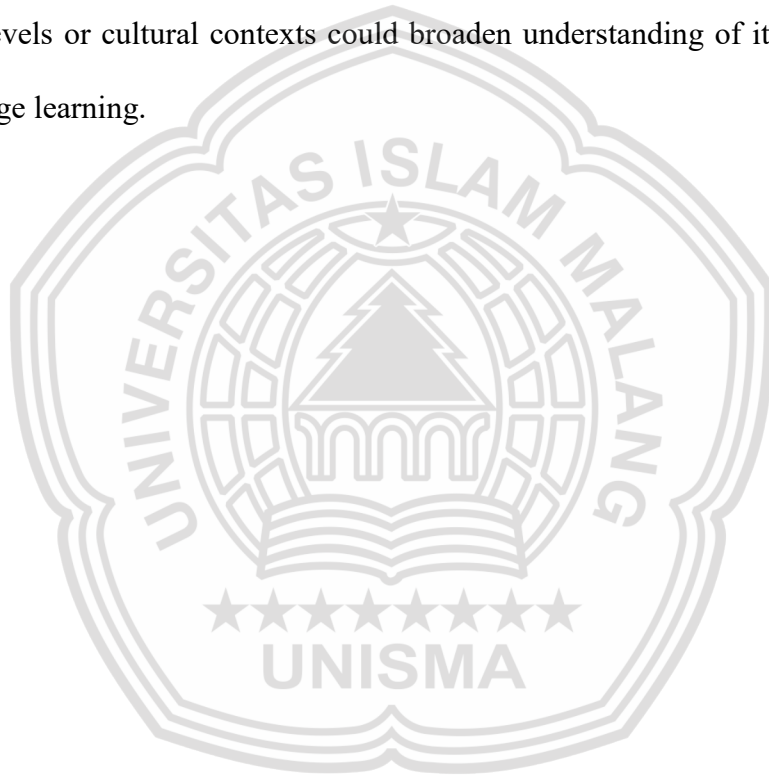
Based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions are proposed:

1. For Students

Students are encouraged to use TikTok consciously as a learning resource by following English content creators, engaging with educational hashtags, and actively applying strategies such as saving and reviewing useful videos. While TikTok offers flexibility and enjoyment, learners should remain focused on language goals and avoid distractions from non-educational content. Students are also encouraged to produce English content (e.g., duets, speaking challenges) to boost confidence and practice productive skills.

2. For Future Researchers

This study opens several opportunities for further research. Future researchers can explore the effectiveness of TikTok for specific language skills (e.g., speaking, listening, vocabulary retention) through experimental or longitudinal methods. Quantitative research involving larger samples could also complement this study's qualitative insights. Additionally, exploring TikTok's impact across different educational levels or cultural contexts could broaden understanding of its role in digital language learning.



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