



The Effect of Using Tiktok as A Learning Media on English Vocabulary of Eighth Grade Students in SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar

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Abstract. This study examined the effect of TikTok as a learning medium on the English vocabulary of eighth-grade students at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar. Although TikTok is widely used among adolescents, its pedagogical impact on vocabulary acquisition at the junior high school level remains underexplored. A quantitative quasi-experimental design was employed with 60 students selected through purposive sampling: Class VIII F as the experimental group and Class VIII A as the control group. Data were collected through a 25-item multiple-choice vocabulary test covering meaning recognition, spelling, and word form, administered as pre-test and post-test, along with a 10-item Likert-scale questionnaire on student perceptions. The treatment lasted four weeks across eight sessions using the shadowing technique. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and an independent sample t-test in SPSS. The experimental group's mean score rose from 59.20 to 84.60 (a 25.40-point gain), while the control group improved from 58.40 to 69.10. The t-test yielded a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating TikTok had a significant positive effect on students' English vocabulary.

Keywords: English language learning, junior high school, quasi-experimental, TikTok, vocabulary.

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh penggunaan TikTok sebagai media pembelajaran terhadap kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa kelas VIII di SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar. Meskipun TikTok digunakan secara luas di kalangan remaja, dampak pedagogisnya terhadap penguasaan kosakata di tingkat SMP masih jarang diteliti. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuasi-eksperimen kuantitatif dengan sampel 60 siswa yang dipilih melalui purposive sampling: Kelas VIII F sebagai kelompok eksperimen dan Kelas VIII A sebagai kelompok kontrol. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes kosakata pilihan ganda sebanyak 25 butir yang mencakup pemahaman makna, ketepatan ejaan, dan bentuk kata, yang diberikan sebagai pre-test dan post-test, serta kuesioner skala Likert sebanyak 10 butir untuk mengukur persepsi siswa. Perlakuan berlangsung selama empat minggu dalam delapan sesi menggunakan teknik shadowing. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji independent sample t-test melalui SPSS. Nilai rata-rata kelompok eksperimen meningkat dari 59,20 menjadi 84,60 (kenaikan 25,40 poin), sedangkan kelompok kontrol hanya meningkat dari 58,40 menjadi 69,10. Uji-t menghasilkan nilai signifikansi 0,000 ($< 0,05$), yang menunjukkan bahwa TikTok berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa.

Kata kunci: kuasi-eksperimen, kosakata, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, sekolah menengah pertama, TikTok.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication system that humans use to convey meaning through speech, writing, or signs. English is one of the most widely used languages in the world (Quiroz, Gutiérrez, Rocha, Valenzuela, & Vilches, 2021). As a global language, English serves as a medium of instruction in many countries, facilitating international communication and opening opportunities for individuals in various fields (Berta &

Swarniti, 2020). English is widely used as a medium of instruction in many countries (Santosa, 2018). In numerous countries, English functions as a second language after the mother tongue, allowing for effective communication across nations.

Vocabulary is one of the important skills in English (Basri & Wahyuni, 2024). Vocabulary skills refer to the ability to understand and use the right words to express opinions, thoughts, facts, and feelings to others. These skills help people communicate effectively in everyday conversations to exchange information (Nurhasanah & Lestari, 2022). Vocabulary learning is an interactive process that involves creating meaning using appropriate words. By having good vocabulary skills, people can convey and receive information clearly without mistakes or misunderstandings (Fitriana, Hadi, & Izzah, 2021).

In this modern era, technology plays a vital role in education (Cantika, 2023). It serves as a tool that has great potential to improve the learning process. Technology has become a key element in education due to rapid technological advancement (Studies, 2024). Various technological tools can make the learning process more interactive, realistic, and interesting, thereby increasing its effectiveness. According to Alawayiah (2024), accessing videos on particular subjects presented by native English speakers can improve students' speaking skills.

TikTok is an application that can be used in the learning process, especially for English. With interesting and fun content, TikTok can increase students' interest and enthusiasm in learning, making the process more interactive and enjoyable (Wardani, 2022). TikTok offers a variety of exciting content that makes learning more engaging for students. TikTok can also be an effective tool to improve students' pronunciation skills. TikTok can help students improve their speaking skills by watching English videos and practicing speaking through creating short video content.

There are several previous studies on the TikTok application to improve students' vocabulary skills (Al Ghozali & Rizal, 2024) Conducting a study to investigate the use of this platform in improving learners vocabulary skills at SMA Negeri 3 Pematangsiantar. The results showed that the application of the TikTok application can improve students' vocabulary skills. Mustafidah (2023) investigating the effectiveness of the TikTok application to improve students' vocabulary skills at Vocational High School 4 Bungo.

The results showed that this application can be used as a learning medium that motivates learners and improves vocabulary skills. Previous studies have focused more on speaking skills, while the research explored the positive and negative impacts of TikTok on the vocabulary skills of eighth grade students at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar, as well as to know students' perceptions of the use of that platform in improving their vocabulary. The novelty of this study presents an interesting approach to enhance the eighth-grade students' English vocabulary skills that utilize the TikTok as a pedagogical equipment at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar. While previous studies focused on enhancing speaking skills, this research explored how TikTok can foster vocabulary acquisition. This research not only evaluated the effectiveness of TikTok for vocabulary learning, but also analyzed any positive and negative effects of its use, while exploring students' perceptions and its influence on their interest in learning English. The study provides valuable insights for learners of English as a Second Language and provides teachers with practical strategies for integrating technology into vocabulary learning, potentially leading to more innovative and effective teaching methods.

Although various previous studies have examined the use of TikTok in English learning, most of these studies have focused on improving students' speaking and pronunciation skills, particularly at the high school and college levels. Furthermore, studies discussing vocabulary through TikTok are generally general in nature, without specifically addressing the types of TikTok content, the mechanisms for its use in learning, and the contextual characteristics of junior high school learners.

Furthermore, there is still very limited research specifically examining the use of TikTok as a medium for vocabulary process between eighth-grade junior high school learners, particularly in private schools like SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar. This is despite the fact that junior high school students have different learning needs than high school students, both in terms of cognitive level, learning interests, and social media usage patterns. Furthermore, there are few studies that simultaneously examine the effect of TikTok utilization on learners' vocabulary and English learning interests, as well as student perceptions of using TikTok as a learning medium.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to a learner's ability to understand, remember, and use words appropriately in both oral and written communication. Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency because it serves as the primary foundation for communication and language comprehension. According to Schmitt and Schmitt (2020), vocabulary encompasses the collection of words needed to communicate and understand a language. Vocabulary is not only related to knowing word meanings but also encompasses understanding word use in context, including connotation, collocation, and register.

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in supporting the development of the four primary language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learners with a rich vocabulary tend to more easily understand texts, express ideas fluently, and interact effectively both orally and in writing. Sarbaini and Rahmi (2024) state that without grammar, little can be conveyed, but without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed at all. This statement emphasizes the crucial role of vocabulary in language acquisition, often even more crucial than grammar in practical communication contexts. In vocabulary learning, there are two main dimensions that need to be considered: receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary refers to words that students can recognize and understand when encountered in reading or listening contexts, while productive vocabulary is words that can be actively used in speaking and writing. Furthermore, vocabulary also encompasses knowledge of pronunciation, spelling, morphology, and appropriate word usage. An integrated understanding of these aspects supports accurate and fluent communication.

TikTok as a Learning Tool

TikTok is one of the most popular social media platforms among adolescents and young learners, characterized by short-form video content ranging from 15 seconds to three minutes. Initially designed for entertainment and creative expression, TikTok has gradually evolved into a multifunctional digital platform that supports educational purposes, including language learning. This transformation aligns with the growing trend of integrating informal digital spaces into formal learning environments. According to Ahmad, E. A. (2024), social media platforms have the potential to foster autonomous and

contextual learning when they are purposefully integrated into educational practices.

As a learning tool, TikTok offers several pedagogical advantages, particularly for vocabulary acquisition in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. One of its main strengths lies in its short, concise, and visually engaging video format, which suits the cognitive and attention characteristics of Generation Z learners. Learners today tend to prefer brief, dynamic content that delivers information quickly and meaningfully. Zhang, Y., Lucas, M., & Pedro, L. (2022) TikTok videos often combine multiple modes of input, such as spoken language, written subtitles, images, gestures, and background music. This multimodal exposure supports vocabulary learning through the principles of multimedia learning, where learners process information more effectively when verbal and visual elements are presented simultaneously (Teng, 2023). For vocabulary learners, this means that new words are not only heard but also seen in written form and contextualized through visuals, which enhances comprehension and memory retention. Subtitles and on-screen text commonly used in TikTok videos further reinforce spelling recognition and word form awareness, which are essential components of vocabulary.

Another significant contribution of TikTok as a learning tool is its role in promoting incidental vocabulary learning. Incidental learning occurs when learners acquire new vocabulary unintentionally while focusing on meaning rather than form. Through frequent exposure to authentic English content on TikTok, learners naturally encounter common words, phrases, idioms, and expressions used in real-life contexts. Nikitina, N. (2024) emphasizes that repeated exposure to vocabulary in authentic digital environments helps learners internalize word meanings and usage patterns without the pressure of formal instruction. This is particularly beneficial for junior high school students, who may feel less anxious and more relaxed when learning occurs in familiar digital spaces.

In addition to receptive vocabulary development, TikTok also supports productive vocabulary use through imitation and interaction. Many TikTok creators model pronunciation, intonation, and sentence structures that learners can observe and replicate. Syaiba (2024) notes that TikTok encourages learners to imitate native or proficient speakers, which helps improve pronunciation accuracy and lexical confidence. Features such as duets, stitches, and comment interactions allow learners to respond to content, repeat expressions, and practice using new vocabulary actively, thereby bridging the gap

between vocabulary recognition and vocabulary use.

Despite its many advantages, the effectiveness of TikTok as a learning tool depends on how it is used. Content quality, frequency of exposure, and instructional guidance are key factors that determine learning outcomes. Without proper selection and guidance, TikTok may function merely as an entertainment platform rather than an educational medium. Therefore, teachers play an essential role in curating appropriate content, integrating TikTok activities with learning objectives, and guiding students to use the platform responsibly and productively.

In conclusion, TikTok represents a contemporary digital learning tool that aligns with modern students' learning habits and technological preferences. Its short video format, multimodal input, authentic language exposure, and interactive features make it particularly suitable for vocabulary learning. By combining entertainment with meaningful language input and opportunities for active use, TikTok has strong potential to enhance vocabulary acquisition, learner motivation, and engagement in English learning. When integrated thoughtfully into instructional practices, TikTok can serve as an effective supplementary medium that supports both receptive and productive vocabulary development in EFL classrooms.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a quasi-experimental research design. This research was conducted at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar. The population of this research consists of all eighth-grade students of SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar in the academic year 2025/2026, which consists of 264 students divided into 8 classes. The sample of this research was selected using a non-random sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling. The total number of students involved in this research was 60 students, consisting of 30 students in the experimental group (Class VIII F) and 30 students in the control group (Class VIII A). The data collection consisted of four primary stages: pre-test, treatment, post-test, and questionnaire distribution. In this study, the instruments used were tests and a questionnaire. Data Analysis Technique used in this study are descriptive statistical analysis, inferential statistical analysis, and interpretation of results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of the Data

The research instrument was a multiple-choice vocabulary test consisting of 25 items. These items measured three aspects of vocabulary knowledge: The meaning of words, spelling accuracy, and grammatical type. Before the main experiment, the researcher brought a pilot test with a small group of learners to assure the questions were clear and suitable.

1. Pre-test and Post-test Results of the Experimental Group (VIII F)

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Experimental Group

Statistic	Pre-test	Post-test
Number of Students (N)	30	30
Minimum Score	45.00	72.00
Maximum Score	76.00	96.00
Mean	59.20	84.60
Standard Deviation	8.15	6.45

The pre-test mean score of the experimental group was 59.20, which suggested that the learners started with relatively low vocabulary mastery. The lowest score was 45 and the highest was 76, showing that kind of wide range of ability levels between the learners. The learners had varying levels of vocabulary knowledge before the beginning of treatment that can be seen in 8.15 with a standard deviation of 8.15.

Based on TikTok-based treatment, the post-test mean increased to 84.60, representing an improvement of 25.40 points. The lowest score also rose to 72.00, which was above the pre-test mean. Additionally, the standard deviation reduced from 8.15 to 6.45, meaning that the score distribution got extra equal. This means that the gap between high-performing and low-performing learners became smaller, and the improvement was shared across the whole group.

2. Pre-test and Post-test Results of the Control Group (VIII A)

This control group consisted of 30 students who followed the standard English vocabulary curriculum without using TikTok. This group was matched in size with the experimental group to maintain statistical comparability.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Control Group

Statistic	Pre-test	Post-test
Number of Students (N)	30	30
Minimum Score	42.00	56.00
Maximum Score	74.00	82.00
Mean	58.40	69.10

Standard Deviation	8.80	7.95
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The control group had a pre-test mean of 58.40, which was very close to the experimental group's mean of 59.20. The standard deviation was 8.80 that is also similar to the experimental group. This similarity in starting scores was important because it told that both groups started with nearly the same vocabulary ability, so neither groups had an unfair advantage before the start of treatment.

After four weeks of regular instruction, the control group's post-test mean rose to 69.10, showing an improvement of 10.70 points. Although this gain was acceptable, it was considerably smaller than the 25.40 point improvement in the experimental group. For comparison, the highest score in Class VIII A was 82.00. In the TikTok-treated Class VIII F, a score of 82.00 would actually fall below the group average.

Prerequisite Testing Analysis

Parametric tests require that the data meet certain assumptions before they can be applied. The researcher examined the normality and homogeneity of the data before conducting the independent sample t-test. Without checking these assumptions, the results might not be reliable, but these prerequisite tests were carried out first.

1. Normality Test

The normality of the data was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. With 30 students in each group, the sample size was relatively small, so the Shapiro-Wilk test was considered appropriate. This test performs better for small samples than the Kolmogorov-Smirnov alternative. The decision rule was straightforward: if that significance value is greater than 0.05, the data were viewed generally shared.

Table 3. The Result of Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)

Group	Data Category	Statistic	df	Sig. (p)	Conclusion
Experimental	Pre-test	0.965	30	0.154	Normal
	Post-test	0.972	30	0.281	Normal
Control	Pre-test	0.958	30	0.185	Normal
	Post-test	0.980	30	0.342	Normal

As mentioned in Table above, the Shapiro-Wilk significance values for the experimental group were 0.154 for the pre-test and 0.281 for the post-test. For this control group, the p-values were 0.185 and 0.342, respectively. It is because all values across both groups and testing phases exceed the 0.05 alpha level, the vocabulary scores are

normally distributed. This result satisfies the normality assumption, fulfilling the first requirement to proceed with parametric testing.

2. Homogeneity Test

Levene's Test was used to check if that two groups had similar variances. If the variances were very different, the comparison between groups would not be fair. As Gastwirth, Gel, and Miao (2009) caution, unequal variances can distort the results of parametric tests, so this assumption needs to be verified before proceeding.

Table 4. The Result of Homogeneity Test (Levene's Test)

Data Category	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig. (p)	Conclusion
Pre-test Scores	0.452	1	58	0.504	Homogeneous
Post-test Scores	1.120	1	58	0.294	Homogeneous

The p-values for the pre-test and post-test were 0.504 and 0.294, separately. Both values are well above 0.05, which means the variances of the two groups were homogeneous. So, this data met the homogeneity assumption and could be used for the independent sample t-test.

Hypothesis Testing

By the research hypothesis, an independent sample t-test was applied to compare the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The decision rule was set at the 0.05 significance level: if the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5. The Result of Independent Sample t-Test

Data Category	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval (Lower)	95% Confidence Interval (Upper)
Post-test Scores	8.293	58	0.000	15.500	1.869	11.759	19.241

The t-test results showed a t-value of 8.293 with 58 degrees of freedom. The p-value was 0.000, which is far below the 0.05 threshold and even below 0.01. The mean difference between the two groups was 15.50 points, and the 95% confidence interval ranged from 11.759 to 19.241. Because this interval does not include zero, the difference between the groups is statistically significant.

Discussion of Research Findings

The statistical result with a p-value of 0.000 provides strong evidence that TikTok

made a real distinction in vocabulary learning. Al-Marroof et al. (2021) have previously argued that social media platforms can serve as effective educational tools when teachers integrate them kindly into instruction. The findings of this research associate with that view. However, this more important question is not simply whether TikTok worked, but rather why it produced such a large improvement compared to conventional teaching.

Mayer (2024) offers a helpful explanation through the concept of dual-channel processing. According to this theory, the brain processes visual and auditory information through separate channels, and when both channels receive coordinated input simultaneously, learning becomes more efficient. TikTok naturally supports this process because students hear the word spoken, see the kind of spelling in the caption, and observe the visual context all at the same time. This creates a form of triple encoding that strengthens memory. A printed vocabulary list, on the other hand, only provides static text through a single channel, which is a more passive and slower way to learn.

Another factor was the shadowing technique, which added an active oral rehearsal component to reinforce vocabulary retention that the conventional class did not have. Kadota (2019) explains that shadowing keeps the phonological loop active because students are not only listening but actively repeating the target vocabulary words aloud, reinforcing both phonological and semantic memory as they go. This process builds motor memory in addition to auditory memory. The researcher observed this directly during the sessions. For example, in the first meeting, several students in Class VIII F struggled to pronounce the word "exhausted" correctly. By the third session, they were able to shadow it smoothly without hesitation. The on-screen captions also played a role; students mentioned informally after class that seeing the word spelled out while hearing it helped them remember the spelling more easily. Similar benefits of shadowing and multimodal input have been reported by Foote and McDonough (2017) and Rama et al. (2023).

In contrast, Class VIII A followed a more traditional approach. The teacher wrote vocabulary words on the whiteboard, students copied them into their notebooks, and the class did choral repetition before moving on to the next item. Nation (2013) has criticized this type of routine because it lacks the rich context that supports deeper cognitive processing. Without meaningful context, new words tend to be forgotten quickly. Dizon

and Thanyawatpokin (2021) observed a similar retention problem in traditional classrooms, noting that without repeated exposure to words in meaningful situations, students struggle to remember both structural variations and contextual meanings.

The emotional environment also differed significantly between the two groups. Krashen (1982) argues that anxiety can block language acquisition, and the data from this study indicates that TikTok helped mitigate this issue by acting as an informal and low-pressure digital environment. Evidence of a lowered affective filter was observed directly in the classroom dynamics; during the shadowing practice in Class VIII F, students laughed and the atmosphere was noticeably relaxed, whereas Class VIII A exhibited a much quieter and lower energy level. This observation is strongly supported by recent empirical studies on Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which confirm that integrating mobile applications like TikTok creates a comfortable and flexible environment that generates positive affective factors, such as increased motivation and self-confidence, while significantly lessening language anxiety (Hashim, 2024). For eighth graders in Denpasar, TikTok is associated with entertainment rather than stressful schoolwork, so using it in the classroom naturally reduced student pressure. Furthermore, researchers have noted that the interactive and authentic nature of TikTok provides engaging tasks that motivate learners to practice language skills more frequently in a simulated, low-anxiety environment (Chuah & Ch'ng, 2023). Therefore, the conclusion that the affective filter was lowered in the present study is not merely an assumption, but a documented outcome validated by direct classroom observation, the high levels of enjoyment reported in the students' questionnaire results, and recent literature on digital language acquisition.

Regardless of the positive findings, this research has various limitations that should be acknowledged. The large improvement in Class VIII F may have been partly influenced by the novelty effect (Clark, 1983), meaning that the initial excitement of using a new tool like TikTok could have boosted engagement and scores. It remains unclear whether this level of enthusiasm would continue over a longer period, such as a full semester. Additionally, the sample was relatively small, with only 60 students from a single private school in Denpasar. Creswell (2014) would recommend interpreting these findings with caution when considering their applicability to different school settings or

student populations.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this quantitative research was to know the empirical effect of integrating the TikTok application as an instructional medium on the English vocabulary of eighth-grade students at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar. The inferential statistical evaluation, executed via an independent sample t-test, yielded a two-tailed significance value of $< 0,001$, that falls definitively below the established 0.05 alpha threshold. This mathematical outcome claims the absolute rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) and confirms the alternative hypothesis (H_a). Consequently, it was empirically established that this deployment of TikTok exerts a statistically significant and positive impact on learners vocabulary acquisition compared to conventional teaching methodologies.

The descriptive statistical data further solidifies this conclusion by demonstrating a clear divergence in linguistic growth between the two observed cohorts. The experimental group, which was actively associated with the shadowing technique from TikTok videos, experienced a mean score elevation of 25.40 points, moving from an initial 59.20 to a final 84.60. The control group, which was subjected to traditional textbook-driven instruction, exhibited a marginal mean increase of only 10.70 points, closing at 69.10. The targeted application of continuous audio-visual stimuli, combined with active vocal repetition, successfully enhanced the students' cognitive capacity to encode and retrieve lexical items, specifically improving their spelling accuracy, meaning recognition, and morphological application.

Ultimately, the findings synthesize to validate the integration of interactive, short-form video platforms within formal educational frameworks. By substituting passive rote memorization with dynamic, multimodal exposure, the instructional process significantly reduces the learners' affective filters while simultaneously driving intrinsic motivation. The use of TikTok as a pedagogical tool fundamentally transforms vocabulary instruction into highly contextualized and cognitively engaging process, satisfying the rigorous structural requirements for optimal contemporary language acquisition.

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