

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English is an international language used globally for various purposes such as social, political, business, and academic purposes, so learning it is certainly an important thing. In Indonesia, learning English is encouraged at every level of education, and it is not only can be done in the classroom or is limited to textbooks only. One of the other ways is by utilizing other media or circumstance that is using gadgets. Gadgets today are certainly familiar and have even become an important part of people's daily lives. With gadgets, many things can be done in the palm of a hand, one of them for academic purposes, specifically in English learning. Fokatea and Widagsa (2024) mentioned that people can easily learn English in this digital era with available media, hence using gadgets through social media is one of the approaches to learning English (Novitasari & Addinna, 2022). Some social media used for English learning include YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and some others (Hanim, 2021). Social media is popular among young adults, and according to Panggabean (2024), stated that the dominant age of social media users is 18-24 years old.

Currently, one of the most widely used social media applications, especially in Indonesia, is TikTok. Based on survey data reported by Dixon (2024) in Statista's website about TikTok users, as of July 2024, Indonesia ranked first in the 'countries with the largest TikTok audience' category with 157.6 million users. The popularity of the TikTok application in Indonesia indicates that there are benefits perceived by users that generate trust to use it. TikTok is a global application where users can watch and create short videos on various topics (TikTok, n.d.) and lets users create 15 seconds to 5 minute videos (Fata et al., 2023). The audience's interests in a particular content will display similar content on the For You feed (popularly known as FYP or For

You Page), and this is what is meant by the function of the algorithm that are often based on a number of factors, such as user interactions, video information, also device and account settings (TikTok, 2024). TikTok as a video-bases platform is used for entertainment, but at this time the use of TikTok serves more than just entertainment purposes, it can be used as an English learning medium as well (Novitasari & Addinna, 2022).

The phenomenon related to the use of the TikTok also occurred at a university in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. Some students were seen inside and outside the campus environment using TikTok with various purposes of activity, such as making viral dance videos for having fun, making shopping transactions using the live TikTok feature, search or looking for food recommendations, and many others. However, based on the preliminary study through observation, it was found that some students at a university in Tasikmalaya use TikTok not only for entertainment but also for learning English. They follow various language challenges practicing their reading, pronunciation, and increase vocabulary, listen to native speakers through daily content or TikTok live, find English slangs that are often used by native English speakers, and so many other activities.

A study on TikTok for learning English was also conducted previously by Pratami and Syafryadin (2023) that explored students' opinion on TikTok application for majoring in English at a university in Dehasen Bengkulu. The results of the study showed that students strongly agree regarding the use of TikTok as a medium for learning English. Suciani et al. (2023) also conducted a study that found out whether TikTok was used to learn English by college students' and their perceptions of TikTok to learn English. Although none of the participants used TikTok directly as an affordance to learn English, they had a positive perception of TikTok application in EFL context. Similarly, Novitasari and Addinna (2022) also investigated students' perception and whether TikTok can help students learn English independently. The result is that students have a positive perspective on the

TikTok application which is used as a medium for learning English, and the way they do English learning on TikTok is through English conversational dialogues with video creators, pronunciation learning by imitating video creators, listening to English native speakers to practice listening skills, and many more. TikTok as a platform for learning English, as in Hamsia (2024), students can directly try to practice their ability in pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary through their conversation using the duet feature in #duetchallenge.

Considering the rapid growth of social media, particularly TikTok, which has become highly popular among the younger generation, it is essential to understand how this platform is utilized for educational purposes, especially in English language learning. Drawing this phenomenon and supported by previous studies, the present research aim to investigate the perceptions of undergraduate students at a university in Tasikmalaya who use TikTok as a medium for learning English. Given students' high level of interest in TikTok, exploring their perception of using the platform for language learning is both relevant and timely. This research is expected to provide insights into how a widely used social media platform can be integrated into an educational context. This is a part of the development of mobile technology that brings changes to the way students learn English with one of the Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) approaches, which allows language learning to be done with mobile devices in a flexible and accessible way through the TikTok platform.

In reviewing the existing literature, it is evident that the most previous studies on the use of TikTok in language learning employed qualitative methods, involved relatively small sample sizes, and did not utilize theoretical models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This presents as significant gap in the research. In contrast, the present research adopts a quantitative approach, employs the TAM framework to provide a structured analysis of user acceptance, and involved sample of 124

undergraduate students. Thus, this study contributes to the literature by offering the more generalizable and theory-driven understanding how TikTok is perceived as a tool for English language learning. Moreover, the findings are anticipated to enrich academic discourse on the integration of technology in language education and provide valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and institutions aiming to design more innovative digital learning strategies through social media.

B. Formulation of the Problem

The formulation of the problem is “What are the perceptions of undergraduate students in Tasikmalaya about the TikTok application for learning English?”

C. Operational Definitions

1. Undergraduate students' perception

The opinions and attitudes of students enrolled in an undergraduate program at a university in Tasikmalaya regarding the use of TikTok for learning English measured using five constructs of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989).

2. TikTok

TikTok is a short video-based social media platform used to access English educational content, and its features are utilized to develop English language skills.

3. Learning English

Learning English refers to the process of undergraduate students increasing their understanding of English skills including listening, reading, speaking, and writing through TikTok.

4. Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989)

The Technology Acceptance Model as a framework used to understand undergraduate students' perceptions of TikTok for English learning that focuses on the perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude toward using, behavioral intention, and actual use

D. Aims of the Study

The study aims to examine undergraduate students' perceptions of the current widely used social media application, TikTok, for English language learning.

E. Significances of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

This research provides an overview of the perception of undergraduate students, whether they have good or bad perception. This research also provides additional contribution to the literature of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) framework especially in the topic of TikTok application for English language learning and also technology for English language learning as a part of Technology-Enhance Language Learning (TELL) that possible to get the insight of the way to utilize technology for English learning.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, this research is expected to provide valuable information for English language students and educators about integrating TikTok for English language learning and become a separate consideration for applying it. The research also provides empirical data related to the perception of undergraduate students of TikTok for learning English, and for the future researchers who have the same interest; it might be the one of the data reference.

3. Empirical Significance

Empirically, this research broadens the researcher's knowledge regarding short video-based applications that can be utilized to learn English. In addition, this research is also useful for practicing academic writing for researcher.