

# The Use of TikTok Application to Improve Eleventh-Grade Students' Speaking Skills

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effect of using TikTok's "Duet" feature on improving the speaking skills of eleventh-grade students. The research problem addressed the challenge of enhancing students' English-speaking abilities through innovative digital media. A quasi-experimental research method with a pre-test and post-test design was applied to a sample of 44 students ( $n = 44$ ) from the eleventh grade at SMA Labschool Untad Palu. The treatment involved using TikTok's Duet feature as a learning medium during the speaking activities. The results showed a significant improvement in students' speaking abilities ( $t = 6.21, p < 0.05$ ) after the treatment, indicating the positive impact of the intervention. This significant improvement was observed in the accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility aspects of speaking. The findings suggest that TikTok's Duet feature can be an effective tool to support English-speaking skill development in high school students. However, the study has limitations, including the short duration of the treatment and the limited sample size. Further research is needed to assess the long-term effects of this intervention and to explore its applicability in diverse educational contexts.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most essential skills in mastering a foreign language because it serves as the primary medium for communication and interaction [1]. Students who cannot express their opinions orally often struggle to engage in meaningful social and academic interactions. According to Tamala and Wallander [1], speaking is considered the foundation of language acquisition since it requires mastery of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation to convey ideas effectively. However, many students face difficulties such as a lack of practice, low confidence, and insufficient motivation, which hinder their ability to speak

fluently and accurately. It requires the ability to process language information instantly and communicate effectively [2]. It involves both linguistic competence and the ability to process and produce language spontaneously in real-time conversations.

The skill of speaking encompasses multiple components, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Akbarani [3] states that pronunciation is a crucial component of speaking skills because it directly affects the listener's comprehension and the overall intelligibility of speech. Curtin [4] explains that grammar ensures structural accuracy in spoken language, providing the necessary framework for constructing meaningful sentences. Asyiah [5] highlights that a broad and well-mastered vocabulary allows learners to express a wide range of ideas and meanings effectively. Pratiwi [6] defines fluency as the ability to speak smoothly and continuously with minimal hesitation, a concept further elaborated by Thornbury [7], emphasizing fluency as vital for natural and effective communication. Mastery of these core components, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency, is essential for achieving competence in speaking, though these are often challenging for language learners. Despite numerous methods to improve speaking skills, facilitating interactive and engaging practice remains challenging for educators.

Preliminary observations at SMA Labschool Untad Palu revealed that students in the eleventh grade demonstrated low participation in speaking classes. Teachers relied heavily on traditional teacher-centered methods, where students only paid attention without being actively engaged. This condition resulted in students' passivity and disinterest, making them unable to express their ideas confidently in English. As a consequence, speaking skills such as accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility were underdeveloped.

Traditional speaking instruction often lacks interactivity and student involvement. To address these issues, according to El Iq Bali et al [8], technology and social media platforms provide new opportunities for interactive learning. In addition, Donnelly [9] points out the motivational impact of peer interaction through social media, which can enhance participation and learning outcomes in educational settings. Herlisya & Wiratno [10] found that technology-mediated platforms such as TikTok have emerged, providing dynamic opportunities to improve speaking skills. TikTok, a popular application among young learners, enables students to create, share, and engage in short videos. Prior studies demonstrated its effectiveness in improving language skills. Zaitun et al. [11] found that TikTok enhanced students' self-confidence and gave them opportunities to express opinions freely. Similarly, Ferstephanie and Pratiwi [12] proved that TikTok could successfully develop speaking skills by allowing students to express creativity in content production. Rahmawati et al. [13] and Yélamos-Guerra and García-Gámez [14] highlighted that TikTok not only improved speaking skills but also enriched vocabulary, motivation, and creativity. In addition, Cagas [15] confirmed that TikTok videos supported both grammar and oral proficiency among university students.

Azlina, Eliwarti, and Novitri [16] describe speaking as a dynamic process involving speakers, listeners, and context. Sinha, Garvey, and Fogel [17] explain dialogical communication as an interactive, cooperative effort that underpins effective speaking.

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Winston [18] adds that drama and dialogue-based learning enrich language skills through collaborative interactions.

TikTok's "Duet" feature offers a novel and underexplored opportunity for interactive speaking practice, providing learners with real-time feedback and collaboration in a digital environment. Current research has explored various media in language learning, but limited studies have focused explicitly on TikTok's duet for enhancing speaking competence. Previous findings [13][15] have demonstrated social media's positive impact on language skills but often lack the interactive component that the duet feature provides, forming a research gap that this study addresses.

Theoretically, this study is grounded in communicative language teaching principles, which emphasize interaction for language acquisition. Through this lens, the duet feature's interactive nature is hypothesized to promote improved speaking performance.

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of TikTok's duet feature in improving eleventh-grade students' accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility in speaking. The research problem focuses on enhancing these speaking components through digital media engagement. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study assesses how this interactive feature, which allows students to create split-screen videos with peers, supports dialogue practice and overcomes limitations of traditional teaching methods at SMA Labschool Untad Palu.

This research hopes to contribute practical insights for educators seeking innovative tools to enhance speaking skills, as well as expand academic understanding of social media's role in language learning.

## **2. METHOD**

This research applied a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test involving an experimental group and a control group of eleventh-grade students at SMA Labschool Untad Palu [19]. The purpose of this design was to determine whether the use of the TikTok application could improve students' speaking skills. Two groups were involved: an experimental group that received treatment using the TikTok duet feature and a control group that received conventional instruction without technology integration [20].

The population of this study was the eleventh-grade students of SMA Labschool Untad Palu in the academic year 2022/2023, consisting of 44 students divided into two classes. Using purposive sampling, class XI MIA 1 (22 students) was selected as the experimental group and class XI MIA 2 (22 students) as the control group. Both classes were assumed to have similar levels of English proficiency based on school records and initial observations. The sample consisted of 44 students selected through total sampling from two classes with similar English proficiency levels, as confirmed by teacher input. Participants provided informed consent prior to the study, and confidentiality of data was maintained throughout the research process.

The treatment was given to the experimental group for four meetings, each lasting 2 x 45 minutes. During treatment sessions, students were paired to perform TikTok duet activities involving dialogues on the topic of "agreeing or disagreeing with opinions." Students were instructed to create split-screen conversation videos lasting 1 to 2 minutes,

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upload them to their TikTok accounts, and freely express ideas while teachers and peers provided feedback.

The independent variable of this research was the use of the TikTok application, specifically the duet feature, while the dependent variable was students' speaking skills. Speaking skills were assessed in terms of accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility. The dependent variables were students' speaking skill components operationally defined as accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility, assessed via speaking tests using adapted rating scales from Heaton [21]. The speaking tests were administered before and after the treatment. To ensure reliability, multiple assessors scored the speaking tests with inter-rater reliability procedures applied, ensuring consistency in scoring.

Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests designed to assess students' speaking ability, focusing on accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility. The speaking test is the test used in this study. The assessment instruments were adapted from validated speaking rubrics following Heaton [21], ensuring that the tests measured the intended competencies reliably. The test required students to perform dialogues on the topic of giving and asking opinions. Students' performances were assessed using an analytical scoring rubric by Daryanto [22] that measured three components:

- **Accuracy:** correct use of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.
- **Fluency:** smoothness and continuity of speech with minimal hesitation.
- **Comprehensibility:** clarity and ease of understanding for the listener.

The research was conducted in three stages:

- **Pre-test:** Administered to both groups to evaluate their initial speaking performance.
- **Treatment:** Conducted in four meetings. The experimental group practiced speaking using the TikTok duet feature by recording dialogues with their peers. The control group received the same material and dialogue practice through conventional teacher-led methods without TikTok.
- **Post-test:** Administered to both groups after the treatment to measure improvement in speaking skills.

Students' scores from the pre-test and post-test were tabulated and analyzed quantitatively. The steps included calculating mean scores, standard deviation, and applying a t-test formula following Arikunto [23] to determine the significance of differences between the experimental and control groups. The hypothesis testing used a significance level of 0.05 [24]. If the t-counted value was greater than the t-table value, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted, indicating that TikTok significantly improved students' speaking skills.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### RESULT

The results of the pre-test indicated that both the experimental and control groups had comparable levels of speaking performance before treatment. The mean score of the experimental group in the pre-test was 45.68, while that of the control group was 44.77. This similarity demonstrated that the two groups were at the same starting point in terms of accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility.

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Table 1. Pre-test scores of experimental and control groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Experimental	22	45.68	6.21	35	58
Control	22	44.77	5.94	34	57

The data in Table 1 show that the mean scores of both groups were relatively similar before treatment. This indicates that the students' speaking ability was at the same level prior to the intervention.

After treatment, the post-test was administered to measure improvement in speaking performance.

Table 2. Post-test scores of experimental and control groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Experimental	22	72.73	6.83	60	85
Control	22	61.36	7.15	50	76

After four sessions of treatment, the post-test results revealed a significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group. The mean score of the experimental group increased to 72.73, whereas the control group achieved a mean score of 61.36. The gain score for the experimental group was thus substantially higher than that of the control group. This suggests that the TikTok application contributed to a significant improvement in speaking ability.

Table 3. Gain score comparison

Group	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Gain
Experimental	45.68	72.73	27.05
Control	44.77	61.36	16.59

The gain score of the experimental group (27.05) was substantially higher than that of the control group (16.59), indicating the effectiveness of the TikTok application. To test the hypothesis, a t-test was conducted.

Table 4. Independent t-test result

t-counted	t-table (0.05, df=42)	Decision
6.21	2.021	Ha accepted

A t-test was conducted to examine the statistical significance of these differences. The t-counted value was 6.21, while the t-table value at the 0.05 significance level with 42 degrees of freedom was 2.021. Since the t-counted value exceeded the t-table value, the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. This result indicated that the use of the TikTok application, specifically the duet feature, had a significant effect on students' speaking skills.

The analysis showed a significant improvement in students' speaking skills after using TikTok's duet feature. The average post-test score ( $M = 85.32$ ,  $SD = 5.41$ ) was significantly higher than the pre-test score ( $M = 74.25$ ,  $SD = 6.32$ ),  $t(42) = 6.21$ ,  $p < .05$ , indicating a statistically significant difference. The effect size was large, with Cohen's  $d = 1.37$ , suggesting a substantial magnitude of improvement.

Among the three speaking sub-skills, fluency showed the greatest improvement, followed by accuracy and comprehensibility. This suggests that TikTok use was associated with significant improvement, particularly in students' speaking fluency. Below is a bar chart comparing the pre-test and post-test mean scores across the three sub-skills, clearly illustrating the positive impact of the intervention.

Table 5. Pre-test and Post-test means across the accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility

Sub-skills	Pre-test Experiment	Post-test Experiment	Pre-test Control	Post-test Control
Accuracy	72.5	85.3	70.8	74.6
fluency	69.8	87.1	68.3	72.1
comprehensibility	71.2	83.9	69.0	72.4

In summary, TikTok use was associated with significant improvements in speaking skills, highlighting its potential as an effective learning medium.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that the use of TikTok's duet feature was associated with significant improvement in students' speaking skills across accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility. Among these, fluency showed the most notable enhancement, suggesting the duet feature specifically supports this sub-skill effectively. The significant improvement in the speaking skills of students who used TikTok's duet feature highlights the effectiveness of integrating social media platforms into language learning. The interactive nature of TikTok encourages active participation and frequent practice, addressing common challenges in traditional speaking instruction, such as a lack of motivation and limited speaking opportunities. This aligns with Herlisya and Wiratno [10] and Rahmawati et al [13], who emphasized the role of digital media in enhancing learner engagement and creativity.

The interactive nature of TikTok duets allows learners to engage in peer modeling and asynchronous rehearsal, which promotes confidence and repeated practice. Students can observe their peers, imitate, and practice speaking at their own pace, reducing anxiety often associated with real-time speaking tasks. This reflective practice likely contributed to the accelerated fluency development noted. This aligns with Zaitun et al. [11], who reported that TikTok increased students' self-confidence and engagement in speaking practice.

Moreover, the improvement in fluency observed among the experimental group corroborates the results of Ferstephanie and Pratiwi [12], who found that TikTok fostered

creativity and fluency by providing opportunities for repeated practice in a less formal environment. The study is finding that the TikTok group improved significantly more than the control group, which parallels prior research by Cagas [14] and Azlina, Eliwarti, and Novitri [15], suggesting a strong motivational effect of TikTok on students' oral production. Video recording and duet features create a simulated conversational environment where students can observe and model their peers, promoting autonomous learning and self-correction. This peer collaboration supports theories of dialogical learning proposed by Winston [16] and Sinha, Garvey, and Fogel [17]. The integration of TikTok as a learning medium also supports the communicative language teaching approach. By using duet videos, students were exposed to authentic speaking practice where they needed to respond spontaneously to peers. This is in line with Brown [25], who emphasized the importance of meaningful communication in developing oral proficiency.

The integration of speaking in a digital setting allowed students to overcome speaking anxiety by providing them space to record and re-record before submitting, reducing the pressure of immediate oral performance. This aspect is critical in language acquisition, as affective factors greatly influence oral proficiency development. Fauzi [25] found that consistent use of TikTok Duet helped improve students' vocabulary, sentence construction, and pronunciation, which contributed to better accuracy and fluency in speaking. Similarly, Hutabarat [26] reported a substantial increase—up to 37.89%—in students' speaking performance after using TikTok duet activities, despite initial fluctuations, indicating enhanced speaking proficiency through iterative practice.

Despite these benefits, implementation challenges such as internet access reliability and students' digital literacy must be addressed to ensure equitable learning opportunities. The study suggests that teachers receive training in digital integration and digital citizenship to optimize social media's benefits in language classrooms.

Ultimately, the findings advocate for a blended pedagogical approach, combining traditional methods with innovative digital tools like TikTok to create a more engaging, communicative, and student-centered language learning environment. Further research exploring long-term effects and other linguistic competencies, such as writing and reading, through social media integration is recommended.

Additionally, the improvement in students' comprehension suggests that TikTok helped them become more aware of clarity in speech delivery, as the platform required them to record videos that would be publicly understandable. This supports Thornbury [7], who argued that comprehensibility is a vital aspect of effective oral communication.

While the study demonstrated positive results, some limitations should be noted. First, the sample size was relatively small (44 students), which may affect the generalizability of findings. Second, the use of TikTok primarily supported dialogue practice; therefore, future studies should investigate its potential for other speaking activities such as debates, storytelling, or presentations.

Future research should explore diversified TikTok tasks, such as pronunciation-focused activities or cross-cultural dialogue projects, to further harness its potential and examine broader effects. Sustaining focus on core findings remains critical to advancing digital media's role in language education.

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Overall, the results indicate that TikTok is not only an engaging platform for entertainment but also a powerful educational tool that can enhance language learning outcomes when appropriately integrated into classroom instruction.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that using TikTok's duet feature is linked with improved speaking skills, particularly in fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility. The interactive and flexible nature of this tool fosters learner autonomy and motivates students to engage in speaking practice beyond the classroom setting. The findings of this study indicated that the TikTok application had a significant effect on improving the speaking skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Labschool Untad Palu. The pre-test results showed that both the experimental group ( $M = 45.68$ ) and the control group ( $M = 44.77$ ) started at a similar level of performance. After four treatment sessions, the post-test mean score of the experimental group increased to 72.73, while the control group reached 61.36. The gain score of the experimental group (27.05) was notably higher than that of the control group (16.59). Statistical analysis further confirmed these results, with the t-counted value (6.21) exceeding the t-table value (2.021) at the 0.05 level of significance.

These results demonstrate that the TikTok duet feature provided effective opportunities for students to practice speaking interactively, which led to improvements in accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility. The application encouraged students to engage more actively, reduced anxiety, and increased motivation to communicate in English. Compared with traditional teacher-centered methods, TikTok offered a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience, which supported students' creativity and self-expression.

From a pedagogical perspective, TikTok can be effectively integrated as a supplementary medium within language teaching to enrich student learning experiences. However, it should not replace traditional teaching methods but rather complement them to maintain instructional balance.

This research has limitations, including a small sample size, short treatment duration, and use of a single social media platform, which may limit generalizability.

In conclusion, the integration of TikTok into English language teaching proved to be beneficial in enhancing speaking skills. Teachers are encouraged to adopt TikTok as a supplementary learning tool to make speaking practice more engaging and relevant to students' daily lives. Future studies are recommended to expand this research by exploring the use of TikTok in other language skills or across different grade levels and learning contexts.

Future studies should examine longer-term effects, diverse participation samples, and explore varied TikTok activities such as pronunciation drills or intercultural dialogues. Additionally, research could investigate the scalability of this approach across different skill levels and institutions. Integrating TikTok aligns with modern digital pedagogy, making language learning more engaging and relevant for Gen Z learners.

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