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TikTok Trends for English Speaking Learning in Senior High School: Challenges and Limitations

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Abstract

This study investigates students' perceptions of learning to speak English through TikTok, focusing on its advantages, disadvantages, and challenges as a digital learning medium. The research was conducted at State Senior High School 14 Depok, where 90% of students actively use TikTok for social interaction, study, and other purposes. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected from 50 10th- and 11th-grade students through questionnaires, documentation, and observation. Data were analyzed systematically through stages of collection, reduction, presentation, verification, interpretation, and conclusion to identify themes, patterns, and relationships. Findings indicate that TikTok offers notable benefits for speaking practice, such as accessibility, creativity, and engagement, but also presents limitations, including distractions, superficial content, and uneven quality of language input. Despite these challenges, TikTok retains strong potential as a supplementary tool in English language teaching. The study underscores the importance of enhancing teacher competencies to integrate digital platforms effectively and adapting to technological trends in education. It also suggests extending future research to other English skills, involving a broader range of schools, including vocational institutions, to account for different student profiles.

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Keywords: Digital Media; English; Speaking; TikTok

INTRODUCTION

A 2015 study showed that social media underpins and facilitates communication studies in the future and beyond (Carr & Hayes, 2015). means that social media has now become a tool that impacts changes in the communication process. Furthermore, social networks have penetrated many areas of educational practice and processes, including the learning process (support, educational processes, improved communication and collaboration, and academic performance) for students and educators. However, research shows that social media has not been widely utilised as a learning tool (Zachos et al., 2018). Previous research has found the effectiveness of social media platforms such as Telegram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and others on English language learning outcomes (John & Yunus, 2021a). Other research has found that social media strengthens the understanding of its function as a learning platform for teachers, such as the use of Twitter, which has influenced the context of educational policymaking (Greenhalgh et al., 2021).

From these research studies, it is clear that digital technology has brought about many changes to social life, including the implementation of education from elementary school to university. Digital technology has even changed children's play patterns, such as online games and the use of social media to access information, upload works, and so on. Currently, the use of social media in learning English as a foreign language should help teachers provide digital learning resources that are easy for students to use. Therefore, it can be argued that teachers should be able to manage social media as an effective learning tool (Alsaied, 2017; Anderson, 2019).

Currently, social media is also widely used to learn English, such as speaking skills, especially by millennials who have become natives or have mastered digital technology, such as social media. Many social media platforms are favoured by the current generation, such as TikTok, Instagram, and so on. Many high school students also use TikTok as a social media platform for friendship, learning, and so on. Almost 90% of the students of SMA Negeri 14 Depok. based on the results of interviews or discussions with students, they have a TikTok account, and they are actively using TikTok. This is an interesting phenomenon to research

whether TikTok can be used as a medium to learn to speak English for upper secondary students at SMAN 14 Depok. in addition, the consideration for this study is that students also communicate a lot by commenting on TikTok posts, many of which use English.

TikTok helps teachers manage work-related stress and allows them to present authentic selves, facilitating deeper connections with students. These interactions subsequently inform their pedagogical practices and support the development of their professional identities (Lemana et al., 2024). Different research indicates that the TikTok app used as a learning medium is not fully effective (Ardiyanti et al., 2021). Another study concluded that students have varying positive and negative perceptions about the use of TikTok videos for English learning. Furthermore, there are various challenges when students use TikTok videos for English learning (Bolendea & Macora, 2024; Syamsiani & Munfangati, 2022). These findings are relevant to the effectiveness of social media on student learning outcomes and understanding of English language learning, such as speaking, and its effectiveness as a learning tool (Altam, 2020; Dashti & Abdulsalam, 2025; Desta et al., 2021; John & Yunus, 2021a, 2021b; Muftah, 2024). Other studies have shown that Facebook has a positive effect on students' speaking skills and increases their motivation and positive attitude towards English learning (Wongsa & Son, 2022).

However, the research that will be carried out is different from previous studies, because this study does not make TikTok a medium for Learning English in class, but this study focuses on analysing the perception of students at the State Senior High School 14 Depok of TikTok as a medium for learning to speak English. According to some previous research, TikTok can be used as a learning medium. However, to apply TikTok as a learning medium at the State Senior High School 14 Depok, students' perceptions of the use of TikTok as a class learning medium are first needed. From the discussion with teachers of English subjects in the State Senior High School 14, Depok, also suggested that the use of social media for Learning media must be tailored to the needs of students. So, the analysis of students' perception of TikTok learning media is whether or not it is needed for class learning media; it needs to be researched first. Thus, this study can provide a different orientation towards learning to speak English through social media for English classes, both for reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

Based on the findings and previous research, this research gap focuses on examining the challenges and shortcomings of the TikTok app as a popular digital learning tool for

public high school students. Thus, this study examines the effectiveness of the TikTok app on English language learning outcomes, as demonstrated in previous research. Therefore, this study focused on analysing students' perceptions of learning to speak English through TikTok, exploring the challenges and shortcomings of TikTok. Based on the three social media platforms mentioned in the previous study—Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp—social media is considered a fun learning medium, a medium for conveying ideas, allowing learners to learn material that should be put into practice immediately, and maximising the delivery of the material through support. Therefore, this research can contribute to the scientific study of digital technology for classroom learning. Furthermore, this study can also be useful in understanding the effectiveness of TikTok for English language learning outcomes, referring to the learning process conditions and student backgrounds that can positively impact English language learning outcomes.

METHODS

Research that uses qualitative descriptions essentially begins with two research approaches. Miles and Huberman's view of qualitative research is that Data looks like words, Not Numbers. Data may have been collected in various ways (observation, interview, doctoral thesis, tape recording), and are usually "processed" approximately before they are ready for use (by recording, typing, editing, or overwriting), but qualitative analysis still uses words, which are usually organised into expanded text. for example. Similarly, measurement and testing methods, hypothesis testing results, data analysis, and tables or schemes, as well as other statistical data, always need to be clearly explained through the description of words (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2020; Mertens, 2024).

The research was conducted at the State Senior High School 14, Depok, on 50 students in grades 10 and 11, who were randomly selected. Data collection techniques used questionnaires, documentation, and observation. Documentation was taken from teacher evaluation records related to the technology learning media that had been used so far. Observations were used to observe the English-speaking learning process for 3 months in the even semester period from January to March 2025. Meanwhile, questionnaires were used to obtain students perceptions regarding the challenges and shortcomings of using TikTok as a medium for learning to speak English. The researcher used a Likert scale for the assessment of the questionnaire with the value of the distribution of answers, namely:

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Less Agree (LA), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Questionnaire analysis techniques were presented using descriptive statistics. The results of questionnaire processing are presented using qualitative statistics in percentages. The following is a questionnaire used to examine the challenges and shortcomings of TikTok (Agting et al., 2022; Conde-Caballero et al., 2024; Gálvez-Ruiz et al., 2025; Tan et al., 2022; Xiuwen & Razali, 2021a).

Table 1. Questions to Identify about Advantages of TikTok for Learning Speaking

No	Questions	Scale Options				
		SA	A	LA	DA	SD
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	Can TikTok be used as a source of learning to speak English for students and teachers?					
2.	Do you think TikTok is effective enough in increasing the interest in learning English for Millennials, especially in English-speaking or studying Grammar?					
3.	Do You Think the TikTok App Can Help Improve Your English Skills?					
4.	Does TikTok have an advantage in English-speaking Learning media?					
5.	Can TikTok motivate students to English-speaking practice?					
6.	Can TikTok overcome the challenge of learning to speak English?					
7.	What makes TikTok an interesting and interactive medium for students?					
8.	Will TikTok be able to expand the knowledge of the English language for students?					
9.	Can TikTok develop students' potential in English speaking?					
10.	How is the TikTok application able to process words to express or convey intent, ideas, thoughts, and feelings, organised and developed according to the needs of students?					

Table 1 is a table used to identify the advantages of TikTok as a medium for learning English speaking in the classroom. The questions explored students' interest in TikTok as a learning resource, motivation, and potential for enhancing student knowledge.

Table 2. Questions to Identify about Lack of TikTok for Learning Speaking

No	Questions	Scale Options				
		SA	A	LA	DA	SD
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	Do You Think That by Learning English through the Videos On The Page, You Can Reduce Your Anxiety In English learning?					
2.	Can TikTok make students less focused on the English material that has been delivered?					
3.	Can TikTok make students bored because of the frequency of watching learning shows on the TikTok application?					
4.	Is the English learning material that has been conveyed in the TikTok application less detailed?					
5.	Is the material that has been posted on the TikTok application less structured than the curriculum from the government?					
6.	Can TikTok limit student creativity?					
7.	Is the information displayed on TikTok less specific so that it does not meet the needs of students in finding information about English material?					
8.	Does using TikTok applications affect the lack of readiness of students and teachers in making English learning media?					
9.	Does any of the content or some of the TikTok content have less clear audio, so the student doesn't understand what the tutor is saying?					
10.	Does learning to use the TikTok application excessively interfere with physical health, such as reduced vision due to light and radiation from mobile phones?					

Table 2 is a table used to identify the shortcomings of TikTok as a medium for learning English speaking in the classroom. The questions explored students' understanding of TikTok's shortcomings that affect speaking and learning in the classroom.

Table 3. Questions to Identify about Obstacles of TikTok to Learning to Speak

No	Questions	Scale Options				
		SA	A	LA	DA	SD
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	Does TikTok content have obstacles to learning to speak English?					
2.	Why can there be barriers to English-speaking users using TikTok?					
3.	If the internet data package runs out, will it affect the failure to create learning media content in the TikTok application?					
4.	Does a disruption in the internet hinder the activities of learning English using TikTok?					
5.	There are still many teachers who don't understand how to use TikTok as a learning medium, so there are still many teachers who use manual Learning media.					

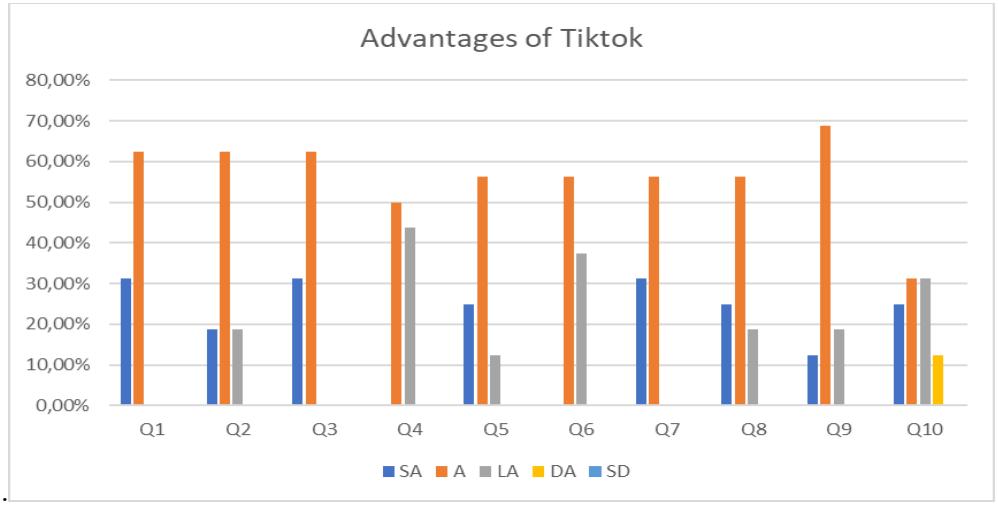
6.	Whether the language used by the tutor is incomprehensible to the student. So that students cannot understand the material that has been submitted?
7.	Does using the TikTok app make it difficult for students to concentrate because sometimes tutors are less clear or too fast when explaining material in videos on the tiktok app?
8.	Can a full memory in a student's cell phone hinder students from opening the tiktok application?
9.	Does the teachers age and lack of knowledge affect so that there are still many teachers who don't understand how to use the tiktok application as a medium to learn to speak English?
10.	Does tiktok's too short duration make teachers feel limited in delivering material or instructing students to English speaking practice using tiktok?

Table 3 is a table used to identify obstacles to TikTok as a medium for learning English speaking in the classroom. The questions explored students' understanding of the obstacles TikTok faced that affected speaking in the classroom. These questions were used to strengthen the study of the challenges and drawbacks of TikTok as a learning medium.

Technique of data analysis used Miles and Huberman's data analysis. It is a systematic approach to analyzing qualitative data to find themes, patterns, and relationships between concepts that emerge from the data. This approach is done through steps such as data collection, data reduction, data display, data verification, data analysis, data interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The characteristics of Miles and Huberman data analysis include systematic, interactive, focus on context, inductive approach, use of data display, triangulation, and collaboration which means that the researcher must first understand and adapt to the situation encountered in their research activities and be involved cooperation between researcher and research teams to get diverse student perspectives and can strengthen the reliability and validity of the analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

RESULTS

The following is the result of data analysis to know the challenges and the lack of TikTok in English-speaking learning. Ada tiga bagian yang dianalisis yaitu advantage, lack and obstacle;



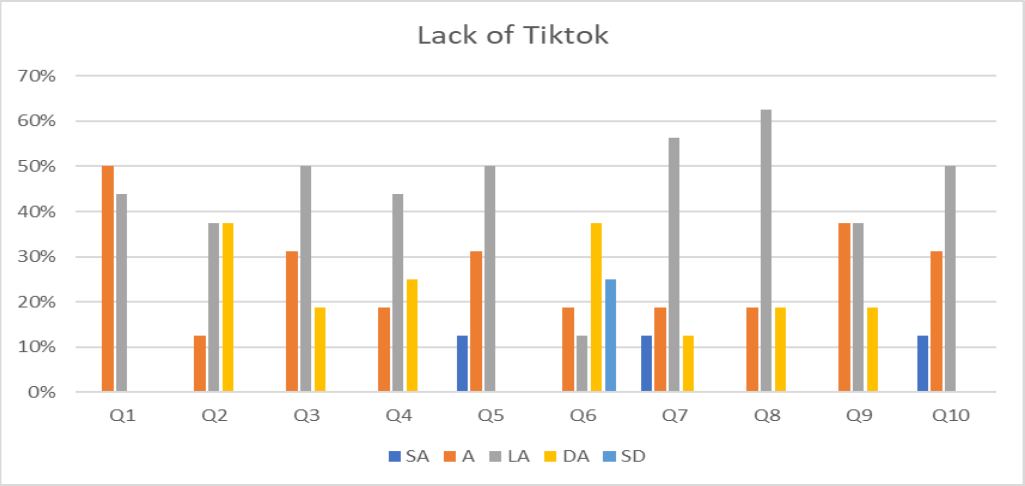
Graph 1. Percentage of Students' Perception about the Advantages of TikTok in English Speaking Learning

Graph 1 describes the perception of students regarding the use of TikTok as an English learning medium. according to students' perception, TikTok is a source of learning to speak that is quite interesting. 62.5% of students agreed that TikTok can be used as an English-speaking learning resource for students and teachers, while 62,5% of students agreed that TikTok is very beneficial for students to improve their English skills and also increase students' learning interest, especially in learning English lessons. 62.5% of students agreed that the TikTok application has advantages as a learning medium. 56,3% of students agreed that TikTok can motivate students to learn English and practice speaking English, 56,3% of students agreed that it can overcome the challenges that often occur in learning English, and 56,3% of students agreed that TikTok is an interesting and interactive medium for students. In addition, 56,3% of students agreed that TikTok can also be used as a learning medium that expands knowledge and develops, and 68,8% of students agreed that TikTok helps potential students in word processing. 31,3% of students agreed that TikTok can express or convey intentions, ideas, thoughts, and feelings in English, which are arranged and developed according to the needs of students.

As many as 86.16% of respondents received the TikTok application in distance learning, and the TikTok application is easy to learn in use. Clarity and harmony between sound, images, and writing as a medium of communication still depend on the signal strength and use of the provider in each place. Based on some of the opinions above, it can be concluded that the TikTok application can be used as a place to express the atmosphere, as

a good learning medium, and a place to develop oneself for users. TikTok itself can be a useful application if users are wise in using it.

The following is the result of a graph or data percentage of TikTok lack in speaking English learning :

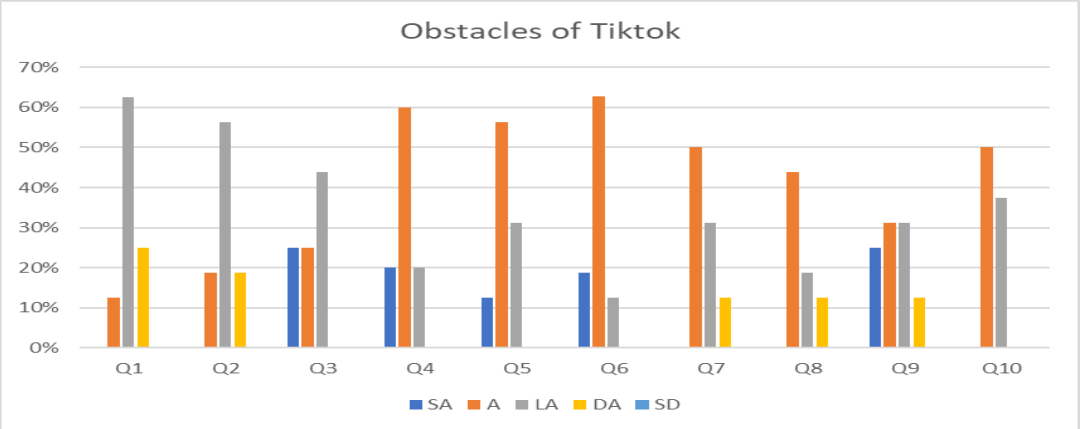


Graph 2. Percentage of Students' Perception about the Lack of TikTok in learning to speak English media

Graph 2 shows the perception of students in using TikTok as an English learning medium. the TikTok application also has disadvantages if used as a medium to learn English. the weakness is 50% of students agree that learning English through videos on the TikTok page can reduce students ' anxiety in learning English 12,5% students agreed that TikTok makes students less focused, and 31,3% students agreed that TikTok make feel bored 18,8% students agreed and feel the English learning material presented on the TikTok application is less detailed, 31,3% students agreed that TikTok less structured with curricula from the government, 18,8% students agreed that TikTok limits student creativity, 18,8% students agreed the TikTok information displayed is less specific. the TikTok information displayed is less specific. 18.8% of students agreed that TikTok could affect the lack of readiness of students and teachers in preparing learning media, because 37.5% of students agreed that sometimes the TikTok application has less clear audio. In addition, 50% of students agree that the lack of TikTok is that the frequency of learning using the TikTok application can interfere with vision due to the light and radiation from mobile phones.

While the result of the obstacle of TikTok as a learning media in the Speaking English Learning emphasises the challenge of digital media of learning in the era of globalisation.

The following is students' perception of the obstacle of TikTok in learning to speak English learning :



Graph 3. Percentage of Students' Perception about Obstacles of TikTok in learning to speak English media

The graph 3 shows 12,5% students agreed that TikTok has obstacles, namely: 25% of students agree that if the internet data package runs out, 60% of students agree that TikTok will have an impact on the failure to create learning media content in the TikTok application, interference with the internet network can inhibit English learning activities using TikTok,56.3% of students agree that there are still many teachers who do not understand how to use TikTok as a student learning media. 18.8% of students agreed that TikTok might make students not understand the material that has been submitted.50% of students agree that TikTok makes it difficult for students to concentrate because sometimes tutors are less clear or too fast when explaining the material in the video on the TikTok application,43.8% of students agree that if the memory is full on the student's phone it can prevent students from opening the TikTok application, 25% of students strongly agree that teachers, so there are still many teachers who do not understand how to use the TikTok application, the teacher's age and lack of knowledge affect so that there are still many teachers who do not understand how to use the TikTok application effectively as a learning medium. 50% of students agree that TikTok's short duration makes teachers feel limited in delivering material or instructing students to practice speaking English using TikTok.

DISCUSSION

Learning media is a learning medium that is suitable as an English-language learning medium. The data concludes that the TikTok application can be used as an English-language learning resource for students and teachers, which is also very beneficial for students to improve their English skills. skills and also increase students ' interest in learning, especially in learning English lessons. According to respondents, the TikTok application has advantages as a learning medium. That is, it can motivate students to learn English and practice speaking English, and can overcome the challenges that often occur in learning English, as an interesting and interactive medium for students. In addition, TikTok can also be used as a learning medium that expands knowledge and develops students ' potential in word processing, expressing or conveying intentions, ideas, thoughts, and feelings in English.

The advantages of the TikTok application are that it can be used as a learning medium to make it easier to understand the material, increase knowledge, explore student creativity, have features that are relevant to student development, increase student confidence, and for education to students (Dewi, 2023; Kemal et al., 2024). The use of the TikTok application as an online English learning medium has an appeal to Generation Z and millennials (Firamadhina & Krisnani, 2021; Hendra Prijanto, 2022; Mudrikatussalamah et al., 2025; Nababan & Harahap, 2023). His research presents a simple and interesting material that is packed with background, images, filters, editing the text, colours, and emojis. A clear voice in the delivery of the material makes learning fun. Such content attracts the interest of the younger generation in online learning because the material presented is interesting, and the video is of short duration.

Besides that, TikTok is a learning medium that lacks. These lacks are that TikTok makes students less focused and feel bored because the English learning material presented on the TikTok application is less detailed, less structured, with curricula from the government, limits student creativity, and the information displayed is less specific. This can affect the lack of readiness of students and teachers in preparing learning media because sometimes the TikTok application has less clear audio. In addition, another drawback is that the frequency of learning to use the TikTok application can interfere with vision due to the light and radiation from the phone. These findings align with previous research that found students face several challenges when using TikTok as a medium for speaking. These challenges include an inability to concentrate due to distractions from other videos,

inadequate written explanations from teachers, and a lack of interaction with others (Lin et al., 2023). It can be concluded that the lack of TikTok as a learning medium makes students less focused on understanding literary literacy lessons because they are bored with the videos they watch, and feel lazy because they feel the material obtained by students is less detailed, making them less focused on understanding literary literacy lessons and switching to other videos.

TikTok learning media is a learning medium that has obstacles. These obstacles are if the internet data package runs out, it will have an impact on the failure to create learning media content in the TikTok application, interference with the internet network can inhibit English learning activities using TikTok, there are still many teachers who do not understand how to use TikTok as a learning medium so that there are still many teachers who use manual learning media, the language used by tutors cannot be understood by students. So that students cannot understand the material that has been delivered, making it difficult for students to concentrate because sometimes the tutor is less clear or too fast when explaining the material in the video in the TikTok application, if the memory is full the students' phone can prevent students from opening the TikTok application, the teachers age and lack of knowledge affect so that there are still many teachers who do not understand how to use the TikTok application as a learning media.

From these findings, we can see that on TikTok, students have little chance of getting a response from the video creator if they have questions about something they don't understand. Because some video creators are native speakers, students feel the video creators speak too quickly when conveying the material. Therefore, they have to rewatch the videos to grasp the meaning. Therefore, teachers must understand the concept of learning using TikTok and understand the impact of using TikTok as an English language learning tool (Carpenter et al., 2024; Conde-Caballero et al., 2024). Teachers must provide training and understanding to students regarding sharpening their English language skills. Teachers train students by providing dialogue videos from the TikTok app to arouse their curiosity and enthusiasm for practice.

These findings provide a comprehensive understanding that every digital learning medium has its challenges and shortcomings. In this context, TikTok, as a learning medium, also has its advantages, disadvantages, and challenges in learning English. Therefore, TikTok can still be said to have significant potential for benefit in teaching and learning contexts

(Bahagia et al., 2022; Barber & Literat, 2024; López-Carril et al., 2024; Maretha et al., 2022). Observations of student practice in class indicate a positive impact on the intensity of English speaking practice (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022; Xiuwen & Razali, 2021b; Yulita & Hertiki, 2023). Therefore, it can be said that the challenges of using TikTok can be understood by teachers in the classroom. These findings provide a novel concept that TikTok, in the context of learning English speaking, has greater advantages than disadvantages.

The results of this study have implications for developing teachers' teaching competencies, particularly in selecting digital learning media that are appropriate to the context, including students' speaking backgrounds, technological devices, learning objectives, teaching materials, school facilities, and social media trends favoured by high school students. Furthermore, these findings also provide teachers with a deeper understanding of the challenges posed by digital technology development trends in education, which continue to evolve in line with scientific developments.

However, this study still has limitations because the exploration of the challenges and shortcomings of using TikTok as a digital learning medium has only been examined in speaking skills classes. Therefore, these findings still require relevance and in-depth study for other English language skills classes. Furthermore, the small sample size and the absence of vocational high schools suggest that the limitations of this study should be further developed or extended by exploring the characteristics of high schools and vocational high schools for English language learning.

CONCLUSION

The research findings concluded that TikTok, as a learning medium in English-speaking classes, presents challenges and shortcomings for both teachers and students. The challenges faced include the connection between understanding and the limited video content. Furthermore, the shortcomings identified relate to the duration of learning sessions and the readiness of teachers and students to use TikTok in class. This relates to the challenge of relevance to the applicable curriculum. Therefore, teachers, as classroom managers, must be able to filter TikTok video content and direct students to focus on the video content used as authentic teaching materials in speaking classes. Furthermore, teachers must align the implementation of TikTok in the classroom with the teaching methods used during

classroom activities. Overall, however, TikTok was found to have a positive impact on the duration of students' English Speaking practice.

However, this study has limitations because the research method focused on a qualitative study to determine the novelty of TikTok as a digital learning medium in English-speaking classes for high school students, with a small sample size. Therefore, this study cannot yet assess the effectiveness of TikTok in improving English speaking skills because it did not examine the results of classroom speaking tests. Therefore, this research can be continued by changing the research method, the number of research samples, or developing the study of English speaking skills.

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