



BEYOND TIKTOK: OPTIMIZING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM FOR ENGLISH LEARNING PURPOSE

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abstract

All Indonesian students have taken an English subject from elementary school to high school, but less than 50% of them are fluent in English. There must be a new way to deliver English materials to students, and one of them is optimizing TikTok—a popular social media among them. TikTok provides many features in its platform for socializing, communicating, and learning. The research aims to elaborate on TikTok as an effective social media for English learning purposes. It is a qualitative method that employs a netnography approach which means that the data is collected based on the popularity derived from engagements, views, and feedback from the audiences. The results show that many educators have already optimized TikTok as a medium for English learning and most English private education institution shifted to the TikTok platform, so it indicates that TikTok is an effective platform to deliver subject materials. There are several recommendations derived from TikTok as good tools to catch up with students to have feeling joy and find happiness during English learning.

INTRODUCTION

Social media is a digital platform that provides users to share any thoughts. Some people use social media for fun and self-entertaining. Others utilize its platform for business purposes such as promotion, campaigns, and even sharing knowledge. Hootsuite released a report that there are 4.88 billion internet users around the world, which means that almost 62 percent of the world's population (Wearesocial.com, 2021), in Indonesia, internet users reach 202 million users in Q1 2021 (Kompas.com, 2021).

I assume that the growth is to have some reasons, which we know that many aspects change globally after pandemic Covid-19. World Health Organization (WHO) stated that Covid-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-Cov-2 virus. Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness, and some will become seriously ill or die from underlying medical conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, or cancer (World Health Organization, 2021). Afterward, many countries take regulations to protect their citizens from the disease.

In Indonesia, the government takes some policies to reduce the spreading of Covid-19 since the first quarter of 2020, which is a large-scale social restriction (PSBB) then renames as the implementation of restrictions on community activities (PPKM). Its regulation impacts many aspects such as the economy, society, education, politic, etc. During the regulation implementation of restrictions on community activities, national economic growth was projected to fall by 2.9 percent (Fahrika & Juliansyah, 2020); unemployment raised to 71.1

million (Indayani & Hartono, 2020) then it triggered criminality cases (Mawar, Andriyani, Gultom, & Ketiara, 2021); and psychology and household economy impacted to students and student guardian because of distance learning (Masitoh & Kurnia, 2022).

The regulation impacted many sectors in Indonesia, so most sectors tried to adjust their behavior to adjust to the condition. Stay at home becomes the most popular phrase during the regulation implementation of restrictions on community activities. The condition of people staying made them look for something new to kill the time during the pandemic. One of the biggest impacts of staying at home is optimizing the digital platform for doing their work or just killing the time. Internet saves their boredom during the pandemic. Most social media platforms reached their all-time-high download numbers.

People utilize social media platforms for many reasons. Previously, they used social media for socializing, but they optimized their social media platform for doing their work. Businessmen use it for promotion, campaign, and selling; unemployment uses it to look for a job or do some creativities to create opportunities for making money; teachers use it for sharing knowledge materials; students use it for getting knowledge; etc.

With these adjustments, I assume that the social media platform recently provides multiple functions beyond its goal. Hootsuite reported that 57,6 percent of the world's population becoming active social media users, and they spend time for social media around three hours. In Indonesia, active social media users reach 170 million and it is around 61,8 percent of Indonesia's population. Indonesian spends time on social media for more than three hours per day (Wearesocial.com, 2021).

Table 1. Most-used social media platforms percentage

Most-used social media platforms	Percentage
Youtube	93.8
Whatsapp	87.7
Instagram	86.6
Facebook	85.5
Twitter	63.6
Facebook messenger	52.4
Line	44.3
LinkedIn	39.4
TikTok	38.7
Pinterest	35.6
Telegram	28.5
WeChat	26.2
Snapchat	25,4
Skype	24.3
Tumblr	18.4
Reddit	17.1

Table 1 elaborates on the percentage of the most-used social media platform in Indonesia. There are 16 social media categories, but I argue that some of these social media are not social media itself. Some of them are categorized in social media massager platforms. Hereby, I categorize the social media platforms which specifically function as social media.

Table 2. Social Media Massager

Social Media Massager	Percentage
WhatsApp	87.7
Facebook messenger	52.4
Line	44.3
Telegram	28.5
WeChat	26.2
Snapchat	25.4

Table 3. Social Media

Social Media	Percentage
Youtube	93.8
Instagram	86.6
Facebook	85.5
Twitter	63.6
LinkedIn	39.4
TikTok	38.7
Pinterest	35.6
Skype	24.3
Tumblr	18.4
Reddit	17.1

The differentiation between social media and social media messenger divides into 2 concepts. First, social media provides a system for the user to reach out to audiences out of nowhere. Although users of social media do not know the audiences, they can share text, visuals, or audio through the platforms. Second, social media messenger is quite different from social media itself. Media messenger platforms can share text, visual, or audio with certain rules, which both of them have to follow each other.

In other words, social media is reaching larger audiences rather than social media messenger. So, this research provides several questions about social media that have recently been used for multiple purposes not only for socializing but also for doing users' work. I coin specific questions about social media as a platform that has been used for doing users' work rather than social media as a socializing platform.

Yet, there are many social media platforms used to do users' work, and many works have been done on social media itself. Therefore, I decide to choose one of the social media platforms which have been popular during the pandemic. TikTok is one of the social media platforms that engages with Indonesian recently. Even though TikTok has been number six of ten social media platforms in Indonesia, it is the most developed social media during a pandemic.

In 2021, over 1 billion people in the world turned to TikTok as a social media platform to be entertained, find and share their joy with others, and learn new things (TikTok, Year on TikTok: 2021-of-a-kind, 2021). On the other sides, Indonesia becomes the second-largest market in 2020 (Annur, 2021). It becomes a reason for this research to focus on TikTok as a social media platform to be examined rather than other social media platforms.

On the other side, the research also focuses on English learning work at several TikTok accounts to catch up with the new method of language learning on social media platforms. I assume that the phenomena of English learning in TikTok as a social media platform is a part of the shifting method of English learning during pandemics and regulation of implementation of restrictions on community activities. Similar to TikTok's values of

finding and sharing joy with others and learning new things, the research will examine kind of shifting method of English learning online.

Previous studies show us several studies of TikTok as social media platform used for learning methods, which are *TikTok Application as Indonesian Language and Literature Learning Media* that elaborates interactive learning in TikTok for understanding the materials of Bahasa Indonesia (Aji, 2018); *Physics Learning Media Based on TikTok to Help Problem Solving and Students' Learning Independence* that calculating percentage of TikTok as learning media (Pea, Walidain, Hermansyah, Fitriyanto, & Darmanto, 2021); *Utilization of the Tik Tok Application as a Learning Media Demonstrating Dramatic Texts* that explaining TikTok as an effective supporting media for learning (Fatimah, Hasanudin, & Amin, 2021); *The Effectiveness of the TikTok Based Online Learning Model* that showing TikTok used as a learning medium has not been fully effective (Kustandi, Cahyadi, Elihami, & Pattiasina, 2021).

This research shows us that many scholars have an awareness of TikTok as social media platform frequently used for learning media. There is a gap in TikTok analysis for learning media that is about optimizing its platform as learning media effectively. So, the issue of creating TikTok, as a large social media used in Indonesia, becomes learning media that can be used for English learning digitally. However, the previous studies encourage this research to examine the ways TikTok is accepted by the audiences. Most of the previous research claimed that TikTok is an effective way to deliver subject materials but they did not mention the reason for the effective way happens. Therefore, this research will elaborate it clearly within netnography to understand connective media leads the audiences to be joyful and happy studying English significantly.

METHOD

This research utilizes netnography as the main method to examine the data and elaborate on the findings. Netnography is capable of answering the research question that is wanted to investigate, and it becomes familiar with the constructs and theories in use (Kozinets, 2010). With regard to the changes in cultural and technological contexts, netnography provides us to understand of the connective media currently used by social media users (Kozinets, 2021). First of all, this research defines optimizing TikTok as a popular social media platform used by current English teachers and it is then investigated purposively regarding community identification and selection. Secondly, the research observes particular accounts which have high engagement and views to eliminate certain content creators that make biases. Afterward, verifying keywords and hashtags is to classify the type of content precisely. Above all, this research examines types of short videos that attract audiences actively to seek the ways of delivering the materials and to measure contents successfully.

Find and share the Joy of English Learning in TikTok

TikTok says *real people, real video* as a slogan. Social media experts explain that TikTok encourages users to become the videographer, meanwhile Instagram, as a competitor, influences users to become a photographer with its slogan to *capture and share the world's moments*. They are frequently compared by users because having similar features on their platforms. But, TikTok reached more audience than Instagram last 2020 because users believe in TikTok to have fairly algorithm, so they can get public attention even though as a commoner.

TikTok also shared its performance from 2020 to 2021, and they claimed that audiences spent time on TikTok increased by 146 percent in average time per user (TikTok, 2021). In that case, TikTok revealed that they have a good-choice social platform for a client because they have been wide and highly engaged community, influenced audiences from brand awareness to purchase decisions, and allowed creators and community-engaged with brands.

These reasons trigger to have creative competition among users in short-form videos. They compete for getting attention among users to get *for your page* on the platforms. The more creative a video is the more viewers that make TikTok recommends its video *for your page* which can be seen by many TikTok users. In other words, the algorithm in TikTok does not base on the number of followers but depends on the creative video.

The awareness of fairly algorithms in TikTok emerges many users to be co-creator of short-form videos in TikTok including English teachers. TikTok becomes one of the solutions for sharing knowledge on social media during the regulation of implementation of restriction community activity. Many English teachers, who are public teachers or private teachers, optimize TikTok for sharing their English skills to get the attention of the audience.

The method of research looking for English learning which provides audiences to upgrade the skill of English in digital networks utilizes the netnography method. For some reason, it is an excellent resource for the seasoned qualitative researcher and a useful entry point for the newcomer to qualitative research (Bowler, 2010). According to Kozinets (2010), online communities form or manifest cultures, beliefs, and values, that guide and direct the behavior of a particular society or group. Therefore, this research uses *keywords planner* in Google Ads feature as the beginning of finding user accounts of TikTok that optimize platforms for English learning medium.

Table 4. Average search per month 'bahasa Inggris' at Google search

Keywords	Average search per month
belajar bahasa Inggris	10,000 – 100,000
cara belajar bahasa Inggris	10,000 – 100,000
belajar berbahasa Inggris	10,000 – 100,000
bahasa Inggris untuk pemula	1,000 – 10,000
belajar grammar	1,000 – 10,000
cara mudah belajar bahasa Inggris	1,000 – 10,000

Table 4 shows that internet users of Indonesia searched for English learning by using these keywords on Google search during the pandemic. It means that internet users optimize Google search to look for a suitable method of learning English. I assume that the phenomenon of people looking for English courses in Google search is because of digital shifting.

However, the internet itself is already attached to human behavior recently. It makes sense for people looking for a suitable method of English learning in current phenomena. Moreover, many students optimize social media platforms to get some knowledge of their subject matter, so TikTok campaigned #samamabelajar on its platform to catch up with many students who will search for subject materials including English learning. I found evidence that reinforces the argument of people or students optimizing TikTok for English learning currently.

Table 5. TikTok hastags about 'bahasa Inggris'

Hastags	Estimated views
#bahasainggris	652,300,000
#beljarbahasainggris	585,200,000
#tipsbahasainggris	24,000,000
#bahasainggrismudah	29,000,000
#kelasbahasainggris	4,000,000
#pendidikanbahasainggris	3,500,000
#gurubahasainggris	3,000,000

Table 5 shows that hastags about 'bahasa Inggris' in TikTok reached more than hundred million views. It explains that many users looking for English subject as video content in TikTok. The views of hastags 'bahasa Inggris' only happen in Indonesian users. Globally, there are larger views with hashtags that use English words.

Table 6. TikTok hashtags about 'English'

Hashtag	Estimated views
#learnenglish	4,500,000,000
#englishteacher	1,300,000,000
#englishclass	880,400,000
#englishlesson	761,000,000
#englishtips	539,400,000
#speakenglish	438,000,000
#TikTokenglish	193,600,000

Table 6 represents hashtag views about 'English' on the TikTok platform. The number of estimated views is larger than table 5 which uses Bahasa Indonesia for the hashtag name. There are a billion views for English learning content videos provided on the TikTok platform. Many people who have English skills contribute their activities to creating learning media in TikTok about English learning. Not only persons who have English skills but also English schools or institutions are optimizing the platform to share knowledge about English materials. Either business goals or sharing the knowledge they utilize its platform to get the audiences.

Several audiences optimize TikTok either they create content videos of English learning, or they are trying to get knowledge about English materials. According to TikTok (2021), its platform is the leading destination for short-form mobile videos that inspires creativity and bring joy to every single person. The mission of TikTok has already been proven by its number of views.

Therefore, the number of views indicates that shifting learning of English materials is fully effective. It represents that learning videos are accepted by TikTok users. With regard to supply and demand theory, all of the short video contents of English materials (supply) attract the audiences (demand) to watch and leave many positive comments considered as a successful way. Instead of skipping English video materials, the audiences have a willingness to stay longer to watch and comment positively. In other words, this shifting method is an effective way to be implied by other teachers

English Learning Method in Short-Form Videos

Several hashtags on English learning videos at TikTok indicate that most educators activate their social media platform to reach students digitally. TikTok has become one of the social media platforms which are popular among internet users recently reconstructed social media users utilizing social media as an e-learning medium. Moreover, TikTok provides interactive features to catch up with the trend within its filters and audio effects. Hereby, I state that TikTok nowadays is not only social media platform but also a learning media.

Educators who use TikTok as English learning media combine their creativity and knowledge to share English material pleasantly. Therefore, its combination of creativity and English skill gets highly impression and engagement in their account. Thus, users easily share its English learning videos in their circles making its video popular.

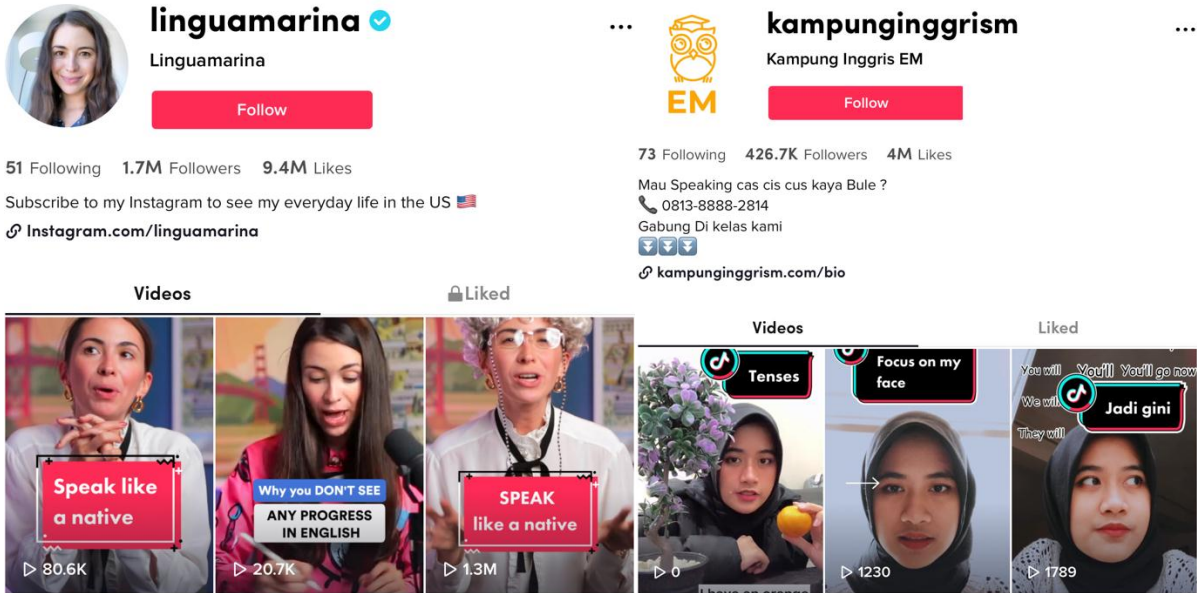


Figure 1. English Educators on TikTok

There are many English educators on TikTok, but figure 1 shows us two of them actively posting their English skills in content videos to share English learning material with the audiences. They simply educate audiences to understand the basic concept of studying English easily. They bring English materials in short-form videos, so they must be able to deliver the point of learning material in less than 30 seconds.

TikTok (2021) recommends creators produce content video 12 to 15 seconds per video, and there must be impressive content in 2 to 6 seconds after the video begins. It is similar to the concept of dromology introduced by Paul Virilio who explains the science of speed. Digitally, people enable to see world vision more quickly and public space becomes a public image through cinematography (Virilio, 1991). Meanwhile, Philipp Wolf observed that its dramalogy is similar to dissolving the traditional coordinates of time and space that was an illusion of simultaneity (Wolf, 2002). In addition, Virilio (1991) elaborated that technology of speed leads to a decline in lived spatial existence.

Short-form video on TikTok relates to the concept of dromology that people nowadays want to break the spatial existence of learning media. Internet users, including social media users, want to get information more quickly than previous systems and technology. They are willing to spend time on the screen to look for information they need without waste of time. For this reason, TikTok recommends creators create short-form videos in less than 15 seconds and have an impressive content video at 2 to 6 seconds after the video is played.



Figure 2. Account of @juannazhen shared pronunciation tips

Figure 2 shows us that @juannazhen optimized their English learning tips as well as the recommendation of TikTok. She avoided long-duration videos to catch up on users' behavior on TikTok. Creators should put their concepts to present their idea of their English skills in short-form video content. Account of @juannazhen divided "pronunciation vs accent" materials into three parts to avoid the long duration of the video. It implies that she already knows that recommendation of TikTok has an effective format. She had been good performance in three parts of her content videos, and each video of hers reached more than 10.000 views.

For those reasons, method shifting of English learning is not about copying and pasting the materials. Educators as well as a creator should put a strategy for delivering the point of its materials. Creativity and knowledge should be put into a short-form video as a new learning medium. A combination of creativity and knowledge leads creators to share English material understandable to audiences. Nowadays, the educator must be a creator at the same time, so students can enjoy learning using advanced technology.

Conclusion

Beyond TikTok is a topic for understanding social media platforms that can be used for multiple purposes, such as socializing, communicating, and studying. It provides many features for creators to catch up with the situation of students nowadays. TikTok also recommends some tips to educators as well as creators to look forward to users' behavior, so they can manage the concept of delivering English material in effective ways. Some educators already moved their concept of English teaching. They combine creativity and knowledge to create a short-form video for delivering the materials. However, educators cannot put the concept of the copy and paste method which derive from traditionally learning in the class to social media platforms. Educators must adjust their concept of teaching in the current situation to make students understand learning materials with joy. This research suggests conducting research for other perspectives to seek beyond effective social media, especially TikTok, which can bring many advantages to education.

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