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Jusak Patty <sup>1</sup> Libreck F. A. Noija<sup>2</sup> SOCIAL MEDIA REVOLUTION: TIKTOK'S IMPACT ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

## **Abstrak**

Pandemi COVID-19 telah berdampak signifikan pada pendidikan, termasuk di Indonesia, di mana sekolah dan universitas ditutup untuk memastikan keselamatan. Seiring dengan munculnya pembelajaran online sebagai mode utama pendidikan, pentingnya kemampuan berbahasa Inggris di era "new normal" menjadi jelas. Makalah ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peluang penggunaan TikTok, platform media sosial populer, sebagai alat pembelajaran bahasa Inggris secara online bagi siswa SMA di Indonesia. Desain penelitian perpustakaan digunakan untuk mengumpulkan dan menganalisis literatur yang ada tentang subjek ini. Temuan menyoroti konsep pembelajaran online, peran media sosial, dan peluang serta tantangan dalam menggunakan TikTok untuk pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Makalah ini menyimpulkan dengan menekankan potensi TikTok sebagai sumber berharga untuk pembelajaran bahasa dan mendorong penelitian lebih lanjut di bidang ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Pembelajaran Online, Kemahiran Berbahasa Inggris, Pembelajaran Bahasa, TikTok, Media Sosial.

#### **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted education, including in Indonesia, where schools and universities were closed to ensure safety. As online learning became the primary mode of education, the importance of English language proficiency in the new normal era became evident. This paper aims to explore the opportunities of using TikTok, a popular social media platform, as a tool for English online learning among senior high school students in Indonesia. A library research design was employed to gather and analyze existing literature on the subject. The findings highlight the concept of online learning, the role of social media, and the opportunities and challenges of using TikTok for English language learning. The paper concludes by emphasizing the potential of TikTok as a valuable resource for language learning and encourages further research in this area.

**Keywords:** Online Learning, English Language Proficiency, Language learning, TikTok, Social Media.

## INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted various aspects of human life, including education. With the emergence of the new normal era, it is crucial to address the pandemic's challenges and find practical solutions. One of the sectors significantly affected by the pandemic is education, leading many countries, including Indonesia, to close schools and universities (Rahardjo and Pertiwi, 2020).

English language proficiency is essential in the new normal era as it serves as an international language for communication between native and non-native speakers (Fatiha et al., 2014). Moreover, a wide range of learning resources are available in English, emphasizing the

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need for students to enhance their English language skills. Recognizing this importance, governments have been striving to ensure continuity in the learning process.

In Indonesia, the Ministry of Education has introduced online learning as a strategy to overcome the limitations imposed by the pandemic. Online learning, also known as virtual learning, integrates internet connectivity with the teaching and learning process (Dabbagh and Bannan-Ritland, 2005). While online learning is relatively new in Indonesia, it offers convenience and practicality, allowing teachers and students to learn remotely (Lehman, 2014).

In addition to the challenges faced in online learning, integrating social media into the learning process has emerged as a potential solution. Social media platforms enable real-time content sharing (Hudson et al., 2016). They serve various purposes, including entertainment, social interaction, information sharing, and academic pursuits (Yang, 2020). Incorporating social media applications into language teaching environments has become increasingly important in improving students' language skills.

In the current technological landscape, numerous social media platforms can be utilized as opportunities for learning English. Given the shift to online activities, students can independently access social media platforms to supplement their learning resources. Among these platforms, the TikTok app stands out as a popular choice. TikTok allows users to create and share videos with various editing functions, making it an ideal tool for mobile learning (m-learning). Educational institutions have increasingly embraced technology and online platforms, including social media applications, to ensure uninterrupted access to learning materials for students (Marklin, 2018).

Considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the popularity of TikTok, and high school students' active use of social media, using TikTok as an independent learning medium is a viable option. TikTok can be integrated into both self-study and teacher-facilitated online learning, providing several positive impacts. Teachers can effectively use TikTok to illustrate ideas or examples, particularly for high school students (Marklin, 2018). Additionally, students have reported positive outcomes in learning English vocabulary through TikTok content (Fahdin, 2020). Given the high number of social media users in Indonesia's 15-19-year age group, TikTok presents an opportunity for engaging young students in language learning (2019-2021 Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association survey).

Amidst the challenges faced during online learning, it is crucial to recognize the opportunities for self-learning English. This paper aims to explore the opportunities of using TikTok as a social media platform for English online learning among senior high school students.

This paper focuses on several key points, including online learning, social media, learning English through TikTok, and the opportunities presented by TikTok for English language learning. Its objective is to inform readers about the opportunities of using TikTok as a social media platform for learning English online during the pandemic. Hopefully, this paper can serve as a valuable reference for researchers and writers interested in further exploring this topic.

# **METHOD**

This study utilized a library research design to systematically gather and analyze the existing literature on using TikTok as a social media platform for English online learning among senior high school students. Library research is a methodical approach to gathering and analyzing information from various sources in the library to address specific research questions (Sari and Asmendri, 2020). The research process involved thoroughly searching academic databases and reputable sources using relevant keywords. Only peer-reviewed articles and research studies that directly addressed the use of TikTok in English language learning were selected for analysis. A standardized form was used to extract and record essential information, including authorship, publication details, research objectives, methodology, findings, and recommendations. Thematic analysis was employed to identify common themes, patterns, and key findings across the selected literature. This analysis provided valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with using TikTok for English online learning among senior high school students. The gathered information was carefully analyzed and interpreted to draw meaningful

conclusions and identify potential areas for further investigation. By utilizing a library research design, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge regarding using TikTok as a social media platform for English language learning.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

## The Concept of Online Learning

Online learning refers to delivering education electronically, utilizing computers and computer-based media such as websites, the Internet, CD-ROMs, and DVDs. It provides access to information and guides students toward achieving specific learning outcomes. Collins (2002) defines online learning as the result of personal computer proliferation, the globalization of ideas and actions, and the use of technology to exchange ideas and provide access to a broader audience. It combines audio, video, computer, and networking technologies to create various educational delivery systems, with networking connecting distance learning instructors with learners.

In Indonesia's education context, online learning is still considered a relatively new learning model. Its widespread adoption has mainly been driven by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which prompted the government to implement it to fulfil educational demands. Dabbagh and Ritland (2005) describe online learning as an open environment that utilizes distributed educational tools, internet resources, and network-based technologies to facilitate learning and knowledge acquisition through action and interaction. It offers flexibility in terms of time and location, catering to the needs of instructors, lecturers, and students engaged in online learning activities.

The fundamental concept of online learning aims to create a classroom-like environment equivalent to traditional face-to-face lessons in schools and universities. Therefore, educational developers are expected to design learning models like e-learning that yield results similar to conventional learning processes. In other words, online learning represents a digital transmission of conventional learning using internet technology.

Rudi and Riyana (2007) propose several characteristics of online learning, including students constructing their knowledge through teaching materials accessible via websites, the widespread availability of knowledge resources through the global nature of the Internet, teachers and educational institutions serving as mediators or mentors, and the need for educational system restructuring to support optimal utilization of information and communication technology.

The distinction between online learning and conventional learning lies in the fact that students' comprehension of teaching materials in online learning no longer relies solely on teachers or instructors. Instead, students independently build their understanding by engaging with online educational materials. Furthermore, the Internet facilitates easy access to knowledge resources, irrespective of physical location.

Face-to-face gatherings have been the primary means of learning and knowledge sharing for centuries. However, Internet technology has eliminated this requirement, allowing anyone to learn anything, anytime, and anywhere through a new development known as e-learning. Although e-learning has existed for a while and internet technology has rapidly advanced, its popularity surged during the COVID-19 pandemic as it became the most effective alternative for continuing planned learning programs. Thorne (2003) identifies three types of online learning: web-supported online learning, blended or mixed online learning combining face-to-face and online components, and fully online learning encompassing the entire learning process conducted online.

The digital era has significantly impacted various aspects of people's lives, including education. The application of digital-based learning, or online learning, has gained increasing popularity. When adequate infrastructure is in place, online learning can be a resource-efficient learning method, fostering self-confidence and independence among learners. Particularly during the COVID-19 outbreak, online learning has proven crucial in protecting students from the spread of the virus, as it allows for remote learning and adherence to physical distancing guidelines. However, online learning also presents advantages and disadvantages. Dabbagh and Ritland (2008) highlight advantages such as flexible time and location, active student

involvement, independence, multimedia-based content delivery, cost-effectiveness, concise subject-focused learning, and 24/7 availability. Disadvantages include limited interaction between learners and students, a focus on training rather than education, computer and Internet literacy gaps among students and teachers, uneven availability of internet facilities, and potential cost barriers for online learning.

# The Concept of Social Media

Social media is an online platform that facilitates long-distance communication, user interaction, and access to information on the Internet. Its primary objective is to connect users across different geographical areas (Baruah, 2012). According to Baruah, social media encompasses internet-based and mobile services that allow users to engage in online exchanges, create content, and participate in communities.

A stable and fast internet connection is necessary for social media, rendering traditional communication methods obsolete. Social media allows users to connect with others, establish forums, engage in chats, share daily activities, and even support the teaching and learning process. It also provides a platform for online communities to exchange knowledge and ideas, engage in personal discussions, and share multimedia content (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2014).

Manning (2014) identifies two fundamental characteristics of social media. Firstly, it enables user participation, although some platforms, like Facebook, also allow passive viewing of others' posts. Users typically create a profile account to initiate interaction. Secondly, social media fosters interaction among established friends, family, and individuals with shared interests.

There are different types of social media platforms, including social networking sites, content-sharing sites, blogs, review and assessment sites, social bookmarking sites, and collaborative projects (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social networking sites facilitate connection, personal information sharing, and messaging. Content-sharing sites enable users to share various types of content and provide the option to rate or comment on shared content. Blogs serve as online platforms where individuals or groups share information in reverse chronological order and include a comments section for interaction. Review and assessment sites offer users a platform to express opinions and provide product ratings. Social bookmarking sites allow users to add and share bookmarks of web documents. As platforms like Wikipedia exemplify, collaborative projects enable multiple users to contribute and create content simultaneously.

In today's digital age, social media has become an essential daily tool for people to connect with the world and conduct business. Social media platforms are designed to captivate users' attention and keep them engaged, impacting human life positively and negatively (Moreau, 2016). Social media's positive effects include connecting with individuals worldwide, facilitating easy and instant communication, and providing real-time access to news and information. However, there are also adverse effects, such as information overload, privacy concerns, and substituting online interactions for offline ones, which can lead to antisocial behavior.

## Opportunities to Use Social Media Apps to Learn English

Nowadays, social media apps have opened up new opportunities for learning English. With the widespread use of the Internet, social media has become an integral part of many people's daily lives. It helps us stay connected with friends, regardless of their geographical location, and it also serves as a valuable resource for English language learning.

The significance of social media as an educational technology, particularly for promoting active learning, has been emphasized by Manning (2014). In traditional education, students often play a passive role in receiving knowledge. However, social media has transformed the learning landscape by enabling students to actively engage with the content and collaborate with others.

English has emerged as a universal language, essential for various activities such as work, travel, online interactions, and gaming. The good news is that learning English is no longer limited to expensive courses or traditional methods. Nowadays, numerous Android, iPhone,

laptops, and PC apps offer comprehensive English learning materials, including grammar lessons and exercises.

These English learning apps can be classified into different categories, as proposed by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). Firstly, there are collaborative project apps like Wikipedia, Medium, and WordPress, where users can contribute to and modify content, allowing them to improve their English skills while actively participating in creating educational resources.

Secondly, content-sharing apps such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube provide platforms for users to share videos, e-books, and images. These platforms offer an opportunity to practice English by creating and sharing content and provide access to many user-generated English learning materials.

Thirdly, social networking sites like Facebook and Instagram enable users to connect with others and share personal information through photos and videos. These platforms allow English learners to interact with native speakers, join language exchange groups, and practice their English skills in authentic social contexts.

Fourthly, blogs and microblogs like Twitter and Facebook allow users to express their thoughts and opinions freely. English learners can follow influential figures, engage in discussions, and improve their writing skills by composing posts and tweets in English.

Fifthly, virtual world games such as Free Fire, MLBB, PUBGM, and COC offer a unique opportunity for English language learning. Players can interact and communicate with others using avatars, engaging in conversations and teamwork that require English language skills.

Lastly, virtual social worlds like Second Life utilize virtual reality (VR) devices to create immersive experiences resembling real-life interactions. Within these virtual environments, English learners can practice speaking and listening skills by conversing honestly with other users worldwide.

In conclusion, social media apps have revolutionized how we learn English by providing diverse platforms and resources for language acquisition. They offer interactive and engaging opportunities for active learning, connecting with native speakers, and accessing many English learning materials. With the continuous advancement of technology, social media apps will likely continue to play a vital role in English language education.

## **Difficulties in Learning English**

Students often encounter difficulties in learning English; teachers must address these challenges and provide support. The technical nature of English taught in schools, such as terms related to electronics or reforestation, can pose difficulties for students. While students may be familiar with these terms, they may struggle to express everyday objects in English and feel self-conscious about using the language for fear of ridicule. Therefore, teachers have a crucial role in addressing learning difficulties and getting to know their students deeper, allowing for a more systematic and practical approach to teaching.

Learning English presents various obstacles that can hinder students from achieving optimal outcomes. Darsiana (2018) identifies factors that contribute to learning difficulties in English, including:

- 1. Limited speaking ability: Students may have low proficiency in spoken English because they are not accustomed to using it daily.
- 2. Reluctance to speak: Some students feel hesitant or choose to remain silent when asked to speak English. Despite having adequate vocabulary knowledge, they struggle to form simple sentences.
- 3. Communication difficulties: Students may find it challenging to communicate in English, which affects all four primary language skills: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Mastery of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, or micro-skills, is crucial for achieving proficiency in these language skills.

Suryanto (2021) and Sholeh and Muhaji (2015) highlight the interconnection between microskills and macro-skills, with difficulties in the macro-skills stemming from micro-skills. Specific challenges faced by students in each language skill include:

- 1. Reading: Pronunciation is a common issue when reading aloud. Students may struggle with pronouncing certain words due to the influence of their mother tongue and lack of exposure to an English-speaking environment.
- 2. Listening: Poor comprehension and difficulty understanding the pace of speech can impede students' listening skills. This leads to challenges in understanding spoken messages, as students cannot request the speaker to repeat what has been said.
- 3. Writing: Difficulties in grammar and vocabulary are common in writing. Students may lack writing skills and a sufficient understanding of vocabulary and grammar. Effective sentence structure is vital in good writing (Wigati, 2014).
- 4. Speaking: Pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar are vital challenges in speaking skills. These micro-skills support one another, and improving each aspect enhances students' ability to speak English effectively.
- In addition to student-related factors, teachers can contribute to the difficulties encountered in learning English. Sholeh and Muhaji (2015) highlight negative factors from teachers, such as:
- 1. Neglecting pronunciation correction: Teachers may overlook the importance of correcting students' pronunciation.
- 2. Laziness in addressing pronunciation: Teachers may be reluctant to correct students' pronunciation, regardless of whether it is good or needs improvement.
- 3. Lack of awareness about the significance of pronunciation: Some teachers may not recognize the essential role of pronunciation in effective English communication.

### **Tiktok**

Media is a vital learning resource that has evolved with advancements in learning technology, including audio and video formats. It serves as a valuable tool for enhancing understanding and interpretation. Amid technological advancement, which continues to impact education, there is a need for learning tools that are not overwhelming for students. The learning materials used must adapt to current trends, such as TikTok.

TikTok, an app that originated in China and was launched in September 2016 by entrepreneur Zhang Yiming, gained significant popularity in Indonesia in 2018. Initially, the app faced a temporary ban by the Ministry of Communications and Information (Kominfo) in July 2018 due to concerns about its lack of educational content. However, it was later unblocked in August 2018 with improved filters and enhanced protection, offering numerous benefits and valuable lessons.

According to a report by beritasatu.com, Indonesia had 202.6 million Internet users as of January 2021, with a 16% increase from the previous year. Internet penetration reached 73.7% during that period, and TikTok emerged as the fastest-growing short video app. TikTok is a social networking app and music video platform that allows users to create, edit, and share short videos with filters and music. While the initial time limit was 60 seconds, users can create even longer videos.

Various media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, offer opportunities to learn English. In this context, TikTok is chosen as a medium due to its evolving usage patterns and improved quality of content. In the first quarter of 2018, TikTok surpassed other popular apps like YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram, with 45.8 million downloads (Bohang, 2018).

The TikTok app provides the ability to record, edit, and share videos and several features that support users in achieving their video-making goals. Here are some notable features found in the TikTok app, as mentioned by Trikinet.com:

- 1. Added Music: TikTok is primarily a music video platform, allowing users to add various types of authorized music to their videos without concerns about copyright issues.
- 2. Filters on videos: Users can apply filters to videos, adjusting the color tone and enhancing the visual appeal according to their content.
- 3. Sticker filters and video effects: TikTok offers a range of categories for video effects, including visual effects, sticker effects, transition effects, split effects, and time effects. These filters add creativity and fun to videos.

- 4. Voice changer filters: Users can modify their voices in videos using the voice changer feature, which provides different sound effects for added entertainment and creativity.
- 5. Beautify Filters: TikTok offers a beautification feature that enhances users' appearance, allowing them to adjust facial features, eye color, and overall facial softness, making their videos more appealing.
- 6. Filter auto-captions: A new feature in TikTok automatically generates captions for the content created, making it easier for viewers, especially people who are hard of hearing, to access and enjoy the videos. Creators can edit the captions to ensure accuracy.
- 7. Duet: TikTok's duet feature enables users to collaborate with other users by combining their videos, fostering creative partnerships.
- 8. Features to delete comments and block users in bulk: TikTok introduced a feature to combat bullying, allowing creators to delete or block multiple comments or accounts simultaneously. This feature simplifies the process of managing interactions.
- 9. Live features: TikTok offers live functionality, although it is limited to users with a minimum of 1000 subscribers.

# TikTok Apps as Media to Learn English Skills

In the context of using the TikTok application for independent study, it provides various opportunities to develop critical English skills. This includes listening, speaking, writing, reading, vocabulary, and grammar. TikTok offers features and content created by individuals who can assist students and teachers in independent learning and online education.

## a. Listening Skill

Listening is a crucial English skill, and TikTok can support its development through audiovisual content. The app allows users to collaborate using original sounds or audio from creators or TikTok. For instance, content creators like @liambye2, @jacobbailin, and @jagolanguagecom create listening exercises. These exercises involve missing sentences completed through audio-visual cues, requiring users to listen carefully and fill in the blanks.

## b. Speaking Skill

Speaking involves expressing thoughts, ideas, and feelings through words. TikTok enables users to insert background sounds into their videos, allowing creative expression. Users can engage in conversational practices and acting challenges created by creators like @elianaghen. Users can practice pronunciation, acting, and complete conversations by participating in duets.

## c. Writing Skill

Writing well requires active thinking and reflection. The comments section on TikTok allows users to interact, provide feedback, and engage in activities that involve questions and answers. Users can improve their writing skills by participating in discussions, offering criticism and suggestions, and receiving feedback. Accounts like @popularenglish and @tetiayanaokyar provide tips to enhance writing.

## d. Reading Skill

Reading involves not only reading the text but also comprehending its meaning. TikTok offers learning models for practicing reading through challenges such as clue tests and prompter tests. For example, the Prompter Test simulates reading news scripts with text displayed on the screen, allowing users to practice pronunciation, intonation, and reading skills. Content creators like @meganhealytv often run such challenges.

## e. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a significant challenge in learning English. TikTok can help users expand their vocabulary through creators like @Johniday, who share different English words and their substitutes to improve language skills. For instance, instead of "very tired," one can say "exhausted." John also provides alternative expressions, such as different ways to say "thank you."

## f. Grammar

Grammar is often considered a challenge when learning a new language. TikTok offers creative content from creators like @jessica\_ie, who actively responds to followers' questions and shares important lessons about English grammar. The videos cover topics like

the difference between "I was" and "I were," the usage of "maybe" and "perhaps," as well as the history of English vocabulary and slang words.

Users can use TikTok for independent study to enhance their English skills in various areas, benefiting from the diverse content and interactive features of the app and its creators.).

## **CONCLUSION**

Online learning has evolved rapidly, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, offering flexibility and access to a wealth of knowledge resources, while social media has revolutionized communication and information sharing, with both positive and negative impacts. Social media apps, such as TikTok, provide unique opportunities for learning English, addressing language challenges by enhancing skills like listening, speaking, writing, reading, vocabulary, and grammar. As technology advances, these platforms are becoming essential tools for language education in today's digital age.

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