

Pedagogical Potential of TikTok for ESL Classrooms

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The predominance of the use of the English language on social media entails its potential usefulness in regard to English as a second language (ESL) learning. Amongst all social media platforms, none can boast the ubiquity of TikTok. This application has been, and continues to be, one of the largest and most influential social media platforms, as well as a massive success across a range of fields with the most active users in the world. In the field of education, it has the potential to enhance educational pedagogies.

Keywords: TikTok features ; education ; pedagogical strategies ; virtual learning environment ; English as a second language (ESL) learning

1. Introduction

The digitalization of technology is a critical component of Industry 4.0. Parallel to this, all digitalization examines the language being used. Not surprisingly, English predominates among the languages used in digital communications worldwide.

The most vibrant development that is interconnected with the teaching and learning of English is social media. This is due to the fact that most students are actively engaged in social media, thereby allowing them to be susceptible to the interconnection of technology and the learning of English as a second language (ESL).

Social media platforms, particularly TikTok, have revolutionized how people socialize and communicate. The app is now the most downloaded app on the entire globe with over 1 billion downloads. TikTok is also transforming the educational environment in the education sector, including in the case of online learning ^[1]. Applying social-networking learning is the new frontier in the context of improving learning social media such as TikTok also aids in improving students' self-efficacy toward academic improvements ^[2]. As one of the most popular social media platforms worldwide, TikTok is also present in the education sector. Pedagogical strategies denote abstract teaching techniques that influence instructional design models, such as collaborative, reflective, integrative, constructivist, and inquiry-based learning ^[3]. This is consistent with the vision of Generation Z, who use social media to communicate, discuss ideas, and obtain—as well as to provide—educational information. TikTok has thus been examined for its pedagogical potential, due to this same influence and/or impact on teaching and learning.

The use of TikTok, particularly in the context of using short educational videos, helps learners to learn media and improve their speaking, English pronunciation, and English writing skills. Therefore, in this regard, TikTok has become useful tool in regard to teaching English to second language learners as a pedagogical strategy. The context of English as a second language (ESL) is where students who are not native English speakers are primarily taught in English by focusing on language skills more than content ^[4]. Furthermore, the technological upper hand also improves students' quality of life in regard to engaging better with friends and people around the world ^[5]. TikTok has several features of note for this purpose, such as shared audio, which allow users to use the audio to listen and mimic voices. It also possesses the duet feature, whereby a user can stitch their video with someone else in order to create new content that looks similar to two individuals conversing. All these features and possibilities render it easy for students to be involved in learning English in a manner that entails that the ESL students rely on it positively. This also promotes a blended learning process, which improves the teaching and learning process of English as a second language, such that students will be fully immersed in their experiences. The TikTok app can thus aid students in improving their reading and speaking skills when it is used correctly in the context of an ESL classroom.

2. The Potential of TikTok as a Pedagogical Strategy for ESL Classrooms

Based on the reviewed articles, the two main themes that were able to be synthesized from these past studies were the outcomes of using TikTok pedagogical key features and the pedagogical strategies of TikTok that are relevant to ESL

learning.

The pedagogical strategies elicited were found in 29 of the papers on digital learning and assignment; 8 papers on active learning; the 7 papers on collaborative and team-based learning; the 4 papers on experiential learning; the 3 papers on incidental learning; and the 2 papers on constructive learning. This shows that there is a wide range of strategies that TikTok has promoted and can make possible. The results also highlight the impact of social media, whereby focusing on TikTok toward its potential in the teaching and learning process for pupils—as it encompasses an array of strategies that can be applied by educators and teachers—in order to enhance the speaking skills of learners, specifically, as well as the proficiency of learning English, in general.

There are various key features—which were obtained following the review of the selected articles—that are useful to discuss here. The most prominent key features include the inclusion of technology in the learning process. The impact of technology is undeniable as the factor that pulls users in to improve their speaking skills. This is because it allows imitation and modelling, which provide real-time examples with various content that are based on different situations. This is also highlighted by [6], who advised that project-based learning can be conducted easily when using TikTok, due to the fact that it serves the right purpose of assessment for the purposes of improving English speaking. It is likened to a bank of content, ready to be used at any time by the teacher. Hence, it reduces the burden of the teacher to prepare materials, who are then able to use ready-made materials that are already contextualized within a real-world scenario. This will have a positive impact on pupils' proficiency as they are able to practice the language when it is based on real-world situations that are available through TikTok's duet challenge concept [7]. This is in line with the most frequent pedagogical strategy that is analyzed in all of these papers: the cases of digital learning and digital assignment. Therefore, there is a need to acknowledge the importance of utilizing the correct digital learning strategies. Furthermore, this is important due to the fact that they are a vital component in planning present and future classroom strategies in order to further develop teaching pedagogical and methodological skills [8].

Another study explored the features and outcomes of using TikTok, especially in the case of the ESL learning environment [9]. ESL students who did not understand complex vocabulary found it easy to understand English using TikTok, which is a significant outcome. This includes the pronunciation of difficult words and the manner of speaking, such as tone and intonation. Therefore, when utilizing TikTok's duet challenge feature, other strategies, such as incidental learning and constructive learning, also take place. This fact allows pupils to learn at their own pace, achieve their mastery, and move toward a better understanding of English structures and concepts (which can be difficult to properly learn and understand). Similarly, other studies have confirmed that utilizing TikTok helps learners to improve their communication, speaking, and writing skills, respectively [6]. Another outcome linked with TikTok is that ESL learners can learn how to express themselves inside and outside of the classroom setting. This leads to an emphasis toward active learning and experiential learning strategies, which is crucial for gaining experience in order to understand how speaking English occurs outside the classroom context [10]. This is further validated by another study in which it was advised that social media use, such as using TikTok (which is actively used for this study), leads to an increased positive perception toward valid academic success, especially when the learner is not a native speaker of the language. Using short videos promotes confidence among learners, thereby significantly impacting academic performance and interaction, or via socialization with others. That said, TikTok has a positive influence on educational development; thus, it is appropriate for online learning and improves communication desires among different students.

The effectiveness of using TikTok in the context of ESL learning has arguably been examined by numerous studies [2][11][12][13]. Based on these studies, students tend to express positive emotions toward English material content, thereby improving their vocabulary as they watch TikTok videos in class. Other learners similarly demonstrate positive attitudes toward using TikTok, which serves as an aid in their classroom. This clearly indicates that TikTok positively or significantly affects how interested ESL students are in their classes. This is also related to the collaborative learning strategy that is a key strategy through the TikTok duet challenge feature. This is because pupils learn and support each other's learning through this feature [14]. As such, this leads to a warm, non-hostile, and positive environment for the purposes of better development toward learning English, despite English being their second language. The impact of collaboration, despite not being performed face-to-face, can be seen as a success in regard to preaching the idea that learning can happen anywhere and everywhere, including from one's own home.

TikTok, is focused on providing entertainment, information, and socialization and is thus useful for academic purposes. Due to the result of educators' practice in regard to establishing TikTok and other social media applications—as well as in developing teaching and learning contexts in order to improve ESL learners' language proficiency—the academic element has, thus, become the main factor [15]. For instance, language-learning based on TikTok videos is now ranked as the most popular knowledge-sharing type of video during the period of 2019 to 2020; this is even in spite of the fact that this trend

has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Substantial studies have examined the effects of using TikTok in order to support language learners and improve their language proficiency and skills ^[16]. This indicates that the effectiveness of utilizing TikTok in the classroom setting is not restricted to borders; instead, it has become a global phenomenon with massive benefits to learners. The purpose of teaching and learning in English, or any other language, is to equip learners with the skills to communicate with it effectively ^[17]. Communication indicates understanding and being understood. It is by using TikTok that learners learn not only diverse sounds, but also improve their speaking and writing skills.

TikTok's presence in the education field, mostly in the English language sphere, has paved the way for the development of M-learning. TikTok assists learners by providing a variety of features, such as broadcasting music videos, short musical clips, special effects, notifications, search box video feeds, settings, likes, comments, duets, reactions, and the editing and sharing of videos, as well as opportunities to make money via this platform. TikTok is used by students due to the fact that the videos are engaging ^[18]. They can watch short videos more quickly and with less effort in order to learn more. Any age group can fully benefit from using this platform. TikTok users can use this app anywhere and anytime. As such, this fact also helps to emphasize the educational strategies used, such as collaborative learning, digital learning, and digital assignment—which goes hand-in-hand with the features exhibited through the TikTok duet challenge feature. These features support the strategies that teachers implement, thus ensuring that the application of using TikTok is in line with the advancement of educational prospects, not merely as a gimmick or trendsetter ^[19].

TikTok is a fun social media platform, or application, for the purposes of classroom activity where students can become a participant in controlling the pace of classroom activity. The social media app, TikTok, allows users to create and share brief videos; further, it is gaining more and more popularity. TikTok is popular among young people in particular, due to the fact that they can use it to share innovative ideas that they and their friends possess ^[20]. Students can utilize TikTok to create videos that are up to 10 min long. These videos are subsequently posted in a series of posts known as "TikTok moments", which are shared with their friends and followers. Posts made by students will be visible to instructors. The material can be altered by instructors, including the duration of each video. The pupils' competitiveness and enthusiasm in their studies would be sparked by likes and shares. TikTok also offers the option for teachers to provide take-home assignments that students can do after class. The recordings that are made and shared via YouTube, and other social media platforms, can thus be stored and retrieved by the teachers. This could be an opportunity for teachers and parents to work together in order to support students' learning outside of the classroom. In so doing this, promotes incidental learning and experiential learning, thereby allowing pupils to be responsible toward their own learning curve and decide how they would prefer to approach it ^[21]. It must be noted that the theory behind this notion is the theory of social constructivism. This theory entails a focus on the importance of learners to collaborate in order to learn. It also results in the focusing on of other parties, such as parents and teachers, in order to provide necessary support and facilitate the learning process, be it directly or indirectly ^[15].

3. Conclusion

TikTok is a helpful and successful instrument for the purposes of improving language teaching and learning. However, it necessitates an examination of its effects, which will provide all stakeholders in the education sector with significant information.

The practical implications of this are enormous. Practicing speaking will no longer be confined to the classroom, monitored by teachers, or only with their own peers. Instead, it will be further developed in order to include practice sessions with native speakers of English beyond the classroom. This would improve the quality of practice that will be received by students.

Yet, another practical implication that must be considered is that understanding the impact of TikTok would provide an input for relevant authorities, such as the Ministry of Education, in order to analyze the impact of TikTok usage for English classes. It would also be a practical suggestion for students to use TikTok, either as a practice tool or an assessment tool. Social media roles can be expanded in the field of education, not merely by providing information through short videos, but also as a practical tool for practice and assessment. However, more studies and research with relevant parties and reviews from other literature studies must be conducted before a conclusive step can be derived. For the time being, these practical implications require more reviews and must be further scrutinized with more literature studies that are based on ESL experiences around the world.

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