

**Exploring EFL Learners' Perceptions of TikTok Speaking Challenge Trends  
and Their Speaking Confidence**

**THESIS**

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**Exploring EFL Learners' Perceptions of TikTok Speaking Challenge Trends and  
Their Speaking Confidence**

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**Motto:**

**“ Try everything that you want, because in the end we only regret the chances we didn’t take”**

**“Indeed, with hardship there is ease”**

**“I risked my mother's life to be born into this world, so it's impossible that I am meaningless”**

**(writer)**

**Among all the pages in this thesis, the Page sheet is the most meaningful, because this is where the author conveys a sense of gratitude that cannot be expressed in words. Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, this thesis is dedicated by the author to:**

- 1. First, the author would like to express extraordinary gratitude to the author's parents, father Arif Salji and mother Susi Mawati, as remarkable parents who always provide care with prayers lifted to the heavens so that the author can face the world, one of which is completing the writing of this thesis. A mother who never tires of giving prayers after each of her prayers, and a father who constantly works to support his children, so one form of the author's devotion to both parents is by completing what has been started.**
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## ABSTRACT

Nabilah. 2026. *Exploring EFL Learners' Perceptions of Tiktok Speaking Challenges Trends and Their Speaking Confidence*. Thesis, English Education Study Program, Sarjana Degree (S1), Faculty of Teacher Training and Education *Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang*. Advisors: (I) Hj. Asti Gumartifa, S.Pd., M.Pd, (II) Dian Septarini, S.Pd., M.Pd.

The purpose of this study is to explore how speaking challenges on TikTok affect the speaking confidence of EFL learners. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. The population of this study consists of EFL learners who actively participate in English speaking challenges on TikTok. The sample was selected through purposive sampling based on participants' accessibility and willingness to participate. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires to obtain in-depth information about learners' experiences and perceptions. The data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis by categorizing the answers into relevant themes. Findings from this study reveal that speaking challenges on TikTok have a significant impact on learners' speaking confidence. The research results indicate several main themes, including the development of confidence through repeated practice, reduction of speaking anxiety, increased willingness to communicate, as well as improvements in pronunciation and speaking fluency. The opportunity to record and re-record videos allows learners to evaluate their performance and gradually build confidence. Additionally, students become more comfortable speaking in front of the camera, which helps reduce nervousness and fear of negative evaluation. However, some challenges are still encountered, such as limited vocabulary and social comparison, which can affect learners' confidence. It could be concluded that TikTok speaking challenges provide a positive contribution to improving EFL learners' speaking confidence through continuous practice and supportive digital environments, although some challenges remain.

**Key words:** *TikTok Speaking Challenges, Speaking Confidence, EFL Learners.*

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The Researcher

Nabilah

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The chapter present, background of the research, formulation of the problem, objective of the research, and significant of the reseach

### **A. Background of the Research**

The ability of speaking English is one of the main skills that must be mastered by foreign language learners (EFL). Speaking is a productive skill that is very important in daily communication, whether in academic, professional, or social contexts. However, in reality, many EFL students face various obstacles in developing their speaking abilities. One of the main obstacles often encountered is low self-confidence when speaking English. According to Bandura (1977) theory of self-efficacy, learners' belief in their own ability greatly influences their willingness to perform a task, including speaking in a foreign language. Learners with low self-efficacy or self-confidence tend to avoid communication because they fear making mistakes or being negatively evaluated. This is supported by Tridinanti (2018) who found that EFL students' speaking achievement is strongly correlated with their self-confidence level students with higher confidence perform better and participate more actively in speaking activities.

MacIntyre et al. (1998) emphasize that "self-confidence plays a crucial role in second language speaking success, as learners with higher confidence levels are more willing to take risks and engage in communication despite potential errors". This statement indicates that self-confidence not only affects students' courage to speak but also influences the quality of their interactions and the progress of their language skills. Therefore, building and enhancing students' self-confidence becomes one of the main focuses in English language learning, particularly in the speaking aspect.

In addition to self-confidence, speaking anxiety is also a significant inhibiting factor in learning English. Utari et al. (2023) explain that many EFL learners experience speaking anxiety that prevents them from actively participating in oral activities, which in turn reduces their practice opportunities and slows down their language development. This anxiety often arises from the fear of making mistakes, embarrassment, or social pressure when speaking in public. Supporting this, Gumartifa and Syahri (2021) found that many Indonesian EFL learners experience high levels of speaking anxiety due to limited vocabulary, lack of exposure to authentic English communication, and fear of negative evaluation from peers and teachers. Their study also revealed that even students with adequate grammatical knowledge tend to hesitate and remain silent during speaking tasks because of psychological pressure and classroom environment.

These findings indicate that speaking anxiety is not merely an internal emotional issue but also influenced by external factors such as instructional approach and peer dynamics. This condition causes students to feel uncomfortable and reluctant to practice speaking, resulting in their skills not developing optimally. In the context of foreign language learning, overcoming speaking anxiety becomes a particular challenge for both teachers and students. Therefore, approaches and learning media are needed that can create a comfortable, enjoyable learning atmosphere and support the improvement of students' self-confidence.

Research conducted by Yulita and Hertiki (2023) revealed that TikTok as a learning medium received positive perceptions from EFL students because it provides an interactive and enjoyable environment that enhances speaking confidence. Similarly, Rahni and Ayudhia (2025) found that the "one-minute challenge" video project on TikTok significantly improved students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and self-confidence through continuous speaking practice. These findings indicate that TikTok not only facilitates the development

of speaking proficiency but also promotes self-confidence through repeated practice and self-reflection via recorded videos.

In addition to its role in improving language skills and building self-confidence, TikTok also proves to be highly beneficial in fostering learning motivation. Unlike traditional learning tools, TikTok combines entertainment and education through its short-video format and creative features, which naturally capture learners' attention. The exposure to diverse accents, intonations, and authentic language use on the platform not only makes the learning experience more engaging but also broadens learners' listening comprehension and helps them adapt their speaking to real-world contexts. Because TikTok videos are short and easy to replay, learners can repeatedly practice difficult words or expressions, mimicking pronunciation and rhythm through techniques such as shadowing, which contributes to fluency development. This practice is further reinforced by the interactive nature of the platform, where features like comments, duet, and stitch enable learners to collaborate with peers, receive feedback, and observe different speaking styles.

At the same time, the option to record and re-record videos provides a safe space for experimentation, allowing learners to speak without the pressure of real-time interaction and gradually reducing their speaking anxiety. A study by Ilham et al. (2024) found that 82% of EFL learners reported higher motivation and engagement in speaking practice when using TikTok, as its interactive features make the learning process more enjoyable and less anxiety-inducing. Beyond these practical aspects, TikTok creates an enjoyable and creative learning atmosphere where language production feels meaningful rather than forced. Learners are not only motivated to practice consistently outside of the classroom but also encouraged by the social recognition they receive in the form of likes, comments, and shares.

This element of social engagement provides an extra layer of motivation, making the process of learning more rewarding. Recent studies strongly support these observations. Annapis et al. (2024) reported that TikTok significantly improved learners' vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence in speaking English. Similarly, Setiowati et al. (2024) found that TikTok-based project learning effectively increased both students' motivation and speaking performance compared to traditional approaches. Ferstephanie and Pratiwi (2021) also demonstrated that learners' post-test speaking scores were noticeably higher after incorporating TikTok into their practice.

Meanwhile, research by Zuraini et al. (2024) emphasized that learners viewed TikTok as easy to use, highly engaging, and effective in maintaining their motivation to keep learning outside class time. In addition, Fauzi (2025) highlighted the importance of TikTok duet and stitch features, which not only made the learning process more enjoyable but also significantly boosted learners' confidence in speaking practice. Taken together, these findings confirm that TikTok should not merely be regarded as a platform for entertainment but as a powerful and dynamic tool for language learning one that nurtures intrinsic motivation, reduces anxiety, and supports continuous development of speaking skills in meaningful and authentic ways.

In the context of English language learning in Indonesia, many students still experience difficulties in developing their speaking skills. One of the main reasons is their limited vocabulary mastery, which makes it hard for them to express their ideas clearly and confidently. Gumartifa and Syahri (2021) state that vocabulary is an essential part of language learning because it supports all language skills, including speaking. They also explain that learning vocabulary is not only about memorizing words but also about using appropriate learning strategies so that the words can be remembered and used effectively. When students do not apply proper vocabulary learning strategies, their vocabulary knowledge tends to be limited. As a result, they often hesitate when speaking

because they cannot easily recall the words they need. This situation can reduce their confidence and prevent their speaking ability from developing optimally in real communication. In response to this issue, recent studies by Saputri et al. (2024) and (Ningroom and Mandarani (2024) suggest that the use of digital media such as TikTok can serve as an alternative platform to support students' speaking development. Through this platform, students are provided with more opportunities to practice speaking beyond the classroom. Moreover, repeated video performances allow learners to actively retrieve and apply vocabulary that they have learned, which strengthens their lexical mastery. The interactive features of TikTok also enable students to receive feedback from peers and reflect on their performance. This process not only supports vocabulary development but also gradually enhances students' confidence and speaking abilities in a more relaxed and enjoyable environment.

Nevertheless, although the potential of TikTok as a learning medium has begun to be recognized, there is still little research that specifically examines the impact of TikTok speaking challenges on EFL students' speaking self-confidence in depth, especially in the context of learning in Indonesia. In addition, most of the existing research is still quantitative in nature and has not extensively explored students' subjective experiences in participating in TikTok speaking challenges. In fact, a deep understanding of students' experiences and perceptions is crucial for developing effective learning strategies that align with their needs. Therefore, this study is important to address this gap and provide a clearer picture of how TikTok speaking challenges can affect students' psychological aspects and speaking abilities.

Based on the above description, it could be concluded that TikTok speaking challenges have great potential as a learning medium that can enhance EFL students' speaking confidence. This study aims to analyze in depth the impact of using TikTok speaking challenges on EFL students' speaking confidence. The results of this research were expected to contribute to the development of

innovative English learning methods that were relevant to technological advancements and aligned with the needs of today's digital generation.

### **B. Formulation Of the Problem**

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate these issues in depth through the following research questions:

1. What were the specific aspects of speaking confidence (such as anxiety reduction, fluency, or willingness to speak) that were most affected by TikTok speaking challenges?
2. What challenges did EFL learners face when participating in TikTok challenges related to their speaking confidence?

### **C. Objective of the Research**

The objectives of this research were designed to address the main issues related to EFL learners' participation in TikTok speaking challenges. Based on the research questions, this study aimed to identify the specific aspects of speaking confidence, such as anxiety reduction, fluency, or willingness to speak, that were most affected by TikTok speaking challenges. In addition, this study also aimed to explore the challenges faced by EFL learners when participating in TikTok speaking challenges related to their speaking confidence.

#### **D. Significance of the Research**

The results of this research expected to be useful both theoretically and practically for the following parties, as follows:

1. The researcher herself

This study enhanced the researcher's understanding of language learning and teaching. It provided deeper insight into how TikTok can influence students' speaking confidence. The research also increased awareness of the role of digital media in language development. Furthermore, it offered practical experience in applying qualitative research methods. Finally, it improved the researcher's ability to analyze and interpret research findings.

2. The educators

This study was significant for educators as it highlighted TikTok as a creative and practical tool to support English speaking skills. By integrating TikTok into teaching practices, teachers were able to create meaningful and engaging activities that allowed students to practice speaking more naturally. The platform also helped reduce speaking anxiety, build confidence, and maintain motivation through consistent practice. Therefore, TikTok offered an effective alternative to traditional methods and supported a more student-centered learning environment.

3. Other researcher

The results of this study were expected to benefit future researchers as a reference for further investigations. This research contributed additional literature on the use of social media in language learning, particularly in relation to speaking confidence. Future studies could apply these findings in different contexts, explore other platforms, or examine the impact of digital tools on other language skills. Overall, this study enriched existing knowledge and opened opportunities for further research in educational technology and EFL teaching.

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