



The Relationship Between Tiktok Exposure and English Vocabulary Acquisition Among English Education Students at Tadulako University

Gusti Ayu Kadek Velli Amanda¹, Konder Manurung², Moh. Abraham
Akbar Eisenring³, Afrillia Anggreni⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Universitas Tadulako

Article Info

Received: 2026-06-08

Revised: 2026-06-14

Accepted: 2026-06-18

Keywords:

*TikTok exposure,
vocabulary acquisition,
English vocabulary,
social media,
correlational study.*

DOI:

10.24256/ideas.v14i1.11135

Corresponding Author:

Gusti Ayu Kadek Velli Amanda

Gustiayukadekvelliamanda@gmail.com

Universitas Tadulako

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between TikTok exposure and English vocabulary acquisition among English Education students at Tadulako University. Using a quantitative correlational design, data were collected from 60 students selected through purposive sampling using an online questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS. The findings showed a mean score of 43.4 for TikTok exposure and 36.9 for vocabulary acquisition. Spearman's Rank Correlation revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.494 with a significance value of less than 0.001, indicating a positive and statistically significant relationship between TikTok exposure and English vocabulary acquisition. These findings suggest that students with higher TikTok exposure tend to have higher levels of English vocabulary acquisition.

1. Introduction

Vocabulary knowledge is an essential component of language proficiency and academic literacy. Insufficient vocabulary knowledge may hinder students' reading comprehension and their ability to communicate effectively in both spoken and written forms (McKeown, 2019; Elleman et al., 2009). Therefore, vocabulary acquisition plays a crucial role in English language learning.

From a theoretical perspective, Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current level of competence. Through continuous exposure to meaningful language input, learners gradually acquire linguistic knowledge, including vocabulary. In digital learning environments, social media platforms may serve as sources of authentic language input that support vocabulary development.

Vocabulary acquisition may also occur incidentally. According to Nation (2013), learners can acquire vocabulary while focusing on understanding meaningful messages rather than intentionally studying new words. Repeated encounters with vocabulary in authentic contexts may contribute to vocabulary growth over time. Therefore, exposure to English-language content on social media platforms may create opportunities for incidental vocabulary learning.

In addition, the concept of Extramural English refers to English exposure that occurs outside formal educational settings (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). Such exposure may take place through various digital activities, including watching videos, interacting on social media, and consuming online content. As students increasingly engage with English beyond the classroom, extramural exposure has become an important aspect of language learning.

Among various social media platforms, TikTok has gained considerable popularity due to its short-video format, interactive features, and accessibility. In addition to entertainment, TikTok provides educational content such as vocabulary lessons, pronunciation tips, and language-learning materials. Previous studies have shown that TikTok can support vocabulary learning and language comprehension through engaging and authentic content (Widagsa & Fokatea, 2024).

In Indonesia, several studies have highlighted the potential of TikTok as a supplementary platform for English learning. Rakhmasari and Pratiwi (2024) found that TikTok positively influenced learners' English acquisition, while Simanungkalit and Katemba (2023) reported that university students perceived TikTok as an enjoyable platform for learning new vocabulary. Furthermore, experimental studies revealed that students exposed to TikTok achieved better vocabulary learning outcomes than those who were not (Nainggolan & Manik, 2024; Abidah, 2024; Alshreef et al., 2023).

Despite these findings, limited research has specifically examined the relationship between TikTok exposure and vocabulary acquisition among English Education students. Previous studies mainly focused on students' perceptions of TikTok or its effectiveness as a learning tool rather than investigating whether the level of TikTok exposure is associated with vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between TikTok exposure and English vocabulary acquisition among English Education students at Tadulako University.

Based on the research gap identified above, this study addresses the following research question: Is there a significant relationship between TikTok exposure and English vocabulary acquisition among English Education students at Tadulako University?

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between TikTok exposure and English vocabulary acquisition among English Education students at Tadulako University. The participants were 60 sixth-semester students (cohort of 2023) selected through purposive sampling. Sixth-semester students were chosen because they had completed the Vocabulary course and had sufficient experience in English language learning, making them appropriate participants for this study.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of two variables: TikTok Exposure and Vocabulary Acquisition. The TikTok Exposure scale initially consisted of 12 items, while the Vocabulary Acquisition scale consisted of 9 items. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Prior to data collection, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability. The validity test was conducted using Corrected Item-Total Correlation with a minimum criterion of 0.30. The results showed that 11 out of 12 items of the TikTok Exposure scale met the validity criterion, while all 9 items of the Vocabulary Acquisition scale were found to be valid. The reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. The TikTok Exposure scale obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.899, indicating very good reliability, while the Vocabulary Acquisition scale obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.920, indicating excellent reliability. These results suggest that both instruments demonstrated a high level of internal consistency and were suitable for data collection.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics, including minimum scores, maximum scores, and mean scores, were used to describe the data. Spearman's Rank Correlation was employed to examine the relationship between TikTok exposure and vocabulary acquisition. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

Variable	Initial Items	Valid Items	Cronbach's Alpha
TikTok Exposure	12	11	0.899
Vocabulary Acquisition	9	9	0.920

3. Result

a. Overview of The Research

This study involved 60 sixth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University. The research aimed to examine the relationship between TikTok exposure and English vocabulary acquisition. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Spearman's Rank Correlation.

b. Instrument Validity and Reliability

Prior to data analysis, the questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability. The validity test was conducted using Corrected Item-Total Correlation with a minimum criterion of 0.30. The results indicated that 11 out of 12 items of the TikTok Exposure scale met the validity criterion, while all 9 items of the Vocabulary Acquisition scale were valid.

The reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. The TikTok Exposure scale obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.899, while the Vocabulary Acquisition scale obtained a value of 0.920. These results indicate that both instruments demonstrated high internal consistency and were suitable for data collection.

Table 2 The validity and reliability results of the research instrument

Variable	Initial Items	Valid Items	Cronbach's Alpha
TikTok Exposure	12	11	0.899
Vocabulary Acquisition	9	9	0.920

c. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the research variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 3 The descriptive statistics of the research variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
TikTok Exposure	60	16	55	43.4
Vocabulary Acquisition	60	16	45	36.9

Table 3 shows that the mean score of TikTok Exposure was 43.4, with scores ranging from 16 to 55. Meanwhile, the mean score of Vocabulary Acquisition was 36.9, with scores ranging from 16 to 45. These findings indicate variation in respondents' levels of TikTok exposure and vocabulary acquisition.

d. Correlation Analysis

To examine the relationship between TikTok Exposure and Vocabulary Acquisition, Spearman's Rank Correlation was employed. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Between TikTok Exposure and Vocabulary Acquisition

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (rs)	Sig. (2-tailed)
TikTok Exposure and Vocabulary Acquisition	0.494	< 0.001

The result of Spearman's Rank Correlation revealed a correlation coefficient (rs) of 0.494 with a significance value of less than 0.001. Since the significance value was below 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between TikTok Exposure and Vocabulary Acquisition among English Education students at Tadulako University.

4. Discussion

The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between TikTok exposure and English vocabulary acquisition among English Education students at Tadulako University (rs = 0.494, p < 0.001). This finding indicates that students with higher levels of TikTok exposure tended to report higher levels of vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, TikTok exposure was associated with vocabulary acquisition among the participants.

This finding may be explained through Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985), which suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible language input. Through English-related videos, captions, subtitles, and audio content, TikTok may provide opportunities for students to encounter English vocabulary in meaningful contexts. The finding is also consistent with the concept of incidental vocabulary learning, which proposes that learners may acquire vocabulary while focusing on understanding content rather than intentionally memorizing words (Nation, 2013).

In addition, TikTok can be viewed as a form of Extramural English exposure, where students engage with English outside formal classroom settings (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016).

The present finding is consistent with previous studies that reported positive associations between TikTok use and vocabulary learning. Simanungkalit and Katemba (2023) found that university students perceived TikTok as an enjoyable platform for learning new vocabulary. Similarly, Rakhmasari and Pratiwi (2024) reported that TikTok provided learners with opportunities to engage with English content and expand their vocabulary knowledge. Experimental studies conducted by Abidah (2024), Alshreef et al. (2023), and Nainggolan and Manik (2024) also reported positive vocabulary learning outcomes among students who used TikTok-based learning activities.

However, the correlation coefficient obtained in this study was moderate ($r_s = 0.494$), suggesting that TikTok exposure was not the only factor associated with vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary acquisition is a complex process that may also be related to various factors such as learning motivation, reading habits, classroom learning experiences, and individual learning strategies. Previous studies have emphasized that vocabulary development is influenced by multiple sources of language exposure and learning experiences rather than a single factor alone. Therefore, although TikTok exposure was associated with vocabulary acquisition, it should be viewed as one of several factors related to students' vocabulary development.

The findings of this study imply that TikTok may be considered as an additional source of English exposure for university students. Since a positive relationship was found between TikTok exposure and vocabulary acquisition, English-related content on TikTok may provide learners with opportunities to encounter vocabulary outside the classroom. Nevertheless, such exposure should complement rather than replace formal language learning activities.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between TikTok exposure and English vocabulary acquisition among English Education students at Tadulako University. The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between TikTok exposure and vocabulary acquisition ($r_s = 0.494$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that students with higher levels of TikTok exposure tended to report higher levels of vocabulary acquisition.

The findings suggest that TikTok exposure was associated with vocabulary acquisition among the participants. However, the moderate correlation coefficient indicates that TikTok exposure was not the only factor related to vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, TikTok may be considered as an additional source of English exposure that complements formal English learning.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, students may utilize English-related content on TikTok as an additional source of English exposure. Educators may also consider incorporating appropriate digital content into English language learning activities to provide students with opportunities to encounter authentic English use

Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to involve larger samples, different educational contexts, and additional variables related to vocabulary acquisition in order to obtain more comprehensive findings.

6. References

- Abidah, A. N. (2024). Students' perception on utilizing TikTok videos for vocabulary acquisition. *Journal of English for Academic and Specific Purposes*, 7(2), 104–115. <https://doi.org/10.18860/jeasp.v7i2.24418>
- Alghameeti, A. A. (2022). Is Tiktok an Effective Technology Tool in English Vocabulary Expansion? *English Language Teaching*, 15(12), 14. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v15n12p14>
- Alshreef, N. R., & Khadawardi, H. A. (2023). Using TikTok as a tool for English vocabulary learning in the EFL context. *English Language Teaching*, 16(10), 125–131. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v16n10p125>
- Anumanthan, S., & Hashim, H. (2022). Improving the learning of regular verbs through TikTok among primary school ESL pupils. *Creative Education*, 13(03), 896–912. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2022.133059>
- Baruti, T. D. W. P., & Subekti, A. S. (2023). Instagram to learn English vocabulary: A study of Indonesian non-English major university students. *IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education)*, 10(1), 107–125. <https://doi.org/10.15408/ijee.v10i1.26969>
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dwipa, E., Khoirunisa, R. A. N., Al-Haqq, F. G., & Aqilah, A. T. (2024). Implementation of TikTok as medium for learning of English vocabulary: The perspective of Department English Education students. *Jurnal Onoma Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra*, 10(1), 977–992. <https://doi.org/10.30605/onoma.v10i1.3280>
- Elleman, A. M., Lindo, E. J., Morphy, P., & Compton, D. L. (2009). The impact of vocabulary instruction on passage-level comprehension of school-age children: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 2(1), 1–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19345740802539200>
- George, D., & Mallery, P. (2003). *SPSS for Windows Step by Step: A Simple Guide and Reference* (11th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Ilham, F., Irwandi, & Fira. (2022). The effect of TikTok usage on English language proficiency: A survey-based correlational study. *Ideas: Journal on English*

- Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature, 13(1).
<https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v13i1.6233>
- Ining, A. A. B. (2021). Expanding ESL Students' Vocabulary Through TikTok Videos. *Lensa: Kajian Kebahasaan, Kesusastraan, dan Budaya* Vol. 11, No. 2, July-December 2021, page 171-184.
<http://jurnal.unimus.ac.id/index.php/lensa>
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.
- Mokhtar, N. H., & Mohd Yusof, N. (2022). The effectiveness of social media platforms in supporting vocabulary acquisition at primary school level: systematic review. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 6(11), 1-6.
<https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2022.61101>
- Nainggolan, N. J., & Manik, S. (2024). The effect of using TikTok application on students' vocabulary mastery at senior high school students. *Journal of English Language Teaching, Literatures, and Applied Linguistics (JELTLAL)*, 2(2), 42-46.
<https://doi.org/10.69820/jeltlal.v2i2.151>
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- McKeown, M. G., & Beck, I. L. (2019). Vocabulary assessment to support teaching and learning. *The Reading Teacher*, 72(4), 491-496.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1763>
- Rakhmasari, D. L., & Pratiwi, B. I. (2024). The influence of social media short videos on Indonesians' English acquisition. *Leksika: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra dan Pengajarannya*, 18(2), 55-61.
<https://jurnalnasional.ump.ac.id/index.php/LEKSIKA/article/view/22659>
- Risalah, A. M., & Rina, N. (2025). Quantitative analysis of TikTok addiction: A user behavior study. *Jurnal Ilmiah LISKI*.
<https://journals.telkomuniversity.ac.id/liski/article/view/7375>
- Rita, & Subekti, A. S. (2023). TikTok and vocabulary learning: A survey study of Indonesian students from English departments. *Pedagogy: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.32332/joelt.v11i2.7866>
- Schmitt, N. (2010). *Researching vocabulary: A vocabulary research manual*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Simanungkalit, J. R. M., & Katemba, C. V. (2023). Utilizing English TikTok as a media in learning English vocabulary: University students' perspective. *Eduvelop: Journal of English Education and Development*, 6(2), 137-150.
<https://doi.org/10.31605/eduvelop.v6i2.2331>

- Sirait, C. T., & Hutasuhut, M. L. (2023). High School students perspective on using Tiktok for learning English vocabulary. *Journal UNIMED*, 12(1), 38–44.
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Sulistianah, K., Kurniasih, & Tarihoran. (2024). Leveraging TikTok for ELT: A systematic review. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Sosial (JUPENSI)*.
<https://journalshub.org/index.php/JUPENSI/article/view/4986>
- Sundqvist, P., & Sylvén, L. K. (2016). *Extramural English in teaching and learning: From theory and research to practice*. Palgrave Macmillan.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-46048-6>
- Tan, K. H., Rajendran, A., Muslim, N., Alias, J., & Yusof, N. A. (2022). The Potential of TikTok's Key Features as a Pedagogical Strategy for ESL Classrooms. *Sustainability*, 14(24), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142416876>
- Tran, D. T. (2023). TikTok's effect on English vocabulary learning: An empirical study of English major curriculum. *Revista de Gestão e Secretariado*, 14(10), 18576–18592.
<https://doi.org/10.7769/gesec.v14i10.2869>
- Wang, Y., & Liu, T. (2023). The role of TikTok in students' health and wellbeing. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-023-01224-6>
- Webb, S., & Nation, P. (2017). *How vocabulary is learned*. Routledge.
- Widagsa, R., & Fokatea, M. R. (2024). Learning English from TikTok: A qualitative case study. *Journal of English Language Teaching and English Linguistics*, 9(2).
<https://journal.upy.ac.id/index.php/eltics/article/view/6950>