

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF TIKTOK AS A LEARNING MEDIUM TO DEVELOP YOUNGSTERS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

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Abstract. The influence of TikTok, with its engaging content, immersive experience, and interactive features among youngsters, has made it an appealing platform for them to connect with English-learning videos from numerous English content creators. This research aims to answer two research questions: 1. What are the varieties of English learning types on TikTok that youngsters use? 2. How does TikTok influence the development of English Proficiency among Youngsters? The writer applied the descriptive qualitative method to answer those two questions, including 55 respondents who fall into the Gen Z category. After analyzing the data, the writer found that youngsters who learn English from TikTok experienced and saw the varieties of English learning types on TikTok: Short-form videos, language challenges, native speaker videos, and interactive learning. It has also been figured out how the TikTok application as an English learning medium has shown its influence in developing youngsters' English proficiency, including the influence of TikTok towards youngsters' communication competence, creativity, critical thinking, self-directed learning, and English learning and teaching tool.

Keywords: *English proficiency, TikTok influence, Youngsters*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media platforms have altered how individuals communicate and interact. Youngsters frequently use social media for several functions; building interaction, sharing information, conversing, collaborating, learning, socializing, and seeking amusement (Otchie & Pedaste, 2020: 889). Since online learning has been carried out, it has caused a radical increase in the use of mobile applications in teaching and learning in various educational institutions. Media used in the learning must adapt to changing trends and booms, such as TikTok application. This social media platform application allows users to upload videos with various editing features. TikTok application can be used with a mobile phone or m-learning.

Initially launched in 2016, TikTok has gained tremendous popularity worldwide. Geysler (2023) in Davaasuren, et al (2024: 77) mentions that TikTok has become the most downloaded among other social media applications. It is a short-form video-sharing app that allows users to create, share, and discover contents across various genres, including comedy, music, and education. With its user-friendly interface, extensive reach, and engaging contents, TikTok has become a source of entertainment and has shown potential as a tool for language learning and proficiency development.

TikTok's unique features, such as the ability to create and share short videos, have made it a valuable medium for language learners seeking to

improve their English proficiency. Warini et. al. (2021) in Fitria (2023a) found that Tiktok provides five types of language lesson commonly accessed by users; pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, common mistakes, and facts on English language. These lessons are attractively created with appealing back sound, images, and other editing features. Users can access a wide range of content, including tutorials, language challenges, pronunciation exercises, and conversational videos. These videos expose learners to authentic English language usage, colloquial expressions, and cultural references, enhancing their language skills engagingly and interactively. Susanto & Suparmi (2023: 55) mention that despite its various qualities and forms of content, TikTok has assisted English language vocabulary development and contextual comprehension in grammar.

TikTok videos' visual and auditory nature provides learners with an immersive language learning experience. They can observe native English speakers' body language, facial expressions, and intonation patterns, improving their listening and speaking skills. Additionally, the platform's algorithmic recommendations expose users to diverse content, allowing them to encounter different accents, dialects, and vocabulary variations, further contributing to their overall language development. Further, Numerous anecdotal accounts and emerging research studies suggest the positive impact of TikTok on English proficiency development. In their study, Vai et. al. (2023) suggest that TikTok facilitates student users with various content to satisfy their curiosity, store lessons of academic writing, and motivation in learning. This is supported by the significant role of TikTok's interactive features, such as comment sections and duet collaborations, in fostering language practice and social interaction among learners.

Despite its negative influences such as distraction, addiction, time-consuming, bullying, and privacy insecurity, TikTok is still being accessed because of its attraction, effectiveness, relevance, and motivation in learning (Rasyid et. al., 2023: 345). TikTok's popularity among young users has made it an appealing platform for English teachers to incorporate into classroom activities. Educators have utilized TikTok to design interactive lessons, create language challenges, and facilitate peer-to-peer language exchange opportunities. These pedagogical approaches leverage students' interest in the platform and promote autonomous learning, creativity, and collaboration in the language classroom.

TikTok's emergence as a global social media platform has demonstrated its potential as a powerful tool for developing English proficiency. Its engaging content, immersive experience, and interactive features provide learners with unique opportunities to enhance their language skills enjoyably and authentically. In their research, Rasyid et. al. (2023: 347) found that 53,4% of their respondents enjoy using TikTok for educational purposes. Further, 88% claim that TikTok has been their most-used tool to help them learn English, especially in acquiring new vocabulary. This innovative platform can revolutionize traditional language acquisition methods and significantly improve individuals' English language development.

Based on all the explanations and facts stated above, the writers were interested to research the influence of Tiktok towards youngsters in developing their English, According to a study conducted by Chen and Wang (2020) about exploring the use of TikTok in English as a foreign language instruction, TikTok

has become a significant platform for language learners due to its engaging and interactive nature. The study explored the impact of TikTok on language learning by surveying a group of English language learners who actively used the platform. Results showed that TikTok played a positive role in enhancing youngsters' English language proficiency. At last, the concepts and thoughts stated above led the writers to conduct this research.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative approach to attain more detailed information about TikTok's influence as a medium in developing English proficiency among youngsters. According to Bogdan & Biklen (1982) in Sugiyono (2013: 13), qualitative design focuses on describing a natural setting in a society. Qualitative research explores, understands, and interprets social phenomena in depth in their natural setting. Researchers use a qualitative research methodology to gather richer information and get a more detailed picture of an issue, case, or event. They wanted to explore the why and how of a situation, not just what, where, and when. Qualitative research consists of the following methods: logic, ethnography, discourse analysis, case studies, open interviews, participant observation, counseling therapy, grounded theory, biography, comparative methods, introspection, casuistics, focus groups, literary criticism, meditation practice, historical research, etc.

The first instrument was observation. Thomas (2003) argued that gathering information through observation involves watching and/or listening to events, then recording what occurs. Observation was used as a reflection to evaluate the learning process so that it could improve the teaching and learning process. Observations were made to identify the influence of using the TikTok application, especially in developing English proficiency among youngsters, and how the situation was during the process. The second instrument was a Google Form questionnaire. This instrument was used to know the strengths and weaknesses, the implementation, advantages, and obstacles when the learners utilized TikTok to develop their English proficiency. This Google form questionnaire was filled out by the students of EFL learners who were mostly at secondary schools and commonly used TikTok daily. The researchers used a closed-ended Google form questionnaire suitable for this research purpose. In the questionnaire, the writers asked some closed-ended and some open-ended questions. This type of questioning is advantageous because predetermined closed-ended responses can provide helpful information to support theories. The researchers classified the data in narrative form, analyzed the data that had been obtained, and reported the results that had been obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After presenting the findings, the writers would like to explain them. The data obtained from the respondents were interpreted by the writers based on their answers to some questions asked in the online questionnaire.

A. Varieties of English Learning Types on TikTok

In order to answer the first research question, the writers would like to explain the varieties of English learning types on TikTok that have already been found and classified by the writers. The explanation consisted of the theories and examples intended to enrich the reader's knowledge.

Short-form videos have become TikTok's most common type of English learning media. Geysler (2023) in Davaasuren et al (2024: 77) states that short-form videos are video content that lasts less than 60 seconds. The most extended duration of this type of video content is three minutes.

Do you prefer watching English learning videos on TikTok that are less than 60 seconds because it is easy for you to scroll through and watch multiple videos in one sitting without dedicating a ton of time?

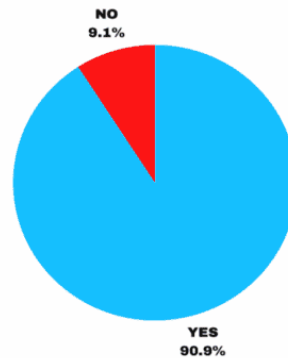


Figure 1. Response on the use of short-form videos

Figure 1 shows that 90,9% (50) of respondents prefer watching English learning videos on TikTok with a duration of less than 60 seconds, and 9,1% chose the longer ones. TikTok has many users who scroll and enjoy watching reels that interest them. Users can quickly skip videos that are not interesting or not beneficial. In contrast, they can repeatedly watch reels that fulfill their needs, especially those of funny or entertaining, informational, musical, or learning content. A study by Yang et al (2019: 340) mentions that short videos are uncomplicated and distributed quickly. Short videos appeal more to everyday viewers than lengthy videos; anyone can create them easily. This result proved that most youngsters preferred watching English learning videos less than 60 seconds long, so they did not have to spend more time sitting just to watch one video.

Do you find more short-form English learning videos (less than 60 seconds) than long-form ones (more than 60 seconds) on your For You Page?

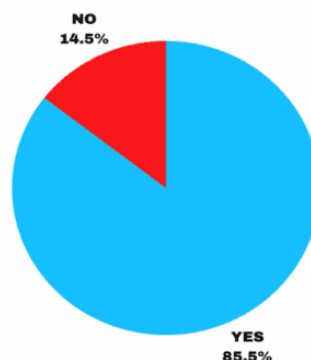


Figure 2. Response to users' preferences for videos on their page

Figure 2 shows that 85,5% (47) of respondents found their preference for short-form videos suggested to their page, and 14,5% (8) of respondents did

not have any suggested videos of their preference. This shows that TikTok can also read users' algorithms regarding the preferred video duration. The result proves that youngsters are more interested in watching videos for a short duration. Bsharat and Hamarsyah (2023: 78) stated that TikTok's short-form video format is perfect for youngsters who search for practical English conversation skills. TikTok can read and suggest English topics that the learners might be interested in and need. These contents motivate youngsters to explore their English proficiency by watching, imitating, and even creating short videos of their practices. By doing so, youngsters can focus on improving their pronunciation, fluency, and sentence structure.

Do you watch many English learning challenges (for examples: Pronunciation challenge, vocabulary challenge, conversation challenge, etc) that appear on your TikTok FYP more than once?

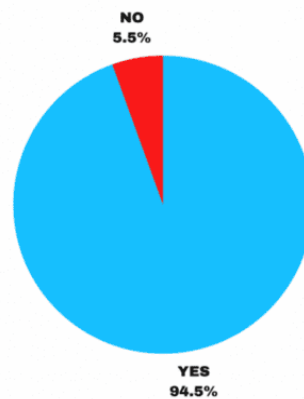


Figure 3. Response on watching videos with English learning challenges

According to the diagram in Figure 3, 94,5% (52) of the respondents watch videos that provide English learning challenges. Meanwhile, 5,5% (3) of the respondents did not find or watch videos with the challenge. This is evidence that language challenge on TikTok is fun and interesting. Videos with these challenges can steal youngsters' attention and keep them watch the videos several times to understand and solve the challenges. Language challenge can also help increase youngsters' ability to memorize what has been learned from the video. TikTok's language challenges can be an excellent tool for language learners, allowing them to practice their English conversation skills through short video responses to various prompts. Students can benefit from the feedback and engagement from the TikTok community, helping them improve their language skills in a fun and dynamic way (Bsharat and Hamarsyah, 2023: 79).

Have you ever challenged yourself to duet or answer English challenges from English Learning content creators on Tiktok by using stitch feature?



Figure 4. Response on youngsters' reaction to the challenge

Based on the diagram of Figure 4, 54,5% (30) of respondents dared to take the challenge given in the videos and 45,5% (25) did not. The results project that most of the sample have ever challenged themselves using the stitch feature to answer or to duet with many language challenges on TikTok. Language challenges on TikTok can be fun for youngsters to improve their English conversational abilities. These challenges often involve creating short videos responding to specific questions or prompts, such as describing something or talking about an experience. These challenges allow youngsters to practice and improve their English proficiency and gain feedback from other users. Students can leverage TikTok's language challenges to improve their English conversation skills in a fun and interactive way. These challenges, which often involve creating short videos around specific themes, provide opportunities for students to practice their language skills and get feedback from other users (Bsharat & Hamarsyah, 2023: 79).

Do you follow a lot of native English learning content creators on Tiktok?



Figure 5. Response to youngsters following native speaker content creators

According to the diagram presented in Figure 5, 52,7% (29) of the respondents follow native speaker content creators' TikTok accounts. Meanwhile, 47,3% (26) of them did not. Most respondents mentioned that they followed more than 10 native English content creators, and a few followed fewer than five native English content creators. This exposure helps youngsters freely follow any English content creators on TikTok they want. This English learning

type on TikTok could open the access for youngsters with natural daily expressions of English conversations, colloquial expressions, pronunciation, intonation, and informal language that may not be covered extensively in textbooks or traditional language learning materials (Bsharat & Hamarshah, 2023: 79). Through TikTok, users can discover and learn about various aspects of English-speaking cultures, such as music, fashion, and cuisine. This exposure can enhance their cultural awareness and comprehension, helping them better connect with English-speaking communities.

There are a lot of native speakers who create English Learning videos on TikTok. Do you feel your English is developed better when you watch native speakers' English learning videos?

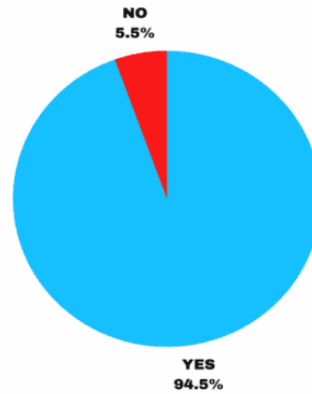


Figure 6. Response on youngsters' development of English proficiency

With its massive user base and diverse content, TikTok provides an ideal platform for practicing English grammar. Native English speakers can create explanatory videos on various subjects, helping their audience improve their English language skills while sharing their knowledge and interact with others (Bsharat and Hamarsyah (2023: 79). By watching and engaging with these videos, English language learners who watch the native speakers' contents on English language learning can improve their listening skills and gain exposure to various accents and dialects. These videos can also serve as a model for conversational practice, helping students learn how to interact with others effectively—according to the diagram of Figure 6, 94,5% (52) of respondents claimed that their English language proficiency has developed by following the English learning videos of the native speaker content creators. However, 5,5% (3) of them mentioned that they have not developed their English from the native speaker videos. This shows that the content of native speakers on TikTok who use English in their natural, everyday conversations has exposed viewers to real-life language use. This means that watching English learning videos that native speakers create can lead to developing English proficiency among Youngsters. However, some youngsters still found learning from the native speakers difficult for specific reasons, like the difficulty in pronouncing English words correctly at a natural speed.

Do you sometimes respond to English learning videos on TikTok by commenting the videos or replying to others' comments?



Figure 7. Response to youngsters' interaction on TikTok

Jessica (2022) stated that TikTok's interactive elements, including the capability to comment on and respond to other users' videos, can help build a community of language learners who can support one another in honing their English conversational abilities. According to the diagram of Figure 7, 54,5% (30) of the respondents claimed they interacted when watching videos on TikTok. They commented on interesting videos and built communication with other users. Meanwhile, 45,5% (25) of respondents did not use to give comments on TikTok videos. This explains that youngsters do not just watch English learning videos on TikTok, but at the same time, they also respond to the videos by commenting or replying to other users' comments. Interactions built by commenting in English can be habitual practices of learning English and help develop learners' English proficiency.

Have you ever participated or interacted in a TikTok live where the content creator talks about English learning?



Figure 8. Response to TikTok live video participation

Figure 8 shows that 50,9% (28) of respondents also watched and participated in live videos, and 49,1% (27) did not have live interaction. This result shows that youngsters do not just watch the English learning videos created and uploaded beforehand. Youngsters also watch an English live stream on TikTok. By using this live feature, youngsters can directly participate with the content creators and other users who are also learn English from the videos. Youngsters who dare to learn English from live videos and interact with other learners should have high motivation to develop their English proficiency.

They can improve their fluency of English language production if they use it in direct interactions.

B. The Influence of TikTok on Youngsters' English Proficiency

In order to answer the second research question, the writer would like to explain the kinds of Influence of TikTok among youngsters that are already found and classified. The explanation consisted of the theory and also some examples that were intended to enrich the readers' knowledge.

Do you learn pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm in English on TikTok?

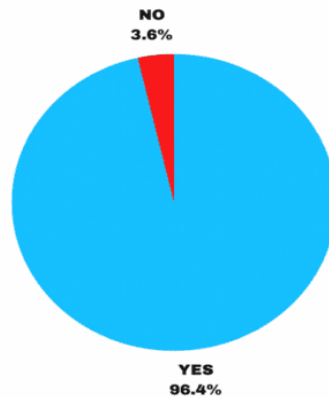


Figure 9. Response on language aspects learned

Figure 9 shows that 96,4% (53) of the respondents learned some aspects of language such as pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. However, 3,6% (2) of them did not feel the influence of TikTok videos on those language aspects. This data show that the majority of youngsters use TikTok and get influenced by the lessons of English learning videos, especially in their pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. Short-form video content on pronunciation has become one mostly watched by language learners (Fitria, 2023b: 1). It is an important element in spoken language learning. Contents with English tongue twister practices and English word pronunciation can help improve those aspects of the language. Chen and Wang (2020) stated that learners can utilize the TikTok application to develop their communication competence, seeing that thousands of English learning contents focused on the pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm as well as a study done by Hambandima, Bire & Feliks (2014) stated that oral English practice is the only requirement to be fluent.

Are your English communication competence (Pronunciation, intonation, rhythm) improved after learning English on TikTok?

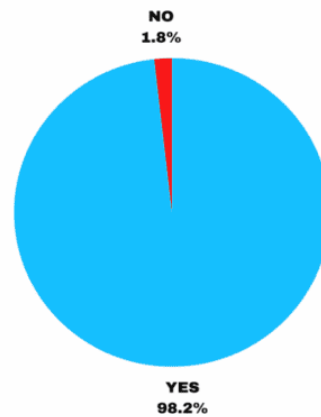


Figure 10. Response on developing English communicative competence

According to Figure 10, 98,2% (54) of respondents believed they gained influence in their oral communicative competence of English, mainly on pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. On the other hand, only 1,8% (1) of respondents did not get the influence. The positive influence experienced by the youngsters is in line with a study by Kholijah et al (2024) stating that TikTok has the potential to be used to develop communicative competence. TikTok can aid learners in improving their communication competence.

Are you good enough at using TikTok features (Q&A, stitch, duet, etc) especially when you want to learn English?

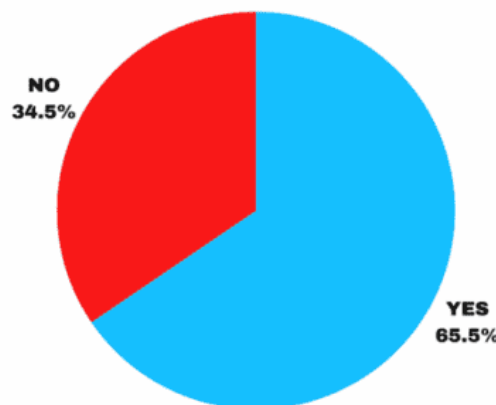


Figure 11. Response on the use of TikTok features for learning English

Figure 11 shows that 65,5% (36) of respondents experienced using some features provided by TikTok to explore their critical thinking, especially when they created Q&A, stitch, or duet, which enabled them to collaborate with other users. On the other hand, 34,5% (19) of respondents did not take the chance to use those features. A study by Alsharif (2021) in (Bsharat and Hamarsyah, 2023: 80) found that by enabling students to collaborate on video projects and share ideas and feedback using TikTok's feature, TikTok can be utilised to improve group collaboration and project-based learning, which leads to the creativity and critical thinking ability of the youngsters. Not only can

youngsters benefit from watching English learning content on TikTok, but they can also train themselves to create content, which means they are encouraged to be critical and creative.

Do English learning videos on TikTok increase your motivation and willingness to examine and analyze the language used in the video?

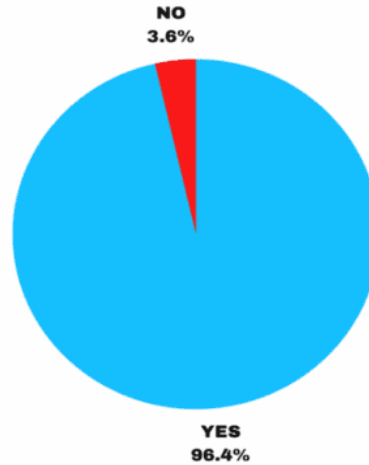


Figure 12. Response on the motivation of language use to be evaluated

Figure 12 shows that 96,4% (53) of respondents stated that they were motivated and willing to critically evaluate the use of the English language on TikTok videos, which they watched. Another 3,6% (2) of respondents preferred only to watch the videos and were not motivated to evaluate the English used in the videos. A study by Saeed et. al. (2020) in (Bsharat & Hamarsyah, 2023, p. 80) stated that TikTok may be utilised to develop youngsters' critical thinking abilities by motivating them to examine and analyse the language used in the videos. The data above shows that youngsters' critical thinking can increase through their motivation and willingness to analyze and even evaluate what they witness on TikTok.

Do you learn English from TikTok because of your own desire?

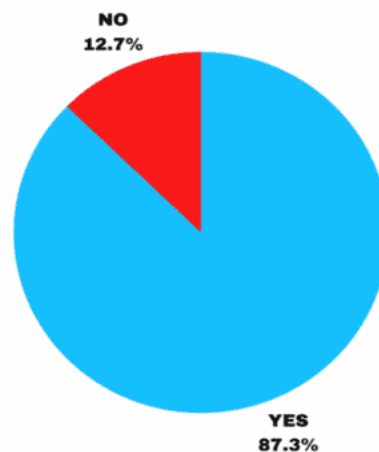


Figure 13. Response on self-regulated learning

According to the diagram in Figure 13, 87,3% (48) of respondents claimed that they learned English by watching TikTok videos because of their

desire. Meanwhile, 12,7% (7) of respondents were triggered by external motivation. Some researchers have highlighted TikTok's contribution to learners' autonomy and self-directed learning, and the data has shown that most respondents learn English out of their desire. Maromon and Marpaung (2023) stated that self-directed learning activities encourage learners to participate in their learning actively. Self-directed learning also enables learners to become more independent in learning.

Do you record and assess your own English performance on TikTok only by yourself?

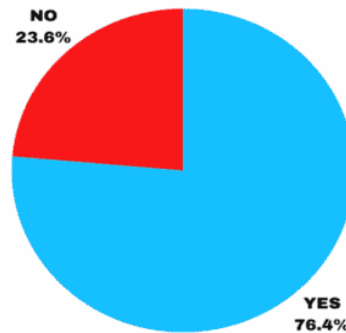


Figure 14. Response on self-creation and evaluation of one's videos

Figure 14 shows that 76,4% (42) of respondents self-created and evaluated their content videos of English learning. On the other hand, 23,6% (13) of respondents did not create their videos. By encouraging students to record and assess their language performance on TikTok, they can foster self-reflection and self-assessment. This study goes together with the data. Most respondents then applied self-regulated learning by recording and assessing their language performance on TikTok.

Do you think that TikTok is an educational and innovative teaching tool especially when it comes to learning English?

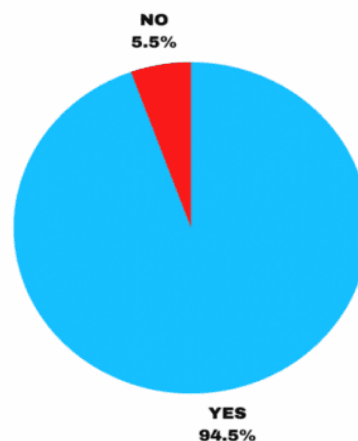


Figure 15. Response on Tiktok being helpful in education and learning

Chen and Wang (2020) stated that TikTok should be taken into consideration for educational English learning and teaching tools since TikTok in the education field has been successful in science education, not only in

Indonesian and Indian schools, but all over the world. Figure 15 shows that 94,5% (52) of respondents believed that TikTok's educational video content was functional, especially in English language learning. Meanwhile, 5,5% (3) of the respondents did not find any benefits from TikTok regarding education and learning. TikTok is then said to be useful in teaching and learning. The majority of the respondents agree that TikTok is an educational and innovative teaching tool when it comes to learning English. This is truly proof that TikTok has shown such great varieties of knowledge that leads the youngsters to this conclusion.

Do you agree that English teachers should use TikTok as a learning tool in a real class sometimes?

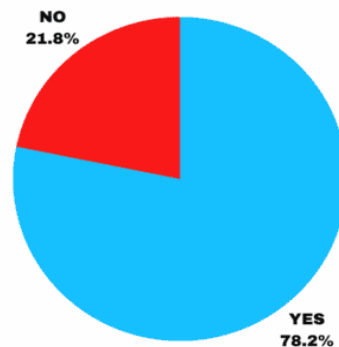


Figure 16. Response on the use of TikTok suggested to teachers

Figure 16 shows that 78,2% (43) of respondents suggested that teachers use TikTok as a teaching and learning tool for the learners in their class. However, only 21,8% (12) of respondents did not recommend TikTok video content in question number 2, which relates to the influence of TikTok as an English learning and teaching tool. It shows that TikTok can guide educators and learners to explore new educational tools to ease the teaching and learning process. The majority of the respondents believe that teachers should use TikTok in real class sometimes, and this shows that by using TikTok as an educational tool in the teaching and learning process, it can bring ease in class because it helps the teachers and students to get exposed to more interactive and engaging learning content.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that various types of English learning can be found on TikTok that have been experienced and used by youngsters such as short-form videos, language challenges, native speaker videos, and interactive learning features.

TikTok application as an English learning medium has shown its influence in developing youngsters' English proficiency, including the influence of TikTok towards youngsters' communication competence, creativity, critical thinking, self-directed learning, and English learning and teaching tool.

Some respondents answered "No" to several questions. The writer concludes that the respondents who chose No learn English on TikTok only to improve certain aspects of their English. Some of them use TikTok only for

learning vocabulary, meaning when asked about pronunciation, they will tend to answer No because pronunciation is not their focus.

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