Discovering the Vibrant World of 'Out-of-Class' English Learning through TikTok: Views from Thai EFL University Students

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Abstract

Given the significant role of the English language and the pervasive impact of technology, this study investigates the perspectives of 110 Thai EFL university students on TikTok as a potential tool for learning English. The findings revealed a predominantly positive attitude toward TikTok, underscoring its effectiveness in bolstering learners' confidence and motivation. However, participants also recognized drawbacks, including a short attention span and challenges with concise content comprehension. The prevailing perception among participants was that TikTok leans more towards entertainment than education. The study advocates for the strategic use of TikTok as a supplementary learning aid, especially for improving listening, speaking, and vocabulary through engaging educational content. Pedagogically, EFL instructors are encouraged to integrate TikTok into out-of-class learning strategies, prompting students to follow pertinent English teaching accounts. It is emphasized that instructors should conscientiously present TikTok's drawbacks to facilitate students' mindful and effective use for English skill enhancement.

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โลกของการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษนอกห้องเรียนที่มีชีวิตชีวาผ่าน TikTok: มุมมองจากนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

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บทคัดย่อ

ด้วยบทบาทสำคัญของภาษาอังกฤษและผลกระทบจากการแพร่ขยายของเทคโนโลยี งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษามุมมองของนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยไทยจำนวน 110 คนที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศเกี่ยวกับการใช้ TikTok เป็นเครื่องมือในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ ผลการวิจัยพบว่านักศึกษาเป็นส่วนใหญ่มีทัศนคติเชิงบวกต่อ TikTok โดยมีการย้ำถึงประสิทธิภาพของ TikTok ในการเพิ่มความมั่นใจและแรงจูงใจในการเรียน อย่างไรก็ตาม นักศึกษายังรับรู้ถึงข้อเสียบางประการของ TikTok เช่น ช่วงเวลาสนใจที่สั้น และความท้าทายในการทำความเข้าใจเนื้อหาที่กระชับ มุมมองทั่วไปของนักศึกษา คือ นักศึกษามองว่า TikTok เอนเอียงไปทางความบันเทิงมากกว่าการศึกษา งานวิจัยนี้สนับสนุนการใช้ TikTok อย่างมีกลยุทธ์เป็นเครื่องมือช่วยเสริมในการเรียนโดยเฉพาะในการพัฒนาทักษะการฟัง การพูด และคำศัพท์ผ่านเนื้อหาการศึกษาเชิงสนุกสนาน ในทางด้านการสอน ครูผู้สอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศควรพิจารณาการบูรณาการ TikTok เข้ากับกลยุทธ์การเรียนรู้นอกห้องเรียน โดยกระตุ้นให้นักศึกษาติดตามบัญชีหรือช่องที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการสอนภาษาอังกฤษนอกจากนี้ยังเน้นว่าครูผู้สอนควรนำเสนอข้อเสียของ TikTok อย่างรอบคอบเพื่อให้นักศึกษาใช้อย่างมีสติและมีประสิทธิภาพในการพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษ

คำสำคัญ: ผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ, การเรียนภาษาอังกฤษนอกห้องเรียน, การเรียนรู้แบบนาโน, การเรียนรู้นอกห้องเรียน, TikTok

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Introduction

In today's increasingly globalized world, the acquisition of proficient English skills holds paramount importance, permeating various societal realms and offering numerous advantages (Mahu, 2012). Language learning transcends traditional classroom settings, extending to extramural English (EE) activities (Sundqvist, 2009), which encompass digital platforms. TikTok as one of them. TikTok has gained immense popularity in Thailand, with individuals spending a substantial amount of time on the platform daily (Dhaninee, 2021). Initially recognized for its entertainment value, TikTok has evolved into an educational tool, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, when online learning became prevalent, and Nano-learning gained traction (Aburizaizah & Albaiz, 2021). Consequently, TikTok has emerged as a source for Nano-learning, enabling users to grasp complex concepts in short intervals (Khlaif & Salha, 2021). While global studies have acknowledged TikTok's effectiveness in educational contexts, research in Thailand has primarily focused on its applications in business, marketing, and entertainment, leaving its potential as an English learning tool largely unexplored (e.g., Hu & Du, 2022; Mingar-Stangeland, 2023)

Despite the global recognition of TikTok's educational potential, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning its role in English language learning within the Thai context. Existing studies in Thailand have predominantly overlooked TikTok's utility as an educational tool, focusing instead on its applications in non-academic domains. Consequently, this research aims to fill this gap by exploring the untapped potential of TikTok as a platform for English language learning among Thai EFL university students. By focusing on this niche area, this study offers a unique perspective that extends beyond TikTok's conventional role in entertainment and explores its implications for language teaching and learning in the Thai higher education context. By shedding light on the effectiveness of TikTok as an English learning tool, this research seeks to contribute valuable insights that can inform language education practices both within Thailand and in international contexts.

This research employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the perspectives and experiences of Thai EFL university students regarding their use of TikTok for English language learning. Through a combination of surveys and in-depth interviews, this study aimed to uncover the ways in which TikTok is utilized by students as a supplementary learning tool, the types of English content consumed on the platform, and the perceived effectiveness of TikTok in improving their English proficiency. By examining the intersection of TikTok and

English language learning from the students' viewpoint, this study could provide insights into the potential benefits and challenges associated with incorporating TikTok into language education practices. Furthermore, by highlighting the specific strategies and approaches adopted by students in their use of TikTok for English learning, this research offers practical recommendations for educators and curriculum designers seeking to leverage digital platforms for language teaching and learning in both intra and international contexts. Overall, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on innovative approaches to language education by exploring the dynamic world of English learning through TikTok among Thai EFL university students.

Literature Review

TikTok and Education

In contemporary society, the pervasive influence of social media has left a profound mark on various spheres of human existence, from entertainment to academia, appealing to diverse demographics (Kaye et al., 2022; Kaye et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2019). Among these platforms, TikTok has emerged as a significant player in education, enriching learning experiences and serving as a valuable repository of knowledge (Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2021). Notably, TikTok, known for its short and engaging videos, has experienced a surge in popularity, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, evolving into a prominent social networking site (Kaye et al., 2022). TikTok has also established itself as an educational resource, featuring tutorial videos aimed at enhancing English language skills, thus fostering an environment conducive to learning and skill development (Mahittivanicha, 2020). Initiatives such as the global '#LearnOnTikTok' campaign and Thailand's specific '#TikTokUni' campaign during the 2020 lockdown, highlight TikTok's commitment to supporting education by enabling educators worldwide to share informative content and facilitating self-directed learning opportunities (Mahittivanicha, 2020). TikTok, considered as a popular social media platform, offers a dynamic environment for teaching and learning English, primarily through short-form videos that typically last from a few seconds to three minutes (Zhang et al., 2023). These videos leverage visual and auditory elements, making them highly engaging and suitable for presenting bite-sized educational content. English language educators and learners use TikTok to share and access quick lessons on vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and cultural understanding (Cahyono & Perdhani, 2023). The platform's algorithm tailors content to users' interests,

increasing exposure to relevant educational material. Additionally, interactive features such as comments, shares, and likes can encourage active engagement and community building among users, facilitating an interactive learning experience. This learning format is particularly appealing to younger audiences who prefer fast-paced, visually stimulating content.

Studies such as that by Afidah et al. (2021) affirm the positive reception of TikTok among students, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, attributing its effectiveness to its engaging features that capture attention and alleviate boredom. Beyond students, TikTok serves as a platform for educators to share knowledge and engage learners through short videos, thereby enhancing learning motivation and interest (Xu et al., 2019). This positive online environment fosters meaningful connections between teachers and students (Blanco-Martínez & González-Sanmamed, 2021). Moreover, TikTok offers a flexible learning environment, enabling study at any time and place, providing learners with additional time for reflection and response (Bailey & Lee, 2020). Collectively, existing research (e.g., Xu et al., 2019; Afidah et al., 2021) validates TikTok's potential as a valuable asset for both students and teachers, contributing to the improvement of language teaching and learning quality while nurturing students' interest in language learning through concise, bite-sized video content. The subsequent section will discuss the concept of nano-learning, highlighting learning through brief and digestible knowledge snippets.

TikTok and Nano learning

Originating from the ancient Greek word 'nanus,' meaning 'dwarf,' the prefix 'nano' was incorporated into the International System of Units in 1958, representing one-billionth (Boholm, 2016). Beyond its role in measurements, 'nano' has permeated various disciplines, evoking futuristic and minuscule connotations in terms such as nanotechnology and nanoengineering. Understanding this etymology is crucial for grasping the concept of nano-learning. Nano-learning epitomizes bite-sized learning, offering a continuous learning process that delivers a wealth of knowledge within a brief timeframe (Aburizaizah & Albaiz, 2021). It emphasizes not the insignificance of knowledge, but rather the brevity of time required for learners to acquire specific information. Al-Shehhi (2022) showcased nano-learning as an innovative approach rooted in student-directed self-learning. Similarly, Ferraro (2023) characterized it as a teaching method enabling learners to absorb a lesson within 10 minutes, facilitated through online or offline media platforms. Nano-learning engages learners

creatively, delivering concise knowledge through various formats such as infographics, quick tutorials, quizzes, and flashcards, thereby enriching lecture support and averting boredom (Aburizaizah & Albaiz, 2021; Zhai & Razali, 2021).

In today's digital age dominated by social media and embraced by technologically savvy Generation Z students, nano-learning has emerged as a prevalent form of online education. TikTok, a popular platform for nano-learning, hosts numerous courses and lessons, particularly beneficial for undergraduate students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Zhai & Razali, 2021). It offers short language learning videos, immersing students in an English-speaking environment. However, concerns have been raised about TikTok's potential to distract EFL learners from their academic pursuits, leading to occasional lapses in self-regulation (Mekler, 2021). Despite these challenges, research from Indonesia suggests that watching English videos aligned with students' interests can significantly enhance vocabulary, inadvertently providing a pathway for improving English language skills (Cahyono & Perdhani, 2023). Thus, students can effectively enrich their vocabulary through exposure to English content that matches their interests, spanning from comedy and skincare reviews to gaming and unboxing videos.

Moreover, the concept of technology acceptance, as explained by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), hinges on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Lamimi et al., 2024). In the context of TikTok as an English language teaching tool, its perceived usefulness is seen in its ability to offer engaging and diverse content that enhances language learning and fits modern learners' fast-paced lifestyles. Perceived ease of use is evident in TikTok's user-friendly interface and the simplicity of consuming and producing bite-sized educational content. However, effective integration of TikTok in educational settings must also consider the quality of content, potential distractions, and the platform's ability to complement rather than replace traditional learning methods (Meirbekov et al., 2023). Acceptance and effectiveness of TikTok as a learning tool will ultimately depend on how it aligns with educational goals and integrates into existing frameworks.

Related studies

Several studies have examined the relationship between English learning and TikTok, shedding light on the dynamics of this platform. In a study by Yang (2020), 187 Chinese secondary-school students expressed predominantly positive attitudes toward TikTok's role

in English learning. The majority endorsed its introduction into EFL classrooms, citing enhanced learning motivation and interest. However, the study also explored reasons for dissent and drawbacks, contributing a balanced perspective. Similarly, Komariyah et al. (2022) engaged in a mixed-methods investigation among university students, utilizing Google Form questionnaires. Responses highlighted TikTok's motivating influence on speaking ability and confidence, emphasizing its positive impact on learning. Another study by Cagas (2022) involved 16 higher education students and evaluated TikTok's impact through pre-tests, post-tests, and video creation tasks. While initial scores varied, TikTok's positive influence emerged post-activity, demonstrating its potential despite the limited sample size. The success of TikTok in English teaching is attributed to its short and entertaining clips, elevating learner motivation. However, Bulut (2023) cautioned against prolonged social media use, suggesting it might shorten attention spans. This insightful perspective acknowledges TikTok's dual nature, underscoring the need for a balanced assessment.

Despite existing research on TikTok's impact on English learning among university students (e.g., Afidah et al., 2021; Cahyono & Perdhani, 2023), limited attention has been paid to its role as an English nano-learning platform in the Thai context. This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating Thai EFL university students' perceptions of English learning on TikTok. By examining the platform's benefits and drawbacks as an English nano-learning tool, the research aims to provide valuable insights, enhancing our understanding of TikTok's integration into language teaching and learning in Thailand. The present study is designed to address the following research questions:

1) What are Thai EFL university students' views of English learning on TikTok?

2) What are the perceived benefits and drawbacks of using TikTok as an English nano-learning platform?

Methodology

Research design

To address the research questions, this investigation employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This methodological choice was made considering the advantages of mixed methods, which facilitate a comprehensive exploration of research questions, offering both depth and breadth to the analysis (Watkins & Gioia, 2015). By utilizing this approach, the study aimed to capture the

perspectives of Thai EFL university students regarding English learning through TikTok. Additionally, it sought to examine TikTok's potential as an educational tool in Thailand, aiming to contribute to an understanding that positions TikTok as an effective avenue for acquiring proficiency in the English language.

Participants

This study included 110 undergraduate students from a leading Thai university, through snowball sampling, each majoring in different subjects within the Faculty of Liberal Arts such as English, Psychology, Japanese, and Thai. This sampling method involved existing participants referring future participants from among their acquaintances. Thus, the initial participants helped to spread the questionnaire to other potential participants within their networks. All participants were English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners who regularly used TikTok for educational purposes. The main selection criterion was their experience with TikTok as a learning tool. These students were chosen to anonymously fill out a questionnaire, providing quantitative data for the research. The students were recruited using snowball sampling. Additionally, ten students agreed to participate in interviews. Selected through convenience sampling, these participants were classmates of the researchers, making them easily accessible and willing to contribute, thus enriching the qualitative data of the study. This approach also facilitated smoother communication and cooperation during the research process.

Research instruments

In this study, an online questionnaire and interviews were utilized as the primary research tools to gather both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the use of TikTok as a nano-learning tool among EFL students. The online questionnaire featured a combination of closed-ended questions, utilizing 4-point Likert scales to acquire quantitative data, and open-ended questions for qualitative insights.

Concerning the questionnaire, questionnaire statements were adapted from Fata et al. (2023) due to shared research objectives and its relevance to an EFL context, specifically in Malaysia, which has similarities with this study's EFL context. Prior to the administration, the questionnaire was qualitatively validated by two experts in the field of language education. Some revisions were made accordingly to ensure its validity and reliability. Administered via Google Forms, the questionnaire encompassed three sections: 1) attitudes towards TikTok as

an English learning platform, 2) effectiveness of using TikTok as a nano-learning platform, and 3) acceptance of TikTok's potential as a nano-learning tool. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with each item on a numerical scale (4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree).

The interview schedule was crafted as a semi-structured format with open-ended questions. The interview questions, inspired by the work of Novitasari and Addinna (2022) on students' perceptions of TikTok learning in an Indonesian EFL context, were direct and broad to EFL contexts, aiming to solicit interviewees' opinions on TikTok as a nano-learning platform. With the same objective of the questions by such work, some interview questions were adopted and adapted to suit the context. Thus, this adoption was particularly pertinent as it aligned with the research objectives. Prior to data collection, all the interview questions were qualitatively validated by the experts and piloted with some students that had similar characteristics to the target group.

Data collection

In this research project, the researchers gathered a set of quantitative and qualitative data. The researchers distributed an online questionnaire to EFL undergraduate students. This questionnaire focused on various aspects of using TikTok as a nano-learning tool, which was divided into sections that assessed attitudes toward TikTok as an educational platform, its effectiveness in delivering content, and overall acceptance about its potential in this role. Responses were recorded on a 4-point Likert scale, where participants rated items from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." In addition to the questionnaire, the researchers conducted in-depth, face-to-face interviews with a select group of ten students who opted in from the larger group. Each interview followed a semi-structured format that allowed participants to freely express their views and experiences related to learning through TikTok. This qualitative method provided deeper insights into the subjective perceptions of the students regarding the platform's educational utility.

Data analysis

The information gleaned from the questionnaire underwent thorough analysis utilizing descriptive statistics, encompassing *mean* and *percentage* calculations. This approach aimed to discern key insights from the data. In contrast, the interview responses were subjected to

content analysis with a diagnostic orientation. Given the distinctive nature of responses across participants, content analysis provided an understanding of the underlying reasons for each response. Table 1, presenting specific criteria, played a pivotal role in deciphering the mean scores derived from the Likert scales. These criteria, grounded in class interval calculations as delineated by Ruangprapun (2000), were tailored to this context, employing a class interval of 0.75 obtained through the calculation of the range divided by the number of scales.

Table 1

The Criteria of the Interpretation of Mean Scores

Range	Interpretation
3.26 - 4.00	Strongly Agree
2.51 - 3.25	Agree
1.76 - 2.50	Disagree
1.00 - 1.75	Strongly Disagree

Ethical considerations

Given the involvement of human subjects in this research, ethical principles hold paramount importance. According to Mertens and Ginsberg (2009), research ethics not only safeguard the rights of participants but also foster a sense of trust and commitment. Consequently, the foremost concern revolves around respecting participants' rights and securing their informed consent. Each research instrument employed in this study explicitly outlines the consent process, specifying the maximum time commitment before participants respond to the inquiries. Furthermore, participant involvement was entirely voluntary, devoid of any form of coercion. Importantly, participants were explicitly informed that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous. The data collection process was designed to be time-efficient, and participants were assured of the freedom to discontinue the interview at any point if they so desired. However, given the anonymity of the participants, participants could not withdraw from the ongoing analysis process, as the data provided could not be individually identified. All information shared by participants is accessible exclusively to the researchers and is securely stored with password protection.

Findings

This study directed its research questions towards unravelling the views of EFL university students regarding English learning on TikTok, while also investigating the advantages and disadvantages linked to TikTok's role as a nano-learning platform. The findings are systematically categorized into three sections corresponding to the thematic areas within the online questionnaires, namely *attitudes towards TikTok as a learning tool*, *effectiveness of TikTok as a learning tool*, and *acceptance of TikTok as a learning tool*. In the subsequent sections, a comprehensive breakdown of these aspects is provided, accompanied by a tabular representation encapsulating the questionnaire outcomes. Additionally, excerpts from the interview responses are interspersed for a deeper understanding.

Attitudes towards TikTok as a learning tool

The investigation of students' attitudes towards TikTok as a nano-learning platform primarily centred on their perceptions of enjoyment, interest, and time commitment. Table 2 below demonstrates students' attitude towards using TikTok as a learning tool.

Table 2

Participants' attitude towards TikTok

No.	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Interpretation
1	Learning English on TikTok is fun and interesting	3%	6%	56%	35%	3.23	Agree
2	Learning English from TikTok is easy to understand.	1%	8%	47%	44%	3.34	Strongly Agree
3	Learning English from TikTok is not time-consuming.	-	11%	37%	52%	3.41	Strongly Agree

As depicted in Table 2, the findings in this *attitudes* aspect consistently reflected a positive trend (items 1, 2, and 3), characterized by the abundance of engaging content. Students actively sought alternative avenues for learning beyond traditional classrooms, with TikTok emerging as one such platform. Table 2 indicated widespread agreement among the

EFL undergraduate students on the enjoyment and interest derived from learning English through TikTok (M = 3.23). Additionally, a substantial majority expressed consensus on the platform's ease of understanding (M = 3.34) and minimal time commitment (M = 3.41). This collectively signifies a positive inclination among EFL undergraduate students towards TikTok as a nano-learning platform.

The interview responses revealed that participants appreciated various aspects of using TikTok for learning. Insights from the responses to open-ended questions further elucidated participants' attitudes:

> "*Due to such high competition for the number of views in TikTok, I found some of the content quite interesting.*" (Student D)

> "*The content was easy to understand. Besides, I can watch the videos as many times as I want to.*" (Student E)

> "*The content was short, simple and well summarized.*" (Student H)

Apparently, the interview responses highlighted the unique advantages of using TikTok for English language learning, revealing that participants find it highly engaging and effective. As one participant noted that the competitive nature of content creation on TikTok leads to more interesting and engaging videos, this suggests that the platform's demand for viewer attention drives content quality. Another participant highlighted the platform's accessibility, particularly the ability to replay videos multiple times, which supports individualized learning paces and helps reinforce understanding. Furthermore, the emphasis on short, simple, and well-summarized content was praised for providing concise yet effective lessons, ideal for learners preferring quick, digestible educational snippets. Collectively, these insights reveal that TikTok's dynamic format and user-centric features make it a valuable tool for language acquisition, catering to modern learners' preferences for engaging, flexible, and efficient educational experiences.

Effectiveness of TikTok as a learning tool

The acceptance of TikTok as a learning tool is a multifaceted topic, covering its potential, reliability, and viability for improving English skills. To assess the effectiveness of

TikTok as a nano-learning platform, the focus centred on its potential to boost users' confidence and motivation, as well as optimize their available free time. Table 3 below presents a positive overall perception among participants regarding TikTok's effectiveness.

Table 3

The results of effectiveness of TikTok

No.	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Interpretation
4	TikTok helps me increase my confidence to use English.	7%	22%	49%	22%	2.86	Agree
5	TikTok helps me increase my motivation in learning English.	-	12%	59%	29%	3.17	Agree
6	TikTok helps me utilize my free time.	12%	45%	26%	17%	2.48	Disagree

From Table 3, over half of the university students (71.00%) concurred that TikTok bolstered their confidence in English proficiency by providing practical English lessons for skill enhancement (item 4). Additionally, a majority expressed agreement that TikTok played a role in amplifying their motivation to engage in English learning. However, there was a notable disagreement on item 6, indicating that a substantial portion of university students (M=2.48) did not find TikTok beneficial in maximizing their free time, suggesting a divergence in usage patterns.

In addition, participants in the interviews highlighted various advantages and challenges associated with using TikTok as a nano-learning platform for English, as revealed by their responses to open-ended questions:

"Learning English on TikTok helps me expand vocabulary in my brain, and it helps me understand more about certain words so that I become more confident when using those words, whether it be in writing or speaking." (Student C)

"I love to watch English teaching content that is created by my favourite actors or influencers. Not only does it improve my English skills, but it also increases my motivation and catches my interest in learning more about English." (Student E)

"Scrolling through content continuously could shorten my attention span, you know. TikTok teaching content is not the only content on TikTok. There are lots of interesting videos and content on the TikTok timeline, so sometimes I could not pay full attention to one certain video." (Student A)

"The downside is that, sometimes, learning English through such concise or short content may be too brief to fully understand. Sometimes, I cannot learn some content with full comprehension. Some aspects of the content are left out compared to a more detailed learning process in a traditional classroom setting." (Student D)

Clearly, the responses from participants in the interviews reveal both the benefits and challenges of using TikTok as a nano-learning platform for English. To elaborate, in a beneficial way, Student C found that learning on TikTok enhances vocabulary acquisition and boosts confidence in using new words in both writing and speaking. Likewise, Student E expressed the view that content created by favourite influencers not only improves language skills but also significantly increases motivation and interest in learning English. However, challenges were also noted; Student A mentioned that the vast array of content on TikTok can distract and potentially shorten attention spans, making it hard to focus on educational videos. Student D pointed out a key limitation in the platform's brevity, which sometimes results in a lack of depth, preventing full comprehension of the material compared to more traditional, detailed educational settings. These insights highlight that while TikTok can be an effective and engaging tool for language learning, its format may require supplementary methods to overcome its inherent limitations in educational content delivery.

Acceptance of TikTok as a learning tool

The exploration of the 'acceptance' aspect regarding TikTok encompasses three critical elements: *its potential*, *reliability*, and *viability* for learning English. As outlined in Table 4, the insights gleaned from the questionnaire showcased students' perspectives on TikTok's potential and acceptance.

Table 4

The results of acceptance of TikTok as a learning tool

No.	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Interpretation
7	TikTok could be another effective way to improve English.	9%	22%	48%	21%	2.81	Agree
8	TikTok is a reliable platform to improve English.	11%	36%	47%	6%	2.48	Disagree
9	TikTok should be more acceptable in English learning.	6%	28%	54%	12%	2.72	Agree

Notably, participants voiced agreement with the effectiveness of TikTok for English improvement, as reflected in the responses to item 7 (M = 2.81) and item 9 (M = 2.72). However, a dissenting viewpoint emerged concerning the platform's reliability, with participants expressing disagreement on item 8 (M = 2.48), underscoring skepticism about its dependability.

With this, the interviews allowed participants to express their varied opinions on the effectiveness of TikTok as a nano-learning platform for English. Here are some of their insights:

> *"TikTok cannot satisfy all parties as everyone has different needs and interests. [Therefore], I think it cannot be developed into an in-depth English learning tool."* (Student B)

> *"In my opinion, TikTok cannot be developed to be an appropriate platform for education since its format works better for entertainment."* (Student C)

"I think TikTok can be an effective platform for learning English if it has a function that can create a community which is divided into different groups such as education, like X's space." (Student E)

"TikTok is not efficient enough to be an English learning tool because the content is so varied and diverse that they do not cover all academic content." (Student F)

The interview excerpts revealed diverse perspectives on the effectiveness of TikTok as a nano-learning platform for English, reflecting both skepticism and optimism among participants. Student B expressed doubt about TikTok's ability to meet diverse educational needs, arguing that it cannot be developed into a comprehensive English learning tool due to its inability to cater to all parties' specific interests and needs. Student C echoed a similar sentiment, noting that TikTok's entertainment-focused format might not suit serious educational purposes. On the other hand, Student E suggested that TikTok could become an effective learning platform if it introduced features to segment the community into dedicated groups such as educational spaces, which could foster more focused learning environments. Meanwhile, Student F criticized the platform for its content diversity, stating that it fails to cover all necessary academic content, thereby limiting its efficacy as a standalone educational tool. These viewpoints highlight the need for careful consideration of TikTok's role in educational settings, possibly requiring supplemental tools and strategies to fully leverage its potential for language learning.

Discussion

This section demonstrates a comprehensive discussion based on the present research findings, juxtaposed with insights from prior studies, in order to address the research questions. Concerning the attitude of participants in this study, most students had positive attitudes towards TikTok as a nano-learning platform. They viewed TikTok as fun, interesting, and an easy way to learn English. A clear explanation could be illustrated by the findings of Afidah et al. (2021), who indicated that TikTok greatly helped gain students' attention through interesting videos, and, importantly, TikTok is easily accessible through mobile devices. The results regarding students' attitudes also supports the studies by Xu et al. (2019) and Afidah

et al. (2021), who claimed that TikTok could improve students' English skills and that it could even influence students' interests in a positive way through short videos. On the other hand, the results also revealed that students did not consider TikTok a time-consuming platform. A possible explanation is that TikTok provided students with the ability to set their own schedule, find any place of their choice to study, and increase learning flexibility to maximize their learning development at their own pace without boredom (Bailey & Lee, 2020).

In terms of the effectiveness of learning English on TikTok, the study revealed that most students believed that TikTok had the ability to boost their confidence to learn English by providing vocabulary teaching content. These results may be explained by the fact that the vocabulary teaching content they watched on TikTok was concise and provided them with explanations on how to use those words with clear situational examples. This finding is consistent with Novitasari and Addinna (2022), who indicated that TikTok provided opportunities for students to improve their English skills, such as pronunciation and gaining new English vocabulary. Moreover, the results of this study revealed that TikTok also can significantly enhance learners' motivation by providing interesting teaching content created by their favourite influencers (also known as TikToker). This finding is in accordance with Xu et al. (2019) who pointed out that TikTok could increase students' motivation by building positive and friendly online environments to connect with learners. In contrast, another finding that stood out was that students showed their concern about the short attention span of using TikTok as a nano-learning tool, which was considered one of the TikTok defects. While TikTok learning might enhance English skills, it is likely that using TikTok as a learning tool is connected to a short attention span. This idea supports Bulut's (2023) claim that social media platforms such as TikTok can impact attention spans because scrolling makes it easy for users to quickly skip over visual content. The result is also similar to those reported by Mekler (2021), who revealed that TikTok could distract EFL learners from lessons as there is other interesting content waiting for them to watch. Moreover, another defect of TikTok as a nano-learning tool presented in the results was the difficulty of understanding short teaching content, as learning on TikTok is a one-way communication. This finding is consistent with Al-Shehhi's (2022) study examining the impact of using nano-learning as a teaching tool in higher education institutions in the United Arab Emirates. Their findings asserted that nano-learning is a learning innovation that relies on students for self-learning rather than being directly guided by an instructor. However, a substantial portion of the university students did not find

TikTok beneficial in maximizing their free time, suggesting a divergence in usage patterns. To this issue, the possible explanation is that this might be due to several factors: TikTok's design encourages prolonged use, which can lead to distraction and procrastination, detracting from productive use of time (Obasi, 2024). The content, while vast, often lacks educational depth and consistency, making it less suitable for those seeking learning and personal development. Additionally, as an entertainment-focused platform, TikTok may not align with the goals of students who prefer activities that directly contribute to their academic or professional aspirations. Consequently, the platform's overwhelming volume and entertainment orientation may not meet the needs of students looking to effectively utilize their free time for more enriching pursuits.

Regarding the acceptance of participants, they shared mixed opinions on TikTok as a nano-learning tool. Most students trusted TikTok's potential for enhancing English language skills as claimed in a previous study by (Zhai & Razali, 2021), while some believed that TikTok was not a reliable platform to learn English. Moreover, students considered that TikTok potential in nano-learning is still too inefficient for it to become an effective way for students to learn English in the future. Some reasons for such results are that TikTok still has many more conditions to overcome such as its variability, limited academic content, and the lack of features, which highlight the weaknesses of TikTok. These findings are in line with research conducted by Yang (2020), which also highlighted a lack of educational features on TikTok, indicating that people considered TikTok's format to be not suitable for learning due to a lack of a feature that provides a centralized area for users with similar interests, which some other applications had. In 2020, even though TikTok had launched a campaign '#LearnOnTikTok' and '#TikTokUni' to encourage students to focus more on educational aspects during the COVID-19 lockdowns (Mahittivanicha, 2020), somehow, it could be implied that TikTok is, significantly, not preferred by learners as an English learning tool in a large area since the feedback received showed that TikTok did not meet the expectations. Consequently, the TikTok team should develop the application by including additional features that can facilitate education. To illustrate, a specific space for educational purposes which would not only offer a space for discussion and collaboration among users but would also comprehensively gather more educational content. Moreover, the findings revealed that there was a dissenting viewpoint emerging concerning the platform's reliability, emphasizing skepticism about its dependability. This doubt is likely to stem from several factors. First, TikTok primarily hosts

user-generated content, leading to variability in the quality and accuracy of information, which makes it difficult to verify the credibility of sources (Huang et al., 2024). Additionally, TikTok's focus on entertainment over educational content can compromise the factual accuracy of videos (Nguyen & Diederich, 2023). The platform's algorithm also prioritizes user engagement over content quality, potentially promoting misleading information. Furthermore, the short format of videos often results in the oversimplification of complex topics (Yeung et al., 2022), undermining TikTok's suitability as a reliable educational tool.

Pedagogical Implications

The majority of the participants in the study exhibited a positive attitude and perception regarding the use of TikTok as an English nano-learning platform, with 90% expressing preferences for specific English teaching channels on TikTok. These findings highlight potential roles for EFL university instructors in supporting their students' English learning.

Firstly, instructors can integrate TikTok into students' independent learning outside the classroom as an alternative tool, leveraging the benefits of nano-learning to sustain interest and prevent boredom (Aburizaizah & Albaiz, 2021; Zhai & Razali, 2021). Utilizing TikTok as a strategy can enhance motivation and vocabulary expansion, particularly when students engage with content aligned with their interests (Cahyono & Perdhani, 2023). This approach enables instructors to diversify and enhance their teaching styles effectively.

Given the diverse English teaching content available on TikTok, instructors should encourage students to explore and identify their preferred content. Simultaneously, instructors can recommend suitable channels based on students' preferences, fostering exposure to the English content environment. This exposure, driven by students' interest, can unintentionally contribute to the enhancement of their English skills. To effectively guide students in selecting suitable TikTok channels for learning English, instructors can provide students with some selection criteria. First, students should prioritize channels presenting accurate and high-quality content by qualified educators by checking their qualifications or professional background. Suggested channels should cover a variety of topics, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, idioms, and cultural insights, to ensure comprehensive learning. Furthermore, it is essential to select channels with clear and concise presentations, regular posting schedules, and positive user reviews. Additionally, instructors should try to find

channels that are culturally sensitive and inclusive, fostering a broad-minded approach to language learning.

Further enhancing the educational value of TikTok, instructors could develop curated playlists of vetted videos that complement the academic curriculum, providing structured learning trajectories in areas such as grammar and vocabulary. Engaging students with interactive challenges such as a "Phrase of the Week" could foster creativity and community engagement. Integrating TikTok content into formal assignments and facilitating discussions around these resources can effectively merge informal with formal educational settings. Universities could support these efforts by offering professional development workshops focused on integrating social media into educational practices. Emphasizing digital literacy and critical evaluation skills is essential, preparing students to navigate and critically assess online content. Collaborations with well-known TikTok content creators could also yield tailored educational content that addresses the unique challenges faced by Thai EFL learners, potentially including interactive sessions and co-created campaigns. These initiatives would not only boost student engagement but would also effectively integrate TikTok into a comprehensive educational framework.

Instructors should also play a crucial role in educating students about TikTok's drawbacks. For instance, the platform's less time-consuming format may divert attention from the classroom, potentially affecting attention spans. Therefore, instructors are advised to position TikTok as a supplementary nano-learning platform rather than a primary tool for English learning. Significantly, instructors need to raise awareness about TikTok's lack of reliability, emphasizing its status as an online platform where content may lack authenticity. To address this, instructors should take responsibility for content quality checks, ensuring accuracy for their students. Moreover, instructors should take several steps. First, they should help verify the credentials of content creators to ensure they are qualified English language educators. Cross-referencing TikTok content with reputable educational resources, such as academic textbooks, can confirm the accuracy of the information. Consistency in content quality and regular updates from creators are also important indicators of reliability. Additionally, instructors should consider user reviews and feedback to gauge the credibility and effectiveness of the content. By doing these quality checks, instructors can help ensure that students engage with accurate and trustworthy material.

Conclusion

Given the significant role of the English language in individuals' lives and the pervasive influence of technology, particularly online platforms such as TikTok, which gained prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic, this study aimed to investigate 110 Thai EFL university students' perspectives on TikTok as a potential tool for learning English. The findings highlight a predominantly positive attitude and perception toward TikTok. While participants perceived TikTok in positive ways in terms of improving their language confidence and motivation, participants acknowledged drawbacks such as a short attention span and difficulty grasping concise content. In terms of acceptance, students deemed TikTok inefficient as an English learning tool, leaning more towards entertainment than education. Consequently, the study advocates for TikTok's use as a supplementary learning aid, especially for enhancing listening, speaking, and vocabulary through engaging content. Instructors are encouraged to integrate TikTok as an out-of-class learning strategy, urging students to follow relevant English teaching accounts. However, it is crucial to present TikTok's drawbacks to students, enabling effective and mindful use for English skill enhancement. In short, this study showed that students have a positive attitude towards using TikTok for learning English, valuing its engaging and accessible format. However, while TikTok can boost their confidence and motivation, it also presents perceived challenges such as short attention spans and potential distractions because of its entertainment focus. Furthermore, concerns about the reliability of content highlight the importance of instructors guiding students in choosing high-quality educational material and implementing content quality checks.

Nevertheless, the study encountered several limitations. Questionnaire and interview results exhibited discrepancies, emphasizing the limitations of questionnaires in prompting critical thinking, while interviews provided more insightful opinions. Additionally, the fact that the majority of interviewees were classmates may have led to straightforward responses due to the existing familiarity. This homogeneity also raises concerns about the diversity of responses. Lastly, time constraints hindered capturing potential changes in attitudes and perceptions over time. Addressing these limitations requires future studies to prioritize both quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding. A broader participant pool and an increased number of interviewees would contribute to more robust and varied data, improving the overall quality of insights.

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