

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING TIKTOK TO IMPROVE VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is an essential competence for vocational high school students because it supports academic communication and future workplace demands. This study examined whether TikTok-based instruction produced a significant difference in the speaking skills of tenth-grade Digital Business students compared with conventional instruction. A quantitative quasi-experimental design with a nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group was employed. The sample consisted of 38 students selected through purposive sampling, including 18 students in the experimental group and 20 students in the control group. Students completed procedure-text speaking tasks assessed primarily on accuracy and fluency. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk test, Levene's test, a homogeneity-of-regression-slopes test, and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Both groups improved after instruction. The experimental group increased from a mean pretest score of 81.94 to 86.11, whereas the control group increased from 74.25 to 82.50. However, after controlling for initial speaking ability, the group effect was not statistically significant ($p = .747$), while the pretest significantly predicted posttest performance ($p = .001$). The findings indicate that TikTok did not outperform conventional instruction under the conditions of this study, although it still provided opportunities for repeated practice, self-evaluation, and feedback. TikTok is therefore more appropriately positioned as a supplementary medium supported by structured tasks and sustained teacher guidance.

Keywords: *TikTok, Speaking Skills, Vocational Students*

ABSTRAK

Keterampilan berbicara merupakan kompetensi penting bagi siswa sekolah menengah kejuruan karena mendukung komunikasi akademik dan memenuhi tuntutan dunia kerja di masa depan. Penelitian ini mengkaji apakah pembelajaran berbasis TikTok menghasilkan perbedaan yang signifikan pada keterampilan berbicara siswa kelas X Program Keahlian Bisnis Digital dibandingkan dengan pembelajaran konvensional. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain kuasi-eksperimental berupa kelompok kontrol nonequivalent pretest-posttest. Sampel penelitian terdiri atas 38 siswa yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling, yaitu 18 siswa dalam kelompok eksperimen dan 20 siswa dalam kelompok kontrol. Siswa melaksanakan tugas berbicara berbasis teks

prosedur yang dinilai terutama berdasarkan aspek ketepatan dan kelancaran. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji Shapiro-Wilk, uji Levene, uji homogenitas kemiringan regresi, dan analisis kovarians (ANCOVA). Kedua kelompok menunjukkan peningkatan setelah pembelajaran. Nilai rata-rata kelompok eksperimen meningkat dari 81,94 pada pretest menjadi 86,11 pada posttest, sedangkan kelompok kontrol meningkat dari 74,25 menjadi 82,50. Namun, setelah kemampuan awal berbicara dikendalikan, pengaruh kelompok tidak menunjukkan hasil yang signifikan secara statistik ($p = 0,747$), sedangkan nilai pretest secara signifikan memprediksi hasil posttest ($p = 0,001$). Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan TikTok tidak lebih efektif daripada pembelajaran konvensional dalam kondisi penelitian ini, meskipun TikTok tetap memberikan kesempatan kepada siswa untuk melakukan latihan berulang, evaluasi diri, dan memperoleh umpan balik. Oleh karena itu, TikTok lebih tepat digunakan sebagai media pembelajaran tambahan yang didukung oleh tugas-tugas terstruktur dan bimbingan guru secara berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: TikTok, Keterampilan Berbicara, Murid Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan

A. Introduction

English plays an important role in intercultural communication, education, and the workplace. Among the four language skills, speaking has a strategic position because it enables individuals to convey ideas, feelings, and information directly. Richards (2008) emphasizes that speaking is a primary means of oral communication, while Harmer (2007) explains that successful communication depends not only on mastery of language forms but also on the ability to use language appropriately in real situations. Therefore, English instruction needs to provide sufficient opportunities for students to produce spoken language,

respond to interlocutors, and communicate messages intelligibly.

In the context of English as a foreign language, speaking is often considered one of the most challenging skills. Students must integrate grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, accuracy, and fluency almost simultaneously when they speak. Brown and Abeywickrama (2020) explain that speaking performance requires the coordination of various linguistic elements and communication strategies within a limited time. This challenge becomes greater when students have relatively little exposure to English outside the classroom. Consequently, many students depend on classroom

activities as their primary setting for speaking practice.

Speaking difficulties arise not only from linguistic limitations but also from psychological factors. Fear of making mistakes, anxiety, shyness, and low self-confidence can reduce students' willingness to use English. Juhana (2012) found that fear of mistakes and lack of confidence are major barriers to learning to speak. Alrabai (2014) also showed that foreign language anxiety can affect students' participation and performance. Speaking activities should therefore provide adequate practice, a relatively safe learning environment, and feedback that helps students improve their performance.

These needs are particularly important in vocational education. Vocational high school students are prepared not only to meet academic demands but also to enter workplaces that require practical communication. For students in the Digital Business program, speaking skills are useful for presenting products, explaining work procedures, communicating promotional ideas, interacting with customers, and describing the use of digital platforms. Rao (2019) states that English-speaking ability can

support employability because it relates to communicating information clearly and professionally. Speaking instruction in vocational schools should therefore be connected to contexts relevant to students' fields of expertise.

One type of learning material that corresponds to the needs of Digital Business students is a procedure text. A procedure text explains how to do or make something through a systematic set of steps. Derewianka and Jones (2016) explain that procedure texts generally contain a goal, materials or tools when necessary, and a logical sequence of steps. In speaking instruction, procedure texts encourage students to organize ideas, use action verbs and sequencing expressions, and deliver instructions coherently. Activities such as explaining how to promote a product on social media, creating business content, or uploading a product to an online marketplace connect language-learning objectives with students' vocational needs.

Although the material is relevant, speaking instruction may still be constrained when activities rely mainly on teacher explanation and limited practice. Developments in digital

technology offer alternative media that can extend opportunities for practice. Audiovisual media combine sound and visual information, allowing students to observe pronunciation, intonation, expression, and message delivery. Berk (2009) argues that using video in instruction can increase students' attention, understanding, and engagement. In language learning, digital media also allow students to access language models and review materials according to their needs.

TikTok is a popular short-video-sharing platform with features for recording, editing, adding sounds and text, commenting, duetting, and stitching. Montag, Yang, and Elhai (2021) describe TikTok as a short-video platform that enables users to create, edit, and share content quickly. From an educational perspective, its short-video format can be used to present speaking models and assign oral-performance tasks. Students can record, review, and repeat their videos before submitting a final version. This process may provide more opportunities for practice than a single live performance in front of the class.

Using TikTok in speaking instruction can support several

learning processes. First, students receive audiovisual models that they can observe before producing spoken language. Second, re-recording enables repeated practice to improve accuracy and fluency. Third, reviewing videos encourages self-evaluation because students can identify excessive pauses, pronunciation errors, or unclear sequencing. Fourth, comments and teacher feedback can provide a basis for revision. Hattie and Timperley (2007) explain that effective feedback helps students understand the gap between their current performance and the expected learning goals.

Theoretically, these activities are consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism, which positions interaction, support, and meaningful experience as important elements in knowledge construction. In TikTok-assisted learning, students do not merely receive explanations; they also observe models, produce videos, reflect on their work, and receive assistance from teachers and peers. These processes may encourage students to construct understanding through authentic activities. Nevertheless, the use of a platform does not automatically lead to

improvement. Its effectiveness still depends on task design, practice intensity, feedback quality, and student engagement.

Previous studies have demonstrated TikTok's potential for language learning. Hongsa, Wathawatthana, and Yonwilad (2023) reported improvements in speaking skills, pronunciation, fluency, confidence, and motivation after TikTok was used. Putri (2022) likewise found that TikTok-based activities offered repeated practice, self-evaluation, and creative expression that supported speaking ability. Alshreef and Khadawardi (2023) found that TikTok could increase motivation and engagement in English learning, although their study primarily focused on vocabulary and students' perceptions. Baron (2020) also showed that online applications were perceived as flexible and engaging tools for supporting speaking practice.

Although previous findings have generally been positive, several research gaps remain. Many studies have involved university students or general EFL learners, while research on vocational high school students, particularly those in Digital Business programs, remains limited. Moreover,

some studies have emphasized perceptions, motivation, or engagement rather than comparing speaking outcomes through an experimental design. Studies using procedure-text speaking tasks in vocational contexts are also scarce, even though procedure texts are directly related to the ability to explain processes and instructions required in digital business activities.

In response to these gaps, this study examined the effectiveness of TikTok as an instructional medium for improving the speaking skills of tenth-grade Digital Business students. Speaking performance focused on accuracy and fluency in delivering procedure texts. The research question asked whether there was a significant difference in speaking skills between students taught using TikTok and those taught through conventional instruction, after controlling for initial ability. The study was expected to provide empirical evidence regarding TikTok's role in speaking instruction and to help teachers determine whether the platform should be used as a primary or supplementary instructional medium.

B. Research Method

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group design. A quasi-experimental design was selected because intact classes were used and participants were not randomly assigned individually. Two classes participated as the experimental and control groups. The experimental group received TikTok-assisted speaking instruction, whereas the control group received conventional instruction with equivalent materials, objectives, and time allocation. Both groups completed a pretest before the treatment and a posttest afterward.

The study was conducted during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at a vocational high school in Surabaya offering a Digital Business program. The population consisted of approximately 90 tenth-grade Digital Business students. Purposive sampling was used based on the classes' relevance to the research objectives and the availability of the instructional schedule. The sample comprised 38 students: 18 in the experimental group and 20 in the control group.

The independent variable was the use of TikTok as an instructional medium, while the dependent variable was students' speaking skills. TikTok was operationalized through activities involving the observation of procedure-video models, identification of text structure and language features, performance recording and re-recording, review, and feedback. Speaking skills were operationalized as the ability to deliver a procedure text orally and were measured primarily in terms of accuracy and fluency. Accuracy included appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, whereas fluency included continuity of speech, limited pausing, and the ability to maintain the flow of explanation.

The primary instrument was a procedure-text speaking test administered as both the pretest and posttest. Students selected topics related to Digital Business, such as how to use a product, make a simple product, promote a product through TikTok, create content for an online business, or sell a product through an online marketplace. Each student was given approximately one to three minutes to present the procedure individually. Performances were

recorded to allow more careful and consistent scoring.

An analytic rubric adapted from Brown and Abeywickrama (2020) and adjusted to the characteristics of procedure-text tasks was used for scoring. Accuracy and fluency were the main aspects analyzed, while content completeness and the organization of steps served as supporting aspects. Each aspect was scored on a scale from one to five. Content validity was examined by experts familiar with English instruction and the school context. The same criteria were applied to the pretest and posttest to maintain scoring consistency.

The research procedure consisted of four meetings. The first meeting was used for the pretest. In the second meeting, the experimental group observed procedure videos on TikTok, identified the goal, sequence of steps, and language features, and then planned and recorded a procedure video. The control group learned the same material through teacher explanation, written or oral examples, and classroom speaking practice without TikTok. In the third meeting, the experimental group reviewed recordings, identified areas

for improvement, practiced again, and received teacher feedback. The control group completed paired or individual speaking practice and received direct feedback. The fourth meeting was used for the posttest, which employed a different topic of comparable difficulty.

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The first stage involved descriptive statistics, including the number of participants, minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. The second stage involved assumption testing through the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, Levene's test of variance homogeneity, and the homogeneity-of-regression-slopes test. The significance level was set at .05. Data were considered normally distributed when the significance value exceeded .05. Homogeneity of regression slopes was fulfilled when the interaction between group and pretest was not significant.

The hypothesis was tested using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). This analysis was selected because the experimental and control groups had different mean pretest scores, indicating differences in initial ability. In the ANCOVA model, the posttest

score was the dependent variable, instructional group was the factor, and the pretest score was the covariate. The covariate allowed posttest outcomes to be compared after the influence of initial ability was controlled. The alternative hypothesis was accepted when the significance value for the group variable was below .05, whereas the null hypothesis was accepted when it exceeded .05.

C. Results and Discussion

Descriptive analysis was used to describe students' speaking ability before and after instruction. A summary of the pretest and posttest scores for both groups is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Scores

Group	N	Pretest M (SD)	Posttest M (SD)	Gain
Control	20	74.25 (5.20)	82.50 (7.86)	8.25
Experimental	18	81.94 (9.42)	86.11 (7.39)	4.17

Table 1 shows that both groups improved their speaking performance. The control group increased from a mean of 74.25 to 82.50, a gain of 8.25 points. The experimental group increased from 81.94 to 86.11, a gain of 4.17 points. Descriptively, the

experimental group had a higher posttest mean than the control group. However, the experimental group also had higher initial ability. Therefore, the difference in posttest scores could not be directly attributed to TikTok without controlling for pretest scores.

Before ANCOVA was conducted, the normality of the data was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test because each group had fewer than 50 participants. The normality results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results

Data	Group	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	Control	0.925	20	0.122
Pretest	Experimental	0.936	18	0.245
Posttest	Control	0.935	20	0.190
Posttest	Experimental	0.914	18	0.102

All significance values in Table 2 were greater than .05. Thus, the pretest and posttest scores in both groups were normally distributed. Levene's test indicated that pretest variances were not homogeneous, with a significance value of .002, whereas posttest variances were homogeneous, with a significance value of .939. The pretest difference

reinforced the need for an analysis that could control students' initial ability.

The next important assumption was the homogeneity of regression slopes. The interaction between group and pretest score produced $F = 0.127$ with a significance value of .724. Because this value was greater than .05, the relationship between pretest and posttest scores was considered consistent across both groups. Therefore, the homogeneity-of-regression-slopes assumption was fulfilled, and ANCOVA could be conducted.

Table 3 Summary of ANCOVA Assumption Tests

Test	Sig. Value	Criterion	Decision
Pretest Levene test	0.002	$p > .05$	Not homogeneous
Posttest Levene test	0.939	$p > .05$	Homogeneous
Group $\times$ pretest	0.724	$p > .05$	Homogeneous slopes

After the assumptions were examined, ANCOVA was used to test the difference in speaking ability after controlling for pretest scores. A summary of the results is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Summary of ANCOVA Results

Source	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Overall model	6.134	0.002	Significant
Pretest	12.882	0.001	Significant
Group	0.106	0.747	Not significant

The ANCOVA results showed that the overall model was significant, $p = .002$. The pretest score also significantly affected the posttest score, $p = .001$, indicating that students' initial ability was an important predictor of their final achievement. In contrast, the group variable produced $p = .747$, which was greater than .05. After initial ability was controlled, there was no significant difference in speaking skills between students taught using TikTok and those taught through conventional instruction. The model's coefficient of determination was .351, indicating that approximately 35.1% of the variation in posttest scores was explained by the variables included in the model, while the remainder was influenced by factors beyond the scope of the study.

Based on the hypothesis-testing criteria, the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternative

hypothesis was rejected. Thus, under the duration and conditions of this study, TikTok did not demonstrate a statistically significant advantage over conventional instruction in improving the speaking accuracy and fluency of tenth-grade Digital Business students.

Discussion

The first noteworthy finding was the improvement in both groups. The experimental and control groups obtained higher mean posttest scores than pretest scores. This improvement indicates that opportunities to study procedure texts, organize steps, and engage in oral practice can support speaking development. Procedure tasks require students to communicate a goal, a sequence of actions, and supporting information systematically. When students repeatedly practice the same organizational pattern, they become more familiar with the necessary vocabulary, sequencing expressions, and sentence structures.

In terms of accuracy, students needed to use action verbs, imperative forms, relevant vocabulary, and intelligible pronunciation. In terms of fluency, they needed to maintain the flow of their explanation without excessive pauses or disruptive

repetition. Practice directed toward these two aspects may explain why both groups improved. Brown and Abeywickrama (2020) emphasize that speaking performance develops through opportunities for language production supported by clear assessment criteria. Harmer (2007) likewise states that meaningful speaking activities help students use language as a tool for communication rather than merely as knowledge of forms.

The improvement in the experimental group may be related to TikTok's characteristics as an audiovisual medium. Students could observe performance models, listen to pronunciation, and examine how procedures were delivered. They could then record their own performances. Unlike a one-time live performance, video recording allowed students to repeat their speech before submitting the final version. This process enabled them to correct errors they noticed, reduce pauses, and reorganize the sequence of their explanations. Thus, the platform functioned not only as a publication space but also as a practice environment.

This process can also be understood through the lens of social constructivism. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that learning develops through interaction and support within meaningful activities. Students in the experimental group did not merely receive material; they engaged in observation, production, reflection, and revision. The teacher provided scaffolding through examples, instructions, and feedback. Peers could also provide support while students practiced and discussed errors. TikTok may therefore offer an environment that supports active learning when it is incorporated into a purposeful instructional design.

Nevertheless, the experimental group's descriptive improvement was not followed by a significant difference after controlling for initial ability. The p-value for the group variable was .747, indicating that the experimental group's outcome did not differ statistically from that of the control group. This finding confirms that digital media do not automatically produce higher achievement. The success of speaking instruction remains influenced by task quality, practice duration, teacher guidance, initial

proficiency, motivation, and student engagement.

The influence of initial ability was evident in the ANCOVA results. The pretest score significantly affected the posttest score, $p = .001$. Students who already demonstrated better accuracy and fluency before the treatment tended to obtain higher final scores. This condition is important because the experimental group's mean pretest score was already higher than that of the control group. Although ANCOVA was used to control this difference, the experimental group had less room for improvement because several students had already achieved high scores at the beginning. This ceiling effect may have limited the extent of measurable improvement over a short period.

The control group showed a larger mean gain of 8.25 points compared with 4.17 points in the experimental group. This does not mean that conventional instruction is always more effective; rather, it indicates that structured speaking practice, teacher explanation, and direct feedback can also be beneficial. Students in the control group remained engaged in procedure-text

tasks, oral practice, and teacher correction. In other words, both groups received strong pedagogical elements: opportunities to speak and feedback. The primary difference was the instructional medium.

The relatively short treatment duration may also explain the absence of a significant difference. Speaking development requires sustained practice because students must build automaticity in vocabulary, grammar, and fluency strategies. Nation and Newton (2008) explain that oral-skill development requires a balance of input, form-focused learning, meaning-focused output, and fluency development. Two treatment meetings may not have been sufficient to produce stable changes, particularly when students were still adapting to TikTok as an academic medium.

The limited sample size also affected the analytical power. The study involved only 38 students from one school. In a small sample, individual variation can have a relatively large effect on means and standard deviations. Differences in motivation, TikTok-use habits, device ownership, internet stability, speaking experience, and confidence may not have been evenly distributed across

the two groups. These factors may have contributed to the 64.9% of posttest-score variation not explained by the model.

Students' adaptation to the educational purpose of TikTok should also be considered. Although they may have been familiar with TikTok for entertainment, using the platform to produce an academic task involved different demands. Students needed to plan content, use English, manage the duration, and satisfy the rubric. Some may have devoted more time to technical production than to language practice. Omar and Dequan (2020) show that motivations for using TikTok vary, including watching, sharing, and creating content. In educational contexts, teachers need to direct these motivations toward linguistic objectives.

The findings differed from those of Hongsa et al. (2023), who reported significant improvements in speaking skills, pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. The difference may be related to participant characteristics, treatment duration, task type, scoring rubric, and analytical design. Hongsa et al. emphasized various benefits of TikTok for EFL learners, whereas the present study specifically compared

experimental and control groups while controlling initial ability through ANCOVA. The vocational high school context and procedure-text material also differed from studies involving general learners or university students.

In terms of learning material, procedure texts remained relevant to Digital Business students. Tasks explaining how to create content, promote products, or use sales platforms connected English with situations students might encounter. Alignment with their field of expertise can increase task meaningfulness and help students understand the practical value of English. Derewianka and Jones (2016) emphasize that genre structure helps learners organize information according to a communicative purpose. In this study, the procedure-text structure provided a clear framework for students to communicate ideas coherently.

The main pedagogical implication is that TikTok should be used as a supplementary medium rather than as the sole determinant of instructional success. Teachers can use short videos for modeling, home practice, performance portfolios, and reflection. However, the activities

should include specific language targets, transparent rubrics, performance examples, scaffolded practice, and feedback. Teachers should also provide privacy options so that students do not feel required to publish videos publicly. Videos may be uploaded to private accounts or digital classrooms, or stored for internal assessment.

Overall, the study indicates that TikTok has pedagogical value but did not demonstrate a statistical advantage over conventional instruction under the conditions examined. Both approaches can support improvement when students receive opportunities for practice and feedback. Therefore, a more productive question is not simply whether TikTok is effective, but how it is designed, how long it is used, what forms of support are provided, and which speaking objectives it is intended to achieve.

D. Conclusion

This study examined the effectiveness of TikTok in improving the speaking skills of tenth-grade Digital Business students, particularly their accuracy and fluency in delivering procedure texts. Both groups improved after instruction. The

experimental group's mean score increased from 81.94 to 86.11, while the control group's mean score increased from 74.25 to 82.50.

The ANCOVA results showed that initial ability significantly affected posttest performance, $p = .001$. After pretest scores were controlled, the group effect was not significant, $p = .747$. Therefore, there was no significant difference in speaking skills between students taught using TikTok and those taught through conventional instruction. The null hypothesis was accepted, and the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

Although TikTok did not demonstrate a statistical advantage, it still has potential as a supplementary medium because it enables students to observe models, re-record performances, review their work, and receive feedback. Its effectiveness depends greatly on instructional design, duration of use, the quality of teacher guidance, and student engagement. Teachers are advised to use TikTok in a structured manner with clear linguistic targets, transparent rubrics, privacy protection, and multiple revision cycles.

Future studies should involve larger samples, longer treatment

periods, and groups that are more balanced in terms of initial ability. Researchers may also examine TikTok's effects on separate speaking components, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, confidence, motivation, and engagement. Studies involving different text types or vocational contexts are also needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the conditions under which TikTok can effectively support speaking development.

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