

TIK TOK AS A LEARNING MEDIA FOR IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' VOCABULARY SKILLS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AT SD N 41 OKU

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of Tik Tok as a learning media in improving vocabulary mastery among fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 41 OKU. The vocabulary materials covered three topics telling the time, daily routine, and transportation delivered through four meetings combining TikTok videos with classroom practice activities. This research employed a quantitative pre-experimental method with a one-group pretest-posttest design, involving 20 fourth-grade students as the sample. Data were collected through vocabulary tests administered before and after treatment, then analyzed using descriptive statistics, a normality test, a paired-samples t-test, and an effect size calculation. The results showed that students' mean vocabulary score increased from 55.40 ("Poor") in the pre-test to 71.00 ("Good") in the post-test. The paired-samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the two scores ($t = -6.418$, $df = 19$, $p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis, while Cohen's d yielded 1.435, indicating a large effect. These findings suggest that TikTok effectively enhances elementary students' English vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: TikTok, Vocabulary Mastery, Learning Media, Elementary School Students.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology in the digital age is progressing rapidly. One of its significant impacts is the widespread use of social media in everyday life. Social media is now not only a means of entertainment and communication but also an important media for learning and accessing information, especially among the younger generation. This condition shows that digital media plays a major role in shaping students' learning patterns and behaviors in the modern era.

One of the most popular social media platforms today is Tik Tok, a short video sharing application used by various age groups, including elementary school students. Tik Tok presents interesting content through a combination of visuals, audio, text, and animation that can attract users' attention in a short time. Due to its popularity and relevance to students' lives, TikTok has great potential to be used as a learning media. In line with this, research by (Hastomo et al. 2022) found that students showed positive perceptions toward the use of Tik Tok for learning English vocabulary because the platform provides engaging and easily accessible learning content.

One of the basic components of English language learning is vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in supporting language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, in practice, many elementary school students still have limited English vocabulary. This is often caused by conventional teaching methods and limited learning media, which make students easily bored and less motivated during the learning process.

The use of TikTok as a learning media can be considered an innovative alternative for teaching English vocabulary. Through short and engaging videos, students can learn vocabulary with the support of visual and audio elements that facilitate understanding and memory. In addition, TikTok's interactive and concise format is well suited to the characteristics of elementary school students, who generally have short attention spans and prefer fun learning activities.

A study conducted by (Maria and Sujarwati, 2025) found that the use of TikTok videos significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery compared to traditional teaching methods. Similarly, research by (Zein et al, 2024) revealed that Tik Tok can function as an edutainment learning media that helps students improve their English vocabulary and learning motivation through interactive video content.

The use of social media has grown rapidly and is widely adopted by people across different age groups. Recent research highlights its significant role in Indonesian society. According (Zainita, 2024) reports that approximately 139 million people in Indonesia use social media, representing about 49.9% of the total population. Similar findings are also reported by (Nugraha, 2024), confirming the widespread use of social media among the Indonesian population.

The advancement of digital technology also has a significant impact on the field of education. Technology supports the learning process by making it more flexible, interactive, and accessible for students. Statistical data in Indonesia indicate that internet usage among students is relatively high. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2023), approximately 84.58% of individuals who are still in school access the internet. This condition reflects that digital technology becomes an integral part of students' daily activities. In line with this, (Hidayat et al., 2022) explain that digital technology is widely utilized in everyday life and plays a significant role in supporting educational activities, particularly by enabling access to online learning resources and facilitating English learning through digital platforms. Therefore, integrating technology into classroom learning is considered an important step to enhance the quality of education in the digital era.

Based on preliminary observations conducted at SD N 41 OKU, it is found that students' English vocabulary skills were relatively low. The learning media used in the classroom did not optimally integrate digital technology, making learning activities less interesting and effective. Therefore, innovative learning media that are relevant to current technological developments are needed to improve students' vocabulary mastery. Several previous studies have examined the use of digital media and social media platforms in English language learning, particularly in improving students' vocabulary mastery. For instance, research by (Dorasa et al., 2025) found that using TikTok as a digital learning tool significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery and increased their engagement in the learning process.

Based on the background above, the researcher conducts a study entitled "Tik Tok as a Learning Media for Improving the Students' Vocabulary Skills in Elementary School at SD N 41 OKU." This study aims to analyze the effect of TikTok as a learning media on students vocabulary skills at the elementary school level.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative method with a pre-experiment approach. (Maruet al., 2020) explain that a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test post-test model is a research design that uses a single group of participants, whose abilities are measured before and after being given treatment. The aim is to determine whether there are changes as a result of the intervention applied, even though this study does not include a control group for comparison. The design chose ninth is study is a One-Group Pretest- Posttest Design, which involves two observations, namely before the experiment (pretest) and after (posttest). The difference between the pretest and posttest results is then used to assess the impact of the treatment on the

dependent variable.

The population of this research consists of all four grade students of SD N 41 OKU in the academic year 2025/2026. Based on the views of (Hossan, et al., 2023), the population in quantitative research includes all analysis units or objects that are the main focus of the study, which have specific characteristics and serve as the basis for determining the sample so that the results can be generalized. a sample is part of a population selected to represent the entire population in a study, in this study, the sample consisted of 20 students in class 4 A at SD Negeri 41 OKU. Class 4 is selected because students at this level possess adequate English vocabulary and cognitive abilities to engage in learning through digital audio-visual media such as TikTok. The sampling technique applied in this research is cluster random sampling as the sampling technique. According to (George, 2021), cluster random sampling is a probability sampling technique in which groups or clusters, rather than individual participants, are randomly selected. In this study, the population consisted of two fourth-grade classes, namely IV A and IV B, at SD Negeri 41 OKU. One class was randomly selected through a lottery, and all students in the selected class were included as the research sample. This sampling technique was chosen because the population was naturally divided into intact classes, making cluster random sampling appropriate for selecting the sample.

The research instrument used in this study is an English vocabulary test administered in the form of a pre-test and a post-test with an equivalent level of difficulty. The test is designed in a multiple-choice format consisting of 25 items and is adjusted to the vocabulary material for fourth-grade elementary school students, the time in English, Daily Routine Vocabulary, and transportation vocabulary.

This instrument is used to measure students' vocabulary mastery after the learning process. The indicators used in this vocabulary test include students' ability to recognize English vocabulary, understand the meaning of words, and match words with pictures. Before being used for data collection, the test instrument will be tested for validity and reliability. The validity test is conducted to ensure that the test items are appropriate and relevant to the vocabulary material being measured, while the reliability test is conducted to determine the consistency of the measurement results. This statement is supported by (Irawansyah et al., 2025), who state that vocabulary test instruments must meet the requirements of validity and reliability in order to produce accurate and reliable data.

The treatment in this study used TikTok videos as learning media to improve fourth-grade students' English vocabulary mastery, focusing on three topics: time expressions, daily routines, and transportation, delivered across four meetings: In Meeting 1 (Telling Time), students watched TikTok videos demonstrating how to read and express time in English (e.g., o'clock, half past, quarter past), practiced pronunciation, and identified times shown in clock pictures; In Meeting 2 (Daily Routine), videos introduced vocabulary for everyday activities (e.g., wake up, take a bath, eat breakfast, go to school). Students repeated the words, matched vocabulary to pictures, and constructed simple sentences about their own routines; In Meeting 3 (Transportation), videos presented vocabulary for various modes of transportation (e.g., car, bus, train, bicycle, airplane). Students practiced pronunciation and identified transportation types from pictures; and In Meeting 4 (Review), previous materials were revisited using selected TikTok videos, followed by exercises and a short evaluation to reinforce and measure students' vocabulary mastery. Decisions in hypothesis testing are made by comparing the significance value (Sig.) to the significance level of 0.05. If the Sig. value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Conversely, if the Sig. value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The pre-test was administered before the implementation of TikTok as a learning media. The purpose of the pre-test was to determine the students' initial vocabulary skills before receiving the treatment. Through the pre-test, the researcher was able to identify the students' vocabulary mastery and compare the results with the post-test scores after the treatment. The pre-test was given to 20 fourth-grade students of SD N 41 OKU. The students were asked to answer vocabulary questions related to the learning material provided by the researcher. To provide a clearer description of the students' pre-test achievement, the frequency distribution of the pre-test scores is presented in Figure 1.

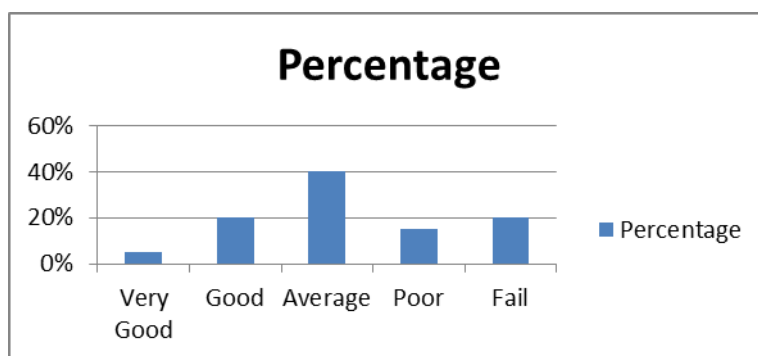


Figure1. Percentage of Pre-Test Scores

Based on Figure 1, the pre-test results showed that the students' vocabulary mastery before the implementation of TikTok as a learning media was still low. The minimum score obtained by the students was 20, while the maximum score was 90. The mean score of the pre-test was 55.40, indicating that the students' overall vocabulary mastery was still in the Poor category. The table showed that 1 student (5%) was in the Very Good category, 4 students (20%) were in the Good category, and 8 students (40%) were in the Average category. In addition, 3 students (15%) were categorized as Poor, while 4 students (20%) were in the Fail category. These results show that most students had not yet achieved a satisfactory level of vocabulary mastery before the treatment. Although some students achieved good scores, many of them were still in the Average, Poor, and Fail categories. This indicates that the students still had difficulty understanding English vocabulary before learning through TikTok. Therefore, the researcher applied TikTok as a learning media to help improve the students' vocabulary skills during the learning process.

Through the post-test, the researcher was able to measure the improvement in the students' vocabulary mastery and compare the results with the pre-test scores. The post-test was given to 20 fourth-grade students of SD N 41 OKU. The students were asked to answer vocabulary questions related to the learning material that had been taught through TikTok videos. The results of the post-test showed that the students achieved higher scores than those obtained in the pre-test, indicating an improvement in their vocabulary skills after the implementation of TikTok as a learning media. To provide a clearer description of the students' post-test achievement, the frequency distribution of the post-test scores is presented in Figure 2.

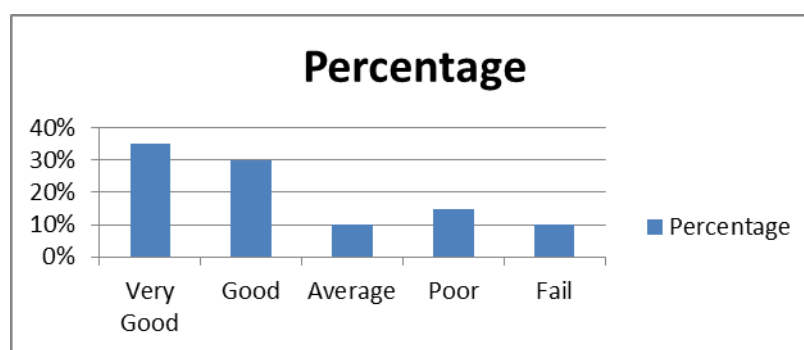


Figure2. Percentage of Post-Test Scores

Based on Table 4.4, the post-test results showed an improvement in the students' vocabulary scores after the implementation of TikTok as a learning media. The minimum score increased from 20 in the pre-test to 44 in the post-test, while the maximum score also increased from 90 to 96. The mean score of the post-test was 71.00, which was categorized as Good. The score distribution also improved after the treatment. There were 7 students (35%) in the Very Good category and 6 students (30%) in the Good category. Meanwhile, 2 students (10%) were in the Average category, 3 students (15%) were in the Poor category, and only 2 students (10%) were still in the Fail category. This shows that more students go higher scores after joining the learning activities. When compared with the pre-test results, the students' achievement became more evenly distributed in the higher score categories. Before the treatment, most students were in the Average, Poor, and Fail categories. After learning through TikTok, more students moved to the Good and Very Good categories. This change suggests that the students understood the vocabulary material better after watching and learning from the TikTok videos. The mean score of 71.00 indicates that the students' vocabulary mastery after the implementation of TikTok as a learning media was in the Good category. These findings show that the students made better progress in learning English vocabulary after being given the treatment.

The descriptive statistics reinforce the pattern observed in the frequency distributions. The 15.60-point increase in the mean score from 55.40 to 71.00, provides an initial quantitative indication that students' vocabulary mastery improved after the treatment. The increase in the standard deviation, from 15.816 in the pre-test to 16.964 in the post-test, suggests that while most students improved, the degree of improvement was not entirely uniform; some students made larger gains than others. This is a realistic outcome in classroom-based research, where individual differences in engagement, prior knowledge, and learning pace inevitably influence how much benefit each student derives from a given intervention. However, descriptive statistics alone cannot establish whether an observed difference reflects a genuine effect of the treatment or whether it could plausibly have occurred by chance. For this reason, the study proceeded to inferential statistical testing.

Before applying inferential statistics, the researcher tested whether the pre-test and post-test data were normally distributed, using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is appropriate for a relatively small sample size such as the 20 students involved in this study. Both the pre-test (significance value of 0.920) and post-test (significance value of 0.121) produced significance values well above the 0.05 threshold, indicating that both sets of scores were normally distributed. This result justified the use of a paired-samples t-test, a parametric statistical procedure, to compare the pre-test and post-test means. Had the data violated the assumption of normality, a non-parametric alternative such as the Wilcoxon signed-rank test would have been more appropriate. Confirming normality first therefore strengthens the methodological soundness of the subsequent hypothesis test.

The paired-samples t-test produced a mean difference of -15.600 between the pre-test and post-test scores, with the negative sign simply reflecting the direction of change post-test scores were higher than pre-test scores. The t-value obtained was -6.418, with 19 degrees of freedom, and the two-tailed significance value was below 0.05. Because the significance value fell under the conventional alpha level, the null hypothesis (H_0), which would have stated that there was no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, was rejected. The alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted instead, confirming that the improvement in students' vocabulary scores was statistically significant rather than attributable to random variation. This finding is central to the study's conclusion: it demonstrates that the change observed between the two testing points was unlikely to have occurred by chance alone, and can reasonably be attributed to the TikTok-based treatment that students received between the two tests.

Statistical significance indicates that a real difference exists, but it does not, by itself, indicate how large or educationally meaningful that difference is. To address this, the researcher calculated Cohen's d, which produced an absolute value of 1.435. Following Cohen's widely used benchmarks where values around 0.2 are considered a small effect, around 0.5 a medium effect, and 0.8 or above a large effect, a value of 1.435 falls well within the large effect category. This is a particularly note worthy finding because it suggests that the TikTok-based treatment did not merely produce a statistically detectable improvement, but one that was substantial in practical terms. In educational research, a large effect size implies that the intervention had a meaningful, tangible impact on student learning outcomes, not just a marginal or barely-measurable one. Combined with the earlier finding of statistical significance, the large effect size strengthens the overall claim that TikTok, when used as a structured pedagogical tool, can produce genuinely impactful gains in young learners' vocabulary mastery.

Several explanations can be offered for why TikTok proved effective as a vocabulary learning medium in this study. First, TikTok videos combine multiple modes of representation moving images, sound, on-screen text, and real-life or animated contexts within a short, tightly focused format. This aligns with principles found in multimedia learning theory, which suggests that learners process and retain information more effectively when verbal and visual information are presented together rather than through text or speech alone. For young learners in particular, who are still developing abstract reasoning skills, this dual coding of information through both auditory and visual channels can make new vocabulary more memorable than a purely verbal explanation. Second, the short duration of TikTok videos is well suited to the attention span of fourth-grade students. Rather than presenting a long, uninterrupted stream of instruction, the treatment broke vocabulary learning into short, digestible segments, which likely reduced cognitive overload and helped maintain student engagement throughout each meeting. Third, the vocabulary selected for the treatment time expressions, daily routines, and transportation was directly connected to students' everyday experiences. This contextual relevance may have made it easier for students to relate new words to concepts they already understood, thereby supporting more meaningful vocabulary acquisition rather than rote memorization of isolated words. Fourth, the interactive classroom activities that accompanied the videos repeating vocabulary aloud, matching words to pictures, and constructing simple sentences provided opportunities for active processing and retrieval practice. Simply watching a video is unlikely to be sufficient for durable vocabulary learning; pairing video exposure with active production and practice likely reinforced the retention of new words.

These findings are consistent with prior research on the use of TikTok in language instruction. (Kusumah et al., 2025) reported that the use of TikTok significantly improved elementary school students' English speaking skills, including their ability to use a wider range of vocabulary, with the average score increasing from 66.90 in the pre-cycle to 81.42 in Cycle 2. They also found that students became more active, confident, and enthusiastic during the learning process because TikTok provided interesting audiovisual materials that encouraged classroom participation. Although the present study focused specifically on vocabulary mastery rather than speaking skills, the convergence between these findings and those suggests a broader pattern: TikTok's audiovisual, short-form format appears to offer consistent pedagogical benefits across different, though related, language skill domains. This cross-study consistency lends additional credibility to the claim that the improvements observed in the present study reflect a genuine effect of the media itself, rather than being an isolated or context-specific outcome.

The findings of this study carry several practical implications for elementary school English teachers. First, they suggest that teachers can meaningfully incorporate short-form video platforms such as TikTok into vocabulary instruction, provided that the content is carefully selected to match students' developmental level and curricular needs. Second, the results indicate that video exposure alone is not enough; the accompanying classroom activities repetition, picture-matching, and sentence construction appear to play an important complementary role in consolidating vocabulary learned through video. Teachers seeking to replicate these results should therefore treat TikTok videos as a springboard for active engagement rather than as a stand-alone instructional tool. Third, given that students who began with lower vocabulary scores also showed improvement, TikTok-based instruction may hold particular value as a support strategy for lower-proficiency learners, helping to narrow gaps in vocabulary achievement within a mixed-ability classroom.

Taken together, the descriptive statistics, normality test, paired-samples t-test, and effect size analysis converge on a consistent conclusion. Students' vocabulary scores improved substantially after the TikTok-based treatment, from a mean of 55.40 in the pre-test to 71.00 in the post-test. This improvement was confirmed to be statistically significant through the paired-samples t-test ($t = -6.418$, $df = 19$, $p < 0.05$), and its practical magnitude was confirmed to be large through the effect size analysis (Cohen's $d = 1.435$). These results, combined with supporting evidence from prior research, provide strong justification for the conclusion that TikTok, when used as a structured and interactive learning media, can significantly and substantially improve the vocabulary mastery of fourth-grade elementary school students at SD Negeri 41 OKU.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that the use of TikTok as a learning media significantly improved the vocabulary skills of the fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 41 OKU. Before the implementation of the treatment, the students' vocabulary mastery was still in the Poor category. The pre-test results showed a mean score of 55.40, indicating that many students still had difficulty mastering English vocabulary. After participating in four learning sessions using TikTok videos, the students showed better learning outcomes. The post-test mean score increased to 71.00, which was categorized as Good. This improvement shows that the students achieved better vocabulary mastery after learning through TikTok. The statistical analysis also supported these findings. The paired sample t-test showed a statistically significant difference between the students' pre-test and post-test scores ($t = -6.418$, $p < .05$). Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted.

This means that the improvement in the students' vocabulary scores after the treatment was statistically significant. In addition, the effect size analysis using Cohen's *d* produced a value of 1.435, which was categorized as a large effect. This result indicates that the use of TikTok had a strong effect on improving the students' vocabulary skills.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that TikTok is an effective learning media for teaching English vocabulary to fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 41 OKU. The use of short and engaging learning videos helped create a more interesting learning experience and was followed by better vocabulary achievement after the treatment. Therefore, TikTok can be considered an alternative learning media that English teachers may use to support vocabulary learning at the elementary school level, especially when the learning activities aim to increase students' interest and vocabulary mastery.

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