

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The influence of social media in the contemporary digital landscape, particularly among youth, is expanding. Consider utilizing TikTok, a widely-used web platform, if you seek an engaging method to enhance your listening abilities. This study examines the impact of the TikTok app on the listening skills of students at SMP Negeri 16 Medan by comparing their performance before and after instruction. Certain TikTok videos provide an innovative method for learning English, assisting pupils, particularly those in junior high, in enhancing their listening abilities.

The ideal setting for students to acquire fluent listening skills while studying English is junior high school. This ability is vital because listening is the cornerstone of becoming fluent in a foreign language. In order to listen actively, one must understand, interpret, and evaluate the information that is conveyed. In order to improve students' auditory comprehension skills, appropriate instructional strategies must be used (Brown, 2007).

However, excellent listening abilities are still elusive for many pupils at SMP Negeri 16 Medan in the present day. Semester test results show that eighth graders' average listening scores are still below the expected level. Inadequate study motivation, a lack of interesting reading materials, and boring classroom methods are all contributing factors.

With the rise of social media sites like TikTok, there are now more ways than ever before to practice English in a fun and natural setting. The TikTok platform is home to a large number of instructional creators that post brief films that teach users how to pronounce words, understand expressions, and improve their listening comprehension. According to Purwanto & Despita, 2023, students can easily enhance their listening abilities outside of class with these short, relevant movies that are delivered with an English accent.

According to Rahmawati et al., 2023, using social media to learn English can increase interaction, participation, and exposure to native speakers. Compared to traditional media, the visual and interactive features of the short-form video platform TikTok render it an effective instrument for engaging students. Daily engagement with captivating videos can significantly improve students' listening comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation awareness in English.

In the classroom, using videos has three major benefits. As a first benefit, students are more engaged and comfortable in class when using videos because of the engaging and diverse learning environment they provide (Malliawang, 2024). Second, videos are a great way for students to learn body language because they can see real people doing things, which helps them to put things into context (Alfitri, 2024). Finally, students gain self-assurance by assimilation and learning from repeated viewing of films. With this medium, not only may kids with verbal communication issues receive compensatory support, but it can also address emotional and cognitive aspects (Afidah et al., 2021).

An original and efficient approach in this regard could be to make advantage of platform TikTok content. Both the instructional materials and the technology used in this topic are engaging and easy for students to understand and use. Social media serves as a potent instrument for education, enhancing student engagement and motivation to learn (Zaitun M. S., & Indriani, E. D, 2021).

Ary et al., 2010 assert that technology may substantially enhance students' auditory skills in language acquisition. Ary's research indicates that students utilizing audio-visual learning aids exhibit greater improvement in their listening abilities compared to those employing traditional instructional methods. The utilization of TikTok material holds significant potential for improving the listening skills of students at SMP Negeri 16 Medan.

This research aims to assess the listening skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 16 Medan. The primary objective of this study is to equip educators with the necessary knowledge to formulate English language learning techniques that address the interests and needs of contemporary students. Plus, teachers can use this study's results as a guide to create new tech-driven learning strategies to help their pupils improve their listening abilities.

1.2 Research Problem

Does listening to the TikTok content affect the listening scores of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 16 Medan?

1.3 Objectives of The Study

Analyze how eighth graders at SMP Negeri 16 Medan's listening proficiency scores changed after watching TikTok videos.

1.4 Significance of The Study

Multiple stakeholders are expected to profit from the outcomes of this study, as mentioned below:

1. Theoretical Benefits

This paper reviews previous research on language instruction and adds to it by demonstrating how social media may help with second language acquisition. By delving deeper into the topic, this study adds to our understanding of how digital content, and the TikTok platform specifically, might enhance the listening comprehension and competency of ESL students. If this study's findings that students' listening abilities improve after seeing audiolingual content on TikTok pan out, it might pave the way for more research into the efficacy of digital tools in language instruction. Teachers can also use the study's theoretical underpinnings to develop more effective pedagogical practices that make the most of ICT (Gusmareky & Tambusai, 2023).

2. Practical Benefits

This research offers explicit advantages for educational methodologies in secondary education. This study finds that students' listening scores are improved by using TikTok content, which is great news for students, teachers, researchers, and schools because it offers new and practical solutions (Arsyad, 2014).

a) For Students

This study lends credence to the premise that students might benefit from utilizing social media, and TikTok in particular, for educational purposes. In a fun and practical approach, it demonstrates how students can enhance their listening abilities by viewing short movies.

b) For Teachers

Adding TikTok-based content to the classroom can help teachers improve listening activities, increase student engagement, and expose students to real-life English usage.

c) For Researchers

This study provides empirical evidence that may be used to support future research on how social media material affects language abilities, including listening comprehension.

d) For Educational Institutions

Legislators and curriculum developers can use these data to help incorporate digital literacy and social media education into ESL programs.

1.5 Literature Review

1.5.1 The Concept of Listening Skills

One of the first things that students of foreign languages should do is focus on improving their listening skills. R. Rahmawati et al., (2022) argues that listening is an artistic

ability that allows us to convey meaning from unstructured data such as words, intonation, and sound. So, according to (Brown, 2007), hearing is taking in spoken word information and making sense of it based on context, grammar, and pronunciation all at once.

According to Arono (2013), there are two primary mechanisms at work here: base-up (i.e., basic sound detection) and top-down (i.e., contextual comprehension). The act of actively and deliberately seeking to understand auditory information is what listening is all about, according to Pourhosein Gilakjani (2011). So, listening is more than just taking in noise; it's a complex mental operation that forms the basis of great communication abilities.

1.5.2 The Importance of Listening in Language Learning

According to (Xu et al., 2019), listening is a crucial part of communication, taking up around 45 percent of the overall time. Students who are able to listen attentively and process what they hear are better able to learn new words, improve their vocabulary, and build techniques for thorough understanding. Particularly for English as a Second Language (ESL) students, consistent exposure to authentic spoken English content helps close the gap between classroom knowledge and practical application.

1.5.3 Challenges in Listening Comprehension

Inadequate vocabulary knowledge, nervousness, low motivation, disparities in speaking speed and accent, and a lack of exposure to real English are some of the reasons why students frequently struggle with listening. These obstacles highlight the need for creative solutions, including digital media, to boost awareness and enthusiasm.

1.5.4 TikTok as a Learning Platform

There are millions of people using the app TikTok, which lets them make and share short films on social media (De Leyn et al., 2021). The service allows users to create their own accounts and then share movies with others. An excellent tool for language learners, the system personalizes lessons based on the preferences of each student. Viewing instructional videos on TikTok increased student engagement, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

Students can utilize TikTok to enhance their English skills because many artists on the platform create instructional videos in English. Through the use of in-film exercises, viewers can improve their English comprehension and learning abilities. In this regard, the TikTok app qualifies as m-learning, say Zaitun and Indriani (2021). For instance, as Dini Septiari (2022) and Pourhosein Gilakjani (2011) point out, the video shows actions, which are subsequently labeled as verbs. This can aid with vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and usage.

1.5.5 Previous Research

The author studied the findings of previous studies to equip herself for this investigation. The researchers choose to compare this study with a number of others that were comparable. The effectiveness of using Spotify and English music to enhance students' listening abilities was examined by Azis et al., (2024). Several research have shown that social media improves the ability to perceive spoken language.

When students listened to films on YouTube for practice, Fitriani et al., (2022) discovered that their comprehension scores went up. Research (Huining, 2020) shows that using TikTok as a teaching tool increases students' engagement and competency in English. The results showed that using social media to practice hearing and speaking English improved these skills, as (Melina & Sihombing, n.d.) had previously discovered.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

Students are exposed to real language input on a constant basis through the integration of TikTok material into learning. The capacity to identify lexical and prosodic patterns is enhanced when pupils regularly engage with these movies. Thus, the study concludes that eighth graders at SMP Negeri 16 Medan can benefit from regular exposure, which will boost their listening scores and understanding.