# STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON USING TIKTOK DUET IN MINIMIZING EFL ANXIETY AND ENHANCING SPEAKING SKILLS

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**ABSTRACT**

This research explored EFL students' perceptions of using TikTok Duet to practice speaking and minimize their speaking anxiety, and their challenges and benefits from using that feature. This current research employed a descriptive qualitative method, involving 49 students who completed the questionnaire and 6 students who participated in a semi-structured interview. The findings revealed that TikTok Duet had a good influence on students' achievement in learning because TikTok provided a convenient and enjoyable environment. Students reported that their anxiety decreased while using TikTok Duet, and they found it helpful in improving their speaking development, such as pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary. This study also found several challenges students face, such as distractions from unrelated content, fast-running video texts, and difficulties finding suitable learning content. In conclusion, TikTok Duet can be a very beneficial digital tool for supporting EFL students in reducing anxiety and developing speaking skills when they use it appropriately.

**Keywords**: TikTok Duet, speaking anxiety, speaking skills, learning media, EFL

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is considered to be the hardest part of language learning to acquire for most of students, especially for non-native speakers, because it happens spontaneously, which means students must quickly select the right word, apply correct grammar, and pronounce words correctly while speaking. This makes speaking more complex than other language skills (Yu & Dong, 2022). Besides, speaking skills are also needed by everyone because they help to show their thoughts, share ideas, and connect with others more easily (Asyrofi &

Wati, 2024). Students in Indonesia mostly experience difficulties in conveying their ideas orally because of limited opportunities to practice speaking every day (Zhang & Lu, 2024). It is also quite difficult to show their speaking improvement due to several issues, such as a limited vocabulary, mispronunciation, and being afraid making mistakes (Al Ghaithi & Behforouz, 2024; Mujayanah et al., 2023; Wulandari et al., 2021).

This speaking difficulty is even more complex due to the high level of anxiety experienced by many students when speaking, especially when they are asked to speak in front of others. Most students often get nervous when speaking English directly in public. According to Maher & King (2023), feeling anxiety undermines students' ability to speak confidently and clearly, which often leads to pronunciation errors, unnatural pauses, and reduced clarity when speaking (Mamang et al., 2023; Tarbani et al., 2024; Tsang, 2022). It can also negatively impact learners' oral communication and English proficiency in mastering the language learning. As a result, many students stay silent during speaking tasks, avoid participation, and fail to improve their oral communication skills (Chen, 2024; Le, 2024; Quvanch et al., 2024). Therefore, in order to solve those speaking issues, a different learning approach is needed. Many existing studies emphasize the importance of creating a more comfortable and accessible learning media to lessen students' anxiety when speaking and support speaking development in language learning (Tapyor & Anwar, 2025).

Nowadays, social media are not only used for entertainment, but it has also started to be applied as an interesting and fun media for learning. Social media is usually used by people to interact online with others, express their thoughts and feelings, and find out new things (Manggo et al., 2022). Those Many online applications like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are currently employed as learning tools to support educational activities (Hongsa et al., 2023). It shows that digital platforms are able to be an interactive tool that supports the teaching and learning process (Vizcaíno-Verdú & Abidin, 2023). Even though the use of social media applications has become easier and more common for learning, there's still a lack in the use of effective digital tools that can help students with speaking difficulties, especially when those issues are related to psychological aspects like anxiety.

One of the social media applications that has recently attracted much attention is TikTok, which is familiar and preferred by students. TikTok has become the most favourite application of many people, which allows the users to create, watch, and share their videos with a duration from 15 seconds to 10 minutes (Carpenter et al., 2024), which enables users to encourage their creativity and enjoyment through videos that are accompanied by music (Fitria, 2023). Unlike other applications, TikTok is a great platform that can be used for language learning because it is accessible for learners to practice speaking like they are talking to someone, repeat their recordings, and learn in a less pressured environment. Other social media platforms rarely offer this. Using TikTok for the learning process is also enjoyable and flexible because students can do it anytime and anywhere. Although several platforms such as YouTube and Instagram are widely used in education, the fact that
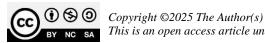
TikTok is still rarely used, especially in English language learning, because TikTok is usually only used for entertainment.

TikTok provides many interactive features, such as TikTok Duet. TikTok Duet permits users to make videos that reply to or collaborate with other users' videos side by side in real-time. Students can imitate, react to, or speak along with the existing content on TikTok to practice speaking (Pasaribu et al., 2022). Therefore, this feature is really good for language learning and keeps students interested to learn more (Ahmad et al., 2023; Ining, 2021; Pratama & Hastuti, 2023). However, despite its potential for learning, using the TikTok Duet feature in academic areas such as speaking skills and psychological barriers like anxiety is still under-researched.

Several studies have shown positive effects of TikTok on learning. TikTok can help people learn to speak English more fluently and confidently when practicing speaking, because TikTok makes learning easier and more fun (Manggo et al., 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2023; Simanungkalit & Katemba, 2023). Another study conducted by Herlisya & Wiratno (2022) found that TikTok can make students more confident in speaking and more actively involved in speaking tasks. In addition, Susanto & Suparmi (2024) found that TikTok increased students' motivation and enthusiasm to practice speaking English in their daily conversations. Another study by Pratiwi et al. (2022) discussed whether the TikTok Duet is effective as a learning tool in the English language. They found that students feel good about using TikTok as a learning tool and enjoy participating more in learning.

Numerous studies have also investigated the TikTok "Duet" feature for English language learning and have shown good results. For instance, research conducted by Hutabarat et al. (2024) showed that using the TikTok Duet feature really helped 8th-grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Padangsidimpuan speak better. The average score in the study increased from pre-test 59.83% to 82.5% for the second post-test after they applied TikTok Duet for speaking tasks. Another research from Zhen et al. (2022), found that students' vocabulary, pronunciation, and communication skills have improved after using Duet Challenge on TikTok.

Although several studies have shown the impact of using TikTok on developing students' speaking abilities, most previous research has only focused on the general use of this application for learning English speaking (Carpenter et al., 2024; Dewi, 2023; Fitria, 2023; Hongsa et al., 2023; Khikmah et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023). Only a few studies have examined students' personal experiences and perceptions of using specific features on TikTok, such as TikTok Duet for English language learning, especially in speaking. Most researchers have only used a quantitative approach (Ahmad et al., 2023; Liu & Hong, 2021; Mujayanah et al., 2023; Simanungkalit & Katemba, 2023). Additionally, researchers mostly discussed the factors that affect speaking anxiety in general, for example, identifying factors like as lack of confidence (Herwanto, 2022), improper grammar and limited vocabulary mastery (Syahrani et al., 2024), fear of negative evaluation (Khreisat, 2022), lack of practice (Ahmad et al., 2023), or psychological issues such as low motivation (Abrar et al., 2024). However, not so many studies discuss how social media, especially TikTok, affects things such as speaking anxiety while learning in an EFL context.

Unlike the previous studies, the current study focuses on students' personal experiences and feelings using TikTok Duet for practicing speaking. Also, it explores TikTok in a new way, not only as a learning tool, but also as a way to help lessen speaking anxiety and strengthen their speaking skills by applying a qualitative research method.

The main objective of this study is to explore students' feelings and experiences, especially EFL students, in using TikTok Duet in English speaking practice to enhance their ability to speak more fluently and help them manage their anxiety. The study also identifies the benefits and challenges that occur when EFL students use this feature. Based on these objectives, this study tries to answer the following questions (1) How are EFL students' perceptions of using TikTok Duet in minimizing their speaking anxiety? (2) How do EFL students perceive TikTok Duet's contribution to improving their speaking skills? (3) What are the challenges and benefits EFL students face when using TikTok Duet for media learning in practicing speaking?

## METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore students' experiences and perceptions of using TikTok Duet features for English learning, focusing on psychological aspects such as anxiety and speaking skill improvement. A qualitative approach allows researchers to understand participants' feelings and opinions about human and social phenomena (Creswell, 2014; Flick, 2014), while descriptive qualitative research provides rich contextual information that cannot be obtained solely through quantitative methods (Ary et al., 2010). The study involved students from the English Education study program at Universitas Negeri Semarang, selected through purposive sampling. This technique enables researchers to choose participants with relevant characteristics aligned with the study's objectives (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Patton, 2002). The criteria required participants to be active students in the 4th to 8th semester, with speaking course experience, prior use of TikTok Duet for practice, at least intermediate English proficiency, and willingness to participate voluntarily.

Data collection combined a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. In total, 49 participants completed the questionnaire, and six were selected for interviews based on their responses. The questionnaire, distributed online via Google Forms and shared through WhatsApp, consisted of fixed-choice items rated on a five-point Likert scale (Ary et al., 2010). It gathered information on students' feelings and challenges in reducing anxiety and improving speaking through TikTok Duet. The semi-structured interview allowed deeper exploration of students' motivations, anxiety, and challenges, with open-ended questions encouraging detailed responses (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2014). Interviews were conducted individually, either face-to-face or online, lasted 20–30 minutes, and were conducted in Indonesian. Each session was recorded, supported by field notes for capturing non-verbal cues and contextual details (Yin & Robert K, 2016).

The data analysis process combined descriptive interpretation of questionnaire

results with thematic analysis of interview transcripts. Thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun & Clarke (2013), is a flexible qualitative method for identifying and reporting recurring patterns. The process involved six steps: familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the researcher compared common ideas from the questionnaire with personal narratives from the interviews to enhance depth and validity. This systematic approach provided a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions of TikTok Duet in supporting speaking practice and reducing anxiety.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results from both the questionnaire and the interview indicated three main findings related to the research questions in this study, which will be described in more detail below.

### Students' Perceptions on Using TikTok Duet to Minimize Speaking Anxiety

The findings of this current study revealed that most students often felt nervous and more anxious when speaking English directly in front of many people, especially in class or during presentations. Students also said that the reason for that feeling was because they were worried and afraid of making mistakes in their pronunciation and grammar. They were confused about whether their pronunciation or grammar was correct or not. They also felt scared of being judged by their friends or teachers, so they were not confident in speaking English.

*"To be honest, I am very nervous when doing speaking because I am afraid of making mistakes in pronunciation or grammar. Sometimes I even blank out and forget the words I want to say."* - (Respondent 1)

*"I always feel nervous and lack confidence when I have to speak English directly. The ideas I had suddenly disappeared because I got nervous, panicked, and afraid of receiving negative judgments from others."* - (Respondent 5)

The questionnaire supported those qualitative data, which showed that around 55,1% of students agreed and 10,2% strongly agreed that they felt more pressure and extremely nervous when speaking English in front of many people or in class. In addition, around 65,3% agreed that they worried about making mistakes such as wrong grammar and mispronouncing words when they spoke English, and also 44,9% felt scared of being judged by other people.

This study found that most students stated TikTok Duet can help them manage their speaking anxiety. Many of them mentioned that they felt more relaxed and enjoyed using TikTok Duet because they could use it to practice speaking alone and without worrying about being judged by others. This finding showed that TikTok Duet gave a more flexible and comfortable environment for students, so they became more confident when speaking English.

*"For me personally, I feel more relaxed and comfortable because I can replay the video if I am not satisfied."* – (Respondent 2)

*"At first, I was nervous, but it gets easier to speak English because I practice more often with TikTok Duet."* – (Respondent 6)

The questionnaire results supported those findings. Around 55.1% of students agreed and 30.6% strongly agreed that TikTok Duet helped them overcome their

anxiety or nervousness and make them feel more relaxed when speaking English, and 51% of students mentioned that TikTok Duet allowed them to speak English without being embarrassed and also being judged. In addition, around 42,9% agreed and 34,7% strongly agreed that they improved their confidence in speaking English while using the TikTok Duet feature.

**Students' Perceptions of TikTok Duet's Contribution to Speaking Skill Improvement**

This study mentioned that many students stated that their speaking skills were improved after using TikTok Duet. They also became more fluent in speaking because they often practiced by imitating the way native speakers speak. By doing that, they learned how to pronounce words correctly. Students said that TikTok Duet allowed them to repeat the same sentences and retake their speaking video until they felt satisfied or better.

*"I can learn how native speakers pronounce these words first, so I feel that this really helps me to speak clearly."* – (Respondent 1)

*"I like to copy the way native speakers speak. The most interesting thing is copying their accents, rather than paying attention to vocabulary or fluency. It is more fun to pay attention to their accents. Especially Australian and British accents, they are interesting. Yes, it is just fun to copy their accents and the way they speak."* – (Respondent 3)

*"I think TikTok is flexible, so I can re-record or retake if I make a mistake while recording a duet speaking video, for example. That also makes me feel free to express myself without being scared."* - (Respondent 6)

These qualitative findings were supported by the questionnaire, which showed 59,2% agreed and 38,8% strongly agreed that watching TikTok video content forced them to imitate or copy the way native speakers speak. Around 55,1% agreed and 24,5% strongly agreed that students' speaking fluency was improved since using TikTok Duet for practice. This showed that TikTok Duet really gave positive learning results to students.

The findings also indicated that most of the students said that their pronunciation had become much better than before, and their fluency also improved after using TikTok Duet. This was because that feature provided much video content from native speakers, so students could follow the way they pronounced words.

*"I believe that TikTok is beneficial to expand my vocabulary and to improve my pronunciation. This will enable me to be more confident by understanding how to pronounce words correctly."* - (Respondent 4)

*"I think TikTok itself can influence fluency because of its rich vocabulary, and native speakers sometimes create content where they speak directly, so we can really learn how to pronounce a word, and sometimes they also give us space to speak, so we don't have to speak in a hurry. So, it gives us more time to practise and improve our speaking skills."* – (Respondent 2)

TikTok also helped students learned many new words or vocabulary. Students said they often found new vocabulary from the duet video and then started using it in their daily conversations. They enjoyed learning slang, idioms, and new expressions that they did not know before.

*"I learn a lot of formal vocabulary from TikTok Duet, it is really helpful because, to be honest, I don't really pay attention when in class, but for some reason I enjoy TikTok more."* – (Respondent 3)

*"I feel like my vocabulary has improved, because before I only used basic words, basic vocabulary, not advanced words like that. So, because of the TikTok feature and the example videos, I learned a lot."* – (Respondent 1)

In addition, this study showed that students said that TikTok Duet made learning English more fun and engaging, so that which made them more motivated to practice speaking more often. They often record their video many times and feel proud to see their improvement from that video.

*"Yeah, of course it motivates me because when I take the duet content video, I need to pay attention to the text in the video so that I don't miss anything, so it makes me want to practice more until I become familiar and fluent, and I get my best results."* – (Respondent 5)

*"Of course, it is exciting and motivating, because it makes learning fun. There are so many different kinds of content on TikTok, and the edits are really interesting. I think because I often practice too, so that's why I feel more fluent when responding to the dialogue on the duet videos."* – (Respondent 6)

The questionnaire data supported these findings. Most respondents, 65.3% agreed and 28.6% strongly agreed that TikTok Duet had improved their speaking and language knowledge, such as pronunciation and vocabulary. Additionally, 59,2% agreed and 32,7% strongly agreed that this feature made them become more motivated to practice speaking English.

## Challenges and Benefits of Using TikTok Duet for Speaking Practice

The findings in this study indicated that most students have a good feeling about the use of TikTok for speaking skills and anxiety. They stated TikTok Duet gave them many positive things in learning. For instance, it provided flexibility because they can practice anytime and anywhere without any pressure. TikTok Duet is also very easy to access for all students who use this feature for learning.

*"For me, TikTok Duet is much more flexible and convenient. It can also be used for speaking practice, and it's already widely used, so I can study anytime I want."* – (Respondent 6)

*"I think it's interesting because it is easy to use. Sometimes, certain apps offer something, but it turns out you have to do this and that first, like paying first, for example."* – (Respondent 1)

This study also found that through TikTok Duet video content, they experienced real-life situations. This feature provided a lot of diverse content which still relates to everyday conversations, for example, like airport attendance, a news anchor, or at a restaurant, etc. This, which makes TikTok Duet, can be a practical and engaging tool for improving various aspects of speaking skills.

*"Well, whether it is interesting or not, it depends on the content creator. Sometimes, there are creators who really made the atmosphere feel like you are on a plane, so the conversation is just like everyday conversation, it gives me real-life situations."* – (Respondent 2)

TikTok gave a lot of benefits to students who used the feature for learning. However, students also still faced several challenges while using it. Few students stated that some running text on TikTok Duet videos was too fast to be followed by students. They found it difficult to keep up with the text, especially if the content used advanced vocabulary or the native speaker spoke quickly.

*"Sometimes the running text is so fast, sometimes I have to think first, and sometimes I don't even have time to breathe."* – (Respondent 3)

*"Because there is running text, we are able to adapt the rhythm, so that we could challenge ourselves so that there wasn't too much filler, and to adapt to the running text, we had to try to make it smooth."* – (Respondent 5)

Therefore, some students also said that sometimes they struggled to find videos on TikTok Duet that matched or were suitable for their level and interest. They had to search more and scroll down until they found suitable videos to duet. Sometimes, they also found it difficult to find content that was more challenging and used advanced vocabulary on TikTok Duet videos.

*"For me, sometimes I am confused about choosing videos that match and really suit me well with my abilities."* – (Respondent 6)

*"Sometimes I find it really hard to find videos on TikTok Duet accounts that are challenging enough to duet with."* – (Respondent 2)

The questionnaire results supported these findings. They showed that most students felt some difficulties while using TikTok Duet for learning media. Around 46,9% of students said they agreed that they were easily distracted by videos or content not related to English while using TikTok to learn, and 34.7% of students said they strongly agreed with this. In addition, 49% agreed and 24,5% strongly agreed that they experienced technical challenges such as internet connections, unmatched contents, editing issues, etc, when making TikTok Duet videos for practice speaking.

## DISCUSSION

The main goal of this current research was to explore EFL students' perceptions about using of TikTok Duet feature as a digital tool in English learning to minimize anxiety level and enhance students' speaking skills. This study also investigated students' challenges and benefits from using TikTok Duet for learning English, especially in practicing speaking. The results from this study showed that many students feel nervous when they have to speak English in front of others. They are often afraid of making mistakes in pronunciation or grammar, and they worry about what others might think of them. This result aligned with the study from Maher & King (2023), who found that students often feel afraid of being laughed at or judged, which makes them stay silent in class.

However, most students also revealed that they felt more confident when using TikTok Duet for practicing English speaking. This is in line with the study from Subekti et al. (2023), which found that including technology in English learning can make students more confident and more active in speaking tasks. Their research showed that interactive and enjoyable learning methods helped reduce students' fear and nervousness, leading to better participation and learning outcomes. Another study from Nurwinda & Ambarwati (2024) also found similar results. They discovered that university students felt more comfortable practicing speaking with TikTok because they were not afraid of being judged. In addition, Ramadhanti et al. (2023) demonstrated that using TikTok Duet helped students get better scores in speaking and made them felt less nervous.

TikTok Duet also helped students improve how they speak. Many students said they got better at pronunciation and fluency by copying how native speakers talk in videos. They enjoyed mimicking accents and repeating sentences, which

made speaking practice feel fun instead of stressful. This finding supports a study by Yulita & Hertiki (2023), who mentioned that TikTok helped students improve their pronunciation and fluency because they could imitate native speakers. In addition, Setiawan et al. (2024) also, discovered that TikTok helped university students speak more smoothly and with better pronunciation and intonation. Another study conducted by Sulistiani et al. (2025) found that TikTok users improved their pronunciation much more than students who used other platforms.

This study showed that TikTok Duet not only improved their speaking, but also helped them expand their vocabulary. Students also said that watching and practicing with videos helped them get idioms and slang that they never learned in class. In addition, another study by Annapis et al. (2024), who used a mixed-method design with 50 EFL learners, found that short and engaging TikTok videos support the improvement of students' vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and motivation. This study also found that TikTok Duet gave students a chance to practice as much as they wanted. Repeated practice using native content on TikTok Duet can make their speaking better. Prabaningrat & Akhiriyah (2024) found similar results showed that junior high students improved their speaking skills through practicing repeatedly with fun and interactive tasks on TikTok.

The findings of this study revealed that TikTok Duet provides flexibility because students can practice anytime and anywhere. Students also said it gave accessibility because it was easier to access compared to other apps, and it didn't require any payment. Research conducted by Hadijah et al. (2023) also, revealed that

TikTok helped learners practice speaking independently and reported that students became more relaxed because they had control over their learning process. Another benefit mentioned by students is that TikTok Duet gave them real-life speaking situations and various content. For example, some videos let them pretend to talk in a restaurant or at the airport. It felt like real conversations, which made the speaking practice more meaningful. This was aligned with the study of Oktavena et al. (2025), TikTok helped students to interact with real situations and natural English that they can use in their daily lives.

This finding revealed several challenges that occur while using TikTok Duet, such as when practicing speaking using TikTok Duet, students often faced distractions from unrelated content and experienced technical barriers. This was supported by a study from Lin et al. (2023), who found that students often became lazy because they got distracted by other content while using TikTok. They said that these distractions made students lose focus and waste time when trying to learn English. The other difficulties were finding content that matched the students' English level. Some students had to scroll for a long time before they found a duet video that felt suitable to them. This is in line with the study by Ahmad et al. (2023) said that not all TikTok content is helpful for learning, and it can be hard for students to find videos that fit their needs.

Even though students faced some challenges when using TikTok Duet, many of them found their own ways to solve these problems. Besides, teachers should also do something. For instance, teachers can provide guidance or a tutorial on using TikTok for learning in order to be more effective and also give recommendations of

content for students that is preferable to students' needs.

## CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this research is to demonstrate how popular social media features such as TikTok can provide a more relaxed, enjoyable, and motivating environment for students to practice speaking English, particularly outside of the classroom. Teachers can use this tool to help students improve their pronunciation, fluency, and confidence in a fun way. To ensure effectiveness, teachers should suggest videos that match the learning objectives and give them clear instructions or guidance before applying TikTok Duet in learning. The study had some limitations, like the participants selected in this study were all students from one university, the number of interview participants was small, and only self-reported data was used. In future research, researchers could include students from other universities to see if the results are the same in different places. Combining interviews with actual speaking tests before and after using TikTok Duet would also be useful to measure the improvement more clearly. Future studies might also look at how teachers use TikTok Duet in their classrooms, for example, how they guide students, what kind of content they suggest, and what problems they might face during the process. To ensure TikTok Duet effectiveness, teachers should recommend suitable videos and provide clear guidance. They should use TikTok Duet appropriately in learning.

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