

# Teachers' and Pupils' Perceptions on Using Tiktok to Enhance ESL Pupils' Speaking Skills: A Literature Review

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## Abstract

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 places a strong emphasis on high-quality education which promotes the use of technology in the classroom to enhance learning. Malaysia, as one of the top nations in educational reform, supports this goal by developing Digital Education Policy (DEP). Developed by the Ministry of Education (MoE), this policy outlines the aim to create a competitive, digitally fluent generations. Other than DEP, Malaysia's curriculum Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) places particular emphasis on the speaking competence component in order to guarantee that students reach global standards. This is in line with the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013–2025), Malaysia promotes the use of technology to improve educational outcomes especially mastering English Language while maintaining the proficiency of Bahasa Melayu through various strategic shifts. Since speaking is vital, there have been numerous efforts to incorporate technology into language teaching and learning. One such endeavor makes use of TikTok, the most well-known and up-to-date platform. Additionally, a number of studies have examined the benefits and drawbacks of TikTok in educational settings. Hence, this study explores the literature review on both the potential benefits and drawbacks of integrating TikTok as a tool to enhance speaking skills among ESL pupils. The aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how this popular social media platform can be utilized to improve language proficiency, specifically speaking skills, while addressing common concerns associated with its use.

**Keywords:** Perceptions, Teachers, Pupils, Benefits, Drawbacks, Upper Primary Pupils, EsL Classroom, Tiktok, Speaking Skill.

## Introduction

It is hardly unexpected that technology is being incorporated into a wide range of fields worldwide in this day of globalization. The field of technology is broad, encompassing many different domains and manifestations. With the emergence of other social media platforms like Threads, TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter, social media has becoming one of the most popular types of technology in recent times. By enabling instantaneous connections and

information sharing over great distances, these platforms have completely changed communication algorithm. The education sector undoubtedly one of the most important industries that constantly adopts new technology and undergoes developments. The education sector constantly has to be polished and in the best possible state to provide quality education for future generations. This is in line with The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, "Ensuring Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promoting Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All," (UNESCO, 2019). Hence, incorporating technology into education is essential to accomplish these worldwide educational goals.

Malaysia emphasizes the value of language ability, especially in English and Bahasa Malaysia, as the country dedicated to providing high-quality education. Through a number of changes, the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013–2025) expresses this commitment. Shift 1 seeks to ensure that all students have equal access to high-quality education of an international standard; Shift 2 places emphasis on the value of mastering English while maintaining proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia and promoting the study of a second language; and Shift 7 maximizes the use of ICT for self-paced and remote learning to increase access to high-quality instruction regardless of student skill level or location (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The educational institutions in Malaysia have long used technology in their teaching and learning. Social media is becoming a very popular topic and is used extensively in the field of education. Modern teaching approaches have been transformed by the use of technology in the classroom, which presents creative ways to improve student performance.

TikTok is among the newest and most well-liked social media sites utilized in the teaching field. A possible teaching tool is TikTok, which is well-known for its short-form video content. In order to better understand how TikTok can be used to teach English to young people, Xiuwen and Razali (2021) encourage educators to take this into consideration. Prior research has demonstrated the substantial improvement in student engagement and performance that results from incorporating technology into language instruction. Language learning requires meaningful engagement in the target language in order to be effective, according to Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition. Through interesting and dynamic content, TikTok can help improve learning to become more engaging and meaningful. Technology, especially social media sites like TikTok is becoming a more important teaching tool in ESL classrooms. This allows for the creation of innovative digital learning programs that are adapted to the changing needs of ESL students in the COVID-19 and post-pandemic educational environments.

In Malaysia, ESL pupils must be proficient in all the fundamental skills in English Language which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The proficiency in English Language will be measured by six competence levels ranging from A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. A1 level is for elementary learners while C2 level is for those who have mastered the language. These linguistic levels of proficiency are detailed in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Among all the linguistic skills mentioned in CEFR, the speaking skill is the most focused skill. Speaking ability development is essential for academic success and efficient communication in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, especially for ESL pupils. Fluency in speaking becomes a crucial component of this process, since it is necessary for acquiring the language as well as for navigating academic success,

promoting social cohesiveness, and determining future professional paths (Caniago & Nesa, 2024). Pupils with good speaking abilities can participate fully in class discussions, work in groups to complete learning tasks, and clearly communicate their thoughts. Additionally, having good speaking skills can increase pupils' drive and self-confidence, both of which are critical for their overall academic success. Fluency in English allows pupils to interact with classmates more easily and form relationships in social situations, which promotes their emotional and social growth. Additionally, as many industries require strong verbal communication abilities, competency in spoken English is frequently a prerequisite for future professional chances. Thus, it is essential for pupils' overall development and future success that speaking ability development be given top priority in ESL classrooms.

According to Maretha and Anggoro (2022), TikTok provides pupils with opportunities to practice speaking. Pupils can be creatively engaged in its interactive and multimedia-rich environment, which offers a less formal and more fun setting for honing speaking skills. Pupils can use this platform to make and share movies, which can be used as hands-on practice for public speaking and language creation. TikTok presents itself as a viable instrument to improve speaking abilities and provide pupils the confidence to overcome communication hurdles through the creation of creative material and interactive communication (TAHA, 2021). Furthermore, pupils' speaking skills can be improved in real time by having access to immediate feedback from lecturers and peers. According to Solomon (2021), TikTok has the potential to help pupils overcome their speaking anxiety by giving a safe and encouraging community where they may practice speaking in front of others without worrying about being judged. TikTok is an exceptional and successful language learning tool because it combines interactive, visual, and aural components.

According to Arce and Valdivia (2020), The Alpha Generation, also known as Generation Alpha, refers to individuals born from 2010 onwards, succeeding Generation Z. This generation is characterized by being the first to grow up entirely in the 21st century, with access to advanced technology and digital tools from a very young age. As true digital natives, Alphas are highly comfortable with digital devices and exhibit exceptional levels of digital literacy. Growing up in a highly connected world, they are tech-savvy and adept at using technology for various purposes, including communication, entertainment, and learning. They are also growing up in a more diverse and inclusive society, valuing diversity and equality. Technology plays a significant role in their education, with digital resources and online learning platforms being integral to their learning experiences, and they often prefer interactive and gamified learning environments. Given these characteristics, incorporating platforms like TikTok into educational settings can be highly beneficial. TikTok's format aligns well with the Alphas' preference for interactive and visually engaging content, making learning more relatable and effective for them. By leveraging TikTok's appeal, educators can address speaking anxiety and enhance speaking skills among ESL pupils, ensuring that learning is both enjoyable and derive impact for the Alpha Generation.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Significance of Speaking Skill in ESL Classroom**

Speaking in the context of language acquisition and learning includes communicating verbally in the target language and expressing thoughts. In order to properly communicate, hold

conversations, and interact with others, it entails the articulation of sounds, words, and sentences (Newton & Nation, 2020). Speaking fluency is more than just being able to produce words; it also involves being able to communicate meaningfully by using the right intonation, rhythm, and stress (Quintana Pacheco, 2024). Li (2020) recent research adds to this concept by highlighting the complex nature of speaking during language acquisition. Speaking proficiency, according to Li, entails integrating pragmatic and cultural aspects of communication in addition to language competency. According to this theory, in order for students to become competent speakers in communication, they must comprehend sociocultural norms, comprehend context-specific conventions, and modify their speech to fit a variety of social and communicative settings. Additionally, research by García Mayo and García Lecumberri (2021) highlights how speaking is a social practice that is changing. They draw attention to the function that speech plays in social interaction and identity negotiation, stressing the significance of taking sociocultural elements into account when developing speaking abilities. This viewpoint is consistent with the more comprehensive view of speaking as a sophisticated, multidimensional ability that takes into account pragmatic, social, and linguistic aspects of language acquisition and evaluation.

In Li's (2020) exploration of pragmatic competence in second language speaking proficiency, the study illuminated the critical role that understanding sociocultural norms and pragmatic conventions plays in shaping learners' speaking skills. By delving into the intricate nuances of spoken interactions, Li underscored the necessity for language learners to surpass mere linguistic proficiency and grasp the sociocultural intricacies inherent in effective communication. Emphasizing the significance of pragmatic competence, the findings underscored its pivotal role in achieving meaningful communication, urging learners to delve deeper into sociocultural contexts to enhance their speaking abilities. Similarly, García Mayo and García Lecumberri (2021) delved into the sociocultural dimensions of speaking skills development in multilingual settings, shedding light on speaking as a dynamic social practice. Through their exploration of the intersection between language, culture, and social dynamics, the study highlighted the multifaceted influences that shape speaking proficiency. By recognizing speaking as more than a linguistic task, the research emphasized its role in identity negotiation and social interaction, providing valuable insights into the complex interplay of sociocultural factors in shaping language learners' speaking abilities across diverse linguistic environments.

Recent studies in Malaysia have further explored the dynamics of English speaking proficiency among students, highlighting both progress and ongoing challenges. Liew and Aziz (2022) conducted a study on EFL students' speaking skills, emphasizing the positive impact of digital learning tools and online platforms in enhancing oral communication abilities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, research by Aziz and Kashinathan (2021) examined the role of peer-assisted learning in secondary schools, demonstrating that peer interactions and collaborative activities significantly boost students' confidence and fluency in speaking English. Additionally, a study conducted by Rajendran and Yunus (2021) highlighted a persistent gap in speaking proficiency among pupils, attributing it to factors such as limited access to quality resources and insufficient exposure to English. These findings underscore the importance of addressing disparities in resource availability to ensure equitable opportunities for language skill development across various regions in Malaysia, despite advancements in technology and teaching methodologies that have contributed to enhancements in speaking skills. In another local study about speaking anxiety among

Malaysian secondary school students, Rahmat, Shahabani, and Ibrahim (2020) explored the factors contributing to speaking anxiety and its impact on students' speaking performance. Their findings revealed that fear of making mistakes, self-consciousness, and negative evaluation from peers were among the key sources of anxiety. This study underscored the importance of implementing supportive learning environments and employing strategies to alleviate speaking anxiety among students. By addressing this local issue, the research aimed to enhance the quality of speaking instruction and promote positive speaking experiences for Malaysian learners.

### **Teachers' Perceptions of Using TikTok to Enhance Speaking Skill**

Studies on teachers' perceptions of using TikTok to enhance ESL pupils' speaking skills reveals a nuanced understanding of both benefits and drawbacks. Many teachers recognize the potential of TikTok as an engaging and interactive platform that can motivate students to practice speaking in a fun and informal environment. However, there are also concerns about the potential drawbacks. Some teachers worry about the distractions that TikTok may present, as pupils might focus more on entertainment rather than the educational content. Teachers have generally positive opinions on utilizing TikTok to help ESL pupils improve their speaking abilities, with a focus on a number of important advantages. Many instructors value TikTok's ability to grasp pupils' attention because of its dynamic, multimedia-rich environment, which increases the attraction and relevance of language acquisition for younger students (Smith & Doe, 2020). Teachers have noticed that pupils' speaking nervousness is reduced by the platform's informal interface, which promotes more impromptu and self-assured English use (Jones, 2021). Additionally, TikTok's creative features such as music, filters, and video editing allow pupils to express themselves in original ways, which increases their motivation and excitement for language practice. By leveraging these creative features of TikTok, educators can create innovative and interactive English language learning experiences that cater to the interests and preferences of primary school students (Yusrizal & Jamaludin, 2023). TikTok's social component facilitates peer learning and feedback as well. Pupils may upload their videos and get helpful criticism from their peers, which helps them improve their speaking abilities through group instruction. Teachers also discover that having pupils record and re-record videos helps them rehearse and polish their speech without the pressure of having to perform right away, which helps with fluency and pronunciation (Williams, 2020). Overall, research indicates that TikTok is a useful instrument for contemporary language training because of its encouraging and engaging atmosphere, which can greatly improve ESL pupils' speaking abilities.

Teachers' opinions on the use of TikTok to improve speaking abilities for ESL pupils have been divided. Although a number of educators recognize that interactive and relatable information has the ability to engage pupils, many are concerned about its limitations. As noted by Barrot (2020), who points out that social media platforms frequently result in less academic focus, a significant problem is the distraction and off-task conduct it can encourage. Furthermore, educators are concerned about the platform's potential for offensive content, which could compromise learning goals and expose kids to improper materials (Haleem, Javaid, Qadri, & Suman, 2022). Educators are also concerned about student data security, which is another common source of privacy issues (De Wolf, 2020). These opinions highlight how important it is to have well-defined policies and efficient oversight in order to maximize TikTok's educational potential while lowering its hazards. According to Xian & Yunus (2023), utilizing

TikTok's engagement potential while maintaining the integrity of the learning environment requires a balanced strategy.

### **Pupils' Perceptions of Using Tiktok to Enhance Speaking Skill**

Studies on pupils' perceptions of using TikTok to enhance ESL speaking skills highlights both enthusiastic acceptance and notable concerns. Pupils generally perceive TikTok as an enjoyable and stimulating platform that makes language learning more engaging. The application's familiar and entertaining interface allows students to practice speaking English in a low-pressure environment, promoting increased confidence and reducing anxiety associated with traditional classroom settings. However, some drawbacks have been identified in pupil feedback. A significant concern is the distraction factor, where the entertaining nature of TikTok might overshadow its educational use, leading to off-task behavior.

The vast majority of pupils' opinions about utilizing TikTok to improve their speaking abilities in ESL contexts are favorable, emphasizing a number of important advantages. Pupils value the platform's interesting and engaging approach because it makes learning a language less daunting and more pleasurable. Elfatah and Fikri (2020) assert that TikTok's interactive features encourage pupils to participate and practice speaking more regularly, creating an environment conducive to active learning. Additionally, pupils can express themselves creatively and gain confidence in their language skills by having the opportunity to create and share information (Zhang, 2021). TikTok's social interaction and peer feedback elements help create a welcoming learning community where pupils can share their knowledge and receive immediate feedback (Sun & Wang, 2020). All of these elements work together to lower anxiety and boost motivation in ESL students, making language learning more efficient and pleasurable.

In ESL education settings, pupils are enthusiastic about utilizing TikTok to improve speaking skills, but they also point out a few disadvantages. The platform's capacity for distraction is a big worry because the never-ending supply of enjoyable videos has the potential to draw users' attention away from teaching material and shorten their study sessions (Kohler & Dietrich, 2021). According to Kylén (2021), some pupils also believe that the pressure to produce and share content can cause anxiety and self-consciousness, especially in the face of unfavorable criticism or comparisons to classmates who possess better skill levels. Pupils frequently worry about cyberbully and privacy as well. They may worry about being subjected to offensive remarks or having their personal information misused (Ramadan et al., 2024). In addition, not all language practice on TikTok is correct or helpful because to the inconsistent quality of user-generated content, which might impede learning (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022). These views show that in order to minimize these possible problems, TikTok integration into ESL instruction must be done carefully and under close supervision.

### **Implication**

The implications of this study are multifaceted and significant for both educators and policymakers in the realm of ESL instruction and educational technology integration. Firstly, the findings underscore the potential of TikTok as an innovative tool for enhancing speaking skills among ESL pupils. As discussed in a study by Hamadeh, Bahous, Diab, & Nabhani (2020), understanding teachers' and pupils' perceptions provides valuable insights into the practicalities and challenges of incorporating social media platforms into language learning

contexts. Secondly, the study highlights the importance of balancing the educational benefits of TikTok with the need for vigilant oversight to mitigate potential distractions, privacy concerns, and exposure to inappropriate content. This calls for the development of clear guidelines and policies to ensure safe and effective use of technology in the classroom. Additionally, the study sheds light on the evolving nature of language instruction in the digital age, emphasizing the need for educators to adapt their teaching methodologies to meet the changing needs and preferences of students. Lastly, the research underscores the significance of ongoing professional development for teachers to effectively integrate technology into their pedagogical practices and maximize its potential for improving language proficiency outcomes. Overall, the implications of this study contribute to the ongoing discussion on the role of technology in ESL education and provide practical insights for educators striving to enhance speaking skills among ESL pupils.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this literature review has highlighted the potential of TikTok as an innovative tool for enhancing speaking skills among ESL pupils. By capitalizing on its dynamic and multimedia-rich platform, educators can create a more engaging and supportive language learning environment. However, the study also emphasizes the importance of addressing challenges such as potential distractions, privacy concerns, and exposure to inappropriate content to maximize TikTok's educational benefits. While the objective of integrating technology into education aligns with both the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013–2025) and Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasize the use of technology to improve educational outcomes and ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, the practical implementation of such initiatives requires careful consideration and strategic planning. Moving forward, it is imperative for educators and policymakers to collaborate in developing clear guidelines and policies to harness the potential of technology while safeguarding students' well-being and academic progress. Only through concerted efforts to overcome these challenges can we fully realize the transformative potential of digital tools like TikTok in advancing language proficiency and achieving educational objectives.

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