



## Enhancing Speaking Proficiency through TikTok Duet Interactions among Eighth Grade at SMP Negeri 4 Padangsimpuan

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore an innovative approach to improve the language skills of eighth grade students using the duet feature of the TikTok application. This research applies a quantitative methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of using video conversations on TikTok in educational settings. The study involved 30 students from SMP Negeri 4 Padangsimpuan as the research sample. Data collection was conducted by providing students with a conversational text containing over 20 vocabulary items, followed by documenting their performance scores. These scores were then subjected to statistical analysis to evaluate the impact of the TikTok duet feature on the students' speaking ability. The results showed a significant fluctuation in the students' speaking ability, with an initial average pre-test score of 59.83 dropping to 34.16 in the first post-test. This decrease suggested a temporary decline in speaking skills. However, subsequent educational interventions, including debriefing and targeted speaking practice, resulted in significant improvement, as evidenced by an average score of 82.5 on the second post-test. Analysis revealed a significant increase of 37.89% in speaking ability from the pre-test to the second post-test, despite the initial decline.

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## A. INTRODUCTION

The ability to communicate effectively is central to students' academic and personal growth, distinguishing those who actively engage in dialogue from those who remain passive. This research stems from the observation that, despite the challenges posed by limited vocabulary and the dominance of local dialects, digital platforms, particularly TikTok, offer a novel avenue for language development.

TikTok's rapid rise as a leading social media platform, highlighted by Sensor Tower's report of 33 million downloads in a single quarter, underscores its potential as an educational tool. The application's duet feature, which allows users to create collaborative content, has been posited as a means to improve English speaking skills, a hypothesis supported by (Serda et al., 2022) regarding the importance of listening in the development of speaking skills. The research aims to explore this potential, focusing on fluency as a key component of speaking skills, given the app's ability to engage students in meaningful, interactive learning experiences.

The research questions focus on the effectiveness of TikTok duets in improving speaking skills and the degree of improvement in fluency. The hypothesis, based on (Martono, 2010) definition of a hypothesis as a "tentative answer" to be tested, is that TikTok duets will have a positive impact on students' speaking skills. This study seeks to provide empirical evidence for this hypothesis and to contribute to the broader discourse on the integration of social media in educational settings to promote language acquisition and fluency.

## B. LITERATUR REVIEW

### 1. Speaking

Speaking encompasses various activities such as interactive, semi-interactive and non-interactive speaking, each with its own characteristics and contexts, as outlined by (Dr. Sri Katoningsih, n.d.). Effective speaking is characterized by clarity, appropriate intonation, and the use of communicative language that is accessible to the audience.

Speaking is multifaceted, involving the speaker, the message, the language used, and the listener, and is influenced by physical, psychological, neurological, and linguistic factors (Siregar, 2021). (Wasid & Sunendar, 2011) define speaking skill as the ability to articulate sounds to convey messages, emphasizing its complexity and the integration of different language skills.

The purpose of speaking goes beyond mere communication and serves to entertain, inform, stimulate, persuade, or inspire listeners. This can be achieved through various forms of speaking, such as entertaining speeches that engage and amuse the audience, informative speeches that emphasize clarity and accuracy of information, stimulating speeches that aim to motivate, persuasive speeches that aim to change attitudes or beliefs, and moving speeches that aim to inspire action or evoke strong emotional responses (Supriyana, 2020).

The challenges of mastering speaking skills, especially in a second language such as English, include overcoming fear and embarrassment, which can significantly hinder learning and fluency. Mastering speaking involves not only technical aspects such as pronunciation and grammar, but also psychological factors such as self-confidence and willingness to practice.

Speaking encompasses a range of forms and is governed by key principles that facilitate effective communication. Monologic speaking involves a single individual presenting ideas to an audience, typically in a public setting, while dialogic speaking involves an interactive exchange between two or more participants and includes discussions, negotiations, and debates (Dr. Sri Katoningsih, n.d.). The essence of effective speaking lies in the clarity of the language, the universality of the terms used, and the speaker's ability to engage and inform the audience. Speaking can be categorized based on the situation (formal vs. informal), the intended purpose (e.g., to inform, entertain, or persuade), the method and technique of delivery (e.g., impromptu vs. scripted), and the size of the audience (ranging from interpersonal settings to large group addresses). These distinctions highlight the adaptability required in speaking practices to suit different contexts and objectives, and emphasize the need for speakers to tailor their approach to ensure clear and effective communication.

Effective communication in English encompasses several crucial components, including pronunciation, which is vital for clear understanding and minimizing misunderstandings; grammar, the structural foundation that dictates sentence formation and clarity of ideas; vocabulary, which enhances precision and expressiveness in conveying thoughts; fluency, important for smooth and engaging speech; and comprehension, essential for interpreting and integrating spoken language. Each element plays a significant role in the overall ability to communicate

effectively, making it important to focus on these areas during language learning to ensure comprehensive skill development.

## 2. Difficulties in Speaking English

Difficulties in speaking English are a common challenge for learners, particularly given the language's status as an international lingua franca. Among the core skills of language learning—speaking, reading, listening, and grammar—speaking is often perceived as crucial due to its direct impact on communication. English proficiency tests like TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) highlight the importance of speaking alongside other language skills. While TOEFL assesses reading, structure, and listening, IELTS includes a speaking component, underscoring its significance in language proficiency evaluation.

The primary difficulty in speaking English stems from a lack of practice, leading to issues like fluency, the habit of mentally translating from the native language to English before speaking, and a limited vocabulary. These challenges can hinder learners' ability to express themselves effectively and confidently in English. Regular practice, immersion in English-speaking environments, and expanding vocabulary through reading and listening can help overcome these barriers, enhancing learners' speaking proficiency.

## 3. The Nature of Social Media

Social media is a multifaceted digital platform that enables a wide range of social activities among users, including communication, interaction, and the sharing of content such as text, photos, and videos. Eisenberg describes social media as an online platform for interaction, collaboration, and the creation or sharing of digital content, emphasizing its role beyond just popular networks like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram (Pakuningjati, 2015). Social media, in essence, facilitates the sharing of ideas, content, thoughts, and relationships online, transforming the way people connect and engage with each other (Scoot in Pakuningjati, 2015).

Kerpen views social media as a network of interactions involving images, videos, writings, and relationships, encompassing both individual and group engagements (Pakuningjati, 2015). Van Dijk highlights social media's role in enhancing user existence and facilitating collaborative activities (Nasrullah, 2015), while (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) define it as internet-based applications that leverage Web 2.0 technology for content exchange. Mayfield interprets social media

as a human-centric platform where ordinary individuals can collaborate, share, and build communities, highlighting the personal aspect and rapid information exchange as key growth drivers (Makhmudah, n.d.).

TikTok, a prominent social media platform, exemplifies these principles by offering a space for users to create, edit, and share short video clips with various effects and musical accompaniments. Launched in September 2016, TikTok has evolved into a global phenomenon, appealing to a wide demographic with its easy-to-use interface for producing engaging content. The application not only allows for the creation of brief videos but has also expanded to accommodate longer clips, up to 60 seconds, broadening its utility and appeal. Through platforms like TikTok, social media continues to redefine the landscape of digital interaction and content sharing, reflecting the dynamic nature of online communities and personal expression.

#### 4. TikTok App as Media Learning in English Speaking Skill

The TikTok app, with its diverse features, has emerged as a potential medium for learning, particularly for improving English language skills. The learning process, as outlined by (Santayasa, 2007), involves essential components such as the communicator (teacher), learning materials, media, communicant (student), and learning objectives. Learning media, as defined by (Pannen, 2001), are systematic tools or materials used in the educational process by both teachers and students, indicating the integral role of media in learning.

TikTok's features, including voice recording, video recording, adding background music, editing, sharing, and duetting with others, provide a unique platform that can be aligned with educational goals. These features not only meet the learning needs of students by providing an engaging and interactive environment, but also resonate with the characteristics of millennial learners who are deeply integrated with digital technologies and social media platforms.

The benefits of the application extend beyond entertainment, providing opportunities for physical activity through dancing, fostering creativity by allowing users to produce diverse content, promoting mental health through self-expression and social interaction, lifting spirits through personal and shared entertainment, and serving as a source of inspiration and laughter for a wider audience. Given these attributes, TikTok can be considered an effective learning tool, particularly for promoting English language skills by encouraging practice, creativity and engagement in a context that is familiar and appealing to today's learners.

### C. RESEARCH METHOD

The research used a quantitative approach to investigate the improvement of English language proficiency through the duet feature of the TikTok app among students at SMP Negeri 4 Padangsidimpuan. Quantitative research, as described by (Jaya, 2020), relies on statistical procedures to analyze the relationships between variables within a structured theoretical framework. The study was conducted from October 15 to November 21, 2022, targeting the eighth grade student population of 352, divided into 11 classes. Due to the homogeneous nature of this group, a cluster random sampling method was used to select a sample of 30 students from each class (VIII-10) for a more manageable study size (Johar, 2008).

Data collection was carried out using tests as the primary instrument, which were considered to be the most appropriate for assessing students' mastery of vocabulary pronunciation and speaking fluency. The tests consisted of pre-tests and post-tests involving conversational reading, with the aim of evaluating the improvement in students' speaking skills before and after the intervention using TikTok. Each student's ability to correctly pronounce the conversational texts was scored, with a maximum score of 100 across two tests.

The Classroom Action Research (CAR) method was used, following Kurt Lewin's model, which includes four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This model facilitated a structured approach to identifying and addressing classroom challenges related to speaking skills. The research was conducted over two cycles to ensure comprehensive analysis and resolution of the identified issues.

Data analysis included the calculation of mean scores, the percentage of the class meeting a predetermined criterion, and the percentage improvement from pretest to posttest. This analytical process was supported by statistical formulas to quantify the extent of improvement in students' speaking skills through the innovative use of TikTok as a learning medium. The research aimed to contribute to the understanding of social media applications such as TikTok as effective tools in language education, particularly in improving the speaking skills of young learners.

### D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 1. The Result of Research

##### a. The pre-observation and pre-test

The pre-observation and pre-test phases of the research at SMP Negeri 4 Padangsidimpuan provided valuable insights into the current state of English

speaking skills among eighth-grade students and the potential for integrating TikTok as a learning tool. The positive response from the curriculum and English teachers paved the way for this innovative study. The initial observation revealed a lack of TikTok application usage in the English curriculum, mainly due to the school's policy against mobile phones. Despite this, the research was permitted, and class VIII-10 was selected as the sample group.

The pre-test aimed to assess the students' baseline speaking proficiency, particularly in pronunciation, using a conversational text. The results showed a wide range of scores, with the highest being 80 and the lowest 30, leading to an average score of 59.83. This indicated a considerable variation in students' speaking abilities, with only 11 out of 30 students scoring above the minimum completeness criteria (KKM), highlighting the need for targeted intervention to improve speaking skills.

The histogram of the pre-test scores further illustrated the distribution of students' proficiency levels, with a significant portion scoring below the KKM, emphasizing the challenges faced by the majority in achieving proficiency in spoken English. The calculation of 36.66% of students passing the KKM underscored the urgency for effective teaching strategies to enhance speaking skills.

This initial phase set the stage for the Classroom Action Research (CAR) to employ the TikTok app's duet feature as a novel approach to teaching English speaking skills, aiming to engage students more effectively and improve their proficiency.

#### b. Finding on Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

In Cycle 1 of the research, the planning phase involved strategizing the action to be taken in the classroom and preparing the necessary materials. Although the initial observation and pretest showed limited student proficiency, the action phase was initiated on November 15, 2022, where conversational texts were distributed and students' pronunciation was closely monitored. The interaction was designed to actively engage students by allowing them to inquire about difficult words or phrases, although the number of inquiries was limited to encourage focused learning.

Observations during this cycle revealed that while the session was conducive, there was a noticeable gap in the students' understanding of the material, particularly in the use of the TikTok duet feature for English learning. Despite the well-structured session, the reflection phase concluded that many students still

struggled with pronunciation, resulting in only 36.66% exceeding the KKM based on the conversational text reading test.

Cycle 2 was developed in response to the need for further improvement in students' speaking skills. The planning phase aimed at simplifying the material to ensure that it was accessible and pronounceable for the students. The action phase involved a more interactive approach, using English conversation videos and encouraging students to practice pronunciation through repetition and creating TikTok duets. This phase also included sharing video links for additional practice outside of the classroom, emphasizing correct pronunciation examples.

Observations in Cycle 2 indicated a more engaged and responsive student body, with a marked improvement in understanding and application of lesson content. The reflective phase of this cycle showed a slight increase in student proficiency, with 40% achieving the KKM on the conversational text test. This was a positive trend, suggesting that the interactive and multimedia approach, particularly through TikTok, could potentially improve students' speaking skills, albeit gradually.

These findings underscore the potential of incorporating social media tools such as TikTok into educational settings to improve language skills. The incremental progress observed over the cycles underscores the importance of adaptive and student-centered teaching methods that match the interests and competencies of today's learners.

#### c. The Result of Implementation The Classroom Action Research (CAR)

The implementation of Classroom Action Research (CAR) yielded insightful results, which are divided into two parts: the results of Post-Test 1 and Post-Test 2.

In Post-Test Cycle 1, following the integration of the duet version feature on the TikTok application as an instructional tool to improve the speaking skills of eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Padangsidempuan during the school year 2022 - 2023, the results showed a range of performance levels. The highest score in Cycle 1 was 80, while the lowest score was 25. The assessment method used in this phase was video conversations on the TikTok application, where the research material consisted of long videos. The data were compiled in Table III, which shows the students' speaking pronunciation scores.

The mean score (M) for the students' speaking performance in post-test cycle 1 was calculated using the formula  $M = (\sum Y)/N$ , resulting in an average score of 34.16.



This score indicated a decrease in the students' pronunciation skills compared to their pre-test scores, which had an average of 59.83.

To further analyze the distribution of scores and the percentage of students who met the minimum criteria, Table IV was created. The table showed that only 2 students (6.6%) passed the MCC, highlighting the lack of overall improvement in students' speaking skills during Post-Test Cycle 1.

The percentage difference between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Cycle 1 scores was also calculated and showed a significant decrease of -42.90%. This result did not meet the criteria for success, which required a 70% improvement in the average score from Pre-Test to Post-Test Cycle 1.

The results of Post-Test Cycle 1 indicated a decrease in students' pronunciation skills when taught using the duet version feature of the TikTok application. Only a small percentage of students met the KKM and the overall performance did not meet the criteria for a successful outcome. Further action and adjustments may be needed in the next phase of the research.

In the post-test cycle 2 of the study, the researcher continued to evaluate the students' performance after implementing the instructional interventions in cycle 1. In this phase, the students' post-test scores were calculated, which showed a range from the lowest score of 60 to the highest score of 95. The assessment tool used for the post-test cycle 2 consisted of a video-text test in English containing a total of 20 conversational text excerpts, with each question having a value of 5. The results are summarized in Table V, which shows the students' speaking pronunciation scores.

The mean score (M) for the students' speaking performance in post-test cycle 2 was calculated using the formula  $M = (\sum Y)/N$ , resulting in a mean score of 82.5. This indicated that, on average, the students were performing at a relatively high level in their speaking skills.

Further analysis was conducted to determine the distribution of scores and the percentage of students achieving different levels of scores. Table VI was generated to illustrate this distribution, which showed that 83.33% of the students met the minimum pass criteria for this cycle.

Based on the results, it was determined that 22 students successfully met the MCC, which represents a success rate of 83.33% in meeting the minimum completion

criteria. The average post-test score of 82.5 in Cycle 2 categorized the students' speaking skills as proficient.

To measure the percentage increase in the students' vocabulary test scores between the pre-test and the post-test in Cycle 2, the researcher used a formula. The results showed an improvement of 37.89%, indicating that the instructional interventions had a positive impact on the students' vocabulary skills.

The study demonstrated the success of the Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach as 83.33% of the students met the minimum completeness criteria in Post-Test Cycle 2. This result led to the conclusion that the CAR cycle was successfully completed and the objectives of the study were met.

## 2. The Discussion

The researcher has gained valuable findings from the data analysis conducted in this study. First, based on hypothesis testing and effect size calculations, the use of TikTok's duet version feature emerges as an instructional technique with a significant impact on the development of English speaking skills. Although it was not originally designed for this purpose, it can be effectively integrated into educational settings, and students' enthusiasm for learning speaking skills through TikTok's duet version is increased. Although students may initially find TikTok's lessons intimidating, they gradually become actively engaged in the learning process, encouraged by the duet version's feature that encourages creativity and participation both in and out of the classroom.

The alignment of these findings with the perspective of (Feng & Chen, 2009) underscores the emotional dimension of the learning process and its significant influence on students' perceptions and attitudes toward their educational experiences. In this study, a significant majority of participants expressed positive feelings such as liking, enjoying, and feeling proud of their English learning journey facilitated by TikTok. This highlights the potential of innovative tools like TikTok to evoke positive emotions and foster engagement in the educational process.

In addition, (Novitasari & Addinna, 2022)'s research corroborates the current study's findings, indicating that students have a positive perception of TikTok as a platform for learning English. They agree that using TikTok not only improves their skills, but also provides an enjoyable and stress-free learning experience. These shared positive views further validate TikTok's potential as an effective and engaging tool for learning English.

Furthermore, the hypothesis that there would be no significant improvement in the speaking skills of students exposed to the duet version of TikTok is refuted by the results of the data analysis. The interpretation of the data shows that prior to the implementation of Collaborative Action Research (CAR) and the duet version in speaking skills instruction, the students scored an average of 59.83 on the Speaking Test, which was below the teacher's minimum standard of 75.

To evaluate the effectiveness of CAR, post-tests are administered after each cycle. The average score on the Cycle 1 post-test is 34.16, also below the teacher's criteria for success. Despite a decrease in the average score from the pre-test, CAR did not meet its intended goals based on these percentages. In contrast, the average score on the Post-Test Cycle 2 improved significantly to 82.5, indicating a remarkable improvement in student performance.

This research focuses primarily on the use of the duet version of TikTok as a tool to improve speaking skills, a critical component of language proficiency that facilitates effective communication. Consequently, the study examines the statistical effectiveness of TikTok's duet version as a valuable resource for improving vocabulary and speaking skills.

After careful analysis of the research data, it is clear that the use of TikTok's Duet Version feature has a positive impact on students' speaking skills. By incorporating this feature, students are able to engage more deeply in the teaching and learning process, leading to increased participation both inside and outside of the classroom and contributing to an overall improvement in their speaking skills.

Furthermore, the alignment between this statement and the perspective of (Pratiwi et al., 2021) underscores a consensus regarding the usefulness of TikTok as a medium for learning English pronunciation. Both sources emphasize the multiple benefits and effectiveness of TikTok in supporting students and teachers in their teaching and learning efforts, particularly in the context of contemporary 21st century education. This convergence of views underscores the growing recognition of TikTok as a valuable tool in the field of language education and pronunciation improvement.

The limitations of this study include the limited sample size, which may reduce the representativeness of the results, and the lack of control factors such as prior experience and students' initial level of English proficiency.

Therefore, a suggestion for future research is to consider using a larger and more diverse sample to increase the external validity of the research findings. Future research could also include relevant control factors to better understand the impact of TikTok use on English language learning. In addition, qualitative research such as interviews with students and direct observation can provide deeper insights into students' learning experiences with TikTok.

The implication for English language teaching is that TikTok has the potential to be an effective learning tool for improving English language skills and increasing students' motivation to learn. English teachers can use this platform to create engaging and effective lessons.

## E. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates the significant impact of using the Duet version of the TikTok application to improve students' pronunciation in the speaking skill area. Initially, the students' vocabulary scores were significantly low, with an average score of 59.83, indicating a low level of proficiency. However, the introduction of the TikTok duet feature into the learning process led to a remarkable improvement, with post-test scores in the first and second cycles showing a dramatic increase to 34.16 and 82.5, respectively. This shift not only highlights the effectiveness of the TikTok Duet feature in improving pronunciation, but also indicates a transition in students' vocabulary scores from poor to significantly better. In addition, the study shows that at the end of the cycle, 37.89% of Grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 4 Padangsidempuan successfully met the minimum completeness criteria (KKM) for the 2022-2023 academic year, highlighting the potential of innovative digital tools such as TikTok in educational settings to improve learning outcomes.

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