TikTok and Its Influence on the English Competence of Vietnamese Students

by

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Abstract

The COVID-19 epidemic forced schools all around the globe to switch quickly to online learning. Teachers had to swiftly find, modify, adopt, and adapt digital educational approaches that suited students' demands. It has presented unforeseen difficulties for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students learning English language communication skills such as motivation, equipment, tech issues, …. As a result, in recent years, the pressure for instructors and academics to use cutting-edge ICTs, such as mobile devices, gaming, and social media, to teach second and foreign languages has increased.

Despite spending a lot of time studying how social media affects individuals, experts keep finding conflicting results. While social media usage in EFL teaching offers students special chances to improve their English language proficiency, researchers also routinely cite its negative impacts, including sadness, anxiety, and social difficulties. Thus, an integral part of this thesis is a discussion of the two opposing views on using **TikTok** in education including the advantages and the disadvantages of **TikTok** in English education. Especially in Vietnam - one of the countries with the most **TikTok** users worldwide - these conflict sides illustrate essential questions in contemporary communications and pedagogy scholarship:

1. How is **TikTok** perceived by English teachers and students in Vietnam?

2. Within the selected group of participants, how do they use **TikTok** to teach and study English?

   a. What motivates them to use **TikTok** in the English acquisition process?

   b. Do they perceive **TikTok** as beneficial or detrimental to teaching and learning English?

c. How can we make **TikTok** a better place to teach and learn English?

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Vietnamese English teachers and students in Hanoi to investigate my research questions. Instead of pre-made coding categories, this study used an inductive coding strategy that lets themes and codes surface during the analysis process. This research suggests that instructors and students in the chosen group see **TikTok** as a possible instructional tool, but not for everyone. **TikTok** is used in and out of class. Overall, the motivation behind using **TikTok** as an educational tool is to make the English acquisition process more accessible, digestible and enjoyable. In addition, every coin has two sides, and so does **TikTok**. On the one hand, most participants spoke about **TikTok** positively as a "fun and engaging" and "effective way to engage and motivate learners," a unique way to learn English through short videos, catchy music, and relatable content. On the other hand, there are also difficulties when using **TikTok**, including lack of context due to short-form videos, the use of informal language and the inaccuracy of knowledge, and the distractive and addictive characteristics. Because there are always two sides of the coin, there is no specific time when the advantages or disadvantages of **TikTok** outweigh the other. It highly depends on the way users utilize the platform and the design of the platform.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Anh Tuan Le. This thesis has not been previously published in any section. The University of Alberta Research Ethics Board approved this study, project Name "**TikTok** and Its Influence on English Competence of Vietnamese Students," No. Pro00123419, October 31, 2022.

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic compelled schools worldwide to transition to online classes rapidly. This unexpected and surprising interruption to society and education altered the work of teachers everywhere. Due to the paradigm shift, teachers had to quickly identify, adjust, and incorporate flexible digital instructional methods that met students' needs. Online learning is a type of distance learning that integrates technological tools and internet-based technology (ICT) in learning in order to serve students more quickly, affordably, and efficiently than ever (Aranda, 2021). Teachers are able to educate students remotely thanks to the use of technology that enables both synchronous and asynchronous interaction. Castillo (2016) contends that, when combined with discussion and instruction, readily available technologies will serve as a platform for developing critical thinking abilities (Castillo, 2016). Thus, using technology also aids students in developing their higher-order thinking skills, which is one of the skills required in this 4.0 era. Online education, in particular, is advantageous to both students and teachers (Singh et al., 2005). For students, online learning is one of the alternatives to traditional classroom instruction. Online education may promote student interaction and help students become more independent learners. At the same time, online learning techniques are available to lecturers to alter traditional teaching methods that may indirectly impact professional work (Aranda, 2021). The lecturer may have more opportunities to effectively assess and evaluate each student's learning process. Educational institutions have used various apps to carry out the learning process, including Google Meet, Zoom, and numerous other social media apps.

Learning media is defined as a resource for learning that evolves along with learning technology and comes in various open education resources. Because learning media can be used to introduce or transfer information and clarify concepts, as well as to make abstract concepts more concrete

and complex, understanding and interpretation are sped up and made more accessible. This is the reason why learning media is essential. Teachers should be able to select the proper and appropriate learning media because they significantly impact the learning process and student learning outcomes (Aranda, 2021). Notably, according to Pratiwi, Uraifah, and Sopiah (2021), a variety of social media are helpful educational tools that can support the teaching and learning process (Pratiwi et al., 2021). Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) described social media as a form of media that is distributed using a variety of electronic and rechargeable devices, including cell phones, computers, tablets, and other devices, to enable users to share their thoughts with others in an easy and organized manner, often for international information dissemination and awareness (P. 61).

However, online education and the use of technology also cause challenges to both learners and educators. Several studies have been conducted about the "digital divide," described as the challenge to people with limited technology access, especially people living in rural areas (Kleiman, 2007). Additionally, the social digital divide refers to the gap between individuals or groups in society who have access to and effectively use digital technologies and those who do not (Maryville Online, 2020). It encompasses disparities in access to devices, internet connectivity, digital literacy skills, and the ability to navigate and benefit from digital resources. The social digital divide can have significant consequences. It exacerbates existing inequalities in education, employment, healthcare, and civic participation. Those who are digitally excluded may face limited job prospects, reduced access to education and information, restricted opportunities for social and cultural engagement (Maryville Online, 2020). It is also the teacher's technology adoption challenges that prevent the use of technology in pedagogy. Divaharan and Ping (2010) stated that effective teaching might not be realized without sufficient subject-related knowledge for technology adoption. It leads to the fact that there is still resilience to online education and the

use of technology. Students described online education as ineffective since they could not understand online lectures. At the same time, teachers indicated that distance learning is novel and did not know how to utilize new technology (Al-Jarf, 2020).

Because English is a global language, people from many different countries and ethnic backgrounds primarily communicate in English. In order to improve their English communication skills, English language learners should be immersed in an English-exposure environment, according to Hymes's Communication Competence Theory (Hymes, 1972). However, the shift from face-to-face to online learning can bring unexpected challenges to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' acquisition of English language communication competence. Consequently, in recent years, teachers and researchers have been utilizing cutting-edge ICTs to study second and foreign languages, such as mobile technologies, gaming, and social media, ... (Chen, 2013; Sundqvist, 2019; Vishnevskaya & Rinkevich, 2021).

Social media use in EFL training provides students unique opportunities to enhance their English linguistic competence. Because English is regarded as an international language utilized to communicate globally, it is among social media's most frequently spoken languages. The advancement of Web 2.0 and computer technology has the capacity to help EFL learners to become self-regulated students by strengthening their English communication skills through content exploring topics popular among youth. People use social media platforms to share information, knowledge, and skills. The use of social media can help EFL learners generate a natural English interaction environment. Until recently, English language teachers, students, and educators have used **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **WeChat**, and **WhatsApp** most frequently. However, **TikTok** has become a rapidly popular social media platform among young people as of the year 2019, particularly since the Covid-19 pandemic's outbreak (Koetsier, 2020).

TikTok is the international version of Douyin, China's social media platform, with over 2 billion downloads in April 2020. **TikTok** is a platform for 15 - 60 second short videos attracting various people to share their knowledge, skills, and experiences. Language learning videos were the second-most popular knowledge-sharing videos on **TikTok** in 2019 (Pratiwi et al., 2021). Since **TikTok** App is a well-liked social media platform that is used to share a variety of video content, there is also a chance to use it as an online learning tool for English, particularly for improving speaking abilities. **TikTok**'s growing popularity among Generation Z – which is "anyone born from 1997 onward" and "grew up with technology, the internet, and social media" (Dimock, 2019) - and its ease of use in creating short videos have prompted researchers to consider the app's potential for use in teaching EFL.

Although researchers have spent a lot of time trying to pin down how social media affects people, findings are contradictory. Scientists and professionals frequently mention the negative effects of social media, including depression, anxiety, and social issues, despite many studies discussing the benefits of social media (Khoiroh, 2021; Paul et al., 2012). Since the introduction of online learning, students have had fewer chances to participate and interact with one another in class, and their skill development has suffered as a result. This occurs because there are several challenges that students face during online learning, including limited data plans and poor reception in their homes. Additionally, there is the growing problem of people becoming too dependent on their social media accounts: some research indicates that social media negatively impacts academic performance and student learning (Spence et al., 2020; Junco, 2012). According to student opinions, online education was only partially effective during the Covid-19 period, which is consistent with previous research by Hamid (2020).

An integral part of this thesis is a discussion of the two opposing views on using social media, and **TikTok** in particular, the advantages versus disadvantages of **TikTok** in English language education. In Vietnam - one of the countries with the most **TikTok** users worldwide (Statista, 2023) - these conflict aspects illustrate a compelling question in contemporary communications and pedagogy scholarship:

1. How is **TikTok** perceived by English teachers and students in Vietnam?

2. Within the selected group of participants, how do they use **TikTok** to teach and study English?

a. What motivates them to use **TikTok** in the English acquisition process?

b. Do they perceive **TikTok** as beneficial or detrimental to teaching and learning English?

c. How can we make **TikTok** a better place to teach and learn English?

In this thesis, we examine these questions from the viewpoint of Vietnamese English Language Learners (ELLs) and teachers. Uses and Gratification Theory will be employed to examine the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the educational aspects of **TikTok** and the decision-making process when considering **TikTok** as a pedagogical tool (Uses and Gratification Theory, 2010). The Uses and Gratification theory looks at how the media affects individuals. It discusses how individuals utilize the media to meet their needs and how they feel fulfilled when those needs are met. Otherwise, Second Language Acquisition theory states that to learn a language, we can employ its grammatical rules sparingly because all that is needed are meaningful interactions in the language, which typically concentrate on the message being delivered rather than the grammar and rules of speech (Second Language Acquisition Theory, 2016). This theory provides an essential view on using informal ways to teach and study English. Hence, the theory implies that

we can consider **TikTok** as a means of delivering English materials so that students can informally acquire English.

The interpretive framework and the qualitative methodology employed in this thesis are closely related. To investigate my research questions, I conducted semi-structured interviews with four Vietnamese teachers and six students. First, English teachers in high schools, universities and English training centres were interviewed to discover the use of **TikTok** in their teaching plans, and/or their view on the potential of employing **TikTok** in education. Furthermore, in-depth individual interviews were also conducted with students to have a more comprehensive understanding of their views on using **TikTok**. Instead of pre-determined coding categories, I used an inductive coding strategy that let themes and codes surface during the analysis process. This qualitative approach's strength is in vividly describing subjective personal experiences rather than making statistical comparisons between demographic groups or describing the prevalence or frequency of specific phenomena.

In this thesis, I will first offer context on the English educational environment in Vietnam, operationally define key terms, and discuss the popularity of **TikTok** in Vietnam. The literature review will then proceed to a topically arranged study of the findings in three categories: major studies looking at the implication of ICTs in pedagogy, studies that focus on social media in language education in general and English in particular, and finally, studies that have examined the use of **TikTok** in teaching and learning English. It will conclude by highlighting significant ideas and methodologies pertinent to the study of **TikTok**'s influence on English competence in the Vietnamese setting, establishing the framework for the research design of the thesis project. Following an explanation of the methodology, I will provide a narrative-style review of the

findings, as well as a detailed discussion of significant insights and recommendations for future research.

Background

This section provides some background perspective on the topic at hand to set the stage for the subsequent analysis. My personal interest in this topic and research perspective serves as the foundation for establishing my positionality within the research topic. What follows is an explanation of terms that will be used frequently throughout the rest of the thesis and an overview of the current **TikTok** and English education situation in Vietnam. Lastly, I provide some theoretical context for using media and how to acquire a new language.

Research positionality

According to the definition of positionality, it is "the researcher's chosen position within a specific research topic" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). It affects both the methods and results of scientific studies (Rowe, 2014). According to positionality, researchers are not separate from the social processes they study since their perspectives are shaped by their own social, historical, and political contexts (Holmes, 2020). Researchers who choose to use qualitative methods are more likely to accept and even embrace a certain amount of subjectivity in their findings (Merrigan et al., 2012). Therefore, new researchers should be aware that their positionality is distinct and can influence all facets of the research process. In certain cases, this is seen as a benefit of a qualitative approach. As a result, my positionality plays a significant role in this thesis.

Firstly, my interest in this subject stems partly from my experiences studying English. I grew up in Vietnam, a country that teaches English as a foreign language. Hence, I have studied English since I was nine years old. I continued studying English until I graduated from the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, one of the best institutions teaching English in Vietnam. Though the textbook and pedagogical methods have witnessed a dramatic change, my experience with the old model may still be valuable to the study since I understand its advantages and disadvantages. Thus,

I can have a comparison between my own experience and the participants. I, therefore, see the current research as an opportunity to explore how **TikTok** can best support learners in achieving high English competence.

Second, my research perspective is an important aspect of my positionality. I agree with the social constructionist worldview of sociology and communication, which investigates the growth of a mutually shared understanding of the world, and this aligns me with most of the current work on the relationship between knowledge and information (Galbin, 2014). Human knowledge, in other words, is negotiated and subjective and is always developed in tandem with others. Knowledge is a socially and culturally created human product. Individuals generate meaning through their relationships with one another and with their surroundings (Galbin, 2014). This view maintains that the researcher does not operate in a vacuum; rather, knowledge is co-created with the study's participants, stakeholders, and other dialogue partners. As a young marketer-communicator, I spend most of my career researching markets and audiences. There are multiple versions of customers' and audiences' insights depending on the lens I choose to see through. Customers and audiences have different views based on their standpoints as consumers of the message I deliver, which is highly related to their demographic details. Thus, in doing research, it is important to stand in their shoes to know their insights better. As Berger and Luckmann (1991) maintain that conversation is the most important means of maintaining, modifying, and reconstructing subjective reality, I agree that it is better to communicate verbally to understand each other's ideas. This significantly influences my methodological selection with qualitative interviews and thematic analysis.

Key definitions

This section will briefly explain three terms used throughout this thesis: English for foreign language (EFL), English language learner (ELL), Informal learning, Open education resources (OER) and Multimodal learning method.

Firstly, English for foreign language (EFL) and English for Second Language (ESL) are very different. ESL nations, like the Philippines, utilize English as their second language, whereas EFL nations only use it in schools and other educational settings. It is referred to as EFL if you live in your nation, spend most of your time speaking your native tongue, and take a few hours of weekly English sessions. Someone who speaks Vietnamese as a first language but takes only a few English classes at school would be an example. English is not used in daily contacts, government, or local media (Cahyani, 2022).

Second, English language learners are pupils who first study a language outside of English in their home nation and community before learning English as a new language. The students are not yet fluent in English, regardless of whether they have some grasp of it. While some students have a basic command of the language, they require extra assistance to acquire it for academic purposes.

Third, informal learning encompasses all efforts to increase one's understanding, knowledge, or ability that occur outside of formal schooling or formally organized educational or social programs. Individuals and communities make crucial decisions regarding the nature of informal learning (e.g., goals, content, means and procedures of acquisition, length, evaluation of outcomes, and applications). Independent study, either solo or in a small group, conducted outside of a traditional classroom setting and without the presence of a credentialed teacher is what we mean when we talk about "informal learning" (Livingstone, 1999). Learning English in an informal

environment occurs when a person picks up the language via their own activities in various contexts without any deliberate effort on their part (Jurkovič, 2019).

According to UNESCO, "Open Educational Resources (OER) are learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under the copyright that has been released under an open license, that permits no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others" (*Open Educational Resources*, 2023). In other words, Text documents, audio, video, multimedia, exams, software, learning objects, and other teaching and learning-related tools may all be included. And the key is that OER may be freely accessed, utilized, remixed, improved, and shared according to the license chosen (Librarian, n.d.).

Multimodal learning is defined as "an embodied learning situation which engages multiple sensory systems and action systems of the learner. This type of learning is traditionally emphasized for children with learning challenges and can include a variety of visual inputs in addition to text" (Massaro, 2012). Using the alphabet song to teach children the alphabet is a prime example.

Practical context

TikTok in Vietnam

TikTok (Douyin) is a social networking platform that creates short videos (15 seconds to 1 minute) in various genres. It is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance. It was first made available in China in September 2016. It was subsequently made available internationally after merging with another Chinese social media platform called Musica.ly, on 2 August 2018, to create a larger video community with existing data and accounts (Cahyani, 2022). **TikTok** had 45.8 million downloads in the first quarter (Q1) of 2018. There were 1.2 billion monthly users recorded as of March 2022

[1], with 740 million expected new installs in 2021. The number of users exceeds that of other popular apps like **Youtube**, **WhatsApp**, **Facebook**, and **Instagram** (Lenia, 2022). According to the mobile application report by Appota (2021), **TikTok** has a worldwide phenomenon with 16 million downloads and experienced a 160 percent increase in downloads on iOS in 2020.

TikTok has also become Vietnam's fastest-growing social media network (Tomorrow Marketer, 2021). **TikTok** has quickly climbed to the fourth spot in the Vietnam app rankings, trailing only **Facebook**, Zalo, and **Instagram**. In particular, the most recent Connected Consumer Report by Decision Lab in Vietnam (2022) has confirmed that 67 percent of 15- to 23-year-olds in Vietnam say they now use more than four social media apps on their mobile phones. Ever-growing **TikTok** and longtime favourite **Instagram** are among them, but like the rest of the population, there is a well-known number-one when it comes to platforms that young people can't live without.

English education in Vietnam.

English has been the primary foreign language taught in the Vietnamese educational system for the past twenty years. English is one of the most widely taught non-native languages in Vietnamese schools because the government sees it as crucial to the country's continued economic and social growth. The result is that English is increasingly seen as Vietnam's top choice when it comes to learning a language from a different culture (H. T. M. Nguyen, 2017). This has led to an increase in the number of schools that make English instruction and study a requirement for graduation. Nowadays, being able to communicate effectively in English is expected of anyone seeking higher education or professional advancement. In 1996, primary schools were given the option of teaching

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[1] The fact that TikTok users may create many accounts may cause them to artificially inflate the number of active users and downloads. It's vital to realize that these platforms provide very inflated user predictions that may overestimate the amount of individuals who actually utilize them.

English. In 2013, the year for which the most recent statistics are available, approximately 22 million students in Vietnam were learning English as a foreign language in classrooms of all shapes and sizes (MOET, 2013a, 2013b).

Nonetheless, English education in Vietnam is primarily grammatical in nature and intended for testing purposes only, which is one of the main reasons why EFL students in Vietnam strive to become more fluent in the language. Vietnamese people, primarily students, use English as a foreign language. English is only taught and learned in a few settings, such as schools, classes, or universities, where it is one of the subjects offered. Before 2018, students began learning the language in sixth grade but now begin in first grade. High school and college students continue to study the language, but few graduate with even a basic level of fluency (van Hoang, 2018).

The Ministry of Education and Training published a six-tiered foreign language proficiency framework in 2014, corresponding to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages' levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. A minimum score of 5.5 on the IELTS or 500-780 on the TOEIC is required for university students. This is the same as the B1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. A speaker at the B1 level can grasp the essence of well-organized, standard input on recurrently encountered topics in one's work, study, leisure, etc., create short pieces of linked text about subjects you know well or that interest you, describe experiences and events, dream, hope, and aspire, and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans (*B1 English Level (intermediate)*, n.d.). Few high school graduates, however, are up to par with these expectations. Students and teachers feel that public school English programs are failing them because of their lack of relevance and investment in teacher training (Nga, 2019).

Furthermore, even when a person receives high marks, they lack confidence. Students acknowledge that even during their senior year of high school, when they excelled in English and earned good grades for this project, they were still uncomfortable speaking English in real-world situations, such as having a straightforward conversation with a foreigner. It demonstrates how the Vietnamese English education system places a premium on test scores and grades rather than the end goal of effective English language proficiency in everyday situations (van Hoang, 2018). Thus, according to a report from Manpower Group (2022), there are only 5 percent of workforce with working English proficiency (*The 2021 Total Workforce Index Report*, n.d.)

Theoretical context

Uses and gratification theory

The impact of media on audiences is explored in the theory of Uses and Gratifications (U&G). This elucidates the fact that audiences consume media to gratify their own individual desires. (*Uses and Gratification Theory*, 2010). Unlike other disciplines, U&G is well-suited to studying social networking services because it places an emphasis on the practical applicability of digital media, the breadth of needs it meets, and the participation of the audience (Falgoust et al., 2022). Humans have a wide variety of needs and gratification. This list is broken down into five distinct needs: Affective needs, Cognitive needs, Personal Integrative needs, Social Integrative needs, and Tension free needs (*Uses and Gratification Theory*, 2010). Their cognitive needs can partly explain people's use of media to educate themselves and expand their horizons. Some members of the audience are eager to gain intellectual and academic knowledge.

The "Use and Gratifications Theory" provides a fresh lens through which to examine the world. This theory, which focuses on "what people do with media," has been used in a number of studies to successfully gain insight into consumers' motivations and concerns regarding their use of

various media, including radio, television, and social media. **Facebook** (Karnik et al., 2013; Menon & Meghana, 2021), **Twitter** (G. M. Chen, 2011; Johnson & Yang, 2009; Phua et al., 2017), **Snapchat** (Punyanunt-Carter et al., 2017), **Instagram** ((Menon, 2022)), **Pinterest** (Mull & Lee, 2014), have all been the subject of studies examining the uses and satisfactions of young adults. There is a convergence of needs and pleasures among these various platforms. MySpace, **Facebook**, Twitter, and Snapchat were used by users to fulfil their needs for social connection and relationship maintenance, while **Facebook** and **Pinterest** were used for entertainment.

A number of the aforementioned services allow users to upload and share short videos, but **TikTok**'s primary function is in this area (Aranda, 2021). Available data suggest that **TikTok** users are more likely to watch others' content than make their own (Bucknell Bossen & Kottasz, 2020). By adapting U&G measures from other social media platforms, Vaterlaus and Winter (2021) found that US adults (n = 247; ages 18 to 25) used **TikTok** for realism, coolness, agency-enhancement, community building, bandwagon, interactivity, browsing/variety seeking, and entertainment (Vaterlaus & Winter, 2021). Yaqi et al. (2021) analyzed the motivations of Chinese **TikTok** users (n=300; ages 15 to 35), finding that the platform primarily provided them with leisure and social needs, information acquisition and business needs. These recent studies on **TikTok** U&G offer a first look at why people choose to use this short-form video-centric social media platform (Yaqi et al., 2021).

Second language acquisition theory

Author and researcher Stephen Krashen developed the theory of second language acquisition, which is crucial because it shaped the field of second language acquisition research in the 1980s. This theory suggests that learners of a foreign language do not need to rely heavily on the language's grammatical rules. There is no need to master the grammatical intricacies of the

language in order to have meaningful conversations; what matters most is the content of the message. Fluency is acquired through exposure to comprehensible input without prior instruction or training in the language's grammar or reading (*Second Language Acquisition Theory*, 2016).

Krashen states two types of second language performance systems: the acquired system and the learned system. In the acquired system a language is picked up unconsciously. For example, this occurs when a child who has been subjected to a language in a natural environment, like at home or school, begins to reproduce that language's correct grammatical structures without even realizing it. The youngster is more concerned with getting their point across and using the language that comes most easily to them. They don't pay attention to what they say because they haven't put in the effort to learn the language. A child will not learn a second language until they are able to comprehend spoken language. The learned system is based on instruction, whereby one acquires a language through classroom study. Here, students concentrate on acquiring grammatical knowledge and developing an awareness of how they come to understand the structure of language (*Second Language Acquisition Theory*, 2016). Krashen contrasts the two and argues that acquisition is more crucial than learning. He thinks that grammar is the only thing that can be tested in school but that mistakes in grammar are inevitable when one has to focus on the content being created. Although studying grammar can help, it is no guarantee of fluent or accurate usage. To be considered fluent in a language, one must be able to convey their thoughts clearly and effectively. Therefore, one must acquire a language to become fluent in it. This theory clarifies the process of language acquisition. When a person reads or listens to materials that are beyond their current linguistic ability, such as a book or podcast, they can acquire new language skills. According to Krashen, there is a predetermined sequence to how and when people learn; not everyone will finish at the same point. Consequently, natural communicative input ought to be

utilized to cater to specific requirements. The grammar in the input should sound natural and not like it was inserted on purpose. In conclusion, the student should not be coerced into making a speech. When the time is right, they will speak (*Second Language Acquisition Theory*, 2016).

Examining the relationship between Second Language Acquisition Theory and Computer-Assisted Language Learning, Chapelle (2009) stated that learners' access to the target language and to interactive events where they can put that language to use increases and evolves dramatically as a result of technological developments. Thus, social media as a Computer-Assisted Language Learning method is highly appropriate for language acquisition. However, the written nature of many learner-computer interactions presents unique processing challenges compared to those inherent in verbal, face-to-face exchanges. Therefore, theories of Second Language Acquisition which place importance on linguistic input need to take into account how technological developments affect linguistic input and how learners' exposure to novel forms of input may influence acquisition. Timing, focusing attention, multimodality, assistance availability, and feedback are just a few of the many interactional facets that technological features impact (Chapelle, 2009).

This section has examined contextual elements that are pertinent to the present study, such as an explanation of my positionality as a researcher, an introduction to **TikTok** and English teaching in Vietnam, and various hypotheses on the use of social media and language acquisition. Having established the framework, the next chapter will examine significant literature that has affected this study.

Literature Review

Introduction

This review presents scholarship on the impact of ICTs and social media, particularly **TikTok**, focusing on the English learning process. The goal of the literature review is to establish the context and identify studies that have investigated the application and impacts of ICTs, social media, and **TikTok** in the education field, particularly in countries that teach English as a second language, as the foundation for conducting a study in the Vietnamese context.

The review begins by outlining the approach and strategy for conducting a literature search, followed by a summary of the findings. It then proceeds to a topically arranged study of the findings in three categories: 1). major studies looking at the implication of ICTs in pedagogy; 2). studies that focus on social media in language education in general and English in particular, and; finally, 3). studies that have examined the use of **TikTok** in teaching and learning English. The review concludes by highlighting key insights and methodologies that are relevant to the study of **TikTok**'s influence on English competence within the Vietnamese context, laying the groundwork for the thesis project research design.

The Application of ICTs in Pedagogy

What are ICTs

According to UNESCO, ICT (information and communication technology) is defined as "a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information" (*Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)*, n.d.). According to Aranda (2021), ICT is the combination of information processing, computing, and communication technologies. ICT encompasses any product related to the transformation of various manual

processes into digital ones (Aranda, 2021). ICT examples include computers, the internet, and electronic delivery systems. To address ICT's major role, Chen et al. (2021) claim that the creation and growth of ICT enhance consumer demands, drive innovation, as well as provide a creative viewpoint for the treatment of multiple challenges in several fields, all of which have a significant impact on our daily lives. ICT has proven to be beneficial in the fields of education in particular (J. Chen et al., 2021)

ICTs and education

Education is a dynamic process. Kanellopoulou and Giannakoulopoulos (2021) propose that teaching and learning must be technologically based. Despite certain challenges, students and teachers benefit from using technology in education (Kanellopoulou & Giannakoulopoulos, 2021). According to Aranda (2021), when technology is employed for educational purposes, we must recognize that both teaching and learning have changed due to ICT breakthroughs (Aranda, 2021). We may propose a new educational paradigm that serves students more quickly, affordably, and efficiently than ever before. Social networking platforms like **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **TikTok**, and **WhatsApp**, as well as digital cameras, may be touted as great learning aids, and people have to be aware of the educational potential they provide (Aranda, 2021; Kanellopoulou & Giannakoulopoulos, 2021).

Thus, promoting ICT use is crucial. Aranda (2021) believes the Internet can aid in providing teaching resources and may help instructors identify instructional resources and quickly resolve issues. Students with internet access and a computer or smartphone may access resources and information with a mouse click. Courses may be provided online if a physical class meeting is not feasible. For example, during the current Covid-19 outbreak, worldwide online courses were made available. Technology has offered unique learning approaches or activities that might replace

conventional education during pandemics or other disasters (Aranda, 2021). Kanellopoulou and Giannakoulopoulos (2021) argue that online tools like email and conference platforms enable a community of learners to exchange information, ideas, and views. Teachers may create and publish resources for students to use at any time. Student forums are another option. During the COVID-19 pandemic it would have been overwhelmingly difficult to maintain educational programs without internet conferencing programs. Further, the option to close educational institutions or keep them open despite the risk of virus transmission would have been tough (Kanellopoulou & Giannakoulopoulos, 2021).

As a consequence, expanding the use of ICT in pedagogy and integrating technology into teaching and learning has a significant influence on student achievement, according to a study issued in 2010 by Japan's National Institute of Multimedia Education. Children who are continually exposed to technology via education have stronger "knowledge," "presentation skills," and "creative powers," as well as a willingness to put up more effort in learning than their classmates, according to the research.

ICTs and language education

ICTs may be employed as efficient and ubiquitous instruments to develop foreign language abilities in general and English skills in particular, with a beneficial influence on learners. Several studies have examined how learners' digital social activities, especially in English, may assist foreign language acquisition. Castillo (2016) used Second Life and an online training course platform to increase adult learners' communication skills in EFL. The study found that **Second Life** had a considerable influence on adult learners' speaking and listening abilities. They found that introducing web-based technologies into language learning might improve student engagement, teaching methods, and the interactive components of these technologies. (Castillo,

2016). The assumption that students' digital behaviours, including gaming, may lead to increased foreign learning was confirmed by Sundqvist (2019). The study evaluated second-language vocabulary differences between Swedish second-language English gamers and non-gamers and found a strong link between gaming time and vocabulary growth, regardless of game type (Sundqvist, 2019). **Hello English, Duolingo** - Learn English for Free, **Memrise**, **English Speaking Practice**, and **Lingbe** are among the programs recommended by Vishnevskaya et al. (2021). Mobile language learning applications should be used in conjunction with other resources like linguistic exchanges, classes, or more comprehensive programs. While utilizing a smartphone app to learn a new language is great for practice and "soaking things in," taking a language school or travelling abroad may be more effective for beginners. It may be used in conjunction with online or in-person language instruction to brush up on skills before a trip or if you lack vocabulary in a certain field (Vishnevskaya & Rinkevich, 2021).

Furthermore, a number of further studies have been conducted to investigate learners' experiences, activities, and attitudes toward informal foreign language acquisition utilizing technology. Sockett (2013) defines informal learning as instances in which language students continue to study without the aim of learning, such as for enjoyment or social engagement. This strategy helps students uniquely strengthen their language abilities. As a result of activities taken in a range of contexts, a learner acquires English unintentionally and sometimes subconsciously (Jurkovič, 2019; Räsänen, 2021). Jurkovi (2019) claims that since English is a lingua franca, individuals of diverse nations and ethnic origins mainly communicate in English. Because English is the de facto language on most global social media platforms, informal English language acquisition seems very ubiquitous. In a study on mobile-assisted language learning, Chen (2013) investigated how Taiwanese EFL students used tablets for informal language learning outside of

class. Chen observed that tablets offered learners opportunities for participation and collaboration in the target language. Nevertheless, it was demonstrated that just providing learners with technology did not ensure excellent language learning. Instead, Chen highlighted that since acquiring new technology has unique challenges, foreign language students may benefit from support (X.-B. Chen, 2013). Research by Isbell (2018) found that users of an L2 Korean learning subreddit demonstrated highly participative interaction patterns and displayed organized standards of behaviour that supported language learning and engaged in a division of labour between beginners and experts (Isbell, 2018).

Challenges when applying ICTs to education

Incorporating ICTs into education, however, presents challenges for both students and instructors. During the Covid pandemic, Al-Jarf (2020) conducted a study with a sample of students and lecturers from the Saudi Arabian Colleges of Languages and Translation, finding that 55 percent of students and educators disliked distance learning, found it ineffective and frustrating and preferred in-class face-to-face instruction. Distance learners failed to understand online lectures in 59 percent of cases. According to the students, their instructors used the same information in class as they did for distance learning without making any changes. There were no new material or resources added to the website. For 58 percent of the students, DL required a significant amount of work. In addition, 69 percent of students struggled to communicate with their lecturers and classmates. Similarly, 64 percent of teachers indicated that many students were disinterested in online learning, completing assignments, presenting online, asking questions, and engaging in online class discussions; they were disappointed and unenthusiastic. There was virtually little contact in the distance learning environment. Furthermore, 57 percent of instructors said that distance learning was novel to them and that it required a new approach to teaching and

learning. They didn't know how to utilize platform features like the whiteboard or how to adapt course content to the new emergency online school setting (Al-Jarf, 2020).

Warschauer et al. (2000) proposed that instructors evaluate the repercussions of using the Internet in their classrooms, given its extensive use among both teachers and students, because of these effects and difficulties. As a consequence, learning how to effectively utilize online sources with the support and motivation of their educational contexts would be quite beneficial for teachers (Warschauer et al., 2000). In a similar vein, Kanellopoulou and Giannakoulopoulos (2021) argue that to optimize their online teaching capacities and efficacy, instructors must learn information and build the essential skills to utilize ICTs. Students must also modify their attitudes about social media and information and communication technologies (ICTs); these instruments must be perceived as enjoyable and, most crucially, teaching instruments.

Social media in education

Definition of social media

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) defines social media as "forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)." Social media may refer to any website, application, or program that focuses on human contact, both privately and publicly, depending on the criteria. According to Jenkins et al. (2006), social media networks are a kind of participatory culture that allows individuals to collaborate and share their ideas for the common good (Jenkins, 2006). Social media, according to Hinton and Hjorth (2013), is a broad term that refers to the ever-expanding modern online media and its area of impact. It is defined by Poore (2016) as "types of digital technology that enable us to communicate and exchange information or 'content' with one another across the internet" (p. 3).

Most definitions of social media contain at least one of these components – interaction, collaboration, and/or communication – which are also associated with distribution and sharing (Poore, 2016). Scholars often stress interaction and cooperation among the many characteristics of social media (Chawinga, 2017; Hickerson & Kothari, 2017). As a result of these characteristics, social media is an excellent tool for fostering active engagement in the classroom, and instructors find these digital tools to be very useful (Maksimova, 2021).

Some prominent social media can be used in education

Facebook

Facebook is a firm based in the United States that provides online social networking services. This application allows students to engage with foreigners and other classmates, debate, and post their ideas and experiences according to their choices. Using **Facebook** may help students reduce anxiety and learn English in casual circumstances, with a wide range of resources, some never explored by educational institutions, such as memes or video blogs (Aranda, 2021). Using **Facebook** in the classroom may also assist students in developing digital literacy. According to Muoz and Towner (2011), new terminology like "new media literacy," "digital literacy," and "twenty-first-century literacy" are emerging. If **Facebook** is used in the classroom, all of these abilities may be gained (Towner & Muñoz, 2011). According to Junco (2012), **Facebook** might be an excellent way to enhance a teacher's connection with their pupils, which could lead to a better learning environment in the classroom as a result of the positive relationship. Students may utilize this social network to improve their writing and communication abilities (Junco, 2012 / 01 / 01).

Facebook has also created a **Facebook** for Educators page (https://education.fb.com). This section provides teachers and institutions with information, resources, and experiences to cope with 21st-

century competencies. Educators may also create groups on **Facebook** for Instructors to share their experiences and suggestions. It also gives educators resources to use with Oculus (virtual reality) to enhance talents. Finally, it offers a wide selection of subjects for eradicating racism and prejudice in schools, as well as lesson ideas and global experiences.

Youtube

Youtube was launched in February 2005 in San Bruno, California. **Youtube** is an online video platform that allows users to search for, watch, and share videos from all over the globe, which can be accessed for free over the internet. **Youtube** is known for the slogan "Broadcast Yourself", which could be a video-sharing location that gives different varying media data. **Youtube** might be a place where people can contribute recordings or watch recordings that have been shared by others.

According to Hanim (2021), **Youtube**'s quick, rapid, and free access is causing it to flourish not just as a source of pleasure but also as a medium for commerce and education (Hanim, 2021). **Youtube**, she claims, offers various benefits as a Learning Media, including:

- Practicality: **Youtube** is easy to use and can be followed by anybody, including students and instructors.

- Informative: **Youtube** provides statistics on improving education, innovation, and so on. Within U&G theory, **Youtube** can help to fulfil the cognitive needs of humans since it can support users in educating themselves to expand their horizons (*Uses and Gratification Theory*, 2010).

- Cognitive support: **Youtube** invites us to discuss or query about topics, as well as to audit a learning video.

- Shareability: **Youtube** provides HTML link functionality as well as Embed learning video code which can be posted on social media networks such as **Facebook, Twitter**, and blogs/websites. According to U&G theory, they interact with their family, friends, and other members of society. Instead of hanging out socially on the weekends, they choose to use online social networking sites (*Uses and Gratification Theory*, 2010).

Instagram

Instagram is a picture and video-sharing platform that is accessible for free on iPhone™ and Android™. People may use **Instagram** to post photographs and videos to share with their followers or a small group of friends to fulfill their integrative social needs ((*Uses and Gratification Theory*, 2010). In addition, they may also browse, comment on, and like **Instagram** photos made by their peers. **Instagram** might assist cognitive needs ((*Uses and Gratification Theory*, 2010) by providing a more important environment for pupils to improve their writing skills due to the upgrades and new features this social network provides (Aranda, 2021). Various studies have demonstrated that **Instagram** might aid in learning English since various options allow users to produce and share live videos of themselves with many friends locally or worldwide (Hu et al., 2014). In addition, students may utilize **Instagram**'s "**Instagram** Story" function to post all of the highlights of their day, not just the ones they choose to keep on their profile. Post photos or videos that will be erased after 24 hours. It also proposes an **Instagram** reel, a new way to create and discover short, funny films, allowing everyone to become an **Instagram** creator and reach new audiences globally. Students may create, email, and share content. **Instagram** may be used to learn English. As a result, youngsters may find **Instagram** a fun and interesting way to learn (Shazali et al., 2019).

WhatsApp

WhatsApp was founded by Jan Koum and Brian Acton. **WhatsApp** has been a **Facebook** service since 2014. Still, it continues to function as a distinct app focused on providing a messaging service that works quickly and reliably everywhere around the globe. Users may exchange text and voice messages, conduct audio and video chats, and share photographs, documents, user locations, and other information. One of the key aims of this App is to foster communication. At its most basic level, one of the primary goals of education is nothing more than communication among diverse components. This supports U&G theory (2010) since **WhatsApp** meets the need of people to connect with society through the internet. Because **WhatsApp** requires internet connectivity, a vast quantity of information can be retrieved in real-time, and information exchange through technology is rapid and simple (Ubaedillah et al., 2021). **WhatsApp** may give a method for instructors to communicate with their pupils more timely and uninterruptedly. It may also promote student communication and provide another place for learning. The fact that practically everyone with a smartphone is acquainted with **WhatsApp**'s fundamental functionalities is an advantage of this App. Nowadays, teens and adults prefer to connect through text messaging rather than face-to-face. Because of its familiarity, **WhatsApp** is among the most accessible applications in ESL settings (Aranda, 2021).

Advantages of social media in education

There are four fundamental reasons why people use social media platforms: entertainment, socialization, information, and academics (Bashir & Savita-Gupta, 2018). Academics have increasingly become essential due to educators' habit of bringing social media apps into language teaching and learning environments to increase learners' language ability (Aranda, 2021). A substantial amount of study has been conducted on the educational advantages of social media.

The general view is that social media, when used properly, with the appropriate mindset, and in a regulated setting, may be a valuable tool for both learning and teaching.

There is an unmistakable link between social media and how it may be utilized successfully in engaging educational methods. Wheeler (2010) provides a representation of social media in pedagogy, focusing on two unique but interconnected approaches to pedagogy aided by social media, namely reflective and collaborative learning activities (Wheeler, 2010). First, social media is a venue for educators to use to enhance collaborative learning by developing and sharing digital material and interaction (Poore, 2016). These technologies have evolved into platforms for interacting and connecting with learners throughout time (Chawinga, 2017). With social media, the whole world becomes a school, open 24 hours a day, seven days a week (Dzvapatsva et al., 2014). According to Menkhoff et al. (2014) and Wheeler (2010), social media complements blended learning by assisting students in creating positive contextual learning in connection to pedagogical goals (Menkhoff et al., 2014). **Twitter**, for example, may be utilized to engage students both in the classroom and at home. Social media also encourages students to collaborate and express comments or questions about their subjects on blogs or **Twitter**. Students may use **Twitter** to share knowledge and interact freely with classmates and instructors, according to Menkhoff et al. (2014). The conventional captive student is increasingly given the option to offer rapid feedback to educators so they may assess whether students have learned the course material, enabling the teacher to detect knowledge gaps and rectify them on the spot. Second, Wheeler (2010) focuses on reflective learning practices. In this context, reflective activities comprise students' capacity to think critically about what they have learned, allowing them to "adapt past learning to new contexts." Given how rapidly information becomes obsolete, it is critical for students to reflect on what they have learned in class, stay up to speed on fast-paced developments,

and stay relevant in their future tough job market. Blogs, according to Wheeler (2010), are online tools that foster reflective learning, while wikis are intended for collaborative learning.

Furthermore, social networks inherit the advantages of ICTs by offering an online learning environment, a tool that may be utilized to replace conventional classes, particularly during a pandemic or catastrophe. Off-campus accessibility benefits both the instructor and the student since there is no need to be in class to obtain schoolwork (Maksimova, 2021). Finally, social media has been shown to help students build alternative literacies such as visual literacy, media literacy, and functional literacy (Poore, 2016)

Specifically, regarding English acquisition, Ismail and Shafie (2019) discovered that social media influences learning when utilized appropriately. They conclude that students claimed to develop experience and abilities in social media by utilizing the English language in many variants and scenarios. Vocabulary, listening skills, reading, and pronunciation/speaking abilities were the skills that benefited the most from social media use, according to Ismail and Shafie (2019). According to the results, receptive skills in the English language were influenced more than productive skills, and the effect was mostly favourable. The research also suggested that people's activities to grasp the language accessible on social media, for example, might supplement and strengthen formal learning earned in schools (Ismail & Shafie, 2019). Soares (2008) utilized blogs to educate English as a foreign language at a Brazilian institution for a whole semester in related research. At the end of the term, he distributed an online survey to explore students' perceptions of blogs as educational materials. According to the findings, blogs greatly enhanced students' English writing abilities by offering access to lessons in the form of Podcasts and videos uploaded on their blogs (de Almeida Soares, 2008).

Disadvantages and challenges of applying social media in education

Despite proof of the advantages of using social media, there are several underlying paradoxes and riddles that continue to stymie the widespread use of these platforms.

Disadvantages

Junco (2012) investigated the link between academic success and social media, notably **Facebook** (Junco, 2012 / 01 / 01). When major control variables are included, **Facebook** time is a significant negative predictor of overall college GPA. Also, although not statistically significant, checking **Facebook** was adversely related to overall GPA. However, according to Paul et al. (2012), students struggle to concentrate and achieve academically due to poor time management and attention skills. A relationship between social media usage and attention span predicted a detrimental impact on academic attainment. If this problem is not addressed, students who sleep late and use social media late at night may struggle in class (Paul et al., 2012).

Spence et al. (2020) discovered evidence of a detrimental influence on short-term memory while using social media to gather new knowledge. He contends that the phenomena are caused by the timing of engaging in certain activities rather than the substance, duration, or quantity of subjects. They determined that even brief usage of social media applications like **Instagram** may affect short-term memory recall (Spence et al., 2020).

Using technology to study may bring distraction and abuse, says Khoiroh (2021). For starters, it stifles creativity in children. Students may quickly obtain answers via **Youtube**. It demonstrates students can get information quickly and easily on the fly. Copying and pasting from the internet is prevalent, as is online plagiarism (Boudjadar, 2015). Furthermore, some instructors see social media sites like **Twitter** and **Facebook** as learning distractions since they divert students from

what they intend to do (Khoiroh, 2021). Furthermore, Chawinga (2017) notes that academic critics of social media commonly point out that the sites give insufficient reference material from unreliable sources (Chawinga, 2017). Using social media too much would lead to a loss of reality, warns Khoiroh (2021). Students who spend too much time on social media will lose touch with the real world. In-person communication may be hampered. It prevents pupils from enquiring. Long-term, students will get used to accepting facts without question. Students often criticize the video's terminology and accent (Khoiroh, 2021).

Additionally, the "Digital Divide" phenomenon demonstrates the very real problem of schools with limited access to technology. Making technology accessible is important, but it is just the first step toward the answer. Recent studies have acknowledged that teachers in these underprivileged inner-city and rural schools face challenges beyond just a lack of technology. Additional barriers include using the available technology in the classroom very differently and having technical support systems that are underfunded compared to teachers in schools with greater financial resources (Kleiman, 2007). Therefore, all prerequisites for proper technology integration must be taken into account when examining equity issues, not just the number of devices on the market. As a result, the difficulty is not in introducing the right technology into classrooms but rather in preparing students to utilize it and encouraging a wider openness to incorporate new technologies as they become available.

In summary, social media use can also negatively impact academic performance and learning. Rather than looking at social media as a problem, Paul et al. (2012) suggest looking at the user's viewpoint. It is the user's duty to use social media correctly. Because of this, Junco feels it is vital to understand how media consumption affects academic performance (2012). Recognizing the bad parts helps us find acceptable alternatives for utilizing social media in education.

Challenges

Tess (2013) discusses some of the factors limiting social media use in education (Tess, 2013). In particular, she thinks that social media integration is a decision made by teachers rather than institutions. For example, Conole (2010) claims that teachers employing technology in the classroom are underpaid, lack expertise, and believe that technology may not function in the classroom (Chawinga, 2017). Another "less personal and more professional" issue for educators is "keeping up with social media developments" (Maksimova, 2021). We must know which "social media platforms are the most engaging to bring up cases for students." Maksimova also feels that knowing how numerous platforms work and tailoring teaching methods to what students want is critical.

Furthermore, Maksimova (2021) says that students may fail to critically view social media due to their regular use. This includes social media postings. While using social media, a teacher may urge students to "focus on particular audiences and rhetorical topics." Concerns regarding social media, particularly among non-users and first-generation students who value their privacy, also challenge students to have to face. Students may also be "reluctant to enter the same social networking area as (their) teachers," he said. Afraid of being watched and evaluated by an instructor, students are reluctant to divulge their social media accounts. It's tough for instructors to persuade students that they don't want to be constantly watched. The use of social media in class is not always taken seriously by pupils (Maksimova, 2021).

Jurkovi (2019) uncovered a new barrier to learning English through social media: many students choose to communicate with individuals in their local language rather than English. Thus, using social media in a language learning context is restricted due to the person's native language and

the prevailing language in social media. As a consequence, the ability to acquire English is heavily dependent on the first language spoken in social circles.

Other issues emerge from the inevitable technical hurdles that come with every technology. Their findings ranged from basic internet connection faltering (especially in rural regions) to equipment faults to very intricate software issues far beyond the skills of most people (Li, 2021; Putri et al., 2021).

TikTok in teaching and learning English

The background of TikTok

TikTok - a short video-sharing platform

TikTok is the most popular platform for short-form mobile videos. Its purpose is to encourage creativity and pleasure (**TikTok**, 2019). **TikTok** debuted in China as Douyin in 2016 and was then promoted to the worldwide population as **TikTok** in 2017. **TikTok** is a video-sharing software that lets users make and share 15-second to 1-minute films on any subject, with a broad range of noises and music samples available, as well as the possibility to apply special effects and filters. There is also the possibility to upload movies straight from your phone (Aranda, 2021). The client uses this program to transmit their own recordings, which are then distributed to other **TikTok** application customers. Throughout the first quarter (Q1) of 2018, **TikTok** was the most downloaded app, with 45.8 million downloads. As of March 2022, 1.2 billion monthly users were reported[2], with an expected 740 million first-time installations in 2021[3]. The number of users

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[2] https://www.omnicoreagency.com/tiktok-statistics/ (accessed April 5, 2022)

[3] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1089420/tiktok-annual-first-time-installs/ (accessed April 5, 2022)

surpasses other well-known applications such as **Youtube**, **WhatsApp**, **Facebook**, and **Instagram** (Lenia, 2022).

Features of TikTok application:

Lee (2022) and Lenia (2021) compiled a list of **TikTok**'s technical features, including (Lee, 2022; Lenia, 2022):

- Account visibility may be set to public or private;

- With a public account, you may set post visibility to public or private.

- Sound recording, sound recording into a chorus, and finally, incorporation into a personal account;

- Video recording, phone video recording, and incorporation into a personal account;

- Post media files with captions, hashtags, and locations as posts;

- Upload media files as posts with captions, hashtags, and locations;

- Filters and effects may be used to alter media files;

- Change the background sound/music and duration/speed of media files;

- Edit, fix and revise the video draughts that were created;

- Combine a media file with someone else's to create content. (Duet, challenges, and collaboration with other **TikTok** users);

- Search for content using hashtags, keywords, and accounts;

- Like, share, and leave comments on other people's posts;

- Send and receive private messages;

- To see relevant content, follow others and hashtags;

- View other people's material without following them, based on what they search for, view, and like, and/or trends chosen by algorithms (the 'For you' tab displays popular **TikTok** videos without following those individuals);

- Distribute media files across several platforms;

  To be more explicit, Montag et al. (2021) explain that the **TikTok** program, which is accessible for Android and Apple devices, allows users to create short movies in which they playback videos to various pop songs, to name one popular aspect of the site. These "LipSync-Videos" may be shared with other users, downloaded for non-commercial use, commented on, and, of course, "Liked." **TikTok** users not only submit playback videos, but they also watch a vast number of video materials. People may also request "challenges," in which they specify which performance should be generated by a large number of users. As a result, **TikTok** users replicate or engage with the original video (Montag et al., 2021).

Content

According to a recent study, **TikTok** may be a powerful medium for informing young people about health-related information, official government information releases, political dialogues, tourist material, live online transactions, and educational content (Montag et al., 2021). According to Lenia (2022), short videos on the **TikTok** platform may be classified into five types based on their content: beauty, talent, curiosity, knowledge, and narrative. The creators share an interest in this area (food, automobiles, pets, items, sports, tourism, technology, animation) to create a short clip (Lenia, 2022).

- Talent (make-up, dress-up, music, dancing, handicraft, painting, technical flow) also has some professional talent in this area. They also demonstrate their technical abilities to other users.

- Beauty (including celebrities, beauties, handsome guys, cute children, and strangers) also has a stunning presence in this group. They can sing and dance nicely at the same time, or they may exhibit their attractive look via play.

- Knowledge (software, kids, tricks, culture, photography, education, health): Producers exhibit their expert knowledge in a particular topic to other users.

- Story: In the form of a short video, the creators create an innovative and amusing story.

Audience

Wu (2020) asserted that individuals aged 30 and under, particularly Generation Z - a computer-savvy generation - are the most frequent **TikTok** users, spending an average of 52 minutes daily on the platform (Wu, 2020). Bucknell, Bossen and Kottasz (2020) showed that young users, in particular, seem to be very engaged on the site and consequently exchange a lot of information (Bucknell Bossen & Kottasz, 2020). **TikTok** is yet to acquire traction with the senior demographic, who do not feel comfortable enough to use it (Draganić et al., 2021). As a result of the quantity of time spent by these young people, **TikTok** should be considered for educational purposes (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). The possibilities are anticipated to be greater as the generations of **TikTok** users reach the age where this kind of e-learning is practical (Draganić et al., 2021).

Advantages of TikTok and Education

Several studies have shown that **TikTok** has a good influence in the learning environment. **TikTok**, according to Solomon (2021), has become a popular source of information for learning and understanding popular culture and other concerns, as well as news. **TikTok** assists students in learning "differently" and is an excellent platform for teaching academic information and supporting student's social/emotional well-being. **TikTok** provides a one-of-a-kind learning

experience by combining technology, kinesthetic movement, and group collaboration/collective learning. Two students in his study posited that "**TikTok** changes the way I learn by allowing me a way to connect with other people and get the idea of the subject in my head" and "Doing **TikTok** has made me more interested in what I'm learning and how I can use the things I learn." Students also said that it helped them recall knowledge for the remainder of the semester/year, that it was useful to refer to if they forgot how to do anything, such as compose a paragraph, and that it helped a lot with grammar when we practiced grammar on **TikTok**. (Solomon, 2021).

Hartung et al. (2022) claim that **TikTok** allows teachers to explain their teaching concepts using short video clips. **TikTok** brought teaching to life in ways traditional teacher education could not (Hartung et al., 2022). First and foremost, **TikTok** is a basic educational tool. So, with so many **TikTok** users and young people, **TikTok** may be an effective educational tool for the nation's youth (Afidah et al., 2021). As of today, **TikTok** seems to be a more user-friendly site than **Instagram**, which lacks several of **TikTok**'s new features (Kahil & Alobidyeen, 2021). As a result, **TikTok** is an appealing venue for kids to express their views on positivity and education, such as video research, language studies, and public speaking.

When used properly, **TikTok** may also be an engaging, dynamic, and unique learning tool that provides students with interactive content and increased support features like help and feedback (Afidah et al., 2021; Khlaif & Salha, 2021; Sihombing, 2021). **TikTok**'s short videos may allow learners and instructors to connect in many ways (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). In this new network, teachers and students may interact without using traditional classroom methods. To provide a platform for sharing knowledge and educating people via an innovative teaching method, **TikTok** has helped enhance students' enthusiasm and interest in learning (Lenia, 2022). Students use social media for knowledge, group discussion, resource sharing, and fun. It may promote student-teacher

connections and learning flexibility (Sihombing, 2021). **TikTok** social media strategists utilize this strategy to generate video duets. Oftentimes, **TikTok** videos include artistic editing. Duets on **TikTok** allow users to remark on existing videos. It allows viewers to respond to the original video while also adding their own comments. This may function in a classroom setting, similar to a debate or discussion. This is a unique technique to foster student discourse (Lungu & Lungu, 2021). Additionally, **TikTok** also naturally promotes the 21st-century talents essential for success in 21st-century society. Critical thinking, communication, cooperation, and creativity are some of them. To complete the **TikTok** process, students must collaborate, apply performance tactics, and memorize strategies (Solomon, 2021).

When it comes to language education, according to Lenia (2020), there are several benefits of **TikTok** as a medium for learning: (1) **TikTok** can facilitate audiovisual necessities in learning languages, particularly listening; (2) **TikTok** learners can also process words to convey, demonstrate, or articulate intentions, concepts, opinions, and feelings that are constituted and established according to the needs of students; (3) students could use the edit feature to present information, ideas, or impressions in a description form of an object; and (4) **TikTok** application could be used as a media for students to improve reading news.

Specifically in English education, according to Xiuwen and Razali (2021), during the covid-19 pandemic, social media and short films may have helped EFL learners improve their English communication skills. Instead of typical class performance, **TikTok** and short videos might present EFL undergraduate students with a wealth of information about English language learning tools. Educators or native speakers of English may post short videos on **TikTok**'s platform to help young people learn English. The teacher just edits the video, posts it on their **TikTok** wall, and provides the URL to the pupils. Students may utilize **TikTok** to create digital English

presentations. **TikTok** is worth noting since it is simple to record yourself conversing with a natural speaker. Instructors and other **TikTok** users may also remark to help improve English communication skills. As a result, EFL learners who utilize **TikTok** might improve their English language skills by watching these short English videos without being limited by space or time. Continually watching a training video may encourage independent practice. Particularly important for non-native speakers of English who lack space to display their proficiency. Another advantage of using **TikTok** in English education is that each video is only fifteen seconds long, contributing to its excellence in short attention span and assisting EFL students in getting the point of the knowledge (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). Their global appeal, interest, and accessibility make them ideal teaching tools, particularly in both formal and informal scenarios. In addition, **TikTok** supports updating instructional media to match current development and student interconnectivity (Cahyani, 2022).

Regarding motivation, **TikTok**'s unique topics and short-time-consumed attributes appeal to EFL undergraduate students' need for vivid digital visuals with enjoyment. Because young people like viewing dynamic visuals and listening to music, using **TikTok** in EFL classrooms may increase EFL undergraduate students' motivation and enthusiasm, **TikTok** and short videos might help students learn English while having fun. Many English educators and English language instructors consider **TikTok** and short videos as strong causes of change for education practice in terms of openness, interaction, and sociability. These features have disrupted traditional learning modes. The English language material has grown beyond textbooks to encompass a wide range of subjects. Students may develop their English communication abilities in several ways (H. H. Nguyen, 2021; Xiuwen & Razali, 2021).

As a result, **TikTok** has proven to positively impact all English skills acquisition, including vocabulary, speaking, listening, and writing.

Vocabulary: Devi et al. (2020) investigated students' perceptions of short English videos in vocabulary acquisition. The results of the test result analysis revealed that the majority of students think learning vocabulary via short English videos is a good idea. Most of them (87,1%) agreed that learning vocabulary via a short English video improved their skills significantly, and they considered that utilizing a short English video is an intriguing strategy for learning vocabulary (Devi et al., 2020). This highly resonated with Ichara Sinta (2022), who concluded that **TikTok** duet videos might aid students in memorizing adjective vocabulary throughout the phases of studying English vocabulary, which is easy to get for both teachers and students and can also increase students' interest and involvement in the learning process. Additionally, **TikTok** duet video learning media does not cause students to lose interest in the traditional classroom learning method; this student experience can aid students in remembering adjective vocabulary; **TikTok** duet videos can be used as study material when studying at home, as is the case today (Ichara Sinta, 2022).

Speaking: According to Mandasari et al. (2022), the **TikTok** app aids ESP (English for Special Purposes) students in improving their speaking abilities. The majority of pupils who used **TikTok** saw a substantial improvement in their grades (70 percent of students got high scores). Aside from that, ESP students were enthusiastic about using **TikTok** to learn to speak. They believe that utilizing **TikTok** motivates them to practise English and that it makes it simpler for them to communicate ideas and get new learning opportunities (Mandasari et al., 2022).

In the same line, Aziz and Sabella (2021) indicate that students may watch and search for a variety of instructional videos about speaking on **TikTok**, making learning interesting and fascinating.

Furthermore, by emulating native English speakers, these recorded videos of English learning resources may assist students in becoming more conscious of the importance of speaking English (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). Furthermore, if the teaching method is not acceptable, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to practise speaking, and they have a limited amount of time to study, their knowledge and accomplishment will suffer. As a result, when students utilize **TikTok**, they are inspired and may improve their speaking fluency by seeing and practising a variety of innovative videos created by native speakers (nur Aziz & Sabella, 2021)

Tarmizi et al. (2021) argued that student-**TikTok** platform interactions indicated sociocognitive phenomena. For example, enjoyable feelings (cognition) were converted into desirable embodied behaviours by employing **TikTok**, a fun social engineering tool (e.g., focusing on how native speakers pronounce words in English). **TikTok**'s ability to give choices to learners may encourage their autonomy as co-producers of knowledge, which is important for spoken English advancement. The students' everyday usage of **TikTok** may also promote the relationship between cognition and the socio-material environment. When students believed **TikTok** was pervasive and significant, they may have developed a strong feeling of agency or an individual's will and capacity to act. Moreover, students' feelings of safety while speaking English on **TikTok** may impact their self-confidence and motivation to study the target language (Tarmizi et al., 2021).

Writing: In 2018, Karthigesu et al. studied using **TikTok** to improve ESL writing skills in Malaysian schools. **TikTok** videos were employed in the research to educate students about action verbs, and their understanding of these verbs would help them improve their writing abilities (Karthigesu et al., 2018). According to Nabilah et al. (2021), **TikTok** Videos are excellent for use as media in learning to write descriptive prose since students have a good opinion of them. They discovered that most students feel that using **TikTok** videos contributes positively to teaching and

learning, particularly learning to write descriptive language. Furthermore, Nabilah et al. contend that **TikTok** videos stimulate students' creativity in describing an item. **TikTok** Videos are filled with a number of exercises that are likely created to encourage pupils to write how they choose in an exciting manner. They also discovered that using **TikTok** increases students' learning of producing descriptive prose more engaging and beneficial. Aside from that, most students claim that viewing **TikTok** Videos makes them pleasant and comfortable while learning to write descriptive prose (Nabilah et al., 2021).

Listening: In Indonesia, a study conducted by Silaban and Purba (2021) found that using instruments with the **TikTok** application to listen to students' listening skills was successfully carried out with excellent results, with two trials of enthusiastic students participating in learning better than before. They conclude that using **TikTok** media to improve students' listening skills is booming, and the media can be used in classroom learning. (Silaban & Purba, 2021). In a similar vein, research by Hanim (2021) suggests that an audio-visual learning medium is required to aid listening learning. The **TikTok** program can meet the character's audio-visual requirements based on available characteristics (Hanim, 2021). Thus, Sihombing (2021) states that teachers can probably use **TikTok** in teaching listening as follows: (1) Teacher can provide or create an English motivational video, English short story, and video of English material. (2) Students have a lot of change to repeat the video till they get it. (3) Teachers can order students to students to answer or present something material based on the video related to the material. (Sihombing, 2021)

Challenges using TikTok

Bernard (2021) posits that in spite of all these positive results, the utilization of **TikTok** also has some drawbacks. He claims that the content quality of each short video is diverse and fragmented and cannot yet replace the primary teaching approach (Bernard, 2021). Along the same line,

according to Li (2021), **TikTok** is not a genuine platform for academic education. Far too many irrelevant videos divert students' attention away from the intended instructional topic (Li, 2021). Xiuwen and Razali (2021) come to the same conclusion when they say that **TikTok**, which has a wealth of engaging short videos on various topics, may divert young pupils' attention away from learning English for academic purposes. The use of algorithms also contributes to this distraction, as **TikTok** has been reported to collect user data. The algorithms will then be trained with data in order to recognize your requirements and provide suggestions. Algorithms, however, promote more stuff (use a different word) than you really need. Additionally, they show you what they want you to see. To put it another way, **TikTok** will attempt to suggest content they believe would catch your interest. The "For You Page," the primary source of the addiction, is meant to keep you browsing to keep you trapped on the site. Additionally, when it suggests enjoyable information when you attempt to concentrate on studying, it will divert your attention. Other videos may appeal to young EFL learners since they are too young to adequately self-regulate themselves.

 In addition, **TikTok**'s algorithms also come with the issue of discrimination. Forbes (2020) reported that there is "collaborative filtering" on **TikTok** that "the physical characteristics of a person's profile picture were mimicked in **TikTok**'s recommendations" (Asare, 2020). If you followed a white woman with blonde hair, for instance, a list of **TikTok** users with similar appearances would appear in your suggestions. This may "reproduce whatever bias there is in people's behaviour" (Asare, 2020). It may be difficult for producers of colour with lesser followings to be noticed and suggested on the site if the bulk of prominent **TikTok** artists are White, for instance. In the same vein, Time Magazine (2020) reported **TikTok** black creators are "being suppressed for Posting Black Lives Matter Content," and The Guardian (2020)

demonstrated that "TikTok tried to filter out videos from ugly, poor or disabled users" (Hern, 2020; McCluskey, 2020). This leads to a lack of equality and fairness among the users and creators.

In the political world, **TikTok** has been strongly criticized in some countries such as the USA, India, Europe, etc. For example, in the summer of 2020, **TikTok** and other Chinese smartphone apps were banned in India. This restriction highlighted more serious concerns that have persisted in relation to user privacy, cybersecurity dangers, and content regulation on social media platforms and telecoms hardware globally (Mishra et al., 2022). Western legislators and authorities have become more concerned that **TikTok** and its parent firm, ByteDance, may provide the Chinese government access to private user data, such as location data. They have cited legal provisions that permit the Chinese government to covertly request information from Chinese businesses and individuals for intelligence collection purposes. They are also concerned that China may spread false information via **TikTok**'s content suggestions. Such claims have long been refuted by **TikTok**, which has also made an effort to disassociate itself from ByteDance (Maheshwari & Holpuch, 2023). Regarding English education, cyberbullying remains the most difficult obstacle for young EFL learners when using **TikTok** for English teaching purposes, owing to the lack of strong legislation and efficient procedures to safeguard children while using **TikTok**. In cyberspace, these young EFL learners are readily harassed or tormented (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). Besides, they also indicate that there are certain possible concerns associated with privacy problems while utilizing social media for academic purposes within students. It may be risky for EFL students to share short videos in English in public social media spaces in order to get feedback from their peers or English language specialists. Posting brief self-made movies in social network forums may put you in danger of attracting the attention of certain prospective offenders. To safeguard young internet users, stronger and more effective procedures and monitoring

mechanisms, as well as strong laws, must be implemented. As a result, the inclusion of **TikTok** into English language education and the development of English language communicative competency necessitates the involvement of a growing number of stakeholders in constructing a bigger and more systematic virtual learning system (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021).

The delay in interactive feedback is another drawback of **TikTok**. According to Ning Cheng, **TikTok** is a media platform for information dissemination, but teacher-student engagement is confined to text communication exclusively. The instructional videos that instructors worldwide submit to **TikTok** are pre-recorded. It is, in a sense, "a unilateral knowledge output" (Cheng, 2021) P.66. Instructors cannot learn about the student's learning status, efficiency, or challenges. Also, it might be challenging for students to provide instructors with timely feedback about "teachers' teaching methods, teaching content and then put forward their suggestions for teachers' adjustment." As a result, both "feedback from students to instructors" and "feedback from professors to students" are delayed (Cheng, 2021).

Several studies have shown that incorporating **TikTok** into education is challenging. Putry and Muassomah (2021) observed that when students used the **TikTok** app to make educational videos, they faced a variety of difficulties. For starters, youngsters are still embarrassed to appear in front of the camera and utter the phrases that have been prescribed. Second, both students and teachers are unfamiliar with **TikTok**'s features, which makes creating videos with background filters challenging. **TikTok** also requires an internet connection to download background images and record videos; if it is not connected to the internet, it will be a huge stumbling block in the video-making process. As a consequence, editing the video and making it aesthetically beautiful takes a long time.

As technology entrants, teachers face challenges in incorporating social media into the teaching and learning process; as a result, teachers should improve their skills in dealing with the development of information technology, including pairing classic books with electronic media to deliver lesson materials to students (Dewi & Arifani, 2021; Putry & Muassomah, 2021). The ability of instructors to use technology effectively in the classroom is one of the major contributing variables. Without sufficient subject-related knowledge for technology adoption, effective teaching may not be realized (Divaharan & Ping, 2010). Tella et al. (2007) conducted research in Nigeria on secondary school teachers' perceptions of technology usage ease and perceived value in the classroom. In Ibadan city, a study of 700 instructors was done, including teachers at private secondary schools. Despite having positive attitudes towards the use of technology in teaching and learning, the study found that 33.8 percent of teachers lacked technology expertise, 21.5 percent knew insufficiently about suitable educational software, and 25.8 percent lacked the knowledge necessary to assess the use and role of technology in teaching and learning. According to the research, in-service training is necessary for both teachers and their employers to support active learning utilizing technology among both instructors and students (Tella et al., 2007). In addition, since the **TikTok** program contains information that is not related to education, teachers have no control over how students use **TikTok** for reasons other than studying (Dewi & Arifani, 2021; Putry & Muassomah, 2021).

Furthermore, according to a study by Kusumadyahdewi and Kusumarasdyati (2021), many students say that the teachings in the videos are delivered too quickly, making it difficult for them to comprehend. The training films were definitely timed to fit under the **TikTok** app's 1-minute limit. Another problem that came up when utilizing **TikTok** training videos was back sounds. According to some of them, the beat of the songs chosen for the video is too intense. Students

claim that the volume and kind of music they listen to interfere with their ability to focus. Despite the fact that the songs are quite popular on the app, some pupils seem to regard them as a distraction rather than an incentive (Kusumadyahdewi & Kusumarasdyati, 2021).

Conclusion

The discussion above shows that social media has a link to education in general and language acquisition in particular. Social media, as a pedagogical tool, enables users to exchange materials, connect and cooperate, offer lessons, and build a socially engaged learning environment. As a result, **TikTok**, one of the most popular social media platforms, may be used in the teaching and learning process. Based on prior research, we may conclude that using **TikTok** (social media) as a learning platform is an important issue that we should investigate. Short-**TikTok** videos are transforming the way individuals with comparable characteristics teach and acquire skills by allowing new kinds of communication via visually appealing materials. Most significantly, integrating **TikTok** into teaching and learning processes fosters the creation of innovative material in accordance with instructional design principles. As a result, short instructional movies produced for teaching may be altered to meet learning goals and assist student learning; this technique has the potential to help learners grasp complicated topics while also developing new creative abilities and knowledge.

The difficulty in showing **TikTok** as a learning platform for inspiring students' English abilities in Vietnam is the gap between prior researches. Studies have been performed mostly in Indonesia, Malaysia and China, while the researcher is unable to locate any studies conducted in Vietnam. To that end, this research aims to discover and document the prevalence of **TikTok** in the Vietnamese educational landscape, as well as to explore the potential for integrating or using **TikTok** as a teaching tool to boost Vietnamese students' enthusiasm for their language learning endeavors. For

this study, **TikTok** will be used to measure students' motivation levels while they are learning and

teaching.

Methodology

To answer my research questions, I explored the perspective of Vietnamese English trainers and college students on how **TikTok** can be used to support the English acquisition process. The following research inquiries were looked into:

1. How is **TikTok** perceived by English teachers and students in Vietnam

2. Within the selected group of participants, how do they use **TikTok** to teach and study English?

3. What motivates them to use **TikTok** in the English acquisition process?

4. Do they perceive **TikTok** as beneficial or detrimental to teaching and learning English?

5. How can we make **TikTok** a better place to teach and learn English?

The research design is explained and justified in the following sections, along with a thorough data collection and analysis process breakdown. We will also examine the advantages and drawbacks of the methodological approach.

Qualitative Research Design

The interpretive paradigm of knowing, which holds that there is no reality apart from our perceptions, served as the framework for this investigation. Because the knower and the knowing can not be separated, each person's viewpoints and values influence how the world is perceived and comprehended. There can be several equally valid interpretations of reality because everyone sees the world differently. Consequently, the research aims to comprehend how meaning is created in varied social circumstances. According to this paradigm, the descriptive-interpretive qualitative research approach, which aims to describe and interpret the objects in line with reality, was used in this study. In qualitative research, things are examined in their natural environments to understand or interpret occurrences in terms of the meanings that people assign to them. This

method also pulls from naturalistic inquiry, which analyzes anything as closely as possible to its natural state, and thoroughly explains an occurrence in everyday language (Sandelowski, 2000). According to the premise that complexity in data sets needs to match the complexity of social phenomena, the major purpose of qualitative interview research is to collaborate in creating knowledge (Bamberger et al., 2012).

This strongly aligns with constructivism, a significant theoretical framework that informs my research. Constructivism is founded on the idea that there are various socially produced realities. Therefore, social constructionists hold that there is no such thing as objective truth but rather that reality is a social construction and that there are, in fact, several realities that vary with time and place. Literature shows that knowledge production and dissemination are socially interactive, iterative processes. A social construction approach in communication research requires each person's social interactions, reflective thought, and "knowledge of the researcher's role in doing research" (Leeds- Hurwitz, 2009, p. 894). The interaction between the researcher and the participants was the main focus of my research, which employed the social construction principle. To rephrase, I engaged in self-reflexive awareness of my own participation in co-creating the knowledge through interaction with my participants and of my own implicit biases and assumptions and how they may affect the results.

Due to the descriptive and interpretive goals of the study, I followed a qualitative research strategy based on in-depth interviews. I was cognizant of Bentz and Shapiro's (1998) advice that the researcher should let the data emerge when drafting and posing the questions. Furthermore, I was aware that I have to be reflexive and aware of my biases in order to "join the person's life world and employ the self as an experienced interpreter" (Miller & Crabtree, 1992, p. 24). When gathering information, I realized that a qualitative interview is essentially "an exchange of views

between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" where the researcher tries to comprehend the world from the subject's point of view and to unravel the meaning of people's experiences (Kvale, 1996, p.1- 2). The interviews aimed to determine how the participants felt about using **TikTok** as a tool for English language acquisition. I was particularly curious about how participants used **TikTok** in an educational setting, why they did so, what aspects of **TikTok** make it successful for learning English, and what challenges they ran into while using it. I used qualitative, inductive coding techniques and thematic analysis to evaluate the material from flexible, open-ended interviews.

Setting

The study was conducted in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. As one of Vietnam's most developed cities, Hanoi offers almost 2.835 schools and 120 post-secondary institutions and universities. The education sector in Hanoi held the pioneering position and is typical for the whole country (Du, n.d.). Deputy Minister of Education and Training Nguyen Huu Do affirmed that Hanoi is a locality with many pioneering, pioneering and typical initiatives in education and training nationwide. Since Hanoi possesses Vietnam's most advanced educational system, Hanoi population is particularly interested in English instruction and the problems that surround it. Thus, I chose to research in Hanoi as an inclusion criterion. Keeping all participants within the same city borders helped protect the validity of the findings since post-secondary education systems are subject to provincial regulations, histories and mandates which vary significantly from city to city.

Ethical considerations

When conducting interviews about **TikTok**, there are several ethical considerations that I always keep in mind to ensure the protection and well-being of the participants, including informed consent, anonymity and power imbalance.

The interviews were conducted with informed consent. I obtained the participants' consent to use their information before the interviews started. The participants might choose to turn off their cameras during video chats. According to University of Alberta policy, the interview tape is solely utilized for research purposes and is kept on file for five years after data extraction. I recognized that I should be open and honest about my function as a researcher and the goal of the interview before asking participants to sign the permission form. As a result, I was very explicit about the information's intended purpose, publication status, and any possible conflicts of interest. Along with providing factual information regarding the research, it is crucial to offer participants with honest answers to their inquiries. The participants were made aware of their freedom to withdraw from the research at any moment and that it was entirely voluntary. Prior to taping the interviews, I emailed my participants a permission form and gave them some information. The participants were informed that the interviews were being recorded while they were taking place.

An important aspect of research ethics is anonymity, especially when using qualitative methods or sharing data sets with parties outside the original study team. Concerns concerning anonymity and online data are not new. It is often simple to anonymize data in conventional research methods so that study participants cannot be recognized (Kleinberg, 2007). As a researcher, I respect the privacy of the respondents and make sure that, unless they expressly accept being identified, their names and personal information stay private. In order to achieve this, I gave participants pseudonyms or made-up names rather than using their actual identities in your research's transcripts, reports, and publications. Their identities are kept a secret as a result. Additionally, I changed or eliminated any details that would have revealed their identity, including particular places, businesses, or distinguishing traits.

To enhance participant comfort and reduce potential risks like mental tiredness or stress, I decided to provide the participant with the option of selecting a neutral place such as a coffee store or coworking space. This is beneficial for the study because it places participants in a public setting to reduce any anxiety a subject may have about participating in an interview. Though the noise may have lowered the recording quality, this risk was reduced before the interviews by evaluating the sound in preparation, ensuring the recording equipment was in a good location, and selecting the quietest settings farthest from as many other persons as feasible. However, I was sensitive to the loss of anonymity in this setting, for example, the participants might not have wanted others to know they had joined the study. However, by doing the interview in the public spaces, other people might regconize the participants. Therefore, after letting the participant choose the place that they want to have the interview, I also let them know about this potential loss of anonymity and let them to decide if they want to continue the interviews. I also followed the "5K" policy from the Vietnamese government to protect me and my participants from Covid-19, including wearing masks, sanitizing hands, not gathering together, active declaration and keeping a 2m distance. Accommodations were made if a participant could not attend due to the time or location. For example, the meeting venue was changed to a more convenient one, or interviews were conducted using Zoom's online conference platform. Despite adjustments, some prospective participants' schedules and locations did restrict their ability to participate. Because of this, some of the interviews were cancelled, which affected the number of participants joining my study.

Another issue is power imbalances since all participants in our study must be treated with "respect," particularly the volunteers (Mirza et al., 2023). No matter the participants' age, sex, colour, religion, political opinions, lifestyle, or any other notable difference between them and the researchers themselves, any study must be performed with respect for the participants' rights

(BERA, 2004, P. 9). As a result, each participant must be treated fairly, and each issue they raise throughout the inquiry must be carefully considered. Any discourse, whether academic or personal, that undermines or demeans the participants should not be used. The participants must be able to speak freely and without interference, fear, or restraint. So, I encouraged my participants to use the language they were most at ease with. I made every effort to use a discourse that had the least negative impact possible on the opinions and feelings of my participants, which included keeping my opinions to myself, withholding information, and allowing them to remain in the locations they felt were the most neutral, allowing them to freely express their opinions without feeling compelled or coerced.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

I have chosen to concentrate on the perspectives of teachers and students since they are the main stakeholders behind education and are ultimately responsible for its results. The subject of this research was narrowed using a number of inclusion criteria. For example, participants had to be in Hanoi and over the age of 18. My initial aim was to attract individuals over 12 because pupils this age are already engaged in English programs at school and have access to social media. However, institutional ethics rules revealed that parental agreement is essential to do research with youth under the age of 18. I was unable to contact the parents in Vietnam to introduce and explain my research due to the long distance and time-zone difference. To account for this, I changed my initial recruitment strategy to target students above 18 who would be able to provide consent.

Before reaching out to any research participants, I worked on getting approval from the Research Ethics Board (REB). By September 2022, my ethics application was filled and waiting for approval. All ethical guidelines required by the University of Alberta were followed to complete

the application. I received my approval by October 2022 and began reaching out to my potential participants.

To recruit my research study participants, I used a snowballing sampling method to find and select samples. Snowball sampling or chain-referral sampling is defined as a non-probability sampling technique. I started with key informants who are viewed as knowledgeable about the topic. I asked the key informants to recommend others to whom they should talk. For this paper, I started with my English teacher at the undergraduate institute, who recommended other teachers and instructors with whom she has relationships within this field. Students who acquired English as a second language were another study sample, and I also used snowballing sampling method to recruit them. Thus, I started with a student suggested by an English teacher. Then, that student recommended other students that might be appropriate for the study.

In total, I interviewed 10 participants, representing English teachers and students in Hanoi. Participants consisted of an English teacher in an institution (n = 1), English trainers in English training centres (n = 2), English private tutors (n = 1), college students (n = 4) and workers learning English for working purposes (n = 2). Although integrating participants from a variety of fields and research traditions complicated the analysis procedure, it also enhanced the data with varied viewpoints while guaranteeing a sufficient number of participants could be recruited from a very small study population.

Interview Procedures

Each eligible participant in this study was interviewed using a semi-structured format, which is a good tool to collect data with depth and richness. To build rapport with participants, qualitative researchers frequently start semistructured individual interviews with less formal interviewing techniques. Semi-structured interviews, a middle ground between structured and unstructured

interview formats, entail preparing a set of questions but being willing to pursue diversions, switching the question order in accordance with the flow of the conversation, asking follow-up questions, and adopting a flexible interview approach (Bamberger et al., 2012). When highly generic open-ended questions are used, the respondent's concerns and interests can come to light, giving the researcher's eyes a wider field of view. Appendix A contains the list of interview questions created based on the U&G Theory study, the popularity of social media challenges, and my research questions. Questions were either added, changed, or deleted based on the findings.

After giving consent to join the interviews, the participants were required to complete a quick demographic survey that inquired about their age, gender, race, and the section of the country they are from. To establish rapport, I asked ice-breaking questions about their teaching experiences and thoughts about teaching English formally and informally. Following that, they were questioned about their experiences using **TikTok** to learn or teach English, including which challenges they had completed, the reasons why they had done so, how they had handled them, and their views on the experience. The questions were aimed at eliciting the participant's experiences, feelings, convictions, and beliefs regarding the subject in question.

When participants were given a chance to ask questions or share any additional ideas or insights at the end of each interview, several seized the chance to inquire about my viewpoint on the subjects we had just covered. I was completely honest in my responses; occasionally sharing thoughts or experiences from my work life or details I had learned from reading. After hearing my viewpoint, participants typically continued the conversation by agreeing or disagreeing with what I said or asking me follow-up questions. This franker exchange was recorded and included in the dataset (only participant responses were coded). Interviewees occasionally found it more

comfortable to provide further insights after hearing my point of view. This method produced a number of intriguing data points that the more organized half of the interview had not.

For improved data collection and to avoid interruptions when taking notes during interviews, all interviews, which lasted between 25 and 40 minutes, were recorded. Additionally, a paid transcription agency transcribed he recordings. I created a 200-word summary for each interview transcript after faithfully transcribing the interviews from the audiovisual recordings. The summaries were succinct, interpretive explanations of the key points and learnings from each conversation. All participants who chose to receive them were given access to the transcripts and summaries, which they were encouraged to review and amend. It is important to give the participants the option of reviewing the transcripts as they will have the chance to make adjustments to their answers when they have more time to think about the topic or to elaborate on their answers, or even change their minds. 3 out of 10 participants opted to review their documents, and 2 participants returned their transcripts and synopses with no edits. One participant returned their transcripts with light or moderate revisions. These interactions helped ensure that I captured participants' meanings as closely as possible and. One drawback to this approach was that it is possible that the participants who did not return edits were simply unable to respond within the time frame I requested (participants were initially requested to respond within two weeks, but edits were accepted up to six weeks after the first request). Interviews lasted up to an hour, and transcripts averaged 6–9 single-spaced typed pages, so reviewing the transcripts may have placed a heavy demand on participants' busy schedules.

Data Analysis

An alphanumeric code was used to de-identify and tag interview transcripts. The data were analyzed using thematic coding and analysis. I read over each transcript several times before

starting the data analysis, writing notes in the margins of each recording. This made it easier to retrieve information and helped familiarize people with the transcripts. I started the content analysis by letting my research questions direct it and aid in developing codes and themes. Unexpected themes in the data may prompt the researcher to utilize other analytical techniques. Therefore, an inductive strategy develops themes after the analysis process rather than before (Del Rosso, 2018).

A comparative analysis was constantly applied throughout the research procedure. I used inductive coding to initially code transcripts of interviews. These transcripts were classified as extracts, a collection of quotations centered on a single idea. As the investigation went on, it was evident that these motifs caused considerable overlap. For example, it was frequently unclear whether a participant-mentioned obstacle should be interpreted as a "challenge" or a "difficulty." After comparing codes, I created a preliminary codebook. I changed this codebook that included criticisms and theoretical recommendations, highlighting significant codes that were then evaluated and categorized. For clarity, codes from the first coding round were removed or changed.

I then re-coded the transcripts. After the second coding round was completed, I reviewed the categories and identified which could be combined and integrated. This process refined the properties and dimensions of the categories developed. The codebook developed in this phase became the final codebook. From the qualitative interviews, six overarching categories emerged and will be described in the **Findings** section: 1). *The application of **TikTok** in teaching and learning English in Hanoi, Vietnam; (2) Participants' feeling about using **TikTok**; (3) Motivation to use **TikTok** in teaching and learning English; (4) The benefit of using **TikTok**; (5) Detrimental features of **TikTok**; and (6) Recommendations when using **TikTok*** (Table 1). Table 1 is a snapshot

of the codebook. These codes can be seen in Table 1, "Codes and Themes". A small portion of the
table is demonstrated below.

Categories	Theme	Code	Evidence from transcripts
Application of **TikTok**	inspire creative pedagogical approaches	Make videos	I regularly make videos to upload to my personal channel and share them publicly online
	proved to be a convenient tool	content sources	There are a lot of great videos on **TikTok** teaching English
	interactive activities to engage with students during classes	Duet	I have some activities for my students using **TikTok** such as "duet" with a video from a native speaker's channel
		Homework	It is also the homework for some of my classes to create some **TikTok** videos filming their speaking practice and send them to me.
		Challenges	Teachers and creators can create challenges or interactive activities that encourage learners to use English in a fun and engaging way.

		Games	I have even created challenges and games to encourage students to participate and practice their English skills
		Watch videos	watched a lot of video about vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and conversational English
		Mimic/imitate	Watch English language content creators on **TikTok** and try to mimic their accents and intonation
		Interact	Use the comments section to interact with other users and practice your written communication skills

Table 1: Portion of the "Codes and Themes" table

Findings

In this section, I outline the main conclusions drawn from the interviews and summarize the findings in a narrative format highlighting the most important topics. The following "Discussion" chapter will provide a more in-depth interpretation and discussion.

The ten interviews produced a diverse spectrum of thoughts on **TikTok** and its role in the English learning process. By using the inductive coding method, after 2 coding rounds, there were six overarching categories emerged (1) the application of **TikTok** in teaching and learning English in Hanoi, Vietnam; (2) participants' opinions and feeling about using **TikTok**; (3) motivation to use **TikTok** in teaching and learning English; (4) the benefit of using **TikTok**; (5) detrimental features of **TikTok**; and (6) recommendations when using **TikTok**. The six categories were then coded to assist in fleshing out and characterizing the substance of the interviews and highlighting crucial observations. Table 1 summarizes these codes and themes with samples from the transcripts. Some themes appeared more than one time in two or three categories. In the following parts, I will thoroughly review each theme, present illustrative quotes and sample codes, and offer preliminary interpretations of participant remarks. These six categories will be presented in the order of the parts that follow, beginning with "The application of **TikTok**," which was discussed first in the interviews and provides significant background for what follows.

The application of TikTok

Participants shared various perspectives on using **TikTok** as their teaching and studying method. Regarding teachers' perspectives, after having consent from the participants and some ice-breaking questions, we began discussing their teaching experience. All the teachers were asked if they use **TikTok** in teaching English and their experience with it. Three out of four teachers indicated they had used **TikTok** to teach English. **TikTok** is indicated to inspire creative

pedagogical approaches as one participant demonstrates she produces her own educational content on **TikTok** and shares it with her students within and outside the class. She also has some classroom activities, such as letting students make a duet with her videos or videos from other native speakers. Occasionally she assigns homework for students, "requiring them to record a duet video" and sends it to her, for which she provides feedback. Another participant has the same method of showing her students short English educational videos on **TikTok**. However, she "didn't produce any content on **TikTok**." She only compiles a source of **TikTok** videos that she finds "interesting and useful and shares them with students." The reason for not creating content is the lack of time; she "found a lot of great content already posted on **TikTok**." Thus, she can utilize those content to "save time and focus on customizing the learning experiences" for her students. **TikTok** is then proved to be a convenient tool since it offers available content sources for users. Two participants added another classroom activity to "create challenges and games" which are interactive activities to engage with students during classes. To be more specific, one participant will find an English challenge on **TikTok** and let students repeat that challenge one after another as an exercise during classes. The student who does it first will then point another student to continue the challenge until running out of time. She will give feedback and help students fix their mistakes immediately during the process. The other teacher even rewards students with the best video, although that is not the best pedagogical approach. However, I found that not everyone can use **TikTok** to teach English. One participant indicated that she doesn't apply **TikTok** or other social media platforms to her teaching methods because she "works for an academic institution." Since this institution only teaches professional English related to one specific field, she "could not find any video that contains English knowledge about that field on **TikTok**." But she admitted that she still "suggested that her students use **TikTok** and other social media to study conservational

English and learn new vocabulary and pronunciation." She also shared that she has a friend working as an English teacher in a private English training center who "provides live-streaming lessons on **TikTok**."

Regarding students' perspectives, three students demonstrated that they are using **TikTok** to study English. Another two indicated they are not using it but had experience using **TikTok** to study English. First, **TikTok** is still a convenient tool for students since one participant said she usually "watches videos on the "For you" page designed to promote videos related to your concerns and your behaviors on **TikTok**." Some popular types of content mentioned by the participants are short grammar lessons, vocabulary quizzes, and pronunciation tips. One participant uses specific keywords such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and conversation practice to search for the content. Using hashtags to explore new videos is another useful method. One participant showed that by choosing one hashtag, you could see a lot of videos that embedded that hashtag in their description. She also stated that she followed a lot of English-teaching TikTokers since she can get a notification when these content creators upload new videos. Students also indicated utilizing the interactive features of **TikTok** since they watch and "mimic, imitate, or respond to English-language content" to practice their English skills, especially speaking. One participant participates in challenges, for example, "reading the news on a high-speed teleprompter and imitating a flight attendant when welcoming customers." Some of them recorded a video themselves as required by the teachers. In addition, another participant added that she interacts with other people's content to practice writing or ask about what she is not understanding. One more time, **TikTok** proved not to apply to everyone since one student admitted that using **TikTok** is not her way of learning English. She mentioned that she "is too busy to use other tools other than attending a class." Also,

she feels "too old" to use **TikTok** and doesn't think she can "learn how to use **TikTok** or adapt to any new technologies."

The feelings when using TikTok to teach and study English

In terms of teachers' opinions, most participants spoke about **TikTok** in positive terms as a "fun and engaging" and "effective way to engage and motivate learners," a unique way to learn English through short videos, catchy music, and relatable content. One participant indicated that **TikTok** makes language learning more accessible, engaging, and effective for students. They also discussed their feelings regarding the ease of use when using **TikTok** to teach English compared to **YouTube** and traditional methods. One participant indicated that "**TikTok** is easier to use than **YouTube**." Specifically, it is easier to create a video on **TikTok** than on **YouTube** because it is just a short video format of only under 60 seconds, while videos on **YouTube** are usually longer than 15 minutes. Another reason is that **TikTok** has built-in features supporting users in creating videos, such as adding effects and music, while **YouTube** is just a platform for uploading videos. When comparing **TikTok** and traditional classrooms, all the participants agreed that "**TikTok** is more interesting" for students to use than traditional methods. One teacher stated, "Learning English via **TikTok** can be a more interesting and enjoyable way to practice English skills, but it may not be enough to achieve proficiency in the language." On the one hand, this approach can make learning more fun and interesting for some learners "who are already familiar with the app" and "who struggle to stay focused during traditional language lessons." However, the content on **TikTok**, according to one participant, is frequently informal and conversational. Therefore it does not always reflect formal English usage. In addition, the condensed structure of **TikTok** videos might not offer thorough justifications or context, which are necessary for fully comprehending the language. As a result, they all concur that while **TikTok** can be a fun and helpful addition to

more established language learning techniques, "it should not be used as the only strategy for learning English." Mixing it with other tools like textbooks, online classes, and language exchange programs is crucial for a well-rounded education.

Students also shared the same positive feeling when discussing using **TikTok** to study English. All of them agreed that **TikTok** could be used for the English learning process because they provide a lot of benefits for students. One participant described **TikTok** as a convenient tool as we can access **TikTok** anywhere, anytime, and it is easy to download and use even without creating an account. About the ease of use, she pointed out that **TikTok** can be simple or complicated depending on the activity level. For example, though it is simple to watch videos on **TikTok**, it will take a lot of time to learn how to create a video on **TikTok**, even when you are tech-savvy. Another participant indicated that **TikTok** is "fun, engaging, and informative, focusing on providing practical tips and tools to help learners improve their English language skills." She concluded that **TikTok** is "an excellent tool for learning English as it provides a wide range of resources to study English at your own pace." In the same vein, one student added that **TikTok** is a useful tool because **TikTok** can present information in a way that is accessible and easy to understand, "making learning more approachable and less intimidating for many people." When comparing **TikTok** and traditional methods, all of the students agreed learning English through **TikTok** or any kind of social media can be more interesting since it provides a more entertaining way to learn English, real-life language use and a diverse learning experience However, some of them highlighted that it is only more interesting in some circumstances. Particularly, one participant brought up how the short-video nature of **TikTok** makes "it more suitable for reinforcing ideas that have already been learnt instead of delivering new material." Another participant made the point that the most interesting and beneficial option relies on the learner's

interests and preferred method of instruction. Although learning English with **TikTok** might be entertaining, more traditional techniques like textbooks, classes, and practice can be more beneficial for building a solid foundation in grammar and vocabulary. Students have the same idea as teachers when saying that **TikTok** can be an entertaining addition to language study, but "it cannot fully replace conventional techniques."

Motivations to use TikTok as an English educational tool

Answering the question of why choosing **TikTok** to teach and study English, all of the teachers agreed that **TikTok** could be an effective tool for teaching English because of several insights. First and foremost, one participant explained that **TikTok**'s audience is the young generation. While most English learners are under 30 years old, they are familiar with using **TikTok**. Thus, she pointed out that **TikTok** can help teachers "attract a wider audience," particularly younger people who may not have been interested in traditional educational formats.

Participants also frequently discussed **TikTok** as a great tool to make the learning experience more engaging and dynamic than in traditional classrooms. One student mentioned **TikTok** as a social learning method as it allows learners to "connect with other language learners and creators," creating a "social and collaborative learning environment." Otherwise, regarding the interactive features of **TikTok**, the platform is also being reported as helping students challenge themselves to use English in a new way. Thus, one teacher indicated that students can "improve their English skills while still having fun" on **TikTok** because the platform allows for interactive and creative teaching methods to capture learners' attention and make learning English an enjoyable experience. In the same vein, a student said that learning English through **TikTok** videos helped improve her English skills more relaxed, and the platform can be "a fun supplement to language learning."

Another motive reported by the participants is to provide "a multimedia platform that combines visual and auditory elements in a short-form format." One participant admitted that incorporating **TikTok** videos into language lessons can offer students a multimodal learning experience, enhancing their understanding and retention of the material. Many participants shared the same opinion that "it makes English lessons more digestible." In addition, another teacher also described this as a way to foster creativity and collaboration. She indicated that students would "be encouraged to engage in the creative expression" with language use and produce content on a topic or theme to express themselves in English. Specifically, students are encouraged to be more imaginative with their language use, develop their writing and speaking skills, and collaborate to create content that helps them practice English. She posited that teachers must also be creative and try to make their content as attractive and condensed as possible to maximize effectiveness. Furthermore, one student posited that by filming themselves, they "could see progress and improvement in their English skills," which "gives them a sense of accomplishment and keep them motivated to continue learning."

Last but not least, the participant chose to use **TikTok** because "it is accessible and it makes learning English accessible." Teachers indicated they could both produce and collect content on **TikTok** for their teaching purposes. And because **TikTok** is now available on mobile phones and internet browsers, everyone can access **TikTok** and use it to learn English to some extent, even without creating accounts.

The benefits of utilizing TikTok in teaching and studying English

Some participants described **TikTok** as a useful tool for learning and teaching English. Regarding which features of **TikTok** make it applicable for teaching and studying English, teachers and

students often mention several themes, including being perfect for quick exercises or mini-lessons, content diversity, providing an entertaining and engaging way to study English, language-learning community, authentic content, bridging the gap between teachers and students.

Specifically, one student mentioned that **TikTok** videos are typically short, which can be helpful for language learners who may have limited attention spans. The short-form video format, **TikTok,** can help students learn new vocabulary, grammar, and expressions in small chunks. This resonated with most teachers that the short videos make **TikTok** perfect for "quick exercises or mini-lessons."

Another theme indicated by the participants is content diversity. student described **TikTok** as "a global platform with a diverse range of content creators." Some language learning content creators share tips and resources for learning English. There are also native-speaker creators sharing their daily lives, opinions, and interests, which might contain unique and informal vocabulary you may not learn in a traditional English class. One student said these creators could provide valuable insights and inspiration for English learners. All the participants agreed that "it gives learners exposure to different English accents, cultures, and perspectives from all over the world to practice listening to and imitating." Thus, you can improve your listening skills, pronunciation, and cultural knowledge from a diverse learning experience.

The participants also described the interactive features of **TikTok**, such as Lip-syncing, Duets, Challenges, and Live-streaming, to provide "an entertaining and engaging way to study English." One student described that these **TikTok** challenges and interactive features could make learning English more social and fun. In addition to commenting and sending messages, these interactive features are reported to "catalyze language exchange and language learning communities". Duets, challenges or live videos can offer an opportunity to connect with native English speakers and

non-native speakers worldwide in real-time. Learners can interact and support each other in their language learning journey because "users can create and share their own English-language videos to practice their language skills and receive feedback from others." One student also indicated that "some communities offer quick feedback and corrections to help learners improve language accuracy." Hence, this is also reported as being helpful for the student to practice their language skills, including writing and speaking skills, especially conversational skills, pronunciation and intonation. In addition, another participant also added that **TikTok** has a lot of engaging content, including music, comedy, and educational videos, which can "make learning English more fun and exciting." This can help keep learners motivated and interested in learning English.

Otherwise, participants also indicated that **TikTok** provides real-life or authentic language use. One teacher stated that the content on **TikTok** is created by real people showcasing real-life language use. Thus, students can see real-life situations, cultural references, and colloquial expressions and slang from native speakers making it more authentic, practical and relatable. This is highly valuable for learners to develop their listening and speaking skills. Furthermore, some participants also reported that the use of music, dance, and other visual aids could also make learning more enjoyable and memorable. Content, including visual and audio elements, presents educational content concisely and visually interestingly, "making it easier for viewers to absorb the information." Specifically, it helps learners associate words and phrases with images and sounds. This feature assists learners in understanding complex concepts and retaining information better. It can help learners remember new vocabulary and grammar rules more easily.

Last but not least, some teachers agreed that **TikTok** provides a platform to connect with students beyond the classroom. One participant elaborated that because many students are familiar with **TikTok**, it can help bridge the gap between teachers and students. Another teacher indicated that

"**TikTok** could help to create a sense of community among students and teachers". By using hashtags and creating challenges, teachers can encourage students to create their own videos related to the course material. This can foster a sense of collaboration and peer learning, which can be particularly helpful for students who may feel isolated or disengaged from their studies. Furthermore, **TikTok** is a tool for building rapport which allows teachers to connect with their students on a more personal level. By sharing glimpses of their personal lives and interests, teachers can show students that they are more than just educators. This can help build trust and rapport, which can be especially important for students struggling with academic or personal issues.

Difficulties when applying TikTok to the English teaching and learning process

Besides the positive aspects of **TikTok**, five main **TikTok** challenges and difficulties were identified in relation to the English acquisition process during the interviews. One participant indicated that "**TikTok** is not suitable for everyone." Specifically, she mentioned that children under 13 are unsuitable as the app's terms of service require users to be at least 13 years old. In addition, there are also people who are not familiar with the app. One student admitted that one of the reasons for not using **TikTok** is that she "is too old" to study new technology. For people who are not tech-savvy like her, learning how to use **Facebook** and **YouTube** is already difficult enough, not to mention creating videos on **TikTok**. It is the same for teachers since one participant reported that "creating videos on **TikTok** is too time-consuming." Learning tools and built-in features to create videos for **TikTok** is not easy, even for the young generation. Regarding creating videos on **TikTok**, it is also people who are "not feeling comfortable appearing in front of the camera because of shyness." Another type of people mentioned by the participants is people working because they are too busy at work and only want to spend time on social media for

relaxing and entertainment instead of studying. Last but not least, **TikTok** is not meant for students looking to learn professional English related to specific fields that are not popular such as the diplomatic or medical field, because most "content on **TikTok** is about basic and conversational English use." In the same vein, teachers who want to teach this genre of English can not apply **TikTok** to their lessons.

In terms of content posted on **TikTok**, the participants reported two issues, including the use of informal language and the inaccuracy of knowledge. All the participants share the same opinion that "the prevalence of informal language," including slang, abbreviations and regional accents, could lead to "confusion for English learners trying to learn proper English grammar and vocabulary." It can be difficult for non-native speakers to understand the meaning of the content because it can be confusing for learners unfamiliar with informal terms and the variations in pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary. It is also reported as inappropriate for formal language learning as it is challenging to "recognize when it is appropriate to use such language in a formal context." Furthermore, another concern is the accuracy of the content. One participant indicated that it is the most dangerous issue because the accuracy and quality of the language used on **TikTok** may vary, and not all **TikTok** content is suitable for English learners. She reported that not all **TikTok** creators might use accurate grammar, pronunciation or spelling in their videos, which can lead to confusion for learners trying to learn correct English.

The third difficulty mentioned by the participants is the short-form format and the fast-paced editing of **TikTok**. **TikTok** videos are typically very short and often "lack context or background information." While a teacher demonstrated that this short and fast-paced format makes it difficult to provide detailed explanations and enough language practice opportunities for learners, one student indicated that "it could be challenging for students to follow along and grasp the full

context of the language being used." It is also reported as being difficult to explore certain words and phrases or complex English concepts or ideas in depth. This can be especially challenging for beginners who are still learning the basics of the language. Specifically, **TikTok** might be unable to "provide a comprehensive understanding of grammar and vocabulary," essential components of language learning. English learners may struggle to develop their English skills without proper instruction and practice.

Two other issues described by the participants are the distractive and addictive characteristics of **TikTok**. One participant admitted that while **TikTok** can be a great platform for educational content, it can also be "a major source of distraction" when trying to study. **TikTok** has many distractions and addictive features that can divert learners' attention and make them lose focus on the learning objectives. Participants enumerated that **TikTok** has a vast collection of entertaining videos, viral challenges, dances, and memes and the use of flashy graphics, sound effects, and other sensory elements to "capture the viewer's attention which can be distracting for language learners and take away the time and effort needed to focus on language acquisition." In addition, the endless scroll of videos, the autoplay, and the algorithm that recommends new content based on the user's preferences can be time-consuming and counterproductive for language learning.

Recommendations to exploit TikTok as a useful tool in the English acquisition process

To manage the challenges and difficulties associated with using **TikTok** to study and teach English, participants suggested a number of methods. Regarding recommendations for students, finding qualified content, taking full advantage of the app and staying focused were common methods. Many participants agreed that to ensure accurate information and proper use of English, learners and teachers "should be mindful of their content and ensure that they use reliable sources for language learning." One teacher indicated that students should follow "verified and reliable

creators with English teaching and learning expertise." A blue checkmark should be next to their username if they are verified. If they are not verified, she suggested that students "check their engagement rates" to see if the public highly recognizes them. Reading comments on their videos can also let students know if the creator received good feedback. And students can also ask their teachers at school about their thoughts on a creator. Besides, students should also "search for content relevant to the language level and interests of the learners and align with their language learning objectives." The most beneficial method to find suitable content is to use hashtags. Some prominent hashtags the participants mentioned are "#learnenglish" or "#englishlesson" or specific skills-related hashtags such as "#englishlistening," "#praticespeakingenglish." A student also pointed out using the "sounds" feature on **TikTok** to find video clips of native English speakers and try to imitate their pronunciation. She added that students "could also tap the sound line on the video" to find other videos using the same sounds with a clearer explanation of the knowledge.

To take full advantage of the app, students are recommended to use some "built-in features such as captions and subtitles." One teacher mentioned that many **TikTok** creators add English subtitles to their videos, which can help you understand the content better. Thus, students should read along with the captions and match the written words with the spoken words to help them better understand the content and study listening and reading skills simultaneously. Otherwise, students are encouraged to "be more active in making interactions." To get better benefits from the interactive features of **TikTok**, a teacher highly recommends students "create their own videos," even if it's just short clips. It can be videos imitating the phrases and sentences used in the videos you watch, videos responding to another user's content or your own content for others to respond to. Students compare their pronunciation to native speakers to practice speaking and "build confidence and fluency in English." It is also a good way to get feedback from the community. If

creating a video is not applicable, she suggested students "comment on other videos expressing their opinion and questions in English to practice their written English." One important thing noted by one student is that "don't be afraid to make mistakes" because "practice makes perfect." In addition, two students share the same idea of reminding students to take notes. Watching a video might be a good way to grasp knowledge, but students should write them down to memorize them. Jotting down new vocabulary and grammar points in a notebook or on the phone will give students a reference to review later and remember what they've learned.

To stay focused and avoid distraction, students are advised to "set goals," "focus on their interests," "be consistent," and "set boundaries." One student indicated that students should set a specific goal for themselves, like being able to hold a conversation in English and work towards achieving it. This help students "track their progress and keep them motivated to continue learning." Another participant emphasized that consistency and repetition are key in language learning. Students should set a specific time every day to learn English via **TikTok** and make it a part of their daily routine. It is also better to watch the same video multiple times and try to imitate the pronunciation and intonation. In addition, one student reported that students could focus on their interests to avoid being uninspiring. By finding English learning content related to their interests, like sports, cooking, or travel, "students can enjoy learning English while also gaining knowledge in their area of interest." She posited that "learning a language should be enjoyable," and **TikTok** should be considered a way to have fun while learning. To avoid addiction to **TikTok**, one teacher suggested that it is important to set boundaries and manage time effectively to ensure students use technology to support their language learning goals. Students should "limit their time on **TikTok**" and even "create another account following English content creators only" to avoid being distracted and trapped by the entertainment content.

When it comes to recommendations for teachers, the most popular recommendation during the interviews is to encourage active participation. Teachers are suggested to integrate popular **TikTok** challenges and trends into language learning activities and encourage learners to actively engage with the content by participating in the challenges, commenting, and asking questions. Teachers should motivate their students to create their own **TikTok** videos using English. Teachers can assign topics or themes for the videos, such as "My Daily Routine" or "Describing My Hometown." This can help build their confidence and creativity while also giving them an opportunity to use the language in a real-life context. This level of engagement can increase motivation and reinforce language learning objectives. In response, it is important for teachers to provide guidance, feedback and correction to ensure that they are using the language correctly and providing suggestions and corrections for improvement.

Participants also provided several insights regarding what to consider when creating or curating content. One teacher suggested that teachers "should create custom content," which should be short, include visual aids and provide context. **TikTok** videos are limited to one minute, so teachers must ensure their content is concise, condensed and understandable. A good way to do it is to "provide context for the words and phrases and explain what they mean and how they're used in everyday conversation." Teachers should also speak slowly and clearly and add captions and subtitles to **TikTok** videos, making it easier for learners to follow along and understand. In addition, when planning content, teachers should consider making a series instead of putting everything in one video. Another teacher indicated "collaborating with other content creators to develop new ideas" can be a great chance to learn from others and provide more interesting insights to audiences. Incorporating visuals, such as images, animations, audio, and music, is also important to help illustrate your points and make your content more engaging. Another suggestion is to "stay

updated with new trends" to provide students with the best enjoyable content. For teachers who are not familiar with new technology, one participant continued to suggest some instruction sources. There are a lot of content creators on **TikTok** showcasing how to make **TikTok** videos using **TikTok** built-in features or third-party applications.

All the participants shared one recommendation applicable to teachers and students. That is, "**TikTok** should not be considered the sole method of teaching English." **TikTok** should be one of many tools and resources in a comprehensive language learning program. It is merely a supplementary tool that teachers and students can incorporate into a more extensive program that "includes more teaching methods, such as textbooks, lectures, face-to-face interaction, language apps, etc."

Because the participants have different positionality, they shared a wide range of opinions and thoughts on **TikTok**. I'll provide a high-level analysis and explanation of the results in the discussion section.

Discussion

In this section, I outline the main conclusions drawn from the findings presented in the "Findings" chapter. This discussion will highlight key findings in light of the research questions, offer interpretations in light of key research literature in the area, and explore how these insights can be understood and applied in a broader context.

The application of TikTok

Participants' experiences of **TikTok**'s application form a critical basis for this discussion and support the exploration of the first two research questions: "How is **TikTok** perceived by English teachers and students in Vietnam?" and "Within the selected group of participants, how do they use **TikTok** to teach and study English?" Nine out of ten participants have experienced using **TikTok** to study and teach English. Within my group of participants, this number shows that **TikTok** has been recognized to become a potential educational tool by both teachers and students Thus, we can conclude that **TikTok** has been used in the English acquisition process in certain contexts. Only one participant indicated not using **TikTok** to study English because she doesn't know what **TikTok** is and doesn't have time for it. However, she has perceptions about the benefits of social media. After listening to the explanation of **TikTok**, she admitted that it could be used for English education and will use it to study English. This is highly related to the Uses and Gratification theory. Though **TikTok**, as a social media network, is widely recognized as an entertainment and communicative tool for users (Vaterlaus & Winter, 2021), it still meets users' cognitive needs since they use **TikTok** to educate themselves, gain intellectual and academic knowledge to expand their horizons (*Uses and Gratification Theory*, 2010).

However, as I expected, **TikTok** does not apply to everyone. In other words, not everyone can use **TikTok** to study and learn English. According to my findings, **TikTok** is limited by generation,

time contribution, attitude, experience, and institutional culture. First, for teachers or lecturers teaching English in a specialized training institution, their English requires specific vocabulary and knowledge which are highly related to their field. Furthermore, these institutions require teachers to follow specific curricula with specially designed textbooks. For example, I graduated from the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam. During my time studying here, all the teachers followed the format provided by the textbooks designed or compiled by the English faculty. And all of the knowledge is specified in the diplomat field, which is not commonly used in normal conversational English. In a search for content related to diplomacy and international relations on **TikTok**, I found only limited and inaccurate language. Thus, teachers would need to produce **TikTok** content by themselves to include in their lessons, which is not preferred because of time restraints and experience. Under this circumstance, **TikTok** can be used but is not a rational option for users. This resonates with Arnett et al.'s findings (2013) that few dental educators used social media for teaching purposes because of time and "lack of expertise to implement social media" (Arnett et al., 2013, P.1048). Furthermore, **TikTok** is also not applicable to students unfamiliar with using **TikTok** in general or for educational purposes in particular. They are people who are older than the age range of **TikTok** users or are under the age limit of **TikTok** (Draganić et al., 2021), people who are too busy in their working and studying life, people who do not have access to needed technologies and people who are not tech-savvy. Recently, **TikTok**'s CEO admitted that his kids are not allowed to use **TikTok** because of the age limit (Washington Post, 2023). As an educational tool, **TikTok** is only suitable for its target users who are 13 - 30 years old (Wu, 2020), have access to smartphones, desktops, and the internet and have specific English learning goals. It is worth mentioning that people not studying English seriously can not use **TikTok** to learn English

as **TikTok** was initially designed to be an entertainment platform that can easily distract them, which will be discussed later in the following section.

The main applications of **TikTok** identified by participants for teachers and students were all relatively consistent with the researcher's perceptions and experiences. The application can be divided into two categories: during and outside the class. During classes, teachers often have interactive activities such as showing a challenge on **TikTok** and letting students repeat it individually. The teacher will then provide feedback and corrections right in the class. Thus, students often follow the activities and instructions of teachers during lessons. Evidently, then, **TikTok** can be integrated with traditional classrooms. Compared to **Facebook**, which can only be used outside of classes as a sharing information and message platform, **TikTok** provides teachers with a higher level of engagement with students during their lessons. Teachers can include interactive activities such as games or challenges in their classes to make them more attractive. This is another level of integration between social media platforms and traditional education methods since it is no longer an online platform to assist students after class. Instead, teachers can exploit its features to redesign their teaching curriculum with more in-class activities. Overall, **TikTok** presented itself as a useful intellectual and social/emotional resource in the classroom, and it is sensible for teachers to explore utilizing it in this manner.

For teachers, outside-class activities include creating content on **TikTok** or recommending qualified videos and content creators for students, giving homework requiring students to make videos, following trending challenges, and providing feedback. For students, outside class activities include watching English educational videos about vocabulary and grammar at home, interacting with these videos, repeating speaking following English challenges, making "duets" with the content creators, connecting with other learners and creating videos practicing their

speaking skills as homework from teachers. By doing so, **TikTok** motivates both students and teachers to practice their creative skills to make the learning and teaching process more interesting. Inherited from the nature of ICT in general and social media in particular, **TikTok** provides an informal learning environment in which language students continue to study without the aim of learning, such as for enjoyment or social engagement (Sockett, 2013).

In conclusion, **TikTok** and its application allow a learner to acquire English both intentionally, as teachers can apply it to traditional lessons, and unintentionally, as students can study English while still using the entertaining features of **TikTok**. This sheds light on the answer to the next questions of this research regarding "What are their motivation to use **TikTok** in the English acquisition process?"

Motivations to use TikTok as an English educational tool

Obviously, teachers and students choose to use **TikTok** in their teaching and learning process because of the benefits that **TikTok** can offer. According to U&G theory, consumers are encouraged to utilize media to fulfil specific needs or desires and because they feel particular benefits from doing so. People have a wide range of needs and gratification inlcuding Affective needs, Cognitive needs, Personal Integrative requirements, Social Integrative needs, and Tension free needs. Within these needs, people's usage of media to educate themselves and broaden their perspectives can somewhat be explained by their cognitive demands. Some audience members are keen to learn new academic and philosophical concepts. Overall, the motivation behind using **TikTok** as an educational tool is to make the English acquisition process more accessible, engaging, digestible and enjoyable.

Accessibility refers to the ability to reach education wherever and whenever you are. This is the common motivation for **TikTok** and other ICTs since it is the benefit taken from the popularity of

the internet and digital devices nowadays. Past studies have stated that this helps students widen their learning resources since they no longer have to rely fully on what has been taught in school (Aranda, 2021; Dzvapatsva et al., 2014; Menkhoff et al., 2014). **TikTok** also allows teachers or English educational content creators to reach wider audiences and spread their impact and reputation.

Regarding the "engaging" motive, **TikTok**'s format encourages users to create fun and engaging videos that can help increase the interaction level. It also aids teachers in showcasing their personality and interests outside the classroom. This can make teachers more relatable to students and help build a sense of connection. **TikTok** also provides a platform for teachers to get creative with their teaching methods. By incorporating **TikTok**-style videos into lessons, teachers can capture students' attention and increase engagement with the material. Furthermore, since **TikTok** helps foster a positive classroom culture, it can be used to create a positive and inclusive classroom culture by showcasing student achievements, celebrating diversity, or sharing motivational messages. This can help create a sense of belonging and community among students.

In addition, making learning English more digestible means that using **TikTok** assists learners in understanding the knowledge more efficiently. With the help of visual and sound aids features and the short-form format, **TikTok** has been chosen to make it easier for learners to fit English study into their daily routine, providing bite-sized content that can be consumed quickly.

Last but not least, learning English could be more enjoyable for students when using **TikTok**. "Enjoyable" means that studying is no longer considered dry and boring because students can find fun and joy while still gaining knowledge. This resonates with (Nguyen, 2021; Xiuwen & Razali, 2021) as they stated in their studies that **TikTok** and short videos might help students learn English while having fun. It is also stated by Tarmizi et al. (2021) that enjoyable feelings (cognition) were

converted into desirable embodied behaviours by employing **TikTok**. Interactive features and the ability to highly apply **TikTok** to class activities play essential roles in these "enjoyable" moments because the class and even homework can be more interesting with the use of **TikTok**.

In terms of teachers' motivation to use **TikTok**, it is worth discussing the English teachers' willingness and readiness. Teacher readiness regarding **TikTok** can vary widely depending on their level of familiarity, comfort, and understanding of the platform (Alakrash et al., 2021; Alberth et al., 2018; Wong & Yunus, 2023). First, some teachers may be well-informed about **TikTok** and have a good understanding of its features, content, and potential educational applications. They may actively use **TikTok** themselves or have observed its popularity among students. As mentioned by Wong and Yunus (2023), teachers who are aware and familiar with **TikTok** are more likely to be ready to explore its potential use in the classroom. Secondly, according to Alakrash et al. (2021), teachers who possess strong digital literacy skills and are comfortable using technology in their classrooms may be more open to incorporating social media as a teaching tool. Thus, their existing technological skills enable them to navigate **TikTok**, understand its privacy settings, and guide students effectively in using it. Third, Alberth et al. (2018) illustrated that teachers who have received professional development or training related to technology integration or social media use in education may feel more prepared to incorporate social media into their teaching practices. Thus, access to resources, workshops, or training sessions that provide guidance on leveraging **TikTok** for educational purposes can enhance teacher readiness. Fourth, teachers' personal attitudes towards social media can also influence their readiness to incorporate **TikTok** into their teaching. Wong and Yunus (2023) demonstrated that some teachers, who have reservations or concerns about social media platforms in general, will resist in using it for

educational purposes. On the other hands, others, who may view them as valuable tools for engagement and learning, will be more open in exploring, utilizing and testing the platform.

Since the motivation, readiness and willingness of the teachers and students are highly related to their perception about the benefits and detriments of **TikTok**, the next section will answer the question of "Do they perceive **TikTok** as beneficial or detrimental to teaching and learning English?"

Benefits and challenges when using TikTok as an educational tool

Every coin has two sides, and so does **TikTok**. Like other social media platforms, **TikTok** provides both benefits and drawbacks to its users. After finalizing the advantages and disadvantages of **TikTok** in relation to its features, it's worth mentioning that some features can be beneficial and detrimental simultaneously. Specifically, **TikTok**'s short-form format is useful for users with short attention spans as it allows content creators to divide the information into small pieces. As mentioned by Aranda (2021), this helps students consume the knowledge little by little instead of being overwhelmed by huge lessons. However, participants also mentioned that it also causes difficulty since the short-form video requires content creators to condense the knowledge to deliver enough information to the audience. Thus, both teachers and students reported that educational content on **TikTok** often lacks context and background information, making it difficult for students to understand the knowledge thoroughly, especially for beginners. This feature limits the educational value of **TikTok**; the platform has been designed for entertainment purposes and must be adapted for educational use. The limited context and explanation make **TikTok** unsuitable for teaching complex topics like grammar and syntax. Instead, it will be more appropriate to reinforce concepts that have already been learned rather than introducing new material.

The next feature is content diversity and authenticity. I believe this is not only the issue for **TikTok** but also other informal learning approaches. On the one hand, the diversity and authenticity of content creators and content types exposes students to different English knowledge worldwide. For example, learners can listen to slang and different English accents, catalyzing their listening and speaking skills when having conversations with different people from different countries. This feature also provides learners with the opportunity to reach different cultures. Learning English is not only about using it fluently with complicated vocabulary and grammar. English as a global language should be a medium for learners to explore the world, and the content diversity and authenticity on **TikTok** plays an important role. It also allows students to have diverse learning experiences since knowledge is delivered in a more creative way than the traditional approach. For instance, vocabulary can be taught differently, including imitating famous movie transcripts and songs, karaoke, etc. This makes learning more entertaining for students. This resonates with the second language acquisition theory of Stephen Krashen, that fluency is acquired through exposure to comprehensible input without prior instruction or training in the language's grammar or reading (*Second Language Acquisition Theory*, 2016). Authentic and natural communicative input helps people acquire language unconsciously. On the other hand, exposing students to that global knowledge pool without appropriate control over the content will be a big problem. Some participants expressed concern about the accuracy of educational content on **TikTok** since it's possible that not all **TikTok** creators use correct grammar, pronunciation, or spelling in their videos. Because **TikTok** is a user-generated content platform, there is no quality moderation. Thus, the content quality depends highly on the knowledge levels of creators. Also, content creators make no judgment on the quality of their content. This makes it difficult for learners to choose which channel to follow. There is also the potential that inaccurate content can make learners

misunderstand English. Participants also reported that the prevalence of informal language, including slang, abbreviations and regional accents, could challenge non-native speakers, especially beginners, to recognize unfamiliar terms, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Regarding content diversity issues, a phenomenon was recently raised in Vietnam due to the rise of some new keywords on **TikTok**, which are distorted from 18+ terms. It is also worth mentioning because when those keywords are on trend, they will potentially blend into educational content, making this informal learning environment unwholesome.

Another important feature is that **TikTok** promotes interaction, including interactive content and interactive activities. Like other social networking sites, **TikTok** can facilitate communication between teachers and students outside of class (Maksimova, 2021; Menkhoff et al., 2014). I believe that the benefit of **TikTok** is in making learning more interesting and entertaining. I have learned English for 15 years, undergoing formal and informal education. And I agree that this interactive feature of **TikTok**, with the support from visual and auditory aids, makes learning English more attractive than formal classes. I still remember the excitement when I first saw a duet video on **TikTok** in the middle of the night and unconsciously simulated the conversation with the creator. It is so different from the feeling of forcing yourself to study English in a class. This is highly related to the multimodal learning method that "engages multiple sensory systems and action systems of the learner" (Massaro, 2012). Students learn most effectively when several learning styles are used by teachers at the same time, according to research. Thanks to multimodal instruction, students are more engaged while learning in a fun atmosphere. It's because they aren't forced to employ a learning approach that doesn't work for them. In addition, as mentioned above, it is also useful for teachers because teachers can apply **TikTok** in their classes to bring excitement to formal lessons. It is no longer merely sharing **Youtube** videos with students or using **Facebook**

or **Twitter** to create groups and communicate with students after class; teachers can now have them all by using **TikTok**. What is more important is the application of **TikTok** during class, as it provides teachers with interactive activities to renovate their teaching style and make formal classes less stressful. Nevertheless, the more modern the method is, the more difficult it is to apply. New technology always causes difficulty in learning how to use it. It is a problem of technology adoption that prevent people from exploiting **TikTok**. According to Divaharan and Ping (2010), the ability of instructors to use technology effectively in the classroom is one of the significant contributing variables. It is not only about the message anymore but the technical side of it. For example, how to include a picture in your video using **TikTok** or other video-creating applications? How do you set up your camera to have enough space to include text in the editing stage? Not everyone can learn it. Otherwise, the interaction, which **TikTok** promotes, is more into the interaction between users and the platform. This has been mentioned by Cheng (2021) that there is still lagging in the interaction between users and users, specifically educators and students. **TikTok** and all social media have the same issue since the content is pre-recorded. Students cannot express any questions or comments instantly to the creators. And teachers can not know if the students have perceived the content correctly. Thus, quick feedback and adjustments are not applicable in **TikTok**.

Additionally, **TikTok** has gained significant popularity and has become accessible to a wide range of users around the world. Thus, on one hand, using **TikTok** can help teachers to reach to a wide range of learners because **TikTok** is appeal to learners due to its attributes that I mentioned above including content diversity, motivations, interaction and engagement, digestable, etc. Teachers can then leverage this diversity to reach learners from different backgrounds, cultures, and age groups, fostering inclusivity and broadening the reach of their educational content. On the other hand,

TikTok can contribute to the digital divide by reinforcing existing inequalities. The availability and usage of **TikTok** are not uniform across all regions and communities. This is where the concept of the social digital divide comes into play. The social digital divide refers to the unequal distribution of digital technologies and internet access among different socioeconomic groups, regions, and demographics. It highlights the disparities in technological resources, skills, and opportunities that can create barriers to accessing and benefiting from digital platforms like **TikTok** (Maryville Online, 2020). There are several factors that contribute to the social digital divide in relation to **TikTok** including Internet access, device availability, technological literacy, language and content, age and generation (Srinuan & Bohlin, 2011). Access to **TikTok** relies on having a smartphone or internet-enabled device, as well as a reliable internet connection. People who lack these resources may be excluded from participating in the **TikTok** community and accessing the content created and shared on the platform. This can further marginalize individuals and communities who are already disadvantaged in terms of digital access. Otherwise, the popularity of **TikTok** and the influence it holds in shaping trends and culture can create a sense of exclusion for those who are not part of the platform. This can lead to feelings of alienation, especially among young people who place significant importance on social media and online interactions.

One thing the participant did not report but is worth mentioning is the algorithms' use. Like other famous social media sites, **TikTok** implies algorithms in its platform. From one point of view, **TikTok**'s algorithms play a key role in giving users direction when swimming in the content pool. It helps users easily find which content will match their needs by providing recommendations and suggestions based on users' behaviours (Si, 2020). It is good because videos with appropriate content will be automatically shown on the "For you page," and users only need to scroll down the

feed. In the same vein, when the learners focus on studying English on **TikTok**, **TikTok** can automatically recommend English educational content. This makes **TikTok** a great informal learning tool because learners can find useful educational content while using **TikTok** for entertainment. However, the bad sides of using algorithms are discrimination, security and privacy issues, addiction and distraction. Discriminatory refers to the bias of **TikTok** in disseminating content. As reported by Forbes, Time Magazine, the Guardian and Intercept, **TikTok** and its algorithms filter content depending on the creators' appearance and race. Thus, it causes inequality among the creators and users of **TikTok** since content from minority groups will be filtered and less promoted to other groups. This leads to the fact that students, when studying English, will have less chance to see this content and creators from these group can not reach a wide range of users. In addition, data collecting is central to answer the question of how **TikTok** can make recommendations for users. **TikTok** gathers data from its users, including demographics and their digital footprints. **TikTok** knows your behaviours on their platform, keywords you are searching for, videos you liked, etc. Thus, many studies have stated concerns over security and privacy issues since **TikTok** knows too much about its users (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). What is worse is the purpose of **TikTok** when collecting data from users. Data will then be used to train the algorithms to detect your needs and give recommendations. However, algorithms promote more content than what you need. They also give you what they want you to see. In other words, **TikTok** will try to recommend what they think will attract your attention. The aim here is to trap you inside the platform by keeping you surfing the "For You Page," which is the main cause of the addiction. And it will also cause distraction when suggesting entertaining content while you are trying to focus on studying.

Cyberbullying is another issue not mentioned by any participants but can be regarded as a serious issue since this is not strange on social networks. It can have detrimental effects on the mental health and well-being of those targeted. Being a global platform, while **TikTok** can be a fun and creative way for people to express themselves and connect with others, it can also be a breeding ground for cyberbullying. Specifically in English education, due to the lack of robust legislation and effective procedures to protect users when using **TikTok**, cyberbullying continues to be the most challenging challenge for young EFL learners while utilizing **TikTok** for English teaching objectives, as mentioned in the previous studies (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). Not only learners but also educators can be cyberbullied on **TikTok**. Recently, there was a situation where a young bachelor, who graduated from one of the most outstanding universities of education in Vietnam, was criticized by the public because of teaching the wrong knowledge on **TikTok**. While it is understandable for the public to contributively criticize creators when they create inappropriate content, there are a lot of keyboard warriors using terrible words and attitudes to abuse that creator. This is highly serious since it not only makes learners and educators lack confidence but also affects their mental health. Consequently, users might stop using **TikTok** or even stop learning or teaching English because of feeling complex.

Recommendations to exploit TikTok as a useful tool in the English acquisition process

Because there are always two sides of the coin, there is no specific time when the advantages or disadvantages of **TikTok** outweigh the other. It highly depends on the way users utilize the platform and the design of the platform. There will always be ways to maximize the benefits and minimize the drawbacks of **TikTok**. This leads to the fifth and final research question that I will answer "How can we make **TikTok** become a better place to teach and learn English?" Through

the interviews with the participants and my own experiences, recommendations can be divided into four groups which align with some main difficulties I mentioned above.

The first group of recommendations answers the question of how we can find appropriate content on **TikTok**. This is highly related to the content diversity features as these recommendations help users find good English educational content when exposed to the content pool. To find good content on **TikTok**, we must find good sources. Identifying qualified content creators and channels on **TikTok** requires users to assess if they are verified and reliable. Verified accounts on **TikTok** with the blue checkmark next to their username do not mean their content is qualified. There is still the potential that they have mistakes while creating content. Still, we can ensure they are real people since many people copy content from different sources while hiding their identities to gain followers for their channels. Thus, verified or not, we still need to assess the quality of the content on their channels. While teachers can easily know if the content is good, students can verify the quality by checking the number of followers, video frequency, and engagement rates and reading the comments on their videos. While the engagement rates and the number of followers can indicate the channels' popularity and the creators' activeness, the publics' comments can demonstrate if the content is correct. The more followers they have, the more they are recognized by the public. The more effort they spend on creating videos, the better the content. The more time they spend on **TikTok** interacting with their followers, the more believable they are. Since the public can leave comments about the content, users can read others' feedback and assess whether the content is accurate. Finally, the most reliable way for learners is to ask their teachers to assess the channels.

In addition, users are able to find relevant content on **TikTok** by using the hashtag and the sound detail. Like **Instagram**, content creators usually add hashtags to their captions to make their

content more reachable and viral. Thus, by searching for specific hashtags related to specific skills or knowledge you want to improve on **TikTok**, you can easily narrow the content sources matching your language level and interest. Some examples are #learnenglish, #englishlistening, and #praticespeakingenglish. A new feature of **TikTok** is that when users tap on the sound detail, all the videos using the same sounds will appear. Content creators sometimes use the sounds from others but demonstrate the visuals in different ways. Thus, users may find better explanations of the same content using this feature.

After finding the appropriate content on **TikTok**, we are also coming up with some suggestions for learners to utilize **TikTok** content in their studying process. Some built-in features on **TikTok**, such as captions and subtitles, benefit English education. When students read along with the subtitles and match the written words with the spoken words, it can help them better understand the content and study listening and reading skills simultaneously. Furthermore, being interactive on **TikTok** is the most important thing (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). I believe that not only on **TikTok** but learners should also be interactive in the whole learning process. However, since **TikTok** is famous for its interactive features, learners should take advantage of it to make learning more enjoyable. To be interactive, learners can learn to create videos of themselves joining the challenges and duet videos. Then they can compare their video with the original one and choose to upload it online and ask other users to give them feedback on their pronunciation. Otherwise, leaving comments on other videos in English to discuss the topic or ask questions can help students with their writing skills. It is important to not "be afraid to make mistakes" because "practice makes perfect." It will help learners build confidence and fluency in English. Finally, since knowledge is not stored in our heads automatically, learners should take notes to memorize them and revive the knowledge regularly.

To deal with the issues coming from the short-form video format of **TikTok**, the participants and I shared the idea of how we can create good content on **TikTok**. Because **TikTok** videos are limited to one minute, teachers must ensure their content is concise, condensed and understandable. To do so, it is important to include context for the knowledge creators introduce in their videos, providing detailed explanations and examples. In addition, the knowledge should be divided into small chunks since it is easier for creators to make short content. It can be videos introducing one or two words or just providing examples of grammar use. Thus, I find it necessary to suggest that teachers consider making a series instead of putting everything in one video. When making videos, it is important for teachers to speak slowly and clearly, add captions and subtitles and incorporate visuals, such as images, animations, audio, and music, into **TikTok** videos, making it easier for learners to follow along and understand. Collaborating with other content creators is another interesting recommendation. This is not a new thing on **TikTok**. This is how "challenge" content work in the beginning. The content producers begin by composing a challenge and sending it to the following producer they are familiar with. Recently, it has been pretty trending on **TikTok** Vietnam that Vietnamese **TikTok**ers living in different countries connect and make videos together by linking the end of one video to the beginning of others, which I find interesting to follow. Thus, applying this collaboration to English education can be a great chance to develop new ideas and provide more interesting insights to audiences.

The issue with which users seem to struggle most is the technical skills creators need to acquire. For teachers who are not tech-savvy, learning how to create a video will be a big challenge. Creating a video on **TikTok** can be easy or difficult, depending on the complexity of the video you want to create. When I tried to create a video on **TikTok**, I could not even find where to include text in the video using the built-in features on **TikTok**. All I saw on the platform was how

to put a funny effect on my face. One of my participants introduced me to using **CapCut** following instructions created by other creators. Even people like me, who have experience making videos using Adobe Premiere, still struggle with that instruction for a while. Currently, **TikTok** allows users to upload images. Thus, creators can create content in this format before turning to videos. A platform I usually use to create photos and videos is **Canva**, a popular design application available on both computers and mobile phones. It is not easier to use, but it provides many ideas and templates on how creators can visualize their content ideas and may be a good option to make the creating process less difficult. Though it requires some time and effort for creators to learn how to use the various tools and features when creating content, I believe creators can create engaging and creative videos that stand out on **TikTok** with practice and experimentation.

However, creating video need not be a barrier because teachers will always have the option of curating rather than creating. The content you want to "create/use may already exist in the format you want" (Santiago, 2021). Thus, instead of recreating something that might already exist, educators can collect and curate existing content on **TikTok**. However, teachers need to know how to assess and evaluate the content to match with their audience and goals. At this point, it is also highly related to teacher professional development (PD). PD is defined as teachers' knowledge and skills that relate to changes in instructional practice, which increase students' learning and achievement (Desimone, 2009). Specifically, on **TikTok**, teachers can follow educational accounts or hashtags to discover innovative ideas and best practices from educators worldwide. Thus, the popularity and accessibility of **TikTok** make it an attractive option for teachers looking to connect with fellow educators. It provides a platform for collaboration and community-building, as teachers can follow and interact with other educators, forming networks of like-minded professionals besides traditional ways such as workshops, conferences, and courses. Thus, by

being willing to adopt **TikTok**, teachers can gain inspiration for new activities, projects, and instructional approaches to incorporate into their own teaching practice and have it fit with their pedagogical values and styles. Then, **TikTok** offers a unique platform for teachers to share ideas, teaching strategies, and classroom activities in a concise and visually appealing format.

As mentioned above, one of the main concerns of the participant is the distraction of **TikTok**. This is highly important since it significantly impacts learners' performance. From my point of view, both **TikTok** and users should be involved to fix this issue. However, in this thesis, I will focus on the user side since all my participants are **TikTok** users. First, students are advised to find a way to keep themselves passionate during the whole process. Students should set a specific goal to track their progress and stay motivated to continue learning. In my experience, a goal should be as detailed as possible. For example, the final goal is to hold a conversation. However, it should be divided into smaller goals, such as holding a conversation for 20 or 30 minutes. It can also be holding a conversation about travelling and politics. At this point, to stay inspired when learning English on **TikTok**, it is better to focus on their interests because it helps learners still have fun while also gaining knowledge in their area of interest. In addition, I agree with the participants that consistency and repetition are key to learning anything. Having said that, learners should set a specific time to use **TikTok** for learning English. Students should also limit their time on **TikTok** to "set boundaries." For example, it can be twice weekly at 8:00 pm every Tuesday and Thursday for 30 minutes. The purpose is to make **TikTok** become a part of learners' daily routine when studying English. Another method is to have two separate accounts for different purposes. I created another account searching for English learning keywords and following English content creators. The idea is not to mix entertainment and educational content because **TikTok** has a "Following" page showing only content from people you follow. Though the algorithms still recommend me

trending entertainment content, the "following" page works well on keeping me stay focus on English learning.

The last and most important suggestion I extracted from the interviews is that **TikTok** should not be considered the sole method of teaching and learning English. Because every approach has two sides, no method is better than the others. Like other social media platforms, **TikTok** offers a more dynamic, personalized, and interactive learning experience than traditional classroom settings but has many drawbacks affecting student performance. In fact, incorporating elements of fun and enjoyment into the learning process can have several benefits. When students find learning enjoyable, they are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and willing to put effort into their studies. It can help create a positive learning environment, foster creativity, and enhance retention of information. By making learning fun, educators can tap into students' natural curiosity and make complex or challenging topics more accessible (Lam & Tou, 2014; Pienimäki et al., 2021). It can involve using interactive activities, educational games, group projects, multimedia resources, or incorporating elements of playfulness into lessons. These approaches can stimulate critical thinking, problem-solving skills, collaboration, and overall academic achievement (Castillo, 2016). Thus, according to Pienimäki et al. (2021, P.10), "fun should be given room to blossom and should be even consciously incorporated into the curriculum."

However, it's important to note that while fun is valuable, it shouldn't be the sole focus of education. Balance is key, and educational experiences should also emphasize meaningful content, skill development, and the attainment of learning objectives (Trespalacios et al., 2011). Effective education combines both engaging and challenging aspects to create a well-rounded learning experience. Proper guidance, moderation, and safety measures are required to ensure an effective and secure learning environment. An unstructured tool like **TikTok**, if not used appropriately, can

cause more harm than provide educational value such as distraction, inequity and the digital divide, privacy and security concerns. Thus, though **TikTok** can be a powerful tool for language learning and teaching, offering an alternative and engaging approach to traditional methods, it should be one of many tools and resources in a comprehensive language learning program (Solomon, 2021). As mentioned above, **TikTok** is more suitable for reinforcing concepts that have already been learned, while structured methods with lectures are designed to introduce knowledge in the most comprehensive way. Therefore, a balanced approach that combines **TikTok** with other teaching methods, resources and activities, such as textbooks, lectures, face-to-face interaction, language apps, etc., can maximize the learning outcomes and keep students motivated. This aligns with the second language acquisition theory which clarifies the acquired system and learned system of human. According to this theory, acquisition is more crucial than learning. In other words, acquiring a language by utilizing natural communicative input is more important than inserting knowledge on purpose. Thus, a combination of the two systems is crucial.

People who participated at the contributing level on **TikTok** in general and social media in particular tended to be the most vulnerable users who has been significantly impacted by these platforms. For these users, the program quickly turned into a serious game, and it was shown that the most essential gratifications sought were those of self-expression, identity formation, and renown. Inexperienced users who experiment with their identities online at such a young age should worry parents and educators (Bucknell Bossen & Kottasz, 2020). Concerning parental worry, young children may be at danger of exposing themselves to unwelcome attention since the parent corporation does not keep an eye on the website as carefully as one would wish. Thus, there is a chance that young individuals, particularly preadolescents, would produce movies without their guardians' or parents' knowledge or permission, and that the person behind the self-made

video may later come to regret it. Additionally, more educational institutions are becoming aware of the risky **TikTok** trends that kids can't get enough of. **TikTok** may pose serious cybersecurity risks. Due to worries about data privacy, a number of school districts and colleges have stopped using the app and prohibited its usage. For instance, t has been barred from college Wi-Fi networks at the University of Texas in Austin, Auburn University, and Boise State University (Maheshwari & Holpuch, 2023). Ontario, Canada, has considered banning **TikTok** in public schools (Rushowy, 2023). Therefore, it is imperative that schools and parents take action and begin educating children about the risks and damage associated with using the internet. This advice relates to not just privacy concerns and "stranger danger", but also to how to control expectations of becoming famous and how online connections might vary greatly from those in real life. Parents and guardians could be concerned about teen groups looking for internet buddies. At all levels, caution must be used, particularly when such young persons are present. In addition, instead of banning **TikTok**, it's more essential for schools and educational institutions to provide ongoing professional development opportunities and support for teachers to enhance their digital skills and knowledge, including specific guidance on utilizing platforms like **TikTok** in an educational context. This can help ensure that teachers feel adequately prepared and confident in using **TikTok** effectively and responsibly in the classroom.

Participant insights provided a thorough picture of **TikTok** as an educational tool in Vietnam when taken into account in the context of the literature and in light of the original study questions. Several participant comments confirmed prior studies on how researchers felt about **TikTok** (e.g., facilitating communication, algorithms and the bad sides of it). Yet, they made fresh contributions, such as the notion that having two accounts might help reduce the distraction **TikTok** causes. I

will briefly discuss several significant limitations of this work before summarizing the main findings and suggesting further research in the Conclusion section.

Challenges

Like all research, this thesis has challenges. Firstly, I was limited by the distance when recruiting participants because I currently reside in Canada while my research was conducted in Vietnam. Thus, I did not have a chance to be in the city at the time of conducting the study. Though the Internet can facilitate communication, there are still challenges, such as the different time zones and face-to-face preferences. Vietnam is fourteen hours ahead of Edmonton which means that daytime in Vietnam will be nighttime in Edmonton. Thus, it was hard to arrange a virtual meeting with the potential sample to introduce my study or do the interview. In addition, Vietnamese culture prefers face-to-face meetings more than remote communication. It is the issue of quick response since remote communication requires time to receive and reply which can be easily interrupted by other tasks and sometimes be forgotten. As a result, though I initially expected to have one survey, 25 individual interviews and 1 focus group session, I only had ten interviews conducted. The decision I took to conduct the study in only one Vietnamese city presents another possible constraint. Due to diverse lifestyles, schools, training centers, and student-applied teaching techniques vary greatly from city to city. For instance, Saigon residents are seen to have a more open view to changes than Hanoi residents (BBC News Tiếng Việt 2014). The topic of how these insights might be perceived and understood from diverse viewpoints can thus be helped by more thorough research of **TikTok**'s implementation in various Vietnamese cities.

Another potential constraint is the translation process since some of my participants are Vietnamese students, and their English abilities are not strong enough to have interviews in English. Thus, I had to translate the four interview transcripts from Vietnamese to English. The translation is a socially constructed process in which the translator might bring their own

understanding of the language to the process. Thus, there will be potential that the translator adds more layers of meaning to the transcript.

While various viewpoints might be included in this field of study, I have chosen to concentrate on the perspectives of teachers and students since they are the main forces behind education and are ultimately responsible for its results. Future studies must raise the views of other subjects as well since this thesis is predicated on the idea that teachers' and students' knowledge and opinions are usually overprivileged at the expense of other points of view. The parents of students and the English educational content creators who are not teachers are of special importance. Future studies on this subject should give priority to these viewpoints. Another potential constraint is that all my participants are above 18. Thus, my study will also lack the opinion of the Z Generation - one of the most active groups of **TikTok** users.

Conclusion

TikTok has emerged as a popular social media platform among younger generations. While it is primarily known for short, entertaining videos, educators and students have found creative ways to utilize the platform to share and learn new information. This thesis has examined **TikTok** in English education, asking about the application, advantages and disadvantages of **TikTok** in teaching and studying English in Vietnam while also exploring the recommendations to make **TikTok** become a better educational environment. Existing literature demonstrates that **TikTok's** short-form video format provides a unique opportunity for language learners to practice and improve their English skills. Many English teachers and educators have also utilized **TikTok** as a teaching tool to engage students and make learning more interactive and enjoyable. The literature also unveiled a range of limitations and barriers of **TikTok** that might significantly impact the student's performance.

With the use of qualitative interviews and thematic analysis, I was able to glean a number of important insights regarding how **TikTok** is being used in English instruction in Vietnam. Most participants agreed that educators have utilized the platform to share informative videos, teach various subjects, and engage with students during and outside classes. In the same vein, students have used **TikTok** to watch educational content, practice their English skills and engage with teachers and the English learning community. Thus, as an educational tool, there are several ways to use **TikTok** to provide an engaging and interactive learning environment for students to learn and practice different language skills. This also shows that the use of social media has evolved since **TikTok** is no longer a mere informal learning method. **TikTok**, with its' interactive features, has been included in the formal setting to facilitate highly engaging activities.

Overall, the motives for using **TikTok** are to make the English acquisition process more accessible, digestible and enjoyable. This is highly related to the benefits that **TikTok** can provide for both English educators and learners. The popularity of the internet and digital devices nowadays make **TikTok** accessible as users can use it wherever and whenever they are. This helps students widen their learning resources since they no longer have to rely fully on what has been taught in school. **TikTok** also allows teachers or English educational content creators to reach wider audiences and spread their impact and reputation. In addition, **TikTok** has diverse types of English educational content which expose students to different English knowledge worldwide. With the help of visual aids features and the short-form format, **TikTok** has assisted learners in understanding the knowledge easier as it makes it easier for learners to fit English study into their daily routine, providing bite-sized content that can be consumed quickly. Last but not least, interactive features and the ability to highly apply **TikTok** to class activities play important roles in making learning English more enjoyable for students since they can find fun and joy while still gaining knowledge when using **TikTok**. Studying is no longer considered dry and boring to some extent because the class and even homework can be more interesting with **TikTok**.

However, it is important to note that **TikTok** should not be seen as a substitute for traditional modes of education, as it has its limitations. **TikTok**'s short-form format limits the educational value of **TikTok** because it is born for entertainment purposes. The limited context and explanation make **TikTok** unsuitable for teaching complex topics like grammar and syntax. Otherwise, **TikTok**'s user-generated content can vary greatly in quality, and it is crucial for educators to discern which videos are credible and useful for their students. Additionally, **TikTok**'s algorithm presents some concerns, as it can cause distraction and addiction since it knows how to trap users inside the platform by recommending attractive content. **TikTok** can also create an "echo

chamber" of information and potentially promote misleading content. Cyberbullying is another concern since it prevents teachers and students from being confident in creating content on **TikTok**.

Key recommendations identified by the participants and me included how to find and utilize appropriate content on **TikTok**, how to create content on **TikTok** and how to stay focused on **TikTok**. To find good content on **TikTok**, we must find good sources by identifying verified creators, checking the number of followers, video frequency, and engagement rates, reading the comments on their videos and consulting with educators to do the assessment. In addition, users are able to find relevant content on **TikTok** by using hashtags and sound details. After finding the appropriate content on **TikTok**, learners can utilize content by using some built-in features on **TikTok**, such as captions and subtitles. Furthermore, being interactive on **TikTok** by creating videos or interacting with other content in English is the most important thing for learners to make learning more enjoyable. Regarding how to create content on **TikTok**, teachers must ensure their content is concise, condensed and understandable by including context for the knowledge creators introduce in their videos, providing detailed explanations and examples, diving knowledge into small chunks, speaking slowly and clearly, adding captions and subtitles, incorporating visuals and collaborating with other content creators. To deal with the issue of technical skills, content creators can learn and practice using third-party platforms to support creation processes, such as Canva or CapCut. When it comes to the problem of distraction and addiction, learners can stay focused by setting specific goals to keep track of the process, focusing on their interests to stay inspired, setting fixed times for studying English via **TikTok** to make it become a habit and having two separate accounts for entertainment and educational purposes. In addition, schools and parents take action and begin educating children about the risks and damage associated with using the internet to

minimize the harm of **TikTok** to students. Schools should also pay attention in provide appropriate resources and infrastructure for teachers to encourage them finding innovation in pedagogy.

Future studies in this field should give priority to the views of students under 18 years old and parents and non-educator content creators. Students under 18 years old are the key target users of **TikTok** since they represent the Z generation. Their ability to adapt to new technology might be the key to thoroughly examining the benefit of **TikTok**. In addition, parents are the people who have the most impact on students, especially students under 18 years old. Thus, it is crucial to understand their perceptions of **TikTok** and its application in the education field. Particularly significant is the non-educator content creators since the purpose of their content on **TikTok** might differ from the educators. Their insights on creating content will also benefit the educators who are now on this platform. Future research should also consider the influence of various areas' cultures and conditions on the use of **TikTok**. For example, Sai Gon is another economic centre of Vietnam but has been considered a more open and modern city than Hanoi. Thus, how students and educators in Saigon view **TikTok** might be a lot different. Furthermore, future researchers researching this topic can choose to examine the cyberbullying and privacy issues of **TikTok** since there is no research dig deep into these issues, including real situations, case studies and how to overcome these issues. To make experimental findings more representative and relevant, future research may also use experiments as instruments and increase the sample size. Otherwise, examining how we can apply **TikTok** in the classroom with specific pedagogical models such as MALL or TCSOL is important.

To apply the outcome of this research to facilitate real-world impact on the use of TikTok among teachers and students, I will adjust the papers and send it to some education and communications journals such as Emerald, Springer, … Otherwise, this study will be translated into Vietnamese

and send to the "Giáo Dục và Thời Đại" newspapper which belongs to the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam. In addition, I will contact a few potential schls in Vietnam and sent my study to them so that they can have a look at the use of TikTok. I will also offer doing workshops for teachers and students to share some insights over the benefits and challenges of using TikTok in learning and teaching English.

In conclusion, **TikTok** has the potential to be a valuable tool in education, but it should be used in a thoughtful and strategic manner. **TikTok** should not be considered the sole method of teaching and learning English. Instead, it can be regarded as a supplement to traditional modes of education rather than a replacement. In addition, **TikTok** should not be used for beginners with little or no English knowledge. Having said that, knowing when the appropriate time and stages is to apply **TikTok** to the English acquisition process is vital. The findings of this thesis demonstrate the educational application of **TikTok**, which was initially born for entertainment and social connecting purposes. Since the education and communications fields keep evolving and have supportive relationships, creating room in the conversation for applying new communications technology to education is critical as research in this area continues to develop.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Research Questions

1. How is **TikTok** perceived by English teachers and students in Vietnam?

2. Within the selected group of participants, how do they use **TikTok** to teach and study English?

3. What motivates them to use **TikTok** in the English acquisition process?

4. Do they perceive **TikTok** as beneficial or detrimental to teaching and learning English?

5. How can we make **TikTok** a better place to teach and learn English?

Pre-Interview Guide

1. Greetings and introductions

2. Standard information regarding the goals and purposes of the study

3. A brief summary of the information on informed consent and the choice to examine analysis reports

4. Before we start, do you have any questions for me?

Questions

Interview with students

1. Opening phase — factual, low stakes, a chance to get people comfortable about interviewing

    1.1. Tell me one thing you particularly think about the importance of English.

2. Introductory – Introduce the topic of conversation

    2.1. Let's talk about our earliest experiences with learning English. When did you start learning

English, and how did you learn it then?

2.2. How did you feel about studying English then?

2.3. Have you ever studied English by using social media? What are your experiences?

If the students answer "yes" to question 2.3, the question will follow this direction:

3. Transition – Move the conversation to the key questions

    3.1. Are you more likely to study English formally or informally?

    3.2. What differences do you feel, if any, between your traditional class and using social media to study English?

4. Key questions – the questions that drive the study

    4.1. What do you usually watch on **TikTok**?

    4.2. Have you ever watched any educational content on **TikTok**, especially in English teaching? What are they, and how do you feel about those types of content?

    4.3. What features of **TikTok** do you think are appropriate for English learning?

    4.4. Do you think **TikTok** can be used for the English learning process? Why?

    4.5. What is your motivation when using **TikTok** to learn English? Do you think learning **TikTok** will be more interesting than learning English in the normal way? Why?

    4.6. What aspects of **TikTok** cause difficulties in learning English to you? What didn't work? And why?

    4.7. Do you have any recommendations so that we can learn effectively learn English via **TikTok**?

If the students answer "no" to question 2.3, the question will follow this direction:

5. Transition – Move the conversation into the key questions

   3.1. Why you don't utilize English for studying English?

   3.2. Is there any other tool that you use to study English beside taking formal classes? What are they and their effectiveness?

6. Key questions – the questions that drive the study

   4.1. What do you usually watch on **TikTok**?

   4.2. Have you ever watched any educational content on **TikTok**, especially in English teaching? What are they, and how do you feel about those types of content?

   4.3. What features of **TikTok** do you think are appropriate for English learning?

   4.4. Do you think **TikTok** can be used for the English learning process? Why?

   4.5. What is your motivation when using **TikTok** to learn English? Do you think learning **TikTok** will be more interesting than learning English in the normal way? Why?

   4.6. What aspects of **TikTok** cause difficulties in learning English to you? What didn't work? And why?

   4.7. Do you have any recommendations so that we can learn effectively learn English via **TikTok**?

   4.8. Will you use **TikTok** to study English after knowing about those features of **TikTok**?

Interview with teachers

1. Opening phase — factual, low stakes, a chance to get people comfortable about interviewing

1.2. Tell me your name and one thing you particularly think about the importance of English.

2. Introductory – Introduce the topic of conversation

2.1. Let's talk about our earliest experiences with teaching English. When did you start teaching English, and how did you teach it then?

2.2. How did you feel about teaching English then?

2.3. Have you ever taught English by using social media? What are your experiences?

3. Transition – Move the conversation into the key questions

3.1. Are you more likely to teach English in a formal way or an informal way?

3.2. What differences do you feel, if any, between your traditional class and using social media to teach English?

4. Key questions – the questions that drive the study

4.1. Have you ever watched any educational content on **TikTok**, especially in English teaching? What are they, and how do you feel about those types of content?

4.2. Have you ever used **TikTok** to teach English? What are your experiences?

4.3. What features of **TikTok** do you think are appropriate for English learning?

4.4. Do you think **TikTok** can be used for the English learning process? Why?

4.5. What is your motivation when using **TikTok** to teach English? Do you think learning **TikTok** will be more interesting than learning English in the normal way? Why?

4.6. What aspects of **TikTok** cause difficulties in teaching and learning English to you? What didn't work? And why?

4.7. Do you have any recommendations so that we can effectively teach and learn English via

TikTok?

Appendix B: Codebook

Table 1: Codes and themes

Categories	Theme	Code	Evidence from transcripts
Application of **TikTok**	inspire creative pedagogical approaches	Make videos	I regularly make videos to upload to my personal channel and share them publicly online
	proved to be a convenient tool	content sources	There are a lot of great videos on **TikTok** teaching English
	interactive activities to engage with students during classes	Duet	I have some activities for my students using **TikTok** such as "duet" with a video from a native speaker's channel
		Homework	It is also the homework for some of my classes to create some **TikTok** videos filming their speaking practice and send them to me.
		Challenges	Teachers and creators can create challenges or interactive activities that encourage learners to

			use English in a fun and engaging way.
		Games	I have even created challenges and games to encourage students to participate and practice their English skills
		Watch videos	watched a lot of video about vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and conversational English
		Mimic/imitate	Watch English language content creators on **TikTok** and try to mimic their accents and intonation
		Interact	Use the comments section to interact with other users and practice your written communication skills
Feelings when using **TikTok** to teach and study	Ease of use	easier to create a video than **Youtube**	Because it is way easier to create videos on **TikTok** than on **Youtube**. You can create a video right on **TikTok**, and it is short as well.
		built-in features	the option to use the app's built-in translation and captioning tools to assist with

English			comprehension and vocabulary acquisition
		TikTok can be simple or complicated depending on the activity level	**TikTok** can be simple or complicated depending on the activity level
	TikTok is more interesting	more interesting and enjoyable way	**TikTok** make learning more fun and interesting for some learners "who are already familiar with the app" and "who struggle to stay focused during traditional language lessons."
		Entertaining way	provides a more entertaining way
	TikTok content is frequently informal and conversational	does not always reflect formal English usage	**TikTok** does not always reflect formal English usage
	it should not be used as the only	Not the only stategy	it should not be used as the only strategy for learning English

	strategy for learning English		
	TikTok as a convenient tool	Access	we can access **TikTok** anywhere, anytime, and it is easy to download and use even without creating an account
		accessible	is accessible and easy to understand
	more suitable for reinforcing ideas	may not be enough	may not be enough to achieve proficiency in the language
		more suitable for reinforcing ideas	**TikTok** is more suitable for reinforcing ideas that have already been learnt instead of delivering new material
Motivations	General	Effective	the motivation for using **TikTok** to teach English is to make language learning more accessible, enjoyable, and effective.
		Beneficial	I think teachers can use **TikTok** as a medium to teach English because it can be beneficial in many ways

	attract a wider audience	Wider audience	It is popular among the youth this it can help teachers and content creators to reach wider audience
	accessible	Accessible	**TikTok** is easily accessible and can be used on a smartphone or a computer. Learners can practice their language skills anytime, anywhere.
	make the learning experience more engaging and dynamic than in traditional classrooms	engaging	make the learning experience more engaging and dynamic for their students
		Unique	It offers a unique and engaging way to learn the language
		more engaging	more engaging and interactive than learning English in a traditional way
	provide "a multimedia platform	Enjoyable	Using **TikTok** for learning English can be an enjoyable way to supplement your language learning efforts
		have fun	you can improve your English skills while

Benefits	perfect for "quick exercises or mini-lessons."		having fun
		more relaxed	It can also help me improve my listening and speaking skills in a more relaxed and interactive way
		Short-form videos	**TikTok** promotes short-form videos, which are typically less than a minute long, making them a great tool for practicing listening and comprehension skills.
		Personalized learning	You can customize your **TikTok** feed to follow creators who post content relevant to your interests and language level to make your learning experience more personalized and enjoyable
		Bite-sized lessons	Thus, **TikTok** offers bite-sized lessons which is helpful for language learners who may have limited attention spans
	content	Social learning/Connec	connect with other learners and native speakers to practice your English, get feedback, or

	diversity	t	exchange ideas.
		Global Platform	It is a global platform exposing students to different accents from all over the world
		Language-learning communities	Many social media platforms offer language-learning communities that allow learners to connect with each other, practice language skills, and receive feedback from peers.
		User-generated content	**TikTok** is full of user-generated content, which means that English learners can find a wide variety of accents and dialects to practice listening to and imitating.
		Content diversity	**TikTok** offers a vast variety of content that can be entertaining and educational, including videos with English subtitles or spoken in English, helping learners to improve their listening and comprehension skills.
	provide "an entertaining and	Interactivity	make learning English more social and fun
		Engaging	It provides engaging content including music,

	engaging way to study English	content	comedy, and educational videos which can make English learning More fun and exciting
		Convenience	**TikTok** is a mobile app that you can access anywhere, anytime. This makes it convenient for language learners to practice their English skills on the go.
		Innovative way	**TikTok** offers an innovative way to learn English, especially for visual and auditory learners
		Entertaining way	**TikTok** has many videos where users lip-sync to popular songs or movie quotes, which can be an entertaining way for learners to practice pronunciation and intonation.
		Challenges	**TikTok**'s trending challenges and hashtags can be a fun and engaging way to practice speaking and writing in English
		Hashtags	you can search for English-related hashtags like #learnenglish or #englishlessons

		Duet	Duets allow users to create a split-screen video with another **TikTok** user, which can be a fun way to practice speaking and listening skills
		Visual	**TikTok** videos often include both visual and audio elements, which can help learners associate words and phrases with images and sounds. This can make it easier for learners to remember new vocabulary and sentence structures.
		Interactive features	**TikTok** has interactive features such as duets and challenges that encourage learners to participate, create and share content in English. This can help learners build confidence and improve their speaking and writing skills in a fun and engaging way.
	real-life language use	Real-life language use/Authentic language use	This exposure to authentic language use can help learners to develop their listening and speaking skills

		Cultural Awareness	**TikTok** provides access to diverse content, including videos from around the world, which can be used to promote cultural awareness and develop intercultural competence.
	bridge the gap between teachers and students	Feedback	Use the comments section to interact with other users and practice your written communication skills. You can also ask questions or request feedback on your own videos
		Connect	using social media platforms like **TikTok** can help teachers connect with students beyond the classroom and build a sense of community and engagement in language learning.
Drawbacks	**TikTok** is not suitable for everyone	not be suitable	it may not be suitable for everyone, and learners should always supplement their learning with other resources and activities.
		age	Another problem is age. I think social media is only appropriate for young people.
	the use of	informal	Some aspects of **TikTok** that can cause

	informal language and the inaccuracy of knowledge	language/slang	difficulties in teaching and learning English include the prevalence of informal language, slang, and regional accents that can be difficult for non-native speakers to understand
		accuracy and quality	However, it's important to note that not all **TikTok** content is suitable for English learners, and users should be cautious about the accuracy and quality of the language used in some videos
		Lack of quality control	**TikTok** is an open platform, and there is no quality control over the content that is posted, which means that some videos may contain inaccurate or inappropriate language.
		Not reliable	**TikTok** is not specifically designed for educational purposes, so it may not be a reliable or consistent source of learning materials.
	lack context or background information	short videos	the fast-paced editing and short videos can make it challenging for students to follow along and grasp the full context of the language being used

		Limited educational value	While it can be used for entertainment, the educational value is limited, and the format may not be suitable for teaching complex topics like grammar and syntax.
		Limited context	**TikTok** videos often lack context or background information, which can make it difficult for learners to fully understand the language being used.
		lack in-depth explanations	Additionally, the short-form nature of **TikTok** videos may not provide in-depth explanations or context, which is crucial for fully understanding the language
		Unstructured approach	In terms of what didn't work, simply relying on **TikTok** as the primary or sole source of English language instruction is unlikely to be effective, as it does not provide a structured approach to learning
	Technology adoption	Technology	Technology can also be a problem. Not everyone can learn how to use social media

			since people in my age are not tech savy at all. Sometimes, login to my account is a problem already
	the distractive and addictive characteristics of **TikTok**	Distracting content	**TikTok** is known for its vast collection of viral challenges, dances, and memes, which can be distracting for language learners and take away from the time and effort needed to focus on language acquisition.
Recommendations	finding qualified content	Follow verified creators	To ensure accurate information and proper use of English, learners and teachers should follow verified creators with expertise in language teaching and learning.
		Find relevant and suitable content	Look for **TikTok** content that is relevant to the language level and interests of the learners. Seek out creators who use standard English and focus on topics that align with language learning objectives.
	creating or curating content	Create custom content	Teachers can create their own **TikTok** content tailored to their students' language level and

			needs. For example, they can use short videos to demonstrate grammar rules or pronunciation.
	taking full advantage of the app	captions and subtitles	Teachers and creators can add captions and subtitles to **TikTok** videos, making it easier for learners to follow along and understand.
		Use relevant hashtags	When searching for educational content on **TikTok**, try using relevant hashtags. For example, if you're interested in learning English, try searching for #learnenglish or #englishlesson.
	encourage active participation	Encourage interaction and participation	Teachers and creators can create challenges or interactive activities that encourage learners to use English in a fun and engaging way.
		Provide guidance and feedback	Provide guidance and feedback to learners on their **TikTok** videos, ensuring that they are using the language correctly and providing suggestions for improvement.
		Engage with	While watching their videos, actively engage

		content	with their content. Pause, rewind and replay the video to catch new words, phrases, and pronunciation.
		Take notes	Write down new words, phrases, and expressions that you come across in the videos.
	staying focused	Set goals	Set achievable goals for yourself to track your progress and motivate yourself to continue learning.
		Be consistent	Consistency is key in language learning. Set a specific time every day to learn English via **TikTok** and stick to it.
		Focus on your interests	Try to find English learning content related to your interests, like sports, cooking, or travel. This way, you will enjoy learning English while also gaining knowledge in your area of interest.
	TikTok should not be considered the	supplement	learners should always supplement their learning with other resources and activities

	sole method of teaching English		