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## Research Article

### TikTok and Grammar Skills in English: Perspectives of English Major Students

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#### ABSTRACT

This descriptive quantitative study aimed at establishing the advantages and disadvantages of watching TikTok to the English grammar skills development of college education students specializing in English enrolled at a state university in Western Visayas during the second term of the academic year 2021-2022. Field experts validated the researcher-structured questionnaire transformed into the Google form was utilized to gather data online considering the government-imposed restrictions related to the pandemic at the time of instrument administration. Findings revealed that the majority of the respondents are 20-year-old, females, and had an average final grade of between 1.75–1.99 in all the English subjects during the last semester of the preceding academic year. A number of them spend 30 minutes to an hour watching TikTok videos that have English grammar-related content in a day. The majority of them had 3 days per week watching TikTok videos with English grammar-related content. Almost all of them revealed that watching TikTok aids them in discovering and comprehending new words in English. However, there were instances that the TikTok videos instead confuse their grammar use. This implies that watching the TikTok application has a more positive impact on the grammar skills in English of college students than its negligible flaws in the process.

**Keywords:** *Advantages and disadvantages, College students, English grammar skills, TikTok*

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### Introduction

English language education in the Philippines was introduced by the Americans after the U.S. defeated Spain in 1889. Until today, English is taught from the primary to the

tertiary levels of education. It is also one of the mediums of instruction in several academic areas (Hajan & Turmudi, 2020). In learning the English language, teaching grammar is one of its major learning areas. The Complete

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Handbook of English Grammar defined it as a set of rules and guidelines that ensure the correct and standard use of the English language. It helps preserve the accuracy of the language by guiding its new learners as well as current users towards standard language use (Learn English, 2022). "Grammar is a system of rules (and exceptions to those rules) that reveals and structures meaning in language and is made up of two things: syntax and morphology. The syntax is concerned with the pattern or sequence of words in sentences, while morphology, as the name suggests, is concerned with the shape or nature of words" (Baden, 2016).

However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, most countries around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions to reduce infections (UNESCO, 2020). Similarly, in the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) have implemented alternative learning modes such as the implementation of a blended learning approach which is the utilization of online or virtual classes and printed or digitized modules to support both synchronous and asynchronous learning. Moreover, CHED suggested strengthening the utilization of online platforms and blended learning, such as but not limited to Google classroom, Messenger, Zoom, Edmodo, Facebook, and YouTube (CHED, 2020).

Social media are Internet-based applications that allow users to create and exchange content (Kaplan, 2015). It yields instant messaging, status updates, and multi-media sharing. It improves interactions and collaboration of groups, builds better social connections, and aids in exchanging information in a web-based environment because it offers plenty of applications (Bartlett-Bragg, 2006).

There are four main purposes for using social media applications, which are entertainment, socialization, informativeness, and academics (Yang, 2020). TikTok has been used globally which exposes everyone to different theories and instructions for the students to consider, especially in the field of learning English as a second language. As TikTok produces a lot of tutorial and lecture videos about improving English, it became part of the students' guide to practice their skills in understanding

and learning the English language. Studies have suggested that utilizing social media for language teaching can have positive effects on learning performance (Yang, 2020). However, limited literature shed light on the utilization of TikTok for learning English, specifically English grammar.

One study has shown that students have positive attitudes towards the use of TikTok videos as aids in learning English; it helps catch students' attention and in eliminating their boredom, especially in EFL class because of its many interesting features (Afidah et al., 2021). Moreover, its application got 45 million downloads globally during the three-month period which surpassed Facebook and WhatsApp as the most popular app (Huang, 2018).

In another study, results revealed that TikTok helped viewers improve their English language skills such as vocabulary and speaking skills through one of the features of this application called duet video where one user can challenge other users to complete a performance or skill presentation (Ichara, 2022). TikTok is also recognized as a knowledge source for nano learning. It is acknowledged as a valuable pedagogical tool for connecting the formal and informal learning gap. Although TikTok is principally an entertainment destination, the platform also has informative videos. TikTokkers showing tips and tricks are the most recurring content type. From a macro perspective, however, it is noticeable that TikTokkers do not follow the ethos of the platform (e.g., dancing) when producing educational content. This deviation demonstrates the intent of TikTokkers to educate than to entertain. Although it is too early to conclude that TikTok can operate as a nano-learning platform, it was established that a substantial amount of content for and engagement from programming learners (Garcia, 2022).

While mostly seen as a leisure app, TikTok has launched educational campaigns and has collaborated with government institutions to encourage users and influencers to produce educational content meant to popularize science communication on the platform. However, misinformation and disinformation have invaded TikTok videos, particularly on COVID-19, and the 2022 Philippine general elections,

with fairly huge engagements, although it is difficult to discern how extensive the reach of such content was. Such content is created, spread, or engaged with by both anonymous and identified accounts, indicating the likelihood that disinformation here is more organic and authentic relative to other platforms (Lanuza et al., 2021).

A recent study has established the usefulness of TikTok as an educational tool and has gathered positive feedback among the respondents after they explored the utilization of the TikTok application as an educational tool for teaching listening. Respondents preferred the use of the TikTok app as a method for learning English compared to the traditional mind map because of its novelty and interesting features (Adnan et al., 2021). Another study was conducted about the utilization of TikTok in enhancing speaking skills. It found that the new application's various features can be implicated in learning English. The respondents, who are teachers and students, find TikTok easy to access information and have fun while learning because of the new experiences that the application offers. In addition to that, they find TikTok interactive and effective which helps the students improve their confidence in speaking and their speaking ability (Hadi et al., 2021).

The foregoing results challenge a look into the perspectives of college education students who are specializing in English at a state university in Western Visayas. Thus, this study aimed to find out the advantages and disadvantages of watching TikTok to the student's learning of English grammar skills, as well as, identify their demographic profile, time spent, and frequency of watching TikTok videos to develop English grammar skills.

## Methods

**Design.** The descriptive quantitative research design was utilized in the study. Descriptive research is described as quantitative research when the researchers gather "quantifiable information that can be tabulated along a continuum in numerical form number of times a person chooses to use a certain feature of a multimedia program, or it can describe categories of information such as gender or patterns

of interaction when using technology in a group situation" (Sahin & Mete, 2021). Hence, this research design is suitable as this study explores the new trend, TikTok mobile application where contents about learning English grammar are available (McCombes, 2022).

Furthermore, this study also utilized the survey research approach. The survey research approach is characterized as a quantitative research technique to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, experiences, or other characteristics of the population by administering a survey or questionnaire to the respondents (Creswell, 2016).

**Participants.** The study was conducted among sophomore college education students specializing in English and enrolled during the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022 at a state university in Western Visayas. The researchers ensured that the respondents have been using social media applications, were familiar with and had viewed TikTok for some time. The total population was utilized in this study as it is a type of purposive sampling technique where you choose to examine the entire population that has a particular set of characteristics (LAERD, 2012). In addition, total population sampling was chosen because the population size is relatively small.

**Instruments.** A quasi-structured questionnaire constructed by the researchers and validated by language teachers and practitioners was used in gathering the data. It was composed of two parts. Part 1 sought answers about the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, family monthly income, average final grade in all English subjects, number of hours in a day, and number of days in a week spent watching English grammar-related TikTok videos. Part 2 asked about the respondents' perspectives on the advantages and disadvantages of watching TikTok on their English grammar skills. After the questionnaire was validated, the administration of this instrument transformed through Google forms was sent to the respondents via Messenger. This was chosen as an option in gathering the data as health protocols were in force, implemented, and observed due to the pandemic. Frequency, percentage, and ranking

were adopted as the statistical tools for computing the data gathered.

## Result and Discussion

**Age.** Table 1 presents the respondents' age frequency distribution. Sixty-seven (67%) of

the respondents were in 20 years of age. Only 1 or 2% were aged 22 years old. This implies that the majority of the participants are Gen Z or those who were born between 1995-2009 and grew up with the trends in technology.

Table 1. Age

Age	f	%
19	9	20
20	30	67
21	5	11
22	1	2
Total	45	100

**Gender.** Table 2 shows that 35 or 78% of the respondents are females, and only 10, or 22% are males. This reflects that most of the respondents are females which further implies

that teaching and specializing in English are attractive to females.

Table 2. Gender

Gender	f	%
Male	10	22
Female	35	78
Total	45	100

**Family Income.** Table 3 reveals that 19 or 42% of the respondents have an average monthly income of PhP5,000 and below followed closely by 14 or 31% who have PhP6,000-PhP20,000 income. Not any of the respondents' families have an average monthly income of over PhP50,000. This means that the

respondents' family income is below or just within the poverty threshold of poor Filipino families for 2021 which is about PhP12,030 or at least PhP8,379 per month for a family of five to meet the basic food requirement (Philippine Statistics Office, 2022).

Table 3. Average Monthly Family Income

Ave. Income (PhP)	f	%
5,000 ≤	19	42
6,000 – 20,000	14	31
21,000 – 35,000	9	20
36,000 – 50,000	3	7
Total	45	100

**Average Final Grade in English.** Fifteen (15) or 33% and 14 or 31% of the respondents have 1.75-1.99 and 1.50-1.74 average grades in all English subjects during the previous semester, respectively. Only 1 or 2% got a 2.50-2.74 grade with none having a grade below 2.74 nor

had anyone above the 1.25 grade. Based on the grading system of most universities in the Philippines, these average grades are equivalent to 88-93 described as Good to Very Good. This means that the respondents are doing well in their English subjects.

Table 4. Average Final Grade in all English Subjects during the Second Semester of their First Year

Ave. Final Grade in English	f	%
1.25 – 1.49	7	16
1.50 – 1.74	14	31
1.75 – 1.99	15	33
2.00 – 2.24	5	11
2.25 – 2.49	3	7
2.50 – 2.74	1	2
Total	45	100

**Time Spent Watching TikTok.** According to the majority of the student respondents, they (39 or 87%) spend 30 minutes to 1 hour watching TikTok videos that have English grammar-related content in a day. Only 2 or 4% of them watch TikTok videos for 4-over 5 hours per day

(Table 5a). This length of time spent by the students watching TikTok is parallel to the time spent by most people around the world. In fact, across the world, the average TikTok user spends 52 minutes on the app each day (Yaqub, 2022).

Table 5a. Time Spent Watching TikTok Videos with English Grammar-Related Content in a Day

Time Spent (in Hours)	f	%
30 minutes – 1 hour	39	87
2-3 hours	4	9
4-5 hours	1	2
5 ≥ hours	1	2
Total	45	100

**Number of Days Spent Watching TikTok.** Data in Table 5b shows that 15 or 33% of the respondents watch TikTok videos with grammar-related lessons 3 days per week. Nine (9) or 20% watch videos 1 to 2 days while 7 or 16%

do it 7 days a week. This result implies that sophomore education students do watch TikTok videos that can help them in their English grammar skills development.

Table 5b. Number of Days Spent Watching TikTok videos with Grammar-Related Topics

Day/Week	f	%
1	9	20
2	9	20
3	15	33
4	3	7
5	2	4
6	-	-
7	7	16
Total	45	100

**Advantages of Watching TikTok to Learning English grammar.** Out of 45 respondents, 44 or 98% stated that watching TikTok videos aids them in discovering and comprehending new words in English. Forty-three (43) or 96% said that it is an interacting platform that improves their speaking ability. This

was followed by 39 or 87% who revealed that these TikTok videos with English grammar content provide them with basic and sufficient knowledge in sentence construction. This result confirms a recent study that concluded that the use of TikTok application as a medium for pronunciation learning in English has many

benefits and is effective in helping students in learning activities (Pratiwi et al., 2021) and improving their speaking and grammar skills (Cagas, 2022).

*Table 6a Advantages of Watching TikTok in Developing English Grammar Skills of the Respondents*

Advantages	f	%
clarifies verb tenses	17	38
gives examples of the correct use of numbers (singular/ plural)	30	67
guides the proper way of using personal pronouns	25	56
provides basic and sufficient knowledge in sentence construction	39	87
improves speaking ability	43	96
improves English writing skills	27	60
motivates to enhance my English grammar skills	40	89
aids in discovering and comprehending new words in English	44	98
makes one competent and confident about spelling	37	82
gives an insight into the technicality of the English language	29	64
lets one learn English grammar skills in an effective and efficient manner	35	78

**Disadvantages of Watching TikTok to Learning English grammar.** Table 6b presents the disadvantages watching TikTok gives to the English grammar skills of the respondents. Twenty-eight (28) or 62% of them said that watching the video confuses them on the tenses of the verb while 20 or 44% stated that it misleads them on the proper way of using personal pronouns.

On the other hand, 1 or 2% and 2 or 4% declared that it does not help them in discovering and comprehending new English words, and does not help them improve their speaking ability, respectively. This revelation is related to the results of a study that established that watching and posting TikTok videos are time-consuming activities and harm students' academic achievements (Herath, 2020).

*Table 6b. Disadvantages of Watching TikTok in Developing English Grammar Skills of the Respondents*

Disadvantages	f	%
confuses on the tenses of the verb	28	62
does not give examples of the correct use of numbers (singular/plural)	15	33
misleads on the proper way of using personal pronouns	20	44
does not provide basic and sufficient knowledge of sentence construction	6	13
an interactive platform that does not improve speaking ability	2	4
does not help improve writing skills using the English language	18	40
distracts one from improving English grammar skills	5	11
does not help in discovering and comprehending new words in English	1	2
makes one feels discouraged about spelling	8	18
does not give an insight into the technicality of the English language	16	36
lets me learn English grammar skills in an ineffective and time-consuming manner	10	22

## Conclusion

The integration and relevance of social media applications such as TikTok, indeed, have an impact on the blended teaching and learning modality of university students, particularly during the pandemic. It contains topics that help supplement the discussions made by the

teacher or as a self-learning instrument complementary to the modules prepared by teachers. It has supported college students, especially those enrolled in English classes, in understanding concepts, instructions, and rules in grammar, and the development of macro skills. Thus, it is established that students find the

TikTok application advantageous in learning English grammar. However, it also has flaws as some of these videos confuse and mislead rather than support the challenges of college students that they find less credible than books.

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