

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

People are becoming more dependent on technology as a result of the age of globalization. It is impossible to dispute the fact that technology plays a significant part in many aspects of modern life. The way that people live their lives and their mindsets are gradually evolving as a consequence of technological advancements, particularly among adolescents (Wahyudi & Sukmasari, 2018). The development of digital technologies, social networks, and multimedia have brought on significant transformations to the way people live their lives during the last several years (Satish, Manikandan, Priscila, Sara, & Mahaveerakannan, 2020). These technological breakthroughs and new discoveries have influenced a wide range of aspects of human life, including learning and education in general, and in addition the study of foreign languages (Leung & Valdés, 2019). Due to advances in technology, educators now have access to a wider variety of instructional strategies that may be customized to meet the requirements of their students (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018).

Social media is a platform that is used often for the exchange of information online. Social media refers to a collection of web-based applications that are built on the technological and ideological underpinnings of the Web 2.0 revolution. These applications provide users with the ability to create and share their own content online (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

DataReportal summarizes data from We Are Social and Meltwater about digital adoption and use in Indonesia from early 2020 to 2025. In 2020, there were 175,4 million internet users in Indonesia, meaning 64% of the total population had access to the internet. It later showed significant growth in 2021. The number of users went up to 202,6 million which internet penetration stood at 73,7%. However, the following year did not make a big difference. In 2022 the number of users reached 204,7 million with the same online penetration. However, issues relating to Covid-19 continued to build habits, causing the number of internet users to increase to 212,9 million, meaning 77% of the population used the internet. On the contrary, the pattern of social and people's behavior has changed. The number of users decreased to 185 million, and online penetration stood at 66.5%. The latest data shows there were 230 million internet users in Indonesia at the start of 2026, when internet penetration stood at 80,5% (Data Reportal, 2025).

Based on the pattern, internet users in Indonesia show fluctuating yet consistently growing numbers over the years. This upward trend suggests that Indonesian students are increasingly connected to the digital world, making digital platforms such as TikTok more accessible and relevant to their learning experiences than ever before. This growing digital connectivity implies that students are spending more time online, making platforms like TikTok a natural part of their everyday lives. It is therefore reasonable to examine how students perceive TikTok not merely as entertainment, but as a medium that could support their English speaking and creative thinking skills.

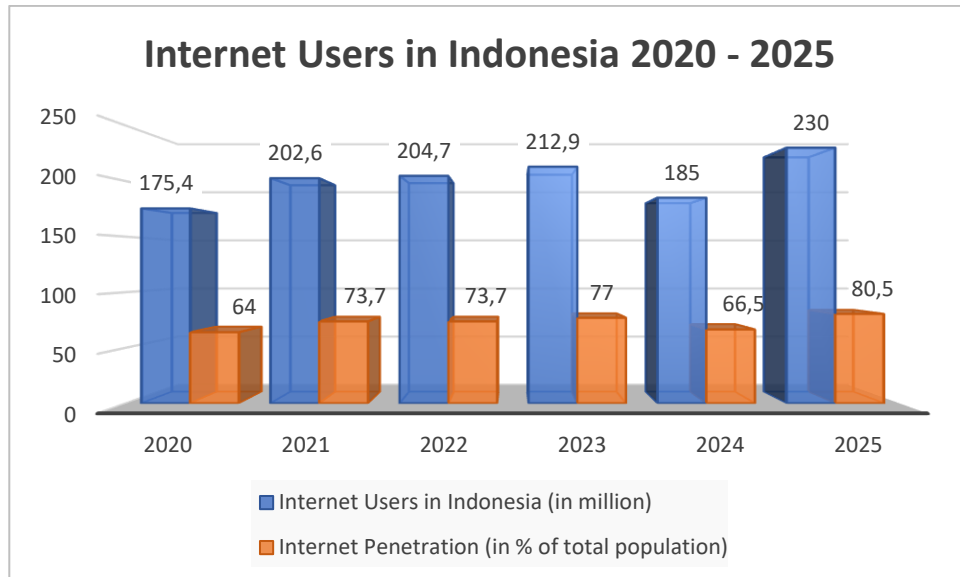


Diagram 1. 1 Internet users and internet penetration in Indonesia from 2020 to 2025

Source : (Data Reportal, 2025)

In January 2020, the report stated 160.0 million social media users in Indonesia with the percentage of penetrations stood at 59%. In 2021, the data reported 170 million social media users equivalent to 61,8%. In 2022 the users increased to 191,4 million meaning 68,9% of the population had accessed social media. However, in early 2023 the data showed a decrease to 167 million users equating to 60,4% penetration. Moving to 2024, the number still decreased to 139 million, equivalent to 49,9% of the population. The latest data report, at the end of 2025 Indonesia exceeds 180 million which equates to 62,9% of the population (Data Reportal, 2025).

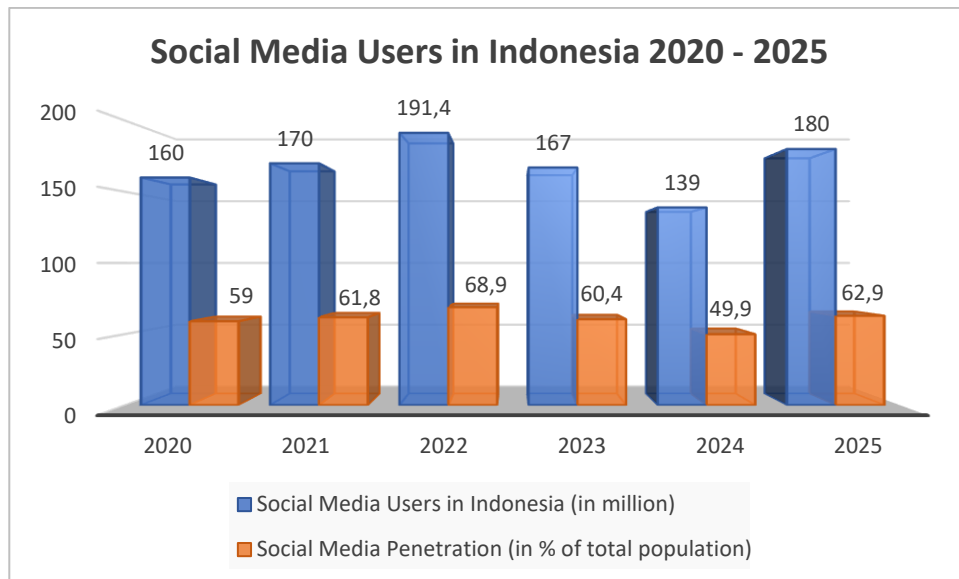


Diagram 1. 2 Social media users and social media penetration in Indonesia from 2020 to 2025
Source : (Data Reportal, 2025)

Data from TikTok's advertising resources reveal that, in early 2025, the platform had 108 million users aged 18 and above in Indonesia. However, there is limited information about TikTok users under 18, which is the focus of the study. This data refers to TikTok's advertising audience and may not accurately indicate the platform's whole active user population (Digital 2025: Indonesia, 2025).

In terms of screen time, in 2025 the majority of Indonesians are surfing on the internet around 1 – 6 hours per day. In terms of app usage, social media still dominates. The most frequently used app is TikTok (35.17 percent), followed by YouTube (23.76 percent), Facebook (21.58 percent), Instagram (15.94 percent), and X/Twitter (0.52 percent). Even more information regarding internet users in Indonesia, the average duration that Indonesians spend using social media platforms on a daily basis is around 2 - 4 hours per day (APJII (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia), 2025).

Due to the large number of users and the significant amount of time spent on these platforms, in recent years, several scholars have focused their attention on the topic of using social media platforms in educational settings. In addition to being tools for socializing and entertaining in general, (Otchie & Pedaste, 2020, p. 890) point out that social media has the potential to be used as a pedagogical tool since they can encourage interaction, participation, critical thinking, collaboration, and the exchange of information. One further possible advantage of using social media is the possibility of conducting distant courses. It allows both students and teachers to easily connect with and minimize costs (Otchie & Pedaste, 2020, p. 890).

Social media can encourage students to actively engage in learning material and can effectively share resources, information, and ideas (Al-Maatouk, et al., 2020). Not only are they able to interact with one another, using social media in educational settings can also allow students to have the opportunity to share and gain information from one another (Zachos, Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, & Anagnostopoulos, 2018).

Research has shown that applying the use of social media for academic objectives increases engagement, supported the aims of social learning and social constructivist learning techniques (Arquero, Romero-Frías, & Del Barrio-García, 2021). Invented in 1997, Richard Mayer 's MMLT concept suits this statement. It may be placed under the umbrella of the more general theory known as cognitivism. According to the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning developed by Mayer and Moreno (1999), an individual is able to acquire more knowledge when information is provided in both text and visuals

as compared to text alone. The concept of "multimedia learning" is predicated on the idea that there are two ways—auditory and visual—to take in new information and knowledge. Both channels are utilized in the processing of information in order to load it into working memory (Moreno & Mayer, 1999).

Social media can help integrate language learning into real-world social contexts and engage younger generations in creative and communicative activities (Cabrera, 2018). Students may be able to share everyday experiences with meaning-making processes that span time context by using user-generated material that is shared on social media. Because of the communicative aspect of social media, it has seen significant use in the realm of educational purposes (Lantz-Andersson, 2018).

Dewi and Rizal state that students may use social media to improve their English abilities in the following areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It has also been shown that students of the millennial age utilize social media to improve the quality of their English since it is fun, engaging, easy to use, and instructive (Dewi & Rizal, 2023). As for today's global world, the importance of English cannot be dismissed or overlooked because English is the most widely spoken universal language. Learning English has become a requirement for anyone involved in international affairs. Learning English through a variety of formal and non-formal educational settings, including elementary schools, courses, and extracurricular activities, is one strategy to help produce a workforce that can compete successfully in the global market. Students' abilities to interact with others will benefit to form a solid foundation

in English. Therefore, starting with elementary school and continuing through high school and college, English instruction should be emphasized.

TikTok is gaining popularity among young people and is one of the intriguing tools that may be used. Other similar platforms include Snapchat and Instagram. TikTok is a social media site that enables users to produce short videos that are loaded with a broad range of elements such as music, stickers, filters, and a number of other creative features. Users may share their videos with their followers on the platform. Because of its immense popularity, TikTok enables a large number of users, particularly younger people, to make use of this platform in order to gain knowledge and information which is condensed and presented via TikTok content (Bulele & Wibowo, 2020).

Engaging media with colorful graphics, reality, and movement can motivate students to learn. TikTok meets the requirements above: colorful, actual, and dynamic. TikTok is an intriguing learning tool because it is still new during the research period and has so many users, especially millennials. We Are Social and Meltwater reports, quoted and summarized by (Data Indonesia, 2025) Indonesia shows a significant number of TikTok users annually. In January 2024, Indonesia placed second which had 126,83 million users, then in July 2024 the rank gradually went to the first-place country with the largest TikTok users globally, reached 157,56 million users. On January 2025, Indonesia took second place, beaten by USA, with 107,69 million users. However, in July 2025, the number of users not only remained but increased to 194,37 million users making Indonesia return to first place. As of April 2026, Indonesia leads globally in TikTok usage, with a total of 222.58 million

registered users. Based on these trends, Indonesia shows rapid growth in the number of users and is likely to continue increasing annually (Data Reportal, 2025). This consistent rise reflects how deeply TikTok has integrated into the daily lives of Indonesians, particularly among teenagers and high school students who are among its most active users. This widespread usage suggests that TikTok is no longer merely a source of entertainment but has gradually become a familiar space where students express themselves and explore ideas. It is therefore relevant to investigate how students perceive TikTok as a platform that could potentially support their English speaking skills and creative thinking abilities.

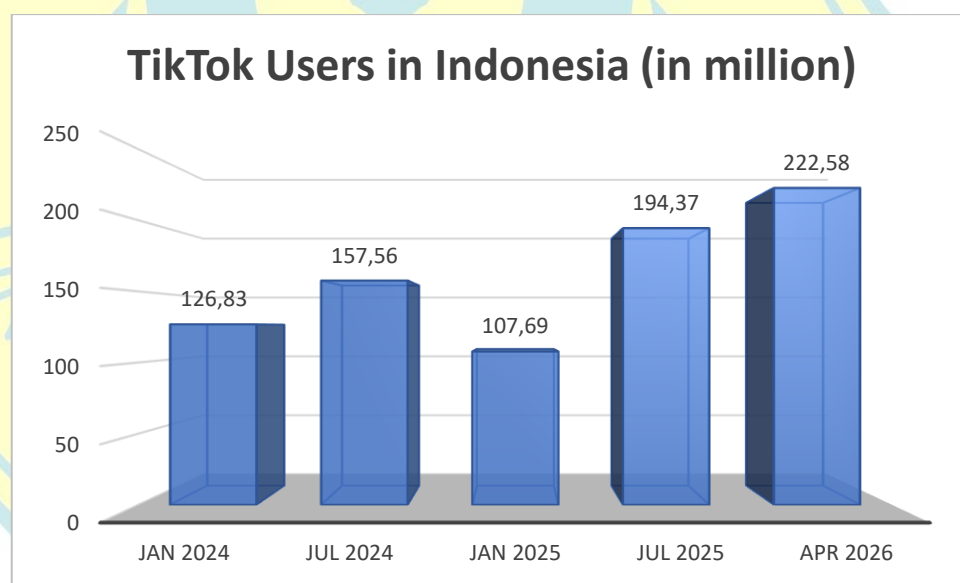


Diagram 1. 3 TikTok users in Indonesia January 2024 – April 2026

Source : (Data Reportal, 2025)

According to (Yang, 2020), the TikTok application offers numerous advantages. Given the variety of capabilities available in the TikTok application, it is extremely feasible that it will be used as a medium for studying English language and literature. Students can practice their speaking skills through videos in this application. Similarly, by utilizing the characteristics of

the TikTok application, students can play roles that prioritize student expression and innovation.

The TikTok application is also a useful medium to use in teaching and learning because, by using the TikTok application, the process of teaching and learning is more efficient and engaging because the teacher only conveys important things in a short time, which making it easier for students to understand the learning conveyed by the teacher.

The usage of TikTok can have a considerable impact on its users' levels of self-confidence, especially among teenagers (Adawiyah, 2020). This has a knock-on effect on users of this application as a growing number of users of TikTok are delivering their material in English, which in turn has an effect on those users. This includes learning how to speak English, constructing phrases and sentences, acquiring new slang terms, and comprehending topics covered in English. Research conducted by (Luisandrith & Yanuartuti, 2020) shows that the application can allow students to express themselves creatively through video production.

Despite the growing body of literature on TikTok in educational settings, previous studies have primarily focused on TikTok's general benefits for language learning, students' perceptions of TikTok for writing skills (Syafuddin, Abdi, Nabilah, Larassati, & Lazuardiyyah, 2021), or its use in practicing pronunciation (Pratiwi, Ufairah, & Sopiah, 2021). While these studies provide valuable insights, none have simultaneously examined students' perceptions of TikTok in enhancing both English speaking skills and creative thinking skills, particularly within the Indonesian vocational high

school context. The lack of studies addressing both variables together in this specific context represents a significant research gap that this study seeks to fill.

This raises the question of how students perceive TikTok as a platform for enhancing their English speaking and creative thinking skills.

1.2 Questions of the study

The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What are students' perceptions of TikTok use in enhancing their English speaking skills?
2. What are students' perceptions of TikTok use in enhancing their creative thinking skills?

1.3 Aims of the Study

Based on the research question provided, this research has two aims:

1. To identify students' perceptions of TikTok use in enhancing their English speaking skills at Vocational High School.
2. To identify students' perceptions of TikTok use in enhancing their creative thinking skills at Vocational High School.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

This study carries possible limitations. First, this study is limited to investigating students' perceptions of TikTok use in enhancing their English speaking and creative thinking skills and does not measure actual improvement

in either skill. Second, the study was conducted only at SMKN 2 Jakarta, involving 230 10th grade students, which means the findings may not be generalizable to other schools, grade levels, or regions in Indonesia. Nevertheless, 10th grade students of SMK Negeri 2 Jakarta come from various majors, including accounting, retail business, office management, visual communication design, and software engineering.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The researcher expects that this research will help with English teaching and learning. It has two significances, theoretical significance and practical significance:

1. Theoretical Significance

This study provides the information about how students' perceptions of TikTok use to enhance students' speaking and creative thinking skills in English.

2. Practical Significance

This study's findings are intended to be beneficial to teachers, students, and other researchers.

a. Students

This study is expected to raise students' awareness of TikTok's potential beyond entertainment, encouraging them to utilize the platform more intentionally as a medium for practicing English speaking and developing their creative thinking skills.

b. Teachers

The findings of this study may provide teachers with valuable insights into how students perceive TikTok as a learning medium, which can inform their decisions in integrating digital platforms into English language teaching activities.

c. School/Polymakers

This study may serve as a reference for schools and policymakers in considering the integration of TikTok or similar digital platforms into language learning curricula, ultimately supporting more innovative and relevant learning approaches.

d. Other Researchers

The findings of this study are expected to provide extra information for other researchers who wish to conduct further studies on the use of TikTok or other social media platforms in language learning, particularly in the Indonesian context.