

# **EFL LEARNERS' ENGAGEMENT WHEN LEARNING ENGLISH READING USING TIKTOK**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
*Sarjana Pendidikan* in English Education**



**By:**

**SUVIANA**

**SN. 20522025**

**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING  
UIN K.H ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN**

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**2026**

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Dengan ini mohon agar skripsi tersebut segera dimunaqosahkan.  
Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatian bapak/Ibu, saya sampaikan terima kasih.  
Wassalamu'alaikum Wr.Wb.

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Judul **EFL LEARNERS' ENGAGEMENT WHEN LEARNING  
ENGLISH READING USING TIKTOK**

Has been examined and approved by the panel of examiners on  
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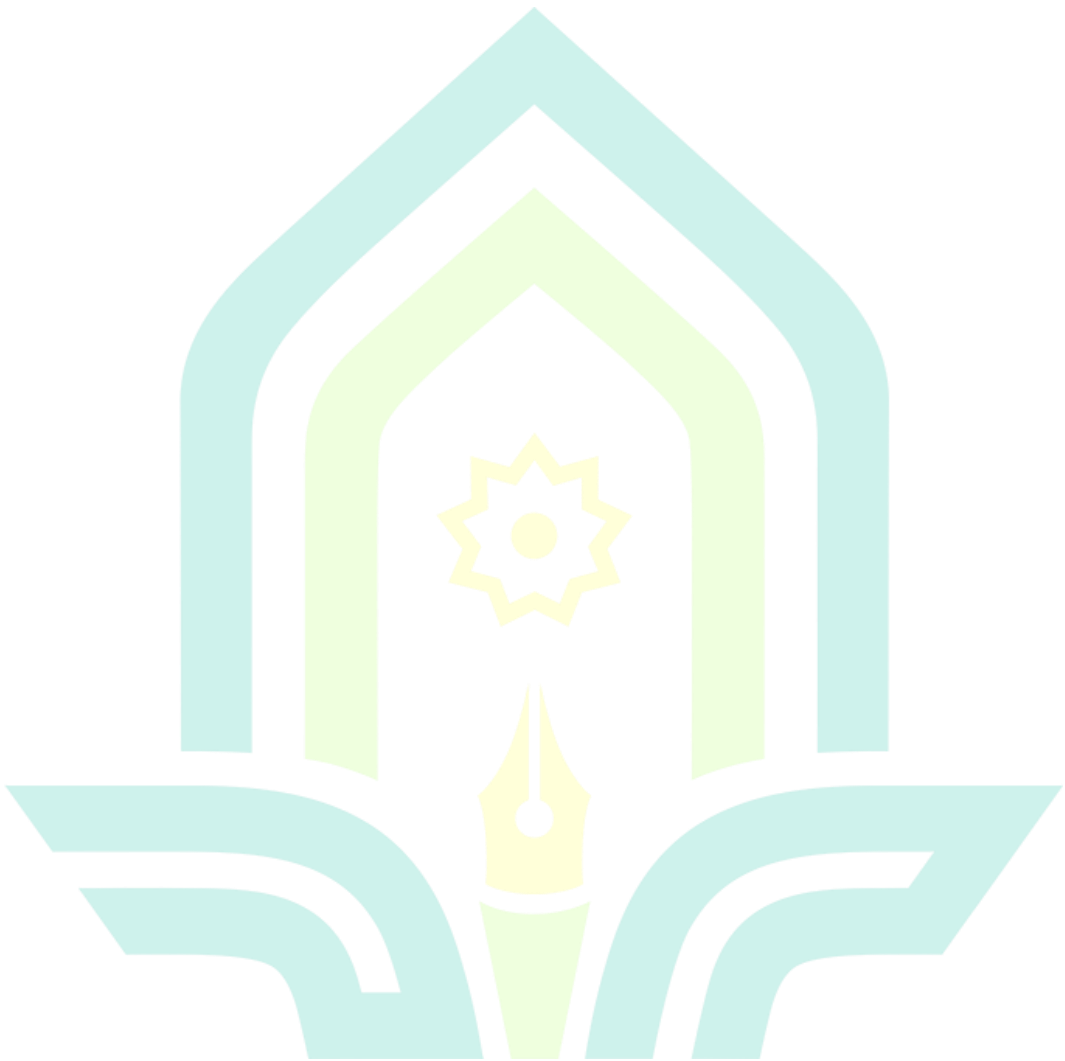
Alhamdulillahirabbil 'alamin, praise be to Allah SWT for His blessings and help, so I was able to finish this thesis. Peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad SAW. This thesis could not have been completed without the help, support, and prayers from many people. Therefore, the author likes to express heartfelt appreciation to those who have supported throughout this process.

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## MOTTO

*“The journey won't always be easy, but every step teaches something to those who keep going”*



## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman peserta didik EFL dalam keterlibatan perilaku (behavioral engagement), keterlibatan emosional (emotional engagement), dan keterlibatan kognitif (cognitive engagement) saat belajar membaca bahasa Inggris melalui TikTok. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan bagaimana peserta didik mengalami partisipasi, perasaan, dan proses berpikir ketika berinteraksi dengan konten membaca berbahasa Inggris di platform tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan dari mahasiswa EFL yang sering menggunakan TikTok untuk kegiatan membaca bahasa Inggris melalui wawancara dan jurnal refleksi.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembelajar mengalami keterlibatan perilaku yang positif melalui partisipasi aktif, seperti menonton video, membaca subtitle, dan menggunakan berbagai fitur pada platform. Pembelajar juga mengalami keterlibatan emosional dalam bentuk minat, kesenangan, motivasi, dan kepercayaan diri. Selain itu, keterlibatan kognitif tercermin dalam penggunaan strategi membaca, pembelajaran kosakata, pemantauan pemahaman, dan pembelajaran yang diatur secara mandiri (self-regulated learning). Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa TikTok mendukung keterlibatan pembelajar EFL dalam membaca bahasa Inggris dengan mendorong partisipasi aktif, emosi yang positif, dan strategi belajar yang efektif di luar kelas.

**Kata kunci:** keterlibatan perilaku, keterlibatan emosional, keterlibatan kognitif, membaca bahasa Inggris, TikTok, peserta didik EFL



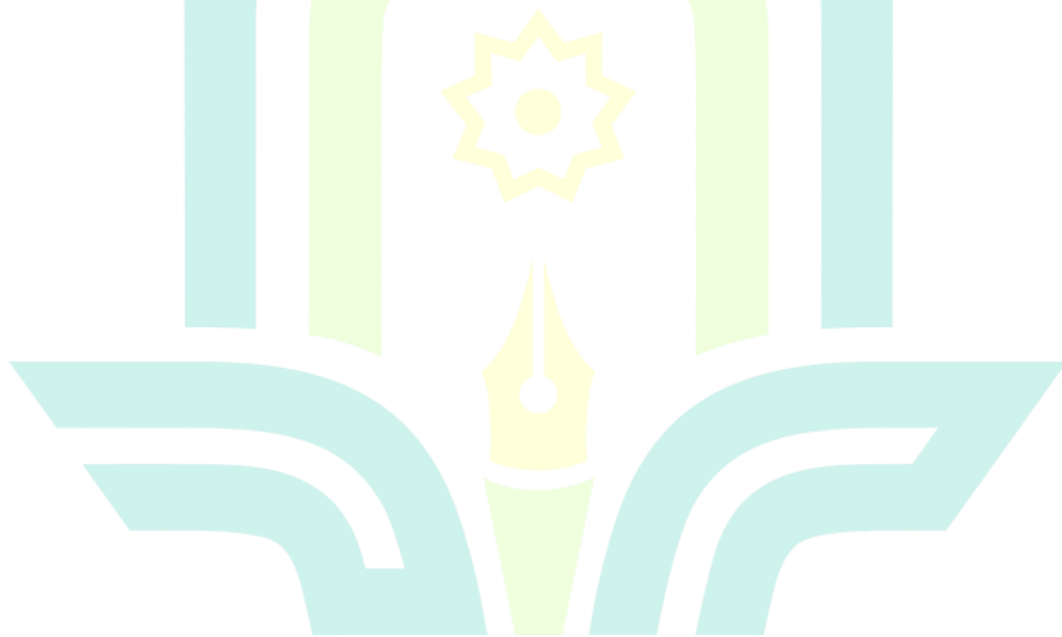


## ABSTRACT

This study explores EFL learners' experiences of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in learning English reading through TikTok. It aims to describe how learners experience participation, feelings, and thinking processes while interacting with English reading content on the platform. Using a qualitative research approach, information was collected from EFL students who often used TikTok for English reading exercises through interviews and reflection journals.

The findings show that learners experienced positive behavioral engagement through active participation such as watching videos, reading subtitles, and using platform features. Learners also experienced emotional engagement in the form of interest, enjoyment, motivation, and confidence. In addition, cognitive engagement was reflected in the use of reading strategies, vocabulary learning, comprehension monitoring, and self regulated learning. Overall, the study concludes that TikTok supports EFL learners' English reading engagement by encouraging active participation, positive emotions, and effective learning strategies outside the classroom.

**Keywords:** *behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, English reading, TikTok, EFL learners.*



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The researcher realizes that this thesis is far from perfect and may still contain limitations. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are greatly appreciated for future improvement. Finally, the writer sincerely hopes that this thesis will be beneficial for readers, researchers, and all those who are interested in

English language learning, particularly in the use of social media as a learning medium.

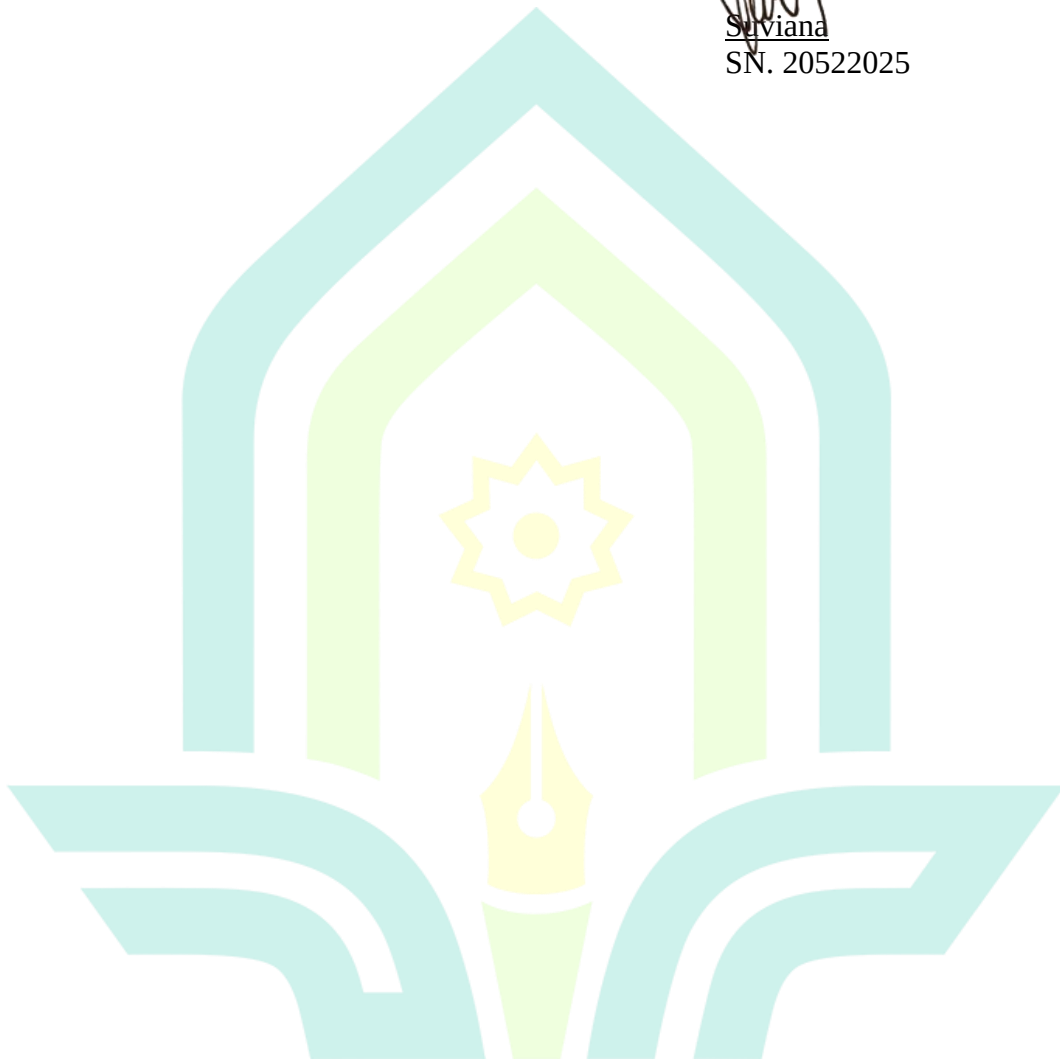
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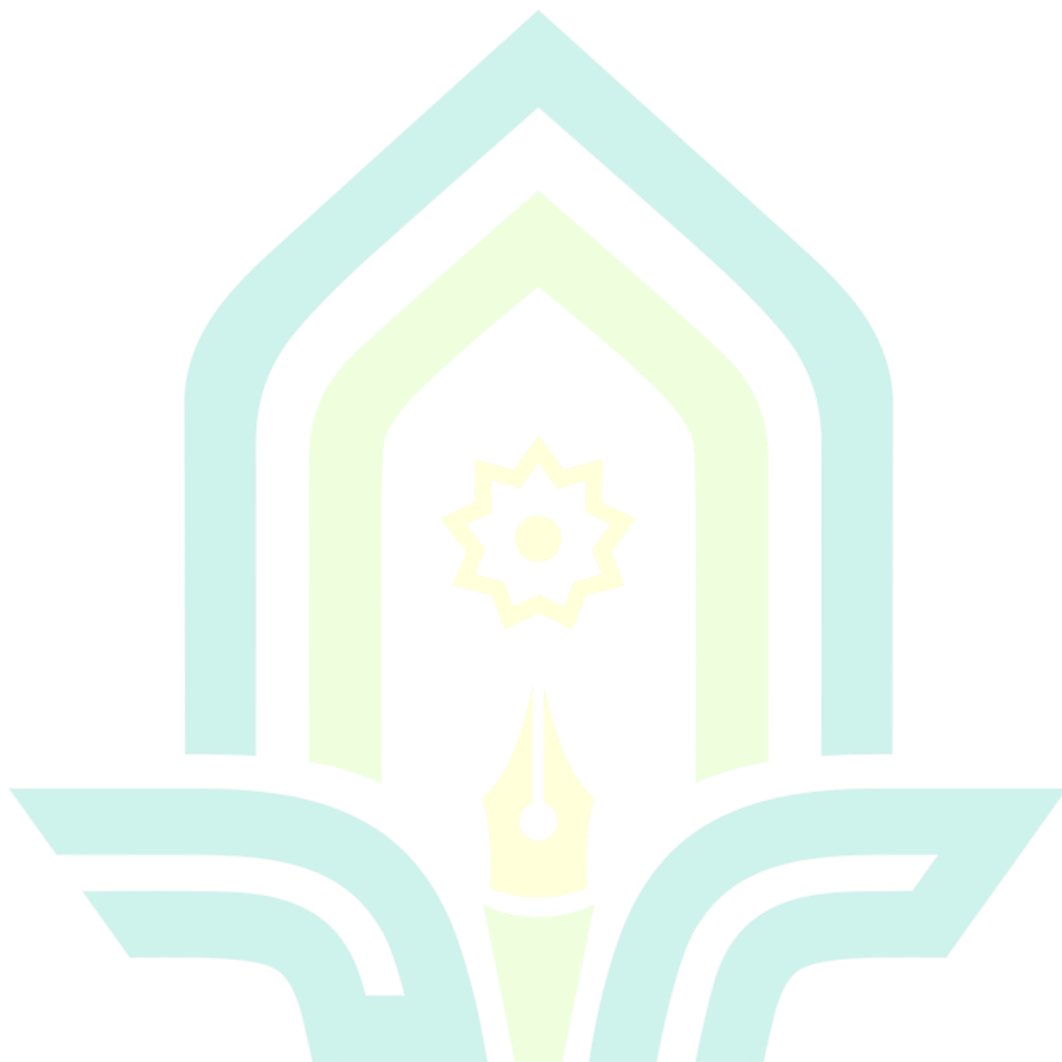
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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In this digital era, technology has changed many aspects of human life, including how people study, work, and interact with one another. One of the most visible changes can be seen in reading practices, where traditional printed texts are increasingly replaced or complemented by digital texts accessed through smartphones and social media platforms. Social media is no longer only a tool for communication but also a space for socialising and learning (Wolf, 2018). Various social media platforms, including Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, are commonly used for both entertainment and educational purposes.

Among these platforms, TikTok is one of the platforms that has drawn the most attention because of its popularity and unique features (Bahri et al., 2022). TikTok allows users to create short form videos with music, filters, and others. These features make learning feel fun and less stressful. For English as a Foreign Language learners, TikTok offers an enjoyable way to practice reading and helps maintain motivation and curiosity toward new vocabulary and sentence patterns (Susanto & Suparmi, 2024).

However, the use of TikTok as a reading medium also raises important academic concerns. While its multimodal features may attract learners' attention, they may also lead to distractions and short term reading practices. Learners may focus more on audio, visuals, or entertainment aspects than

on the written text itself. In fast moving videos, written texts can be easily skipped or only partially read, which may limit deep comprehension and sustained cognitive engagement. This situation begs the question of whether engaging with TikTok reading material actually promotes reading engagement or if it only promotes short term reading of English texts. Therefore, reading engagement in digital environments like TikTok cannot be assumed to be automatically positive and needs to be examined more critically.

Reading engagement is not merely about recognizing words or understanding basic meanings. McNamara (2007) explains that it involves using strategies, monitoring one's own understanding, and making meaning from the text as a whole. From this perspective, digital environments such as TikTok have the potential to both support and hinder reading engagement. On one hand, TikTok provides real time, interactive, and authentic digital texts that allow learners to engage with English beyond formal classroom settings (Fokatea & Widagsa, 2024). On the other hand, its fast moving and entertainment oriented content may reduce learners' opportunity to apply effective reading strategies.

Engagement with TikTok reading content is also closely related to the development of digital literacy. Digital literacy involves not only the ability to use digital tools, but also the capacity to understand, evaluate, and think critically about digital texts that combine written, visual, and audio elements (Lankshear & Knobel, 2013). TikTok reading content represents real world



digital texts that require learners to process information quickly while maintaining attention and comprehension, making it a relevant context for examining reading engagement in digital environments.

Although TikTok is widely used by EFL learners as a source of English exposure, its effectiveness as a medium for reading engagement remains unclear. The short duration, fast pacing, and strong dominance of visual and audio elements may encourage surface level interaction rather than deep reading engagement. While several studies have reported positive effects of TikTok on vocabulary and motivation, limited attention has been given to how learners actually engage with written texts on TikTok, particularly in terms of behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Therefore, reading engagement in TikTok based digital texts cannot be assumed to be automatically positive and requires closer qualitative examination.

Previous research on TikTok in EFL settings has mostly concentrated on learning objectives, vocabulary growth, and speaking abilities. Few research has examined the behavioural, emotional, and cognitive involvement of EFL learners through their lived experiences when it comes to TikTok reading content. By offering a qualitative investigation of how EFL learners engage with TikTok reading material as part of their casual digital reading practices, this study fills this knowledge gap.

The preresearch findings indicate that TikTok is a social media platform frequently used by EFL learners in their daily lives. All participants reported accessing TikTok every day, mainly for entertainment but also to gain

information and learning English through English related or educational accounts. Reading activities on TikTok are often conducted in casual situations, such as scrolling before sleeping or during free time, and involve texts that are perceived as simpler and more engaging than academic materials. However, the strong presence of visuals, music, and audio sometimes shifts learners' attention away from the written text. These conditions highlight the importance of examining how EFL learners perceive TikTok reading content as digital texts and how their interactions with such content reflect their behavioural, emotional, and cognitive reading engagement, including both its potential benefits and limitations in the context of English language learning

## **1.2 Problem Identification**

Based on the explanation of the background above, the researcher formulates the problem identification as follows:

1. TikTok is widely used by EFL learners for entertainment and English learning, but its role in supporting English reading engagement remains unclear.
2. The multimodal and fast moving style of TikTok may encourage learners to focus more on visual elements than on written texts.
3. Previous studies have mainly focused on vocabulary learning, speaking skills, and learning outcomes, while limited attention has been given to learners' behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement in English reading through TikTok.

4. There is still limited understanding of how EFL learners experience behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement when learning English reading through TikTok.

### **1.3 Problem Restriction**

According to the above problem identifications, the problem must be limited in order to keep the research focused and avoid being overly general. The behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement of EFL students using TikTok to acquire English reading is the main emphasis of this study. Only students that use TikTok reading material as part of their English learning activities are included in the study. It investigates how students engage with English reading content on TikTok, engage in reading activities, feel motivation and emotions, and use cognitive techniques. Only student experiences gathered from semi structured interviews and reflection notebooks are included in the study.

### **1.4 Formulation of the Problems**

Based on the background of the study, this research focuses on the following questions:

1. How do EFL learners experience behavioural engagement when learning English reading through TikTok?
2. How do EFL learners experience emotional engagement when learning English reading through TikTok?
3. How do EFL learners experience cognitive engagement when learning English reading through TikTok?

### 1.5 Aims of the Study

Based on the research questions, the aims of this study are:

1. To explore how EFL learners experience behavioural engagement when learning English reading through TikTok.
2. To explore how EFL learners experience emotional engagement when learning English reading through TikTok.
3. To explore how EFL learners experience cognitive engagement when learning English reading through TikTok.

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

1. **Theoretical Significance:** this study can add knowledge about reading engagement, especially in the context of digital texts like TikTok. It helps to understand how behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement appear when learners interact with modern learning media.
2. **Empirical Significance:** this study provides actual facts and findings about learners' experiences in using TikTok reading content. It can show how learners actually engage in reading through this platform, which can support future research in related subjects.
3. **Practical Significance:** this study can be useful for teachers and learners. For teachers, it can give ideas on how to use TikTok as a teaching tool to boost kids' interest in reading. For learners, it can motivate learners to participate more actively in reading activities and help them become more conscious of their learning process.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

The findings indicate that EFL learners showed positive behavioral engagement while learning English reading through TikTok. Their engagement developed gradually through repeated exposure to English reading content on their For You Page. They actively watched videos, read subtitles, replayed content, and used features such as liking, saving, and following educational accounts. These activities became part of their daily routines and reflected consistent participation in English reading.

The findings also indicate that EFL learners experienced positive emotional engagement while learning English reading through TikTok. Their interest, enjoyment, motivation, and confidence grew naturally through continuous exposure to English content and its attractive features. They felt happy, proud, and inspired when they understood texts, completed challenges, or noticed their progress. These positive emotions reduced anxiety and encouraged them to keep reading even when they faced difficulties.

In addition, the findings show that EFL learners demonstrated positive cognitive engagement while learning English reading through TikTok. They used various reading strategies, monitored their understanding, and connected new information with prior knowledge. They also developed vocabulary through repeated exposure and applied different strategies to

review and remember new words. Furthermore, they managed their own learning by selecting strategies, reviewing content, and reflecting on progress.

Overall, the study concludes that TikTok supports EFL learners' English reading engagement in behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. It provides an interactive and flexible learning environment that promotes active participation, positive emotions, and independent learning development.

## **5.2 Suggestion**

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions can be made as follows.

### **1. For EFL Learners**

EFL learners are suggest to use TikTok not only as a platform for entertainment but also as a learning resource to improve their English reading skills. They should actively engage with English reading content, apply reading strategies, and use TikTok features such as saving videos or following educational accounts to support continuous learning. At the same time, learners should manage their screen time wisely and stay focused on educational content to avoid distractions.

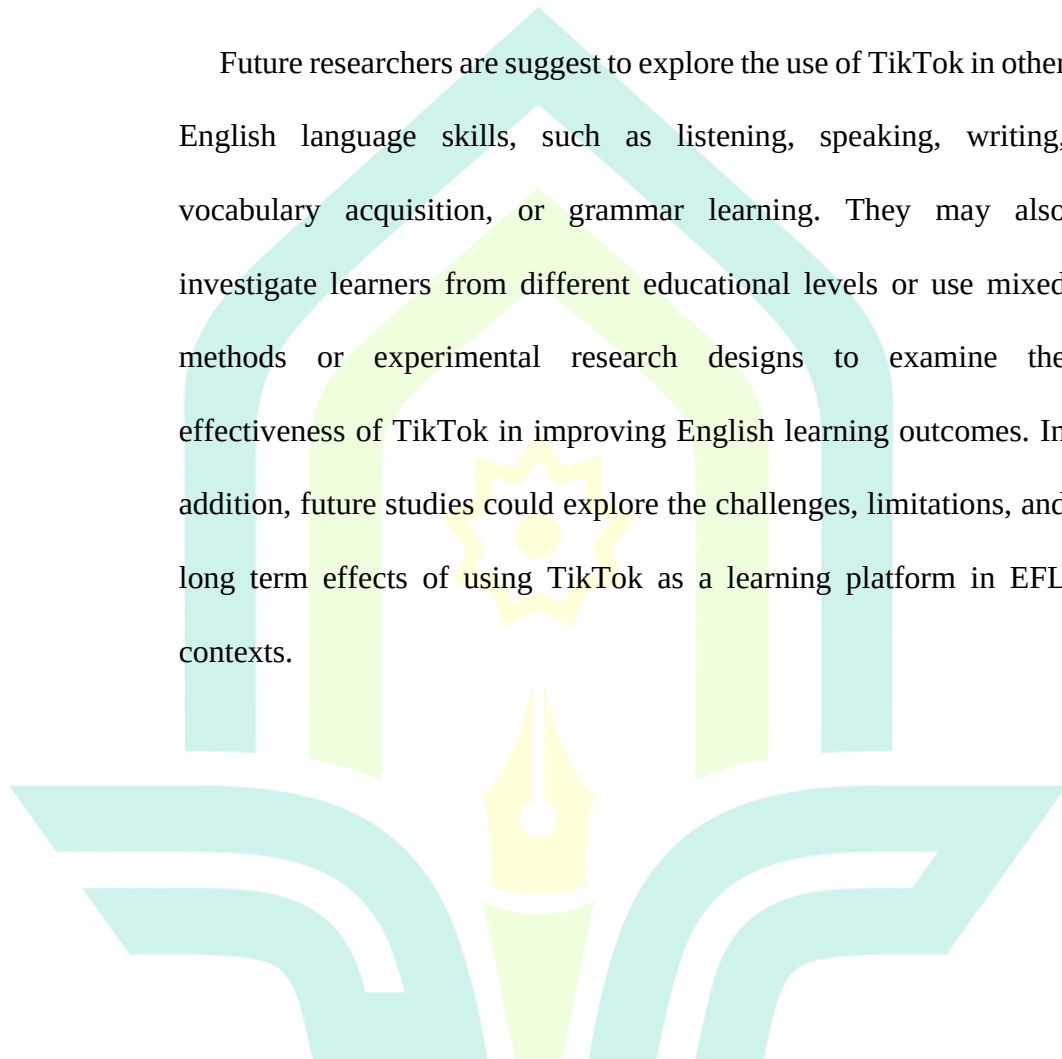
### **2. For Teacher**

English teachers are suggest to integrate TikTok into English reading instruction as a supplementary learning medium. Teachers can recommend educational TikTok accounts, select appropriate reading

content, and design learning activities that encourage students to reflect on, discuss, and analyze English texts found on the platform. This may help increase students' engagement and motivation in learning English reading.

### **3. For Further Researcher**

Future researchers are suggest to explore the use of TikTok in other English language skills, such as listening, speaking, writing, vocabulary acquisition, or grammar learning. They may also investigate learners from different educational levels or use mixed methods or experimental research designs to examine the effectiveness of TikTok in improving English learning outcomes. In addition, future studies could explore the challenges, limitations, and long term effects of using TikTok as a learning platform in EFL contexts.



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