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## | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Exploring Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Students' Vocabulary Proficiency via TikTok: Language Proficiency in the Digital Age

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## | ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of TikTok on the vocabulary proficiency of Saudi English as a foreign language (EFL) student, examining its effectiveness in supporting vocabulary learning and retention. Using a quasi-experimental design, participants were divided into an experimental group that engaged with TikTok-based learning materials and a control group that received no such intervention. A vocabulary levels test (VLT) measured the students' vocabulary proficiency, while a Likert scale questionnaire was used to assess their perception of TikTok as a learning tool. Results indicated that the experimental group showed significant improvements in terms of both high-frequency and mid-frequency vocabulary levels, compared to the control group. Additionally, the questionnaire responses revealed that students perceived TikTok as an enjoyable, practical, and efficient platform for learning new vocabulary. The findings suggest that increased exposure to educational content on social media may enhance EFL instruction by promoting interactive and students-centered learning. The study recommends further research to explore the long-term effects of TikTok on broader aspects of language proficiency.

## | KEYWORDS

Vocabulary learning, TikTok, social media in language learning, digital learning, language proficiency, EFL learners.

## | ARTICLE INFORMATION

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## 1. Introduction

In the modern age, proficiency in a second language (L2), particularly English, is essential for career development and efficient communication (Abdul Halim et al., 2021; Ariffin, 2021; Ja'afar et al., 2021). In order to improve language acquisition, researchers and language educators are always seeking new and efficient teaching methods (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019). The emergence of digital tools has transformed language instruction, making learning easier through platforms that include social media, TV shows, and podcasts, and promoting independent learning by blurring the lines between formal and informal learning. Social media, especially TikTok, has become a powerful tool for language acquisition. By giving users access to interactive and multimedia content, this form of media promotes both independent and collaborative learning (Mondahl & Razmerita, 2014). Moreover, through the use of challenges, comments, and videos, platforms such as TikTok engage learners and help them to retain and comprehend terminology (Malik & Asnur, 2019). Additionally, by personalizing content, TikTok's algorithm exposes viewers to a wide range of vocabulary and authentic language use (Levin & Opsahl, 2022). However, despite its advantages, the platform has been the subject of disputes and has even been banned in some countries (Maheshwari & Holpuch, 2023).

Although prior research evidenced the importance of technology for language learning (Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020; Alwehaibi, 2015; Fithriani et al., 2019; Sari & Wahyudin, 2019), there remains a lack of TikTok-specific studies conducted in the Saudi EFL context. The current study addresses this gap by examining the effect of TikTok on the vocabulary proficiency of Saudi English as

a foreign language (EFL) students (Zaitun et al., 2021; Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022; Hongsa et al., 2023), evaluating both qualitative learner perceptions and quantitative proficiency improvements.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Students' vocabulary proficiency, especially in spelling, pronunciation, and sentence context, can be improved by integrating technology into language learning (Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020). Due to the development of digital platforms, teachers and students now access a multitude of resources to assist with their language learning. Many such platforms are used for this purpose, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (previously Twitter), YouTube, and podcasts. Multiple previous studies examined their role in language learning, offering valuable perspectives on their effective use (Alwehaibi, 2015; Fithriani et al., 2019; Sari & Wahyudin, 2019). Such tools give students access to real-life content and the opportunity to communicate with native speakers in person, both of which are essential for improving language fluency and expression.

Although a considerable amount of research addressed the use of technology in language learning (Dalte, 2021; Wu et al., 2023), there remains a significant gap concerning how TikTok, a unique and rapidly changing platform, affects the vocabulary proficiency of Saudi EFL students. While the influence of TikTok in different language learning environments was examined by earlier studies (Zaitun et al., 2021; Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022; Hongsa et al., 2023), more research is needed to determine how, specifically, it affects vocabulary acquisition by Saudi EFL learners. By examining the connection between TikTok usage and vocabulary proficiency by such students, the present study sought to address this gap and provide fresh perspectives on the platform's possible educational benefits.

In addition to using quantitative methods to evaluate vocabulary proficiency effects, this study investigated how its participants perceived the influence of TikTok on their educational journey, seeking to ascertain whether Saudi EFL students observed improvements in their language proficiency, and whether they believed that exposure to authentic content on TikTok expanded their vocabulary. This study thereby added to the expanding corpus of research concerning technology and language acquisition by combining qualitative and quantitative research to offer a more nuanced understanding of the use of TikTok in the Saudi EFL setting.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The rapid advancement of technology has created a pressing need for creative and innovative approaches to language learning, along with new methods of evaluating their effectiveness. Consequently, the investigation of how L2 learners view these innovative methods is crucial. The exposure of L2 learners to authentic materials and real-life language usage contexts is a particularly beneficial approach to language learning. However, it is important that careful consideration is given to how social media platforms, such as the hugely popular TikTok, are used as authentic audio-visual resources in EFL or English as a second language (ESL) classrooms, and that the way they affect language learning is understood. This study assessed the effectiveness of TikTok as a language learning tool by examining its impact on Saudi EFL learners' vocabulary proficiency, exploring the qualitative facets of the participants' views of the use of the platform as a language learning tool, in addition to employing quantitative measurements, thereby providing an in-depth understanding of the multifaceted relationship between TikTok and language learning experiences among Saudi EFL learners.

### **1.4 Aims and Research Questions**

This study explored the quantitative dimensions of Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and assessed the impact of TikTok on their vocabulary improvement. It sought to illuminate the diverse perspectives and experiences of the students regarding the integration of TikTok into their language learning activities. In addition to revealing the direct impacts, the study contributed to the understanding of the dynamic relationship between developing technology and language learning in modern educational contexts. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent does the use of TikTok produce a measurable improvement in the participants' vocabulary proficiency?
2. How does the use of TikTok impact the range of English vocabulary proficiency among Saudi EFL students, particularly for enhancing comprehension across a diverse set of words?
3. Is there a correlation between the time spent using TikTok and the development of vocabulary proficiency?
4. What are the participants' perceptions of learning vocabulary using TikTok?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study developed a theoretical framework that unified the two pivotal constructs of technology-mediated language learning (Chapelle, 2001) and the input hypothesis proposed by Krashen (2003). The term 'technology-mediated language learning'

proposed by Chapelle (2001) highlights the revolutionary way in which technology is incorporated into language learning activities. This theoretical framework highlights the critical role that digital platforms play in supporting language learning and advocates for a paradigm change towards dynamic, immersive learning settings. Within this paradigm, our study examined the subtle effects of the lively and dynamic digital platform TikTok on the vocabulary proficiency of Saudi EFL students. Meanwhile, Krashen's (2003) input hypothesis added a crucial component to our theoretical framework, as it emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input to the language acquisition processes. The present study highlighted the importance of exposing students to English content on TikTok that not only captured their attention, but also corresponded with their current proficiency level by using Krashen's (2003) concepts, which claim that language learning is most effective when students are exposed to material that is a little more advanced than their current level of language proficiency, as this enables students' language skills to expand gradually.

### **2.2 Computer Assisted Language-Learning**

Defined by Beatty (2010) as "any progress in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her language" (p.7), computer assisted language-learning (CALL) employs digital platforms and computer resources to improve language learning outcomes. By using digital tools to improve language acquisition, CALL can transform traditional learning (Beatty, 2010), promoting interactive participation and changing the teacher's role to that of a facilitator (Healey, 2016). When engaged in CALL, students undertake technology-driven, collaborative learning experiences via online platforms that encourage learner autonomy and self-directed learning (Tafazoli et al., 2019) that demonstrates the transformative potential of CALL in modern language education.

### **2.3 Mobile Assisted Language-Learning**

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), an innovative approach that transforms language learning methodologies by utilizing the adaptability and accessibility of mobile devices, is at the forefront of the constantly changing field of language education. By utilizing mobile devices for flexible learning, MALL expands on CALL (Çakmak, 2019), incorporating applications, games, and internet resources into the learning process to give students access to language resources at any time. Previous research in the field of MALL demonstrated its efficacy in offering accessible and captivating language training, showing that, despite obstacles like screen size and connectivity issues, the use of MALL can improve language learning by meeting the many demands of learners as mobile technology improves.

### **2.4 Social Media and Language Learning**

Extant studies highlighted the educational benefits of social media platforms that can be significant for language acquisition. For instance, YouTube offers a wealth of educational content that helps students to learn a language and to increase cultural knowledge (Baptista, 2022; Wang & Chen, 2019). Language development can also be facilitated by other social media platforms, including Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter, which have the potential to improve vocabulary and listening skills (Al Harbi, 2020; Widia & Mutiara, 2021). Previous research highlighted the need for selective material consumption, but confirmed the role of social media in promoting language competency, despite the differences regarding student engagement with such platforms (Desta et al., 2021).

### **2.5 TikTok as a Language Learning Tool**

Originally developed as a platform for entertainment, TikTok has become an invaluable educational tool. Existing research demonstrated that the use of the platform can improve speaking skills (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022); vocabulary acquisition (Erwani et al., 2022); and pronunciation (Pratiwi et al., 2021). According to Zaitun et al. (2021), duets and short-form videos are two interactive elements on TikTok that promote retention and engagement, which can aid in language learning. Although these findings are encouraging, further investigation is needed to determine how use of the platform might impact the vocabulary proficiency of Saudi EFL students.

**Receptive Skills.** Reading and listening are examples of receptive skills that are essential for language proficiency. These skills entail comprehending and interpreting spoken or written language, in order to decipher meaning from a variety of sources. Previous research demonstrated that multimedia-based tests are useful for assessing receptive skills, although issues like test security remain (Sudaryanto et al., 2019). According to Asad et al. (2021), students prefer to use mobile-assisted reading practice, which enhances their receptive skills further. Provided their usage is balanced with academic priorities, the use of social media platforms, especially Facebook, can also contribute to the development of receptive skills (Qadi, 2021).

**Vocabulary Proficiency.** A strong vocabulary affects an individual's communication and comprehension and is essential for language competency. TikTok is a useful tool for vocabulary learning, and students benefit from engaging with its interesting and varied material (Rama et al., 2023). Moreover, students' peer collaboration and engagement are often improved by the

vocabulary feedback provided via social media and mobile applications (Ko, 2019), and their exposure to new words on social media strengthens students' ability to retain words and use them in context (Zainal & Rahmat, 2020). Such findings highlight the ways in which digital platforms can revolutionize the development of vocabulary and modern language learning.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employed a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative and qualitative strategies to evaluate vocabulary proficiency among Saudi EFL students. In order to address research questions 1, 2, and 3, the study utilized a quasi-experimental design with two groups of Saudi EFL students that employed qualitative approaches. To improve their lexical skills, one group participated in a TikTok-based vocabulary intervention, while the other group was a control and did not receive this intervention. Pre-testing was used to determine the baseline level of vocabulary proficiency of both groups. After the intervention, a post-test was administered to assess any improvements in the participants' vocabulary proficiency. By using the control group as a point of comparison, this quasi-experimental design enabled a systematic investigation of the possible effect of the TikTok-based intervention on the students' language skills.

Additionally, the quantitative research component, which involved survey research, addressed research question 4, which aimed to understand the participants' views of using TikTok for vocabulary acquisition. This quantitative research strand was utilized to meet these specific research objectives and to supplement the qualitative findings (Mills & Gay, 2019). Specifically, survey research, a form of quantitative inquiry, was used to collect data that sought to understand the participants' views, beliefs, behaviours, and demographic composition regarding the use of TikTok for vocabulary acquisition.

This combined approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of TikTok for vocabulary acquisition and the participants' views of it for this purpose.

#### **3.2 Participants**

This study recruited 21 female and 9 male Saudi EFL learners aged 18 to 24 to participate, aiming for a sample size of 30 individuals. The snowball sampling technique was employed (Mills & Gay, 2019), which entails the initial selection of individuals who meet the study's criteria and their subsequent identification of further participants. All of the participants received a consent form from the researcher that outlined the goals and procedures of the study, prior to their participation.

#### **3.3 Data Collection and Analysis**

This study utilized a questionnaire, a pre-test, and a post-test to address its research questions. The participants were asked to complete a vocabulary levels test (VLT), which assesses learners' ability to use words at specific frequency levels, such as the first and second 1,000 words. Words in the first 1,000 frequency level include common, everyday words, such as 'book', 'water', and 'house'. These words are basic terms and are usually among the first that learners acquire. The second 1,000 frequency level contains slightly less common, but still essential, words, such as 'kitchen', 'bicycle', and 'umbrella'. The mastering of such words is crucial for effective communication and comprehension in everyday situations. The VLT is a tool that is used widely language proficiency research to assess vocabulary knowledge by testing how well individuals understand, and are able to use, words that appear frequently in a language. The test employed for the purpose of this study was adapted from that proposed by Webb et al. (2017) (see Appendix A). Only the first two VLT levels were utilized, as the participants were native Arabic speakers. In their work, Webb et al. (2017) stated that beginners should be placed at the 2,000-word level, because they probably lack proficiency in the higher levels.

Following the pre-test, the participants were divided into two groups: one received the vocabulary intervention treatment, while the other acted as a control; each group consisted of 15 students. The researcher administered the treatment to the intervention group. During this phase, the participants in the treatment group were given access to TikTok content from three specific accounts: @zackhub101, @donnie.jackson, and @Englishbygiovana. Over a period of three weeks, the participants in the treatment group received videos daily to enhance their vocabulary skills. The control group did not have access to these TikTok accounts during the intervention. Both groups then underwent the same post-test assessments to measure the changes in their vocabulary proficiency. In addition, participants in the experimental group were required to complete a questionnaire that was modified from that used by Mistar and Embi (2016), Khan et al. (2021), and Binmahboob (2020) to capture their views regarding the use of TikTok for vocabulary learning (see Appendix B). In Items 16 and 7 on the questionnaire, 'WhatsApp' was replaced with 'TikTok', and Items 19, 5, and 15 were amended to align better with the present study's objectives. Additionally, 'YouTube' was replaced with 'TikTok', where relevant. Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS 30.

#### 4. Results

##### 4.1 Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT)

**Table 1: Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores (1000-Word Level)**

Group	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Improvement (%)
Experimental	85	92	7
Control	85	86	1

Both the experimental and control groups began with the same pre-test score of 85%, indicating a strong foundational understanding of high-frequency word. Post-test results, however, show noticeable improvements. The **experimental group** improved by **7%**, reaching **92%** after using TikTok for vocabulary learning. the control group, which did not use TikTok, showed minimal improvement, increasing by only 1% to 86%. A prevalent issue among EFL learners is the disparity between participants' mastery of high-frequency and mid-frequency words which is highlighted by these pre-test results.

**Table 2: Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores (2000-Word Level)**

Group	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Improvement (%)
Experimental	60	70	10
Control	60	61	1

At the 2000-word level, participants had a lower pre-test score of 60%, indicating only moderate proficiency in mid-frequency words. Post-test results reveal a more substantial difference between the two groups. Following exposure to TikTok-based learning, the experimental group increased by 10%, reaching 70%. The control group increased by just 1% point to 61%, showing minimal improvement. These findings point to an issue that many EFL students face: a lack of proficiency in mid-frequency vocabulary. They also imply that learning using TikTok was more effective at closing this gap.

In terms of the first research question, *To what extent does the use of TikTok produce a measurable improvement in the participants' vocabulary proficiency?*, according to post-test results, the experimental group made significant progress. The average score rose to 92% at the 1,000-word level, signifying a 7% improvement (Table 1). Meanwhile, with a 10% improvement, the average score increased to 70% at the 2,000-word level (Table 2). These quantifiable gains in vocabulary proficiency offered compelling evidence of TikTok's ability to improve the learning of both high-frequency and mid-frequency vocabulary.

In terms of the second research question, *How does the use of TikTok impact the range of English vocabulary proficiency among Saudi EFL students*, particularly for enhancing comprehension across a diverse set of words?, the experimental group demonstrated notable progress in mastering mid-frequency vocabulary at the 2,000-word level. This improvement implied that TikTok improves learners' vocabulary effectively by exposing them to a variety of lexical items in interesting and relevant contexts. Since mid-frequency words are essential for comprehension, but are sometimes underdeveloped in standard educational contexts, the increase at the 2,000-word level was especially notable. Research shows that learners must understand between 95-98% of the words in a text in order to demonstrate sufficient understanding (Nation, 2006; Schmitt et al., 2017). Further, according to Webb and Nation (2017), standard EFL curricula tend to emphasize high-frequency words, leaving mid-frequency vocabulary less systemically taught.

**Table 3: Overall Improvements Between Groups**

Word Level	Experimental Group Improvement (%)	Control Group Improvement (%)
1,000-word level	7	1
2,000-word level	10	1

The comparison between the two groups (Table 3) highlighted the influence of TikTok on the students' vocabulary learning. At the 1,000-word and 2,000-word levels, the experimental group consistently outperformed the control group, increasing their proficiency by 7% and 10%, respectively, whereas the control group made only slight improvements of 1% at both levels. These results showed that TikTok filled an important gap in the EFL learning context, proving to be a valuable tool for improving the comprehension of a wide variety of words, in addition to being an efficient way to reinforce high-frequency vocabulary.

#### 4.2 Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire was employed to address the last two research questions: 3. *Is there a correlation between the time spent using TikTok and the development of vocabulary proficiency?* and 4. *What are the participants' views of learning vocabulary using TikTok?* The participants consisted of 9 males and 21 females between the ages of 18-24 years old. The average age of the participants is 20 years old.

**Table 4: Experimental Group - Time Spent on TikTok Daily and Vocabulary Proficiency Gains**

Time Spent on TikTok (Hours)	Number of Participants	1,000-Word Level Improvement (%)	2,000-Word Level Improvement (%)
3 Hours	3	5%	7%
4 Hours	5	7%	10%
5+ Hours	7	9%	12%

As shown in Table 4, regarding research question 3, Is there a correlation between the time spent using TikTok and the development of vocabulary proficiency? The findings showed a significant connection between language proficiency improvement and TikTok usage, especially for the experimental group. The participants in the experimental group who used TikTok for five or more hours a day showed the most improvement at both the 1,000-word (average 9% increase) and the 2,000-word (average 12% increase) word level. While those who spent only three hours per day on TikTok showed the smallest improvement, and those who spent four hours per day on the platform showed a moderate improvement. This implied that improved vocabulary learning is linked to increased exposure to TikTok's interactive, language-rich material.

**Table 5: Control Group - Time Spent on TikTok and Vocabulary Proficiency Gains**

Time Spent (Hours)	Number of Participants	1,000-Word Level Improvement (%)	2,000-Word Level Improvement (%)
2 Hours	2	0%	0%
4 Hours	6	1%	1%
5+ Hours	7	1%	1%

In contrast, as shown in Table 5, the control group showed little improvement in their vocabulary proficiency, even though they spent a similar amount of time on other activities. The participants who reported spending five or more hours on other activities showed only a negligible 1% improvement at both the 1,000- and 2,000-word level, indicating that the time spent was less impactful when standard learning methods were used. This comparison highlighted the fact that TikTok's dynamic and captivating structure seemed to increase the efficacy of vocabulary learning, with the experimental group demonstrating a particularly strong correlation between time spent and proficiency gain.

**Table 6: Comparison of Vocabulary Gain Between the Experimental and Control Groups**

Time Spent (Hours)	Group	1,000-Word Level Improvement (%)	2,000-Word Level Improvement (%)
3 Hours	Experimental	5%	7%
4 Hours	Experimental	7%	10%
5+ Hours	Experimental	9%	12%
2 Hours	Control	0%	0%
4 Hours	Control	1%	1%
5+ Hours	Control	1%	1%

The responses to the Likert-scale on the questionnaire addressed research question 4, regarding the participants' perceptions of the efficacy of learning vocabulary using TikTok. The majority of the items received a mean score of above 3.5, indicating agreement with the statements, and the results showed an overall positive view of TikTok as a language learning tool (Tables 7 – 11).

**Table 7: Mean Score and Standard Deviation of each Category**

Category	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Effectiveness of TikTok in vocabulary Learning	3.89	0.98
Engagement and interaction through TikTok	3.83	1.08
Efficiency and accessibility of vocabulary Learning	4.27	0.80
Challenges and limitations of learning vocabulary	3.50	0.94
Overall perception of TikTok as a vocabulary learning tool	4.09	0.95

The findings show that TikTok is widely regarded by Saudi EFL students as an effective and accessible resource for vocabulary learning. The category "efficiency and accessibility of vocabulary learning through TikTok" received the highest mean score 4.27 (SD = 0.80). Suggesting that participants found TikTok an easy to use and convenient platform for vocabulary learning. Additionally, the category "overall perception of TikTok as a vocabulary learning tool" received a high mean score 4.09 (SD = 0.95), further confirming the platform's positive impact on vocabulary learning. The category "effectiveness of TikTok in Language vocabulary learning" received a mean score of 3.89 (SD = 0.98), demonstrating that students recognize its potential to improve their vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, the category "engagement and interaction through TikTok" received a slightly lower mean score 3.83 (SD = 1.08), showcasing that although TikTok is enjoyable, the way it is interactive may change based on individual learning preferences. However, the lowest mean score was reported for the category "challenges and limitations of learning vocabulary" 3.50 (SD = 0.94), pointing out that although some students might face difficulties, they do not generally view these issues as significant challenges to learning. Overall, the results indicate that students view TikTok as an engaging and effective vocabulary learning platform with significant accessibility and convenience benefits.

**Table 7: Effectiveness of TikTok in Language Learning**

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Using TikTok increases my language learning productively.	3.88	1.02
Using TikTok is effectively improving my language learning.	4.00	1.03
It is easy for me to become skilled in discovering information about language learning via TikTok.	3.88	0.89
TikTok helps with my vocabulary retention and its usage.	3.81	0.98

The statement "Using TikTok is effectively improving my language learning" received a mean score of 4.00 (SD = 1.03), indicating that participants generally view TikTok as a beneficial tool for language learning. Moreover, the statement "Using TikTok increases my language learning productively" received a mean score of 3.88 (SD = 1.02), suggesting that while students find TikTok effective, they may view its impact on productivity as less noticeable. Additionally, the mean score for "TikTok helps with my vocabulary retention and its usage" was 3.81 (SD = 0.98), indicating that students find TikTok useful for learning and applying new words. Additionally, participants indicated that it is easy for them to become skilled in discovering information about language learning via TikTok, with a mean score of 3.88 (SD=0.89). These data imply that participants see TikTok as a useful tool for learning vocabulary, with a substantial agreement on its convenience and its potential to enhance retention and information discovery.

**Table 8: Engagement and Interaction With TikTok**

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
TikTok is a good source of interaction for vocabulary learning.	3.94	0.93
Learning vocabulary through TikTok is enjoyable and engaging.	4.19	0.98
I am excited to use TikTok for vocabulary learning.	4.00	1.15
I use TikTok to share new vocabulary I learn with my friends.	3.25	1.24

The findings demonstrated that TikTok offered the participants an engaging and interactive vocabulary-learning experience (Table 8). The mean score for the statements "TikTok is a good source of interaction for vocabulary learning" and "Learning vocabulary through TikTok is enjoyable and engaging" was 4.19 (SD = 0.98) and 3.94 (SD = 0.93), respectively. Meanwhile, the statement "I am excited to use TikTok for vocabulary learning" received a mean score of 4.00 (SD = 1.15), indicating that the participants were enthusiastic about using the app as a learning tool. According to these findings, many of the students were excited to use TikTok, indicating that they believed it to be an interesting and dynamic vocabulary-learning tool. Fewer participants, however, reported sharing the new vocabulary they learned via the platform with others, as the item received a score of only 3.25 (SD = 1.24), which may indicate that they used TikTok more for passive learning than for active engagement.



**Table 9: Efficiency and Accessibility of Vocabulary Learning via TikTok**

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Finding vocabulary learning-related videos on TikTok is easy.	4.44	0.73
Passing on vocabulary-related information through TikTok takes less time.	4.38	0.81
Using TikTok boosts my confidence with the vocabulary I use.	4.06	0.93
Learning English language using TikTok is convenient for me.	4.19	0.75

As shown in Table 9, the participants reported that they found it easy to learn vocabulary via TikTok, as the item "Learning English using TikTok is convenient for me" received a highest mean score of 4.19 (SD = 0.75), suggesting that most of the participants found it to be a convenient tool. Meanwhile, "Finding vocabulary learning-related videos on TikTok is easy" also received a high mean score of 4.44 (SD = 0.73), suggesting that TikTok's algorithm and content variety support language learners. Moreover, the score for the statement, "Passing on vocabulary-related information through TikTok takes less time" demonstrated the platform's effectiveness in transmitting vocabulary-related information, as it scored 4.38 (SD = 0.81). Additionally, "Using TikTok boosts my confidence in the vocabulary I use" scored 4.06 (SD = 0.93), suggesting that exposure to language through TikTok videos enhances learners' confidence in vocabulary usage.

**Table 10: Challenges and Limitations of Learning Vocabulary via TikTok**

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
TikTok creates challenges in learning vocabulary.	3.56	0.81
Using TikTok for vocabulary learning can be a waste of time.	2.63	1.41
The difficulty level varies in learning vocabulary through TikTok.	4.31	0.60

Despite the positive responses received for the items shown in Table 10, some of the participants expressed concerns about the challenges of learning vocabulary via TikTok. With a mean score of 3.56 (SD = 0.81), the statement "TikTok creates challenges in learning vocabulary" raised the possibility that certain students encountered problems understanding the content they encountered on the platform. Nevertheless, with a low mean score of 2.63 (SD = 1.41), the statement "Using TikTok for vocabulary learning can be a waste of time" demonstrated that most of the participants did not believe that TikTok is a useless tool. In addition, they believed that the difficulty level of the vocabulary they encountered varied, as the relevant item received a mean score of 4.31 (SD=0.60).

**Table 11: Overall Perception of TikTok as a Vocabulary Learning Tool**

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Using TikTok increases chance of vocabulary learning.	4.31	0.79
TikTok offers varied ways of vocabulary learning.	4.25	0.93
I will use TikTok for learning vocabulary in the future.	3.56	1.15
<i>TikTok helps me to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words and to become more familiar with them.</i>	4.25	0.93

As shown in Table 11, the participants believed that the use of TikTok improved their language learning greatly. With a high mean score of 4.31 ( $SD = 0.79$ ), the statements "Using TikTok increases the chance of vocabulary learning" and "TikTok helps me to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words and to become more familiar with them" both received high scores of 4.25 ( $SD = 0.93$ ). Furthermore, the statement "TikTok offers varied ways of vocabulary learning" obtained a mean score of 4.25 ( $SD = 0.93$ ), indicating that the availability of a variety of learning methods was appreciated. Finally, the mean score for the statement "I will use TikTok for learning vocabulary in the future" was 3.56 ( $SD = 1.15$ ), demonstrating a moderate level of agreement. This may result from a number of variables, including personal learning preferences, concerns about platform distractions, or doubt regarding TikTok's long-term efficacy.

## 5. Discussion

This study explored the effectiveness of TikTok in improving vocabulary proficiency among Saudi EFL students, based on data from a Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) and a questionnaire. In response to the first research question—to *what extent TikTok produces measurable improvements in vocabulary proficiency*—the experimental group showed significantly greater gains than the control group. This supports previous findings by Alzubi and Kaur (2021), who noted that social media platforms create rich linguistic environments for second language acquisition. Questionnaire results also indicated that students viewed TikTok as an effective learning tool, with a mean score of 3.89 ( $SD = 0.98$ ), further reinforcing its positive role in vocabulary learning.

The second research question examined how TikTok impacts the range of vocabulary proficiency, particularly in exposing learners to diverse language contexts. Results showed that TikTok helps expand vocabulary by presenting words in authentic and varied scenarios, supported by the high mean score of 4.27 ( $SD = 0.80$ ) for the "efficiency and accessibility" of vocabulary learning. These findings align with Sun and Yang's (2022) argument that multimodal learning improves vocabulary retention and comprehension. They also reflect Nation's (2021) assertion that vocabulary is best acquired through contextual exposure. Regarding the third research question—the *correlation between time spent on TikTok and vocabulary development*—although direct measurement wasn't conducted, the "engagement and interaction" section yielded a mean score of 3.83 ( $SD = 1.08$ ), suggesting a link between active usage and vocabulary improvement. This is consistent with Zou et. al (2022) findings on digital engagement and Krashen's (2018) Input Hypothesis.

In answering the final research question on students' perceptions of using TikTok to learn vocabulary, responses were overwhelmingly positive. The overall mean score was 4.09 ( $SD = 0.95$ ), with high agreement that TikTok increases vocabulary learning opportunities (mean = 4.31,  $SD = 0.79$ ). These outcomes align with Wang and Tahir (2020), who found that digital platforms are favored for their flexibility and engaging nature. However, the "challenges and limitations" section scored lower (mean = 3.50,  $SD = 0.94$ ), indicating that some students faced distractions or variability in content quality. In conclusion, TikTok demonstrates strong potential as a vocabulary-learning tool, offering engaging, multimodal input and learner-centered experiences, despite minor drawbacks.

## 6. Conclusion

Combining visual and auditory stimuli with the interactive nature of TikTok videos arguably has the ability to improve language recall and retention. Additionally, according to the findings of this study students' vocabulary proficiency may improve the more

time they spend interacting with educational content on TikTok, indicating that regular exposure is crucial for the development of learners' vocabulary. These findings demonstrated that social media applications can be used as an additional resource for learning a foreign language, especially for increasing vocabulary retention and encouraging engagement.

The limitations of this study included the brief intervention time that may not have reflected the long-term impact of TikTok on vocabulary learning, and the relatively small sample size that limited the findings' generalizability to a larger population. Furthermore, the study focused solely on vocabulary proficiency, overlooking other language skills, such as writing, grammar, and pronunciation, that might be investigated by future studies. Finally, the use of self-reported questionnaire data raised questions regarding possible social desirability bias, highlighting the necessity of using mixed-method techniques, such as qualitative interviews and direct observation, in order to better understand real student engagement and learning results.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### The Vocabulary Levels Test (Webb, Sasao, & Ballance, 2017)

Place a checkmark under the word that corresponds with to each meaning. Here is an example:

	game	island	mouth	movie	song	yard
land with water all around it						
part of your body used for eating and talking						
piece of music						

It should be answered in the following way.

	game	island	mouth	movie	song	yard
land with water all around it		-				
part of your body used for eating and talking			-			
piece of music					-	

**1,000 Word Level**

	choice	computer	garden	photograph	price	week
cost						
picture						
place where things grow outside						

	eye	father	night	van	voice	year
body part that sees						
parent who is a man						
part of the day with no sun						

	center	note	state	tomorrow	uncle	winter
brother of your mother or father						
middle						
short piece of writing						

	box	brother	horse	hour	house	plan
family member						
sixty minutes						
way of doing things						

	animal	bath	crime	grass	law	shoulder
green leaves that cover the ground						
place to wash						
top end of your arm						

	drink	educate	forget	laugh	prepare	suit
get ready						
make a happy sound						
not remember						

	check	fight	return	tell	work	write
do things to get money						
go back again						
make sure						

	bring	can	reply	stare	understand	wish
say or write an answer to somebody						
carry to another place						
look at for a long time						

	alone	bad	cold	green	loud	main
most important						
not good						

not hot						
	awful	definite	exciting	general	mad	sweet
certain						
usual						
very bad						

## 2,000 Word Level

	coach	customer	feature	pie	vehicle	weed
important part of something						
person who trains members of sports teams						
unwanted plant						

	average	discipline	knowledge	pocket	trap	vegetable
food grown in gardens						
information which a person has						
middle number						

	circle	justice	knife	onion	partner	pension
round shape						
something used to cut food						
using laws fairly						

	cable	section	sheet	site	staff	tank
part						
place						
something to cover a bed						

	apartment	cap	envelope	lawyer	speed	union
cover for letters						
kind of hat						
place to live inside a tall building						

	argue	contribute	quit	seek	vote	wrap
cover tightly and completely						
give to						
look for						

	avoid	contain	murder	search	switch	trade
have something inside						
look for						
try not to do						

	bump	complicate	include	organize	receive	warn
get something						

hit gently						
have as part of something						

	available	constant	electrical	medical	proud	super
feeling good about what you have done						
great						

	environmental	junior	pure	rotten	smooth	wise
bad						
not rough						
younger in position						
happening all the time						

## Appendix B Questionnaire

Adapted and modified from (Mistar & Embi, 2016; Khan, Radzuan, Farooqi, Shahbaz, & Khan, 2021; Binmahboob, 2020)

1. Gender
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
2. Please indicate your age
  - a. 18
  - b. 20
  - c. 21
  - d. 22
  - e. 23
  - f. 24
3. How much time do you spend on Tik Tok daily?
  - a. Less than 1 hour
  - b. 1 hour
  - c. 2 hours
  - d. 3 hours
  - e. 4 hours
  - f. 5 hours or more

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Using TikTok increases my language learning productively.					
2	Using TikTok is effectively improving my language learning.					
3	Learning English language using TikTok is convenient for me.					
4	It is easy for me to become skilled in discovering information about language learning via TikTok.					
5	TikTok helps with my vocabulary retention and its usage.					
6	I will use TikTok in learning vocabulary in future.					
7	TikTok is a good source of interaction for vocabulary learning.					

8	I am excited to use TikTok for vocabulary learning.					
9	I use TikTok to share new vocabulary I learn with my friends.					
10	Learning vocabulary through TikTok is enjoyable and engaging.					
11	TikTok creates challenges in learning vocabulary.					
12	Using TikTok for vocabulary learning can be a waste of time.					
13	Using TikTok increases chances of vocabulary learning.					
14	TikTok offers varied ways of vocabulary learning.					
15	Finding vocabulary learning-related videos on TikTok is easy.					
16	Passing on vocabulary-related information through TikTok takes less time.					
17	Using TikTok boosts my confidence in the vocabulary I use.					
18	The difficulty level varies in learning vocabulary through TikTok.					
19	TikTok helps me guess the meaning of unfamiliar words and become more familiar with them.					