



The Effect of TikTok Short Video to Improve Students' Speaking Skill in Junior High School

Andi Eka Prasetiani Arinda¹, Muhammad Zuhri Dj², Siti Nurul Ilmi³

^{1,2,3}Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bone

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Corresponding Author:

Andi Eka Prasetiani Arinda
andiekaprasetiarianda@gmail.com
Institut Agama Islam Negeri
Bone

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the effect of TikTok short videos on improving students' English speaking skills at the junior high school level. Employing a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test control groups, this research involved 60 eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 6 Watampone in the academic year 2025/2026 as total sampling. The experimental group (Class VIII B, n = 30) received instruction using TikTok short videos (15–60 seconds), while the control group (Class VIII A, n = 30) continued with conventional teaching methods. Speaking performance was assessed through a standardized rubric covering five aspects: pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension (scored 1–5). Data were analyzed using paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test via SPSS v21.0 at a significance level of $p < 0.05$. Results showed that the experimental group's mean score increased from 8.10 (pre-test) to 17.60 (post-test), a gain of 9.50 points ($t = -15.877, p = 0.000$). The control group improved from 7.43 to 15.77, a gain of 8.33 points ($t = -11.928, p = 0.000$). The independent sample t-test confirmed a statistically significant difference between the two groups' post-test scores ($t = 2.264, df = 58, p = 0.027 < 0.05$), leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. The largest gains in the experimental group were observed in vocabulary ($\Delta = 2.10$) and grammar ($\Delta = 2.03$). These findings indicate that TikTok short videos are an effective, engaging, and innovative medium for enhancing students' English speaking performance.

1. Introduction

Speaking ability is a fundamental skill in English language learning and a key indicator of communicative competence. In the era of globalization and digitalization, English speaking proficiency is increasingly required across academic, social, and professional contexts. As noted by Richards (2008), speaking reflects overall language development rather than functioning as a supplementary skill. Therefore, developing students' oral communication skills remains a primary objective in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education.

Despite its importance, many secondary school students still struggle to speak English fluently and confidently. Common difficulties include limited vocabulary, inaccurate pronunciation, grammatical errors, and low self-confidence. This issue is particularly evident in Indonesian junior high schools, where English exposure is largely confined to classroom settings. As a result, students have limited opportunities to practice speaking in authentic contexts, which often leads to passive participation and communication anxiety. Marzuki, Jabu, and Basri (2018) emphasize that speaking requires not only linguistic competence but also psychological readiness, which is often underdeveloped in conventional classrooms.

One major contributing factor is the continued reliance on traditional teaching methods. Teacher-centered instruction, rote memorization, and mechanical speaking activities such as text recitation tend to limit meaningful interaction. Brown (2004) argues that speaking development requires consistent and contextualized practice; however, many classrooms still emphasize form over communication. Consequently, students may perform adequately in written tasks but struggle to express themselves spontaneously in spoken English.

At the same time, the rapid development of digital technology presents new opportunities for language learning. Students today are highly familiar with digital platforms and prefer interactive, visually engaging content. As digital natives (Prensky, 2001), they are more responsive to technology-integrated learning environments than to traditional instructional approaches. This shift highlights the potential of digital media to enhance both engagement and learning outcomes.

One platform that has gained widespread popularity among teenagers is TikTok, a short video-based application that promotes creativity, self-expression, and communication. Its features such as short video formats, audio-visual elements, and interactive tools provide exposure to authentic spoken language, including pronunciation, intonation, and everyday expressions. Khlaif and Salha (2021) describe TikTok as supporting "nano-learning," while Sun, Wang, and Chen (2022) emphasize its ability to deliver contextualized language input through short-form videos.

Previous studies on social media integration in language learning generally report positive effects on students' motivation and speaking performance. Short-video platforms such as Instagram Reels and TikTok have been shown to enhance

engagement and provide meaningful language exposure. However, these studies also reveal important limitations. Many are conducted in different educational contexts, focus on levels other than junior high school, or apply non-experimental or weakly controlled designs. As a result, although the potential of these platforms is evident, controlled quasi-experimental evidence on the effectiveness of TikTok in the Indonesian junior high school (SMP) context remains limited.

This gap underscores the need for more rigorous and context-specific research. In particular, SMP Negeri 6 Watampone represents a relevant setting, where students have been observed to demonstrate low participation and limited confidence in speaking English. Addressing this issue requires an instructional approach that not only improves linguistic competence but also increases student engagement and confidence.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of TikTok short videos on the English speaking skills of eighth-grade students using a quasi-experimental design. By comparing an experimental group receiving TikTok-based instruction with a control group taught through conventional methods, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence of its effectiveness in a specific Indonesian junior high school context. The research addresses two questions: (1) Is there a significant difference in speaking skills between students taught using TikTok and those taught without it? (2) To what extent does TikTok improve specific aspects of speaking, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension? The findings are expected to offer practical insights for teachers seeking technology-enhanced alternatives to conventional speaking instruction.

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group structure. This design was selected to examine causal relationships in a real classroom setting where random assignment was not feasible (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Two intact eighth-grade classes were assigned as the experimental group ($O_1 \rightarrow X \rightarrow O_2$) and the control group ($O_1 \rightarrow O_2$), where O_1 represents the pre-test, X the treatment, and O_2 the post-test.

The population consisted of 60 eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 6 Watampone, Bone Regency, in the 2025/2026 academic year. Total sampling was applied, with Class VIII B ($n = 30$) as the experimental group and Class VIII A ($n = 30$) as the control group. Initial equivalence between groups was confirmed using pre-test scores to ensure comparability prior to treatment.

Data were collected through individual speaking tests administered before and after the treatment. The test included two tasks: self-introduction and describing a person. These tasks were selected because they represent fundamental communicative functions at the junior high school level and allow students to demonstrate fluency, vocabulary use, and basic grammatical structures in a relatively natural context. Despite being limited in number, the tasks were

considered sufficient as they covered key speaking components aligned with the study objectives.

Students' performances were assessed using a rubric adapted from Brown (2004), covering five aspects: pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Each aspect was rated on a scale of 1 to 5, resulting in a total raw score ranging from 5 to 25. To facilitate interpretation, raw scores were converted into a scale of 0–100 using the formula: $\text{Final Score} = (\text{Raw Score} \div 25) \times 100$. This conversion explains the use of decimal scores (e.g., 8.10, 17.60). Content validity was established through expert judgment by two English education lecturers and one certified English teacher. Reliability was confirmed through inter-rater scoring, with a correlation coefficient of $r \geq 0.80$ indicating acceptable consistency (Brown, 2004; Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

The treatment was conducted over six meetings. The experimental group received instruction using TikTok short videos (15–60 seconds) featuring authentic English expressions. Activities included watching videos, practicing pronunciation, and performing guided speaking tasks such as short monologues. In contrast, the control group received conventional instruction consisting of textbook-based activities, including reading aloud, vocabulary exercises, and teacher-led question-and-answer sessions, without the use of digital media.

Ethical considerations were addressed prior to data collection. Students participated voluntarily with informed consent obtained from the school and participants. All data were treated confidentially, and student identities were anonymized in reporting the results.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 21.0 at a significance level of $p < 0.05$. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize score distributions. A paired sample t-test examined within-group improvements, while an independent sample t-test compared post-test results between groups. Assumptions of normality and homogeneity were tested using the Shapiro-Wilk and Levene's tests, respectively.

3. Result

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test scores for both groups.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Group	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Pre-Test Experimental (VIII B)	30	5	15	8.10	2.60
Post-Test Experimental (VIII B)	30	15	25	17.60	2.36
Pre-Test Control (VIII B)	30	5	15	7.43	3.26

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Post-Test Control (VIII A)	30	5	20	15.77	3.76

The experimental group improved by 9.50 points (from 8.10 to 17.60), while the control group improved by 8.33 points (from 7.43 to 15.77). Both groups demonstrated notable improvement, with the experimental group achieving a higher post-test mean.

4.2 Gain Score per Speaking Aspect

Table 2 presents mean scores per speaking aspect for both groups in the pre-test and post-test.

Table 2. Mean Score per Speaking Aspect

Aspect	Pre Exp	Post Exp	Δ Exp	Pre Con	Post Con	Δ Con
Pronunciation	1.77	3.63	1.87	1.40	3.20	1.80
Fluency	1.63	3.53	1.90	1.53	3.30	1.77
Vocabulary	1.40	3.50	2.10	1.53	3.17	1.63
Grammar	1.37	3.40	2.03	1.47	2.80	1.33
Comprehension	1.93	3.53	1.60	1.50	3.30	1.80

The experimental group achieved the highest gains in vocabulary ($\Delta = 2.10$) and grammar ($\Delta = 2.03$), followed by fluency ($\Delta = 1.90$), pronunciation ($\Delta = 1.87$), and comprehension ($\Delta = 1.60$). The control group's highest gains were in comprehension ($\Delta = 1.80$) and pronunciation ($\Delta = 1.80$).

4.3 Prerequisite Tests

The Shapiro-Wilk normality test indicated non-normal distribution across all data sets ($p < 0.05$). However, following Field (2013), t-tests were retained as they are robust against normality violations for samples with $n \geq 30$, supported by the Central Limit Theorem. Levene's test confirmed homogeneity of variance for both pre-test ($F = 0.488, p = 0.488 > 0.05$) and post-test scores ($F = 0.307, p = 0.582 > 0.05$), satisfying the assumption for independent samples t-test.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Table 3 presents the results of paired sample t-tests and independent sample t-test.

Table 3. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Statistical Test	Mean Pre	Mean Post	t	p-value	Decision
Paired T-Test Experimental (VIII B)	8.10	17.60	-15.877	0.000	Significant

Paired T-Test — Control (VIII A)	7.43	15.77	- 11.928	0.000	Significant
Independent T-Test (Post-Test: Exp vs Con)	—	—	2.264	0.027	H ₁ Accepted

4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that both the experimental and control groups experienced statistically significant improvement in speaking skills. However, the experimental group, which received TikTok-based instruction, showed a greater magnitude of improvement. This indicates that while conventional teaching methods remain effective to a certain extent, the integration of TikTok provides additional benefits that enhance students' speaking performance more substantially.

One important explanation for this result lies in the nature of TikTok as a multimodal learning platform. Unlike traditional instruction, TikTok combines visual, auditory, and contextual elements, allowing students to process language input through multiple channels simultaneously. This aligns with multimedia learning theory, which suggests that learners understand and retain information more effectively when it is presented through both visual and auditory modes. As a result, students are better able to internalize pronunciation, intonation, and language patterns.

The significant improvement in vocabulary and grammar observed in the experimental group further supports this interpretation. TikTok exposes learners to authentic language use in real-life contexts, enabling them to acquire vocabulary and grammatical structures naturally. Rather than memorizing isolated words or rules, students encounter language as it is actually used, which enhances both comprehension and retention. This contextual exposure likely contributed to the higher gains in these aspects compared to the control group.

In addition to linguistic development, TikTok appears to play a crucial role in improving students' fluency. Repeated exposure to short videos, combined with imitation and practice activities, provides students with opportunities to rehearse language in a structured yet engaging way. Over time, this repeated practice reduces hesitation and increases automaticity in speech production, leading to smoother and more confident speaking performance.

Another key factor influencing the results is student engagement. TikTok's interactive and familiar format aligns closely with students' digital habits, making the learning process more enjoyable and motivating. When students are actively engaged, they are more likely to participate, practice, and take risks in using the target language. This increased participation may explain why the experimental group demonstrated more consistent improvement across speaking aspects.

Furthermore, the use of TikTok may help reduce speaking anxiety, which is a common barrier in EFL contexts. Traditional classroom environments often create pressure that discourages students from speaking. In contrast, TikTok-based activities provide a more relaxed and informal learning atmosphere, allowing students to practice speaking without fear of immediate judgment. This psychological comfort can significantly enhance students' confidence and willingness to communicate.

The findings also align with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasize the importance of meaningful interaction and authentic communication. TikTok-based activities encourage students to use language for real communicative purposes rather than merely completing structured exercises. This shift from form-focused to meaning-focused learning likely contributed to the observed improvement in speaking skills.

Despite these advantages, the improvement observed in the control group should not be overlooked. Conventional teaching methods, such as guided practice and teacher feedback, still play an important role in language learning. The results suggest that while traditional approaches are effective in building foundational knowledge, they may be less effective in promoting spontaneous communication and engagement compared to digital-based approaches.

However, the use of TikTok in language learning is not without limitations. One potential drawback is the risk of distraction, as students may focus more on entertainment aspects than on learning objectives. Additionally, the short duration of videos may lead to superficial learning if not accompanied by structured instructional guidance. Therefore, teachers must carefully design activities to ensure that learning remains purposeful and aligned with instructional goals.

Another limitation of this study relates to its scope and design. The treatment was conducted over a relatively short period of six meetings, which may not fully capture the long-term effects of TikTok-based learning. Additionally, the sample size was limited to a single school, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research could address these limitations by involving larger samples, longer intervention periods, and diverse educational settings.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on technology-enhanced language learning by providing empirical evidence from a quasi-experimental design in the Indonesian junior high school context. Unlike previous studies that often rely on descriptive or non-experimental approaches, this research offers more robust evidence of the effectiveness of TikTok in improving speaking skills.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that English teachers can benefit from integrating TikTok into their instructional practices. By incorporating short-form video content into speaking activities, teachers can create more engaging and authentic learning experiences. However, it is essential to balance the use of digital media with pedagogical structure to maximize learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the results of this study confirm that TikTok-based instruction is an effective approach for improving students' speaking skills. Its ability to provide authentic input, enhance engagement, and reduce anxiety makes it a valuable tool in EFL classrooms. Nevertheless, its implementation should be carefully managed to address potential limitations and ensure meaningful learning.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that TikTok short videos have a statistically significant positive effect on eighth-grade students' English speaking skills at SMP Negeri 6 Watampone. The experimental group achieved a significantly higher post-test mean (17.60) compared to the control group (15.77), with an independent t-test confirming the significance of this difference ($t = 2.264, p = 0.027 < 0.05$). Both groups improved significantly from pre-test to post-test, with the experimental group showing greater overall gains.

Improvement was observed across all five speaking aspects, with the largest gains in vocabulary ($\Delta = 2.10$) and grammar ($\Delta = 2.03$) in the experimental group. These findings confirm that TikTok short videos provide an effective, innovative, and engaging instructional medium for English speaking development at the secondary school level.

Based on these results, English teachers are encouraged to integrate TikTok short videos as supplementary instructional media, particularly for speaking skill development. Future research is recommended to investigate the effect of TikTok on other language skills (listening, reading, writing), to apply longer intervention periods, or to employ mixed-method designs to explore students' perceptions alongside quantitative outcomes.

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