

**EXPLORING INCIDENTAL LEARNING THROUGH TIKTOK
VIDEOS TO ASSIST EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS'
SPEAKING SKILL**

A THESIS

**Submitted to Fulfill One of the Requirements
for *Sarjana Pendidikan* Degree in English Education**



**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI
K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN**

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Dengan ini menyatakan bahwa skripsi yang berjudul “**EXPLORING INCIDENTAL LEARNING THROUGH TIKTOK VIDEOS TO ASSIST EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ SPEAKING SKILL**” ini benar-benar karya saya sendiri, bukan jiplakan dari karya orang lain *atau pengutipan yang melanggar etika keilmuan yang berlaku, baik sebagian atau seluruhnya*. Pendapat atau temuan orang lain yang terdapat dalam skripsi ini dikutip berdasarkan kode etik ilmiah. Apabila skripsi ini terbukti ditemukan pelanggaran terhadap etika keilmuan, maka saya secara pribadi bersedia menerima sanksi hukum yang dijatuhkan. Demikian pernyataan ini, saya buat sebenar-benarnya.

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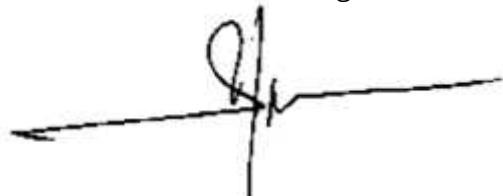
Saya menilai bahwa naskah skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan kepada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan untuk diujikan dalam sidang munaqasyah.

Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatiannya, disampaikan terimakasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr.Wb.

Pekalongan, 19 Juni 2026

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Jika Allah menolong kamu, maka tidak ada yang dapat mengalahkan kamu, tetapi jika Allah membiarkan kamu (tidak menolongmu), maka siapa lagi yang dapat menolongmu setelah itu? Karena itu, hendaklah orang-orang mukmin bertawakal kepada Allah. '(QS. Ali 'Imran: 160)

"It's always darkest before the dawn"



ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan video pendek di TikTok sebagai media pembelajaran insidental untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara mahasiswa perguruan tinggi yang mempelajari Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Pembelajaran insidental, berdasarkan teori Kerka (2000), mengacu pada pembelajaran yang tidak direncanakan atau tidak disengaja yang terjadi melalui paparan terhadap pengalaman yang bermakna, bukan melalui pengajaran formal. Dalam konteks ini, TikTok tidak berfungsi sebagai alat pengajaran, melainkan sebagai lingkungan media kehidupan nyata yang menarik, di mana mahasiswa dapat memperoleh keterampilan bahasa secara tidak sengaja melalui paparan berulang terhadap konten berbahasa Inggris. Penelitian kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana keterampilan berbicara mahasiswa dapat berkembang melalui keterlibatan alami tersebut, tanpa pengajaran eksplisit atau tugas terstruktur. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan jurnal refleksi diri mahasiswa, sehingga peneliti dapat menangkap perspektif, pengalaman, dan peningkatan yang dirasakan oleh para pembelajar. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat mengungkap pola-pola perolehan kosakata, peningkatan pengucapan, dan peningkatan kefasihan yang dihasilkan dari paparan siswa yang konsisten terhadap konten TikTok berbahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman tentang bagaimana konsumsi media digital informal dapat mendukung perkembangan bahasa dan menawarkan implikasi praktis untuk mengintegrasikan kebiasaan media sehari-hari siswa ke dalam strategi pembelajaran bahasa.

Kata kunci: Pembelajaran insidental, Berbicara, TikTok

ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of short videos on TikTok as a medium for incidental learning to improve EFL university students' speaking ability. Incidental learning based on Kerka's (2000) theory, refers to unplanned or unintentional learning that occurs through exposure to meaningful experiences rather than formal instruction. In this context, TikTok serves not as a teaching tool but as an engaging, real life media environment where students may acquire language skills incidentally through repeated exposure to English content. This qualitative study aims to identify how students' speaking skills can develop through such natural engagement, without explicit instruction or structured tasks. Data were collected through semi structured interviews and student self reflection journals, allowing researchers to capture learners' perspectives, experiences, and perceived improvements. The findings are expected to reveal patterns of vocabulary acquisition, improved pronunciation, and enhanced fluency resulting from students' consistent exposure to English speaking TikTok content. This study contributes to the understanding of how informal digital media consumption can support language development and offers practical implications for integrating students' everyday media habits into language learning strategies.

Keywords: Incidental learning, Speaking, TikTok



PREFACE

Praises and gratefulness are sent to Allah SWT who has poured His grace and His love and bestowed me guidance, health, wealth and patience so that the writing process of my research proposal research entitled “ **Exploring Incidental Learning Through Tiktok Videos To Assist Efl University Students’ Speaking Skill**” can be completed. It is submitted to English Education Department, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan to fulfill one the Requirement for Sarjana Pendidikan Degree at English Education Department. This proposed study can be accomplished because of many supports from several people. Therefore, in this occasion I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

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The Writer

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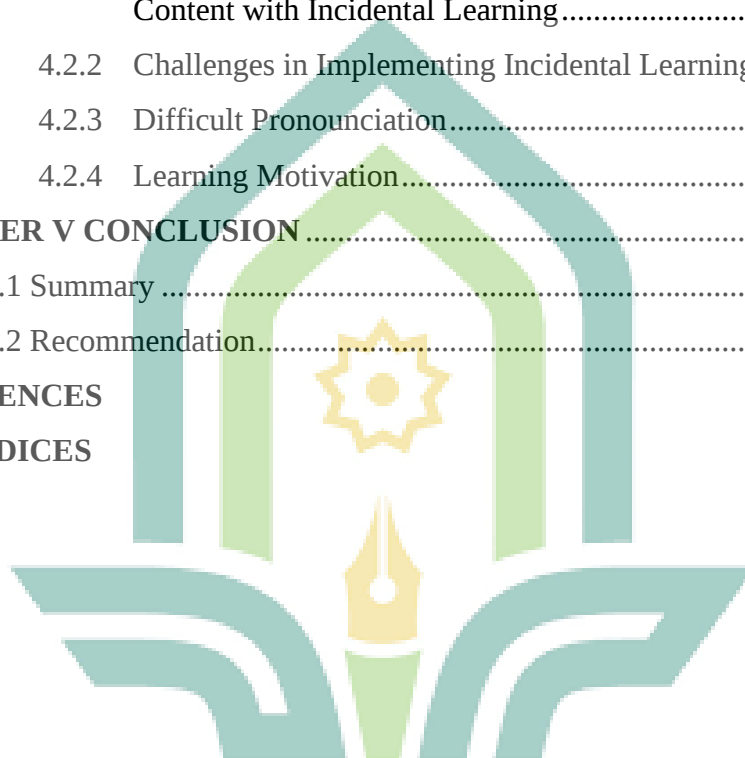


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Of The Study

In today's world of technology, social media websites have become a key part of teens' daily lives, changing not only how they talk to each other but also how they gain knowledge. Specifically, TikTok stands out as one of the strongest and most common sites, especially for young people today. Its short, fast, creative, and simple videos attract young viewers, causing them to spend lots of time looking at many kinds of content (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). This habit creates new chances for educators to study casual ways of learning, especially when learning a new language, where real and meaningful contact is very important.

One of these chances has to do with learning without trying, which is learning that happens without a clear goal or planned teaching. Kerka (2000) explains learning without trying as unplanned learning that happens naturally as a result of people's normal lives, often in interesting and real situations that touch their feelings. Learning without trying is especially important in language learning because students can learn new words, ways of speaking, features of talk, and ways to express themselves just by often being around environments full of language in a way that matters (Hulstijn, 2003; Benson, 2011). Online media, such as TikTok, can act as this kind of place by giving real language input through actual speaking, stories, talks, and written words.

The TikTok algorithm delivers a personalized stream of video content, some of which is in English or accompanied by English subtitles, expressions, and dialogue. Such content can serve as authentic input, in line with Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982), which states that language learning occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input in a low pressure environment. As noted by Thorne (2003), digital communication tools can facilitate language learning by providing culturally relevant and contextually appropriate discourse that reflects real life interactions. This supports the development of communicative competence, which includes fluency, accuracy, and practical language use (Canale & Swain, 1980). Integrating this natural exposure into language learning aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes meaningful communication and interaction over isolated linguistic practice (Littlewood, 1981).

Speaking ability is one of the most important skills in English language learning because it reflects learners' ability to use language for real communication. Brown (2004) states that speaking is an interactive process that involves producing, receiving, and processing spoken language. Based on preliminary observation conducted by the researcher toward students of the English Education Department, many EFL learners still experience difficulties in speaking English fluently and confidently. For EFL learners, speaking is often considered the most challenging skill due to limited exposure to authentic English use, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes. Even though university students majoring in English education have learned English for

many years, many of them still experience difficulties in speaking fluently and confidently. In Indonesia, school lessons often focus more on grammar rules, understanding written work, and doing homework, so students don't get many chances to actually talk and communicate with each other (Richards, 2006; Dörnyei, 2001). Therefore, students usually don't improve their speaking skills very fast, even after they have studied English for a long time.

This study aims to investigate how incidental learning processes can improve EFL university students' speaking skills through short videos on TikTok. Using qualitative methods, including semi structured interviews and students' self reflection journals, this study seeks to reveal how informal exposure through TikTok affects students' speaking skills development, their engagement, and their perceptions of the learning process. These findings are expected to provide educators with insights on how to integrate students' digital media habits into English language teaching in a more relevant, meaningful, and impactful way.

1.2 Formulation Of The Problem

Based on the above background, the researcher formulated the problem formulation/research questions as follows:

1. How does incidental learning process assist EFL University students' speaking ability through TikTok?
2. What are the challenges in implementing incidental learning as a process of developing EFL students' English speaking ability through Tiktok content?

1.3 Aims Of The Study

The purpose of this study is to find out about:

1. To Explore how incidental learning process develop EFL University students' speaking ability through TikTok.
2. To describe what are the challenges of learning as a process of developing EFL students' English speaking ability through TikTok content.

1.4 Operational Definition

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms used in this study, the researcher provides some definitions related to the study as follows:

1. TikTok : TikTok is a social media platform that enables users to create, share, and watch short-form videos. In this study, TikTok serves as the platform through which participants are exposed to English-language content, such as conversations, podcasts, storytelling, and daily expressions, that may facilitate incidental learning (Montag et al., 2021).
2. Incidental Learning : Incidental Learning refers to the process of acquiring knowledge unintentionally while engaging in another primary activity rather than through deliberate learning. In this study, it refers to participants' unintentional

acquisition of English speaking-related knowledge, including pronunciation, expressions, vocabulary, and speaking patterns, while watching English-language TikTok videos (Kerka, 2000).

3. Speaking Ability : Speaking Ability refers to the ability to communicate ideas, opinions, and feelings orally in English by using appropriate pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and expressions. In this study, speaking ability is explored through participants' experiences of developing these aspects while engaging with English-language TikTok content (Brown, 2004; Harmer, 2007).
4. EFL University Students : EFL University Students refer to undergraduate students who learn English as a foreign language in an English Education program. In this study, they are students who actively use TikTok and frequently watch English-language content as part of their daily activities (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).
5. Short Videos : Short Videos refer to brief English-language videos available on TikTok that contain

authentic communication or educational content, such as conversations, podcasts, storytelling, pronunciation practice, and daily expressions. These videos serve as the primary source of English exposure for participants during the incidental learning process (Kaye, Chen, & Zeng, 2022).

1.5 Significancy Of The Study

1. **Theoretical Significance:** This study applies Kerka's (2000), theory and supports the theory as it relates to student's engagement. this study also expands the application of Kerka's theory from general incidental learning into the area of speaking ability development in digital learning environments. Therefore, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how social media exposure can facilitate incidental learning and support English speaking development among EFL learners.
2. **Empirical Significance:** The findings of this research can provide evidence on how social media platforms, particularly TikTok, support students' speaking development in real life contexts. It is expected to serve as a reference for future researchers interested in digital mediabased language learning and incidental learning in EFL contexts.
3. **Practical Significance:** This study can help English lecturers and educators design more engaging and student centered learning strategies by

integrating students' digital habits, such as watching TikTok videos, into learning activities. It also encourages the use of authentic and informal learning resources to support students' speaking ability beyond traditional classroom instruction.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that English-language content on TikTok plays an important role in developing EFL students' English speaking ability through incidental learning. Through repeated exposure to authentic English content, the participants were able to improve various aspects of their speaking ability, including pronunciation, vocabulary use, speaking expressions, and confidence in communication. However, the participants also encountered several challenges while engaging with English-language TikTok content.

Based on the findings and discussion, the study indicates that EFL students at a university in Central java engaged in incidental learning while using TikTok primarily for entertainment purposes. Consistent with Kerka's (2000) theory, learning occurred unintentionally as a by-pr'oduct of participants' everyday activities on social media. The findings demonstrated that the participants experienced several indicators of incidental learning, namely changes in behaviour, increased awareness, adaptation, problem-solving skills, and retention of knowledge. These indicators were reflected in the participants' increased engagement with English-language content, awareness of pronunciation and speaking patterns, ability to apply newly learned expressions in communication, strategies for understanding unfamiliar language, and ability to retain English expressions encountered on TikTok.

The findings also revealed several challenges experienced by the participants while engaging in incidental learning through TikTok. These challenges included distraction, difficult pronunciation, and learning motivation. Participants reported being distracted by entertaining content on the For You Page, encountering difficulties understanding fast speech and unfamiliar pronunciation, and experiencing fluctuations in motivation that affected their engagement with educational content. Despite these challenges, the participants continued to interact with English-language TikTok content and developed personal strategies to maintain their learning process.

This study demonstrates that TikTok can serve as an effective platform for supporting the development of EFL students' English speaking ability through incidental learning. Although learners encounter various challenges during the learning process, continuous exposure to authentic English-language content provides valuable opportunities for improving speaking skills in a natural and engaging way.

5.2 Recommendation

The researcher acknowledges several limitations of this study. This research focused only on how English-language TikTok content contributes to the development of EFL students' English speaking ability through incidental learning and the challenges encountered during the learning process. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all EFL learners because they were obtained from a limited number of participants within a specific context.

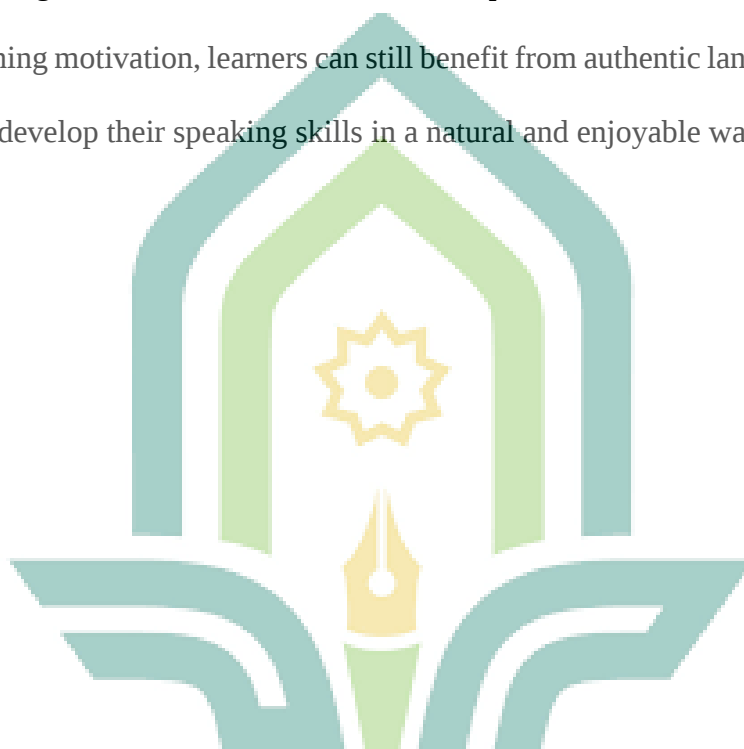
For EFL students, TikTok can be utilized as an alternative medium for improving English speaking ability. Although learning through TikTok occurs incidentally and may not provide immediate improvements, the platform offers authentic language input, flexible access, and engaging content that can support speaking development. Through continuous exposure to English-language videos, students can become more familiar with pronunciation, expressions, speaking styles, and natural communication patterns used by native speakers. Therefore, students are encouraged to use TikTok not only for entertainment purposes but also as a source of meaningful language exposure.

For English lecturers and educators, the findings of this study suggest that social media platforms such as TikTok can be considered as supplementary learning resources to support students' speaking development. Since students frequently interact with social media in their daily lives, integrating authentic digital content into language learning may increase learners' engagement and provide additional opportunities for exposure to spoken English outside the classroom.

This study is also expected to serve as a reference for future researchers interested in incidental learning, social media, and English language learning. Future studies may involve a larger number of participants, longer observation periods, or different educational contexts to obtain more comprehensive findings. In addition, future researchers may investigate other language skills such as listening, vocabulary, pronunciation, or speaking fluency through TikTok and other social media platforms. The researcher hopes that future

studies will further explore the potential of social media as a medium for language learning and provide broader insights into how incidental learning contributes to English language development.

Overall, TikTok can serve as a valuable platform for supporting EFL students' English speaking ability through incidental learning. Despite challenges such as distraction, difficult pronunciation, and fluctuations in learning motivation, learners can still benefit from authentic language exposure and develop their speaking skills in a natural and enjoyable way.



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