

Elida Gjerde Thorvik

Is TikTok a New Way to Support Language Learning?

A Qualitative Study

Bachelor's thesis in English

Supervisor: Guro Stensby Sjuls

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Abstract

A synthesis of 6th grade teachers' experience of TikTok as a learning platform for English is presented here, offering valuable insights into the topic. The primary objective of this study was to gather information about teachers' perceptions and experiences with TikTok through semi – structured interviews. By conducting interviews, I aimed to capture the teachers' perceptions and understand their thoughts, observations, and concerns regarding the use of TikTok in language learning. In addition to exploring the teachers' experiences, this study also considers relevant theories related to language learning on digital platforms in the age of technology. By connecting the teachers' perspectives with established theories, I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the potential effects associated with using TikTok as a language learning tool.

1.0 Introduction

The increasing popularity of social media platforms and the digital age have significantly impacted the way children learn second languages. In Norway, English is taught as a second language from 1st grade in primary school, and recent reports suggest that Norwegian students have become increasingly proficient in English. The Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten* published an article titled “OMG! Hvordan ble kidsa så vilt gode i engelsk? (OMG! How did the kids become so wildly proficient at English?). According to the authors, many teachers believe digital platforms, including YouTube, TikTok, Netflix, Snapchat, Minecraft, and Fortnite, contribute to children’s proficiency (Nipen et al., 2023). The research for this article was done by Norstat, in this study they were looking at 15–29-year-olds international media usage. The number had more than doubled since 2011, with the number then being 30% percent, the number in 2022, was an astonishing 72% percent (Nipen et al., 2023). The study shows the increasing usage and popularity of international media platforms such as TikTok. The research on TikTok does show how popular it is, and that it might affect English language skills in a positive or negative way. A point that is brought forth in the article, is that the national evaluation of English level is currently higher than previous years. They even go so far as to suggest that these platforms have given rise to a new form of English that is akin to a second mother tongue for some children. The authors note that some teachers consider it an almost new mother tongue and that most children have "21st century English skills". It is suggested that this increase is due to YouTube, TikTok, Netflix, Snapchat, and "Minecraft" and "Fortnite.”

The use of social media platforms, such as TikTok, has been suggested as a contributing factor to the improvement of English language skills among students (Bernard, 2021). Several studies have investigated the impact of TikTok on language learning, including its potential to enhance vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation skills. 51% of children between 8 and 11 years of age, and 40 % of children between 5 and 16 years of age, use TikTok everyday (Ofcom 2022, pp. 24-28). In a study conducted by Arifin, the authors explored the potential of social media platforms, including TikTok, to enhance the learning of English language through the use of video clips. Arifin’s study explains how educators the use of video clips. Arifin’s study explains how educators could create short videos of teaching and learning that reach students on TikTok, by optimizing their use of TikTok. Bernard’s study (2021) investigated the impact of TikTok on vocabulary development among ESL students.

According to the study, TikTok videos can serve as an important resource for exposing students to authentic language use and new vocabulary through the use of TikTok videos. These results suggest that TikTok can help students acquire a broader vocabulary and enhance their language skills.

Another study done on TikTok titled “Language Style and Register Used by Famous Content Creators in TikTok Application”, conducted by Lisdawati (2021) focused on analyzing the language style and register employed by popular content creators on TikTok. Lisdawati explored how these creators adapt their language use to engage with their audience effectively. The study shed light on the unique linguistic features and strategies employed by TikTok content creators, contributing to a deeper understanding of the language dynamics within the platform. These studies collectively contributed to the interest behind how TikTok could potentially be a tool for English language learning. Collectively these studies suggest that TikTok can offer a valuable tool for language learners to enhance their skills and engage with authentic language use in a contemporary and interactive manner.

Building on the findings of these studies, which highlight the potential of TikTok as a valuable tool for language learners, it is worth noting the significant improvements observed in Norwegian students’ English language skills. The results of the mandatory English proficiency tests demonstrated that a considerable number of students have reached the highest level of proficiency in English (level 3) (Nipen et al. 2023). Despite the mandated proficiency tests administered in fifth grade, teachers can still administer tests to determine how their students are progressing in English Language Skills. As a result of the lack of mandatory proficiency tests, the choice was made to study teachers in the 6th grade in order to gain a deeper understanding of teaching methodologies. Although TikTok was the primary focus of the research, there were a number of other curiosities that came to mind, such as how teachers can measure the progress of their students in the classroom. As a result, I asked teachers how they measure their students’ progress. Further, the choice for studying teachers in 6th grade were that there were no mandatory proficiency tests for this grade, this increased interest in how teachers can measure their student’s progress. For this reasoning I asked them how they measure their students’ progress and test their students’ language skills (See appendix).

2.0 Theory

With platforms such as TikTok becoming increasingly popular among Norwegian students, there has been a growing interest in exploring the potential impact that these platforms can have on language learning. As a part of this section, it is my intention to examine two prominent theories that shed light on the correlation between the use of mobile technology and the improvement of English language skills. There are two theories, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which sheds light on the potential role that technology may have played in the changing nature of language learning in the digital age we now live in, and Input Hypothesis, which provides insight into the complex process of learning languages.

2.1 MALL (mobile assisted learning)

In accordance with the advancement of technology, it has become increasingly essential to master English as a second language and foreign language in order to communicate on a national and international level. Thus, it is very important to provide students with a conducive learning environment. Students may gain a greater understanding of English by utilizing a variety of facilities and new methods. As a result of its accessibility and universality, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has been considered a promising technique for teaching English as a second language (Nuraeni et al., 2020). As its name suggests, MALL focuses on the use of technology, particularly mobile phones in language learning.

Depending on the preferences of the student and the location of the student, students may learn a second language in a classroom or specific area, or they may learn it through their mobile phones (Nuraeni et al., 2020). The advantages of this learning tool include its ease of use, its resources, its user-friendliness, and its affordability, and so on. A growing trend in modern life is the use of mobile technology for a wide range of activities, including communication, entertainment, banking, and education, due to its portable nature. A mobile device is also more affordable than a computer, which makes them more accessible to a broader range of individuals (Nuraeni et al., 2020). MALL can be considered an ideal solution to the time and location-based problem associated with foreign language learning.

In addition, Chen, and Chang (2012) have identified the unique features of mobile devices, such as their portability and connectivity, which enable learners to access learning resources and keep in touch with others anywhere and anytime. Additionally, MALL has been shown to enhance learners' motivation autonomy and self-directed learning skills (Godwin-Jones, 2011; Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). MALL in language education, however, faces some challenges, such as a lack of institutional support, limited technical literacy, and privacy and security concerns (Lai & Gu, 2011). As a tool for language learning, MALL has significant potential benefits, but further research and development are required to fully realize its full potential.

2.3 Input Hypothesis

The Input Hypothesis, proposed by Stephen Krashen (1985), posits that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current level of competence. This theory suggests that learners need exposure to meaningful and understandable language input to make progress in language acquisition. The concept of input and its role in second language learning has been widely discussed in the field of second language acquisition. Gass and Mackey (2015) emphasize the significance of input, interaction, and corrective feedback in L2 learning, supporting the idea that meaningful input plays a crucial role in language development. They argue that exposure to comprehensible input facilitates the acquisition of grammatical structures, vocabulary, and overall language proficiency. VanPatten and Williams (2015) also discuss the Input Hypothesis as one of the prominent theories in the field, highlighting the importance of comprehensible input for language learners.

Schmidt (2001) delves into the role of attention in language learning and how learners engage with input to acquire language skills. He emphasizes that learners must actively process and focus on relevant language input to internalize linguistic features effectively. Moreover, throughout Ellis (2017) comprehensive study on second language acquisition, the importance of input is emphasized. As Ellis theorized, comprehensible input is a crucial component of language development, helping learners bridge the gap between their current level of competence and that of the target language. As a result, the importance of providing learners with meaningful and understandable language input is highlighted.

The input hypotheses align with the principles of skill acquisition theory (Dekeyser, 2015), which emphasizes the value of meaningful practice and exposure to input that challenges learners beyond their current competence level. Dekeyser suggests that learners require opportunities to engage with input that stretches their abilities, fostering skill development and acquisition. Thus, the input hypothesis supports the notion that learners benefit from exposure to meaningful and challenging language input, e.g., through platforms such as TikTok to facilitate language learning and proficiency growth.

2.3 Objectives

However, limited research has been conducted on Norwegian teachers' perceptions of TikTok's impact on their students' English skills. My interest in this study resulted from the fact that very little research has been conducted regarding this subject that considers teachers' views and perceptions. Furthermore, I wondered how teachers could measure this progress because no proficiency tests are required in 6th grade.

This study delves into the perceptions of Norwegian teachers regarding the impact of TikTok on the English skills of their 6th- grade students. By exploring their perspectives, this research aims to uncover the potential benefits and challenges associated with using TikTok as a tool for language learning. Through gaining insight into the teacher's outlook on TikTok's influence, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge surrounding the effects of digital platforms on language development. By focusing on the perspectives of the teachers, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role TikTok plays in the language learning journey of students in the 6th grade.

2.4 Thesis statement

What are Norwegian teachers of 6th grade perception of the impact of TikTok on the student's English skills?

2.5 Delimitation

It was necessary to narrow down the thesis statement to make it feasible, for example, to pick only one of the many social media platforms currently available. TikTok is popular among 11–12-year-olds due to its entertainment value, opportunities for creative expression and social interaction. The platform is easy to use and available on several devices and is part of a

larger trend where social media and digital platform play an increasingly large role in the lives of children and young people (Persen et al., 2023). It has been discussed in numerous articles that TikTok is popular among children in primary schools, including those appearing in *Aftenposten* and the article by Person et al., about how Norwegian children and teenagers are becoming hooked on the popular media app TikTok (Person et al., 2023).

3.0 Methods

3.1 Qualitative method

For this thesis, the choice of method was to use a qualitative method as the research question seeks to explore individual experiences and thoughts around the usage of TikTok in primary schools and the students' language skills. Qualitative research seeks to understand meaning. Researchers interested in qualitative research investigate how people interpret and experience other people's experiences (Wilson & Sharples, 2015, p. 120). Using a qualitative approach is especially appropriate when investigating phenomena that are unfamiliar to us, for which little research exists, or for which we would like to gain a deeper understanding than what we currently possess (Johannessen et al., 2010).

3.2 Participants and delimitation

In this study, participants were English teachers who taught 6th grade students in Norwegian primary schools. It is likely that these students, after learning their second language from first grade, will have adequate language skills, and it would be worthwhile to interview teachers to find out whether they have seen any benefits from the use of social media, specifically TikTok.

3.2.1 Recruitment

Generally, the recruitment process involves three steps, including contacting the potential informant, setting a time for the interview, and sending a reminder about the interview the day before (Johannesen, et al. 2010, p. 105-106). As a student without much recruitment experience, I was able to quickly create the recipient list and get the email sent when the email template was complete. Upon finding many schools, I had to write an email template explaining the project and recruiting participants. The process took some time due to low response rate. In response to the low response rate, a second batch of emails was sent out.

3.2.2 Ethical considerations

As an interviewer, it is important to acknowledge and address ethical concerns throughout the entire interview investigation process. It is important to be mindful of ethical issues arising from the planning and preparation stages to the point of making the final report available. Integrity and credibility of an investigation can be strengthened by considering and incorporating ethical considerations from the outset, ensuring the well-being and rights of all involved parties (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p.80). This study focused on a group of English teachers teaching sixth grade English at Norwegian primary schools. Because this study was anonymized, no personal information was recorded. Thus, the interviewees are coded as follows: T01, T02, etc., which represent teachers 1,2, or 3. Due to the fact that teachers knew the interview would be anonymous and not recorded or taped, they might have felt more comfortable sharing information with me and talking with me because their name, face, and workplace would not be disclosed to anyone else.

3.2 Method for data collection

For this thesis, I chose to use the semi – structured interview as the tool in the data collection. An interview that is semi-structured is used when the topic being investigated is intended to be understood from the perspective of the interviewee, in particular their interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 47). Semi-structured interviews allow for addressing the thesis statement, as the topics has not been previously investigated, and by using the interview type I could ask openly and get more information and reflections than what is possible with a questionnaire or a more structured closed off interview.

Typically, these types of interviews are routinely transcribed and recorded, however, in this project the answers were transcribed in the moment and discussed with the interviewee afterwards to avoid collecting any person identifiable information (i.e., speech recordings). In order to maintain the confidentiality of teachers' personal information, the interviews were conducted while excluding any questions that would disclose personal information.

3.3 Preparation and interview guide

In this circumstance, the interview guide plays an important role, providing a list of topics and a general set of questions that will be addressed during the interview, as well as acting as a guide throughout the process “A semi-structured interview has an overarching interview guide as the starting point for the interview, while questions, topics and order can be varied. The researcher can move back and forth in the interview guide” (Johannessen, et al, 2010, p.137). When preparing the interview guide, the aim was to identify central subthemes that were relevant for this research question. Often, the researcher is content to inquire about these topics, but in general, the questions are designed to encourage the informants to provide more detailed information. Furthermore, the interview guide will frequently include subsections or internal questions to facilitate the researcher's ability to elaborate on the various topics discussed. Typically, an interview guide will have a specific order for the topics, but if the informant raises a new topic, this can be changed. It is possible to achieve a good balance between standardization and flexibility by using these interview types (Johannessen et al. 2010, p.139).

A range of topics are developed based on the thesis statement of the interview or the study (Johansen et al., 2010, p.139). My interview guide had a variation of themes we were to talk about, such as cellphone ban, how they were made aware of how their students used TikTok, how they measure language skills, and if they had seen a change over time. Other questions were more direct to language skills, such as how TikTok might have affected the language of their students’. Some of the questions had follow up questions such as why/why not and so forth (See Appendix). Further, the questions became more focused on TikTok, and how they know their students use it, as well as what changes in language they have observed which may have been because of using TikTok (see Appendix). In the course of the interview, we were able to move through the interview guide, but the responses led to a range of conversations, which led to interesting topics being discussed that differed from those raised by the teachers.

3.4 Procedure

In order to set up the interview, I sent emails to the three teachers who were available during this time and who responded that they would like to participate. Second, was to have a place where they felt comfortable, which is why I asked if they preferred teams or in person, and all three agreed that teams would be an appropriate platform.

We started the interview by discussing my background and the interviewee's background. As we continued our conversation, we discussed TikTok. The practicality of using teams or zoom for two of the interviews was determined by time and distance. One of the interviews was conducted in person due to location and corresponding free time. The transcription of responses without recording worked well, especially since there were times when we repeated certain points, and I could ask them if they would like to repeat them, which allowed for extraction of the essence of the teachers' opinions. The interviews took approximately one hour and a half to complete but varied with respect to the candidate's prior experience as a teacher, as well as their level of expertise and interest in the subject.

4.0 Analysis

Whenever a qualitative study is conducted, it is essential to collect exact transcriptions of interviews and observations, or raw data, as they are referred to (Jacobsen, 2010, s. 127). I chose to use content analysis to synthesize the points brought forth by the teachers. In content analysis, it is common to analyze meaning content. The researcher is concerned with the content of the data material, for example what an informant tells in an interview (Johannessen, 2010, p.). Content analysis is a research technique that involves systematically analyzing and interpreting communication messages to identify patterns, themes, and relationships. According to Berelson (1952), content analysis is particularly useful for studying media content and can provide insights into the attitudes, beliefs, and values of individuals and groups. Weber further notes that content analysis can also help researchers understand how different media outlets shape public opinion (1990, p. 9). During the data analysis, a systematic methodology was employed to identify patterns, themes, and relationships within the information gathered from the teachers. This methodological process was intended to ensure objectivity and reliability in the interpretation of the findings. A content analysis was conducted to identify and analyze the recurring themes, contrasting perspectives, and key insights expressed by the teachers. This study aimed to determine if the teachers perceive TikTok as a potential benefit for language skills and a potential disadvantage based on their perceptions. As a result of this comprehensive analysis, it was possible to gain insight into the teachers' perspectives and contribute to the overall insights gained from the study by providing a better understanding of their perspectives.

5.0 Results

In this section I will describe the results and I will discuss the main themes that emerged from the data, including teachers' perceptions of screen time and TikTok usage among their students.

5.1 TikTok and cell phone usage

In the context of TikTok usage, the teachers' responses indicate a significant prevalence of the popular social media app among their students. They acknowledged that TikTok is used extensively, as evidenced by students frequently discussing it and wanting to share TikTok videos, with some even requesting to watch TikTok in class. The teachers emphasized the widespread adoption of social media platforms like TikTok among young students, including within the classroom setting. Interestingly, the restriction on cell phone usage at school grounds, does not appear to deter students who have access to their phones from using it. Additionally, student utilizing their phones to search for and discuss various topics and trends with their peers, indication that they are exposed to similar content regardless of whether they use the TikTok app or not.

Regarding screen time, the teachers held varying perceptions of their students' usage patterns. Some believed their students had unrestricted access to technology, including TikTok, while others observed excessive screentime concerns about students being addicted to their phones and advocated for limited technology usage. In terms of cell phone banning, all the schools had a cell phone ban in place. However, the reasoning for this ban varied from that their students were too immature to understand the consequences of phone usage and found ways to use them secretly despite the ban, to how the cell phone creates a lack of concentration and uneasiness, with students wanting to use their phone in class, to using them for TikTok instead of academic purposes when allowed to use it in academic setting. Lastly, one of the teachers highlighted the concern about the immaturity of their students by acknowledging that inappropriate things had been shared from places such as the locker room.

Regarding phone usage, the teachers unanimously agreed that social media platforms like TikTok, Snapchat, and YouTube, as well as communication apps such as WhatsApp, and text messages, were also popular among their students. Additionally, gaming apps like Roblox

were mentioned. One teacher also emphasized the importance of maintaining an open communication with students regarding their phone usage. Overall, the results of the questions about screentime, cell phone ban, and usage, suggest a prevalent and extensive use of TikTok among students. This despite the varying perceptions of screen time and the existence of cell phone bans. The teachers acknowledged the influence of social media platforms and the significance of communication through mobile devices, emphasizing the need for ongoing dialogue with students regarding responsible phone usage.

5.2 Has the technology “obsession” changed over time?

To gain a better understanding of how much technology has changed over time, I added a follow up question if there had been a change over time in their views, and while T02 was new, and could not give an answer, the other two teachers did. And according to T03, there has been a noticeable change in the educational landscape due to the integration of iPads in schools. However, T03 expresses concern that the situation has worsened over the past 12 years. While iPads can be a valuable resource for students with writing and reading difficulties, T03 highlights that students now find it incredibly challenging to even write two to three pages by hand compared to earlier generations. This suggests a shift in the way students engage with written language and raises questions about the balance between technology and traditional writing methods.

Another observation made by T03 is that students often sit together but are engaged with separate phones. This implies that although students are physically present, their attention and interactions are focused on their individual digital devices. This shift in social dynamics can have implications for language development and communication skills, as face – to – face interactions may be compromised in favor of online engagement. T01 raised a concern about phenomena such as Andrew Tate and the prominence of pronouns and gender identity in online discourse. Additionally, T01 notes that students discover old music and express their affinity for the English language. While the use of English words may seem impressive, T01 points out that there is a gap between their knowledge of these words and their understanding of their appropriate context. Words like “toxic” and “woke” are used loosely without a full grasp of their meanings, potentially leading to misconceptions or miscommunication.

Furthermore, T01 suggests that students speak English to each other, possibly as a way to establish their identity or as a result of finding it challenging to speak Norwegian fluently. The mention of students speaking with an accent and engaging in lots of oral activity highlights the influence of English language and culture on the students. However, T01 also notes that there may be a gap between the students' knowledge of English words and their understanding of the appropriate contexts in which to use them. The discrepancy between knowledge and context raises questions about the effectiveness of language learning and the need for further language instruction that focuses on accurate usage and understanding.

Overall, these quotes shed light on various aspects of students' engagement with technology, language trends, and the influence of English language and culture. They highlight both potential benefits and challenges that arise in this digital age, emphasizing the importance of critical thinking, context comprehension, and effective communication skills in navigating the evolving landscape of education and language acquisition.

5.3 TikTok and language skills

I was interested in knowing if they were aware that TikTok has the potential to affect their students' English language skills. Here their responses varied in how it could affect their language skills since they had a different outlook on the subject. The teachers highlighted several observations regarding the impact of TikTok and online content on students' language skills and critical thinking abilities. One teacher emphasized that the main difference lies in the concepts and ideologies that students, who are not yet mature enough, struggle to comprehend. While they learn more words, and get a bigger vocabulary, they still struggle with grammar and spelling because of how the text on TikTok videos usually does not match with what is being said. One of the teachers said that TikTok itself is not the core issue but rather a symptom of larger challenges in media literacy.

On the positive side, another teacher (T02) noted that students are acquiring new words and developing a better vocabulary through their engagement with TikTok. The teacher mentioned that students correctly use terms like "caught in 4K" (meaning someone who has been caught doing something "wrong", usually on a high-quality camera), indicating a deeper understanding of the language they encounter on the platform. However, T02 also expressed a

concern that students' understanding might be somewhat narrow, suggesting that their exposure to a specific range of content on TikTok may limit their overall comprehension.

Lastly, T03 acknowledged the improvement in students' verbal skills, noting that they possess a broader vocabulary. However, the teacher also observed that grammar skills tend to be weaker among students. This shows that T01 and T03 agree on some difficulties that could end up being a consequence of unmatched text and sound such as using the word "unalive" instead of "suicide" for example.

Based on the teachers' observations and insights, it becomes evident that they have recognized both the positive and negative effects of TikTok on the language skills of their students. T03 emphasized that their students, being relatively immature learners, struggle to comprehend various concepts and ideologies presented in TikTok videos. While acknowledging the increase in vocabulary, this teacher highlighted the difficulties students face in grammar and spelling. This observation raises concerns about the potential impact of TikTok on the overall linguistic accuracy of the students.

In contrast, another teacher acknowledged the benefits of students learning new words and developing a better vocabulary through their engagement with TikTok. T02 specifically noted that students correctly use terms encountered on the platform, such as "caught in 4K," indicating a level of understanding and assimilation of the language they encounter. However, they also expressed concerns about the limited range of content exposure, which may hinder students' overall comprehension abilities. While students may possess a strong grasp of the specific vocabulary encountered on TikTok, their comprehension of a wider range of language may be restricted.

Additionally, T03 reported improvements in students' verbal skills and vocabulary, highlighting the positive impact of TikTok. However, similar to T01, this teacher also observed weaknesses in students' grammar skills, as T01 and T02 also observed. The consistent observation of this limitation suggests that the mismatch between the text and sound in TikTok videos, which can lead to unconventional language usage, may contribute to difficulties in grammar acquisition. In summary, these differing perspectives from the teachers demonstrate their awareness of both the positive and negative aspects of TikTok's potential impact on the English proficiency of their students. While TikTok can contribute to

vocabulary expansion and improved verbal skills, challenges related to grammar, spelling, and overall comprehension remain. The teachers' observations highlight the need for educators to carefully navigate the use of TikTok in language learning contexts, capitalizing on its benefits while addressing the potential limitations it presents.

5.4 Evaluations of language skills

During the course of my research, I found that there is a standardized assessment for 5th grade which aims to assess the language skills of the students, however none for 6th grade. This disparity in standardized assessment between the 5th and 6th graders raises important considerations about the consistency and reliability of evaluating students' English proficiency at this stage of their education. To gain a deeper understanding of the evaluation methods employed in the classroom, I engaged in insightful discussions with the teachers who participated in this study. Through these interviews, I discovered various approaches and strategies that teachers utilize to assess their students' English language skills in the absence of a standardized test.

During written assignments, T01 explained that handwritten assignments are used instead of a computer-based assessments in order to assess spelling skills. Additionally, students can be assessed on their vocabulary understanding using glossary tests. Additionally, T01 also mentioned that they are an exposure teacher, meaning that their English classes are conducted exclusively in English. Rather than relying on a standardized mapping test, the teacher evaluates the student's work. T02, who took over teaching responsibilities just five months prior to the interview, mentioned that they had not conducted much evaluation. Rather than using a traditional diary format, they implemented Book Creator, a tool which creates digital books such as diaries. This assignment allows students to read and write about various topics in English on a regular basis. As such, T02 regularly monitored the student's progress and writing skills. Based on T02's analysis, they primarily evaluate students based on their ability to write and speak.

Similarly, T03 discussed their approach to evaluation, which included the use of videos. The majority of students are able to follow along with English subtitles during the viewing of English spoken films. Intermittently, these videos are paused to determine whether students comprehend and can follow along. Additionally, students are tested on their knowledge and

understanding of words by using texts, reading aloud in class, and discussing words in order to determine if they comprehend the texts. With the aid of these multimedia resources, T03 intends to reinforce comprehension and language skills beyond those taught through traditional textbooks alone.

As a result of the diverse perspectives presented in T01, T02, and T03, it is apparent that students' English language proficiency can be evaluated using a variety of methods. While standardized tests are not administered, teachers use a variety of strategies to assess students' vocabulary, speech, comprehension, writing, and oral communication skills. By incorporating videos, texts, and hands – on activities, students can be actively engaged in language learning. Overall, the primary objective of these evaluation methods is to assist students in developing and improving their English proficiency.

6.0 Discussion

This thesis explores the perception of Norwegian teachers of 6th grade students regarding the impact of TikTok on their English skills. This section will also incorporate the theories MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) and the Input Hypothesis to provide a theoretical framework for analyzing the impact of TikTok on L2 learning.

TikTok and language skills have become a topic of interest and concern among educators and journalists, this theme has showed up in different articles, as previously mentioned. Based on the answers provided by the teachers in the interviews, different perspectives have been offered regarding how TikTok might influence the students' English performance. T01 highlighted the potential challenges associated with complex concepts and ideologies presented on TikTok emphasizing the need for students to develop critical thinking skills and source evaluation. T02, on the other hand, acknowledged the positive aspect of TikTok expanding vocabulary and understanding of new words and phrases. However, T03 expresses concerns about potential negative effects on grammar skills.

The input hypothesis proposed by Stephen Krashen, suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input slightly beyond their current level of competence. The teachers' perspectives align with this theory, as they mentioned that TikTok provides exposure to new words and phrases, expanding their vocabulary and understanding

of concepts. However, concerns were also raised about the potential negative impact on grammar skills, indicating the need for a balanced approach to language development. Gass and Mackey (2015) and VanPatten and Williams (2015) emphasize the importance of meaningful input in language development. In the context of TikTok, the challenge lies in ensuring that the language input students encounter is comprehensible and meaningful, allowing for language acquisition to take place. Teachers can help in this aspect by encouraging critical thinking, facilitating discussions about the concepts and ideologies to help them understand, and providing opportunities for students to engage with comprehensible input. Although TikTok might have some useful effects on language acquisition, it should also be noted that TikTok does not provide the users with accurate feedback and does not provide the opportunity for optimal interaction among users. While TikTok may have the potential to help expand vocabulary and improve intonation, it does not provide feedback or interaction between users, which ultimately could limit the app as a learning platform. As a result, even if students learn terms as “caught 4K”, this does not necessarily indicate that they understand or use the term incorrectly.

In the context of TikTok and language skills, the teachers’ perspectives align with the input hypothesis. They mentioned that TikTok provides exposure to new words and phrases, expanding students’ vocabulary and understanding of concepts. This aligns with the notion that learners need exposure to comprehensible input that challenges their current level of competence to facilitate language acquisition (Krashen, 1985). However, concerns were also raised about the potential negative impact on grammar skills, indicating the need for a balanced approach to language learning. This highlights the importance of ensuring that the language input encountered on TikTok is comprehensible and meaningful, allowing for acquisition to take place (Gass & Mackey, 2015; VanPatten & Williams, 2015). Teachers can play a crucial role in this aspect by encouraging critical thinking facilitating discussions about the concepts and ideology presented on TikTok to help students understand them and providing opportunities for students to engage with the comprehensible input.

The incorporation of technology, particularly mobile phones, and language learning aligns with the MALL (mobile assisted language learning) theory. MALL emphasizes the use of mobile devices, such as smartphones, to create a conducive environment for effective language learning (Nuraeni et al., 2020). TikTok, as a popular social media platform, offers a unique opportunity for students to engage with authentic language use, exposure to new

vocabulary, and communication with peers. However, it is important to note that while TikTok can provide exposure to language input, it may not always guarantee comprehension or accuracy in language acquisition. This aligns with the notion that learners need to actively process and attend to relevant language input in order to internalize the linguistic features (Schmidt, 2001). Vulchanova (2017) and Arifin (2021) provide insights into the potential of social media platforms, including TikTok, for English learning purposes. They emphasize the need to optimize these platforms to enhance language learning opportunities. For example, educators can curate or create TikTok content that aligns with specific language learning objectives, incorporating activities that promote vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, or cultural understanding. By leveraging the popularity of TikTok and its engaging nature, more teachers can harness its potential as a supplemental tool to support language learning both in and outside the classroom. Arifin's article states that TikTok is used by everyone for different aspects, even teachers use TikTok to share knowledge materials (Arifin, 2021).

It is important to recognize that the impact of TikTok on language use and development is a topic that has garnered attention and concern from many educators and parents. While T01 believes that the concepts and ideologies presented on TikTok may be too complex for younger users, T02 argues that the app may actually be expanding their vocabulary with new words and phrases. T03 agrees that TikTok can enhance verbal skills through exposure to a wider range of vocabulary but cautions that grammar may suffer as a result. It is important to recognize that the impact of TikTok on language development may differ depending on the individual user and their level of engagement with the app. While some may be exposed to new vocabulary and concepts, others may be more prone to simply imitating the language used in videos without understanding its meaning or proper usage. As such, it is important for educators and parents to actively monitor and guide children's use of social media and to encourage critical thinking and source evaluation skills to mitigate potential negative impacts. Ultimately, with proper guidance and education, TikTok and other social media platforms can be used as tools to enhance language development and exposure to diverse perspectives and cultures. Lastly another point I came across which were interesting was that I also wanted to determine whether there were any similarities in the way they measured progress so that they could determine whether TikTok or social apps were beneficial to students' achievement.

6.1 Future research and limitations

6.1.1 Future research

This study gives an overview of this research questions, however there are many points and details that could potentially be extracted based on the results. For future research however, several study aspects can be explored to further investigate the impact of TikTok on language skills and learning. One possibility is to conduct a longitudinal study that spans over a more extended period to gain insight into the long-term effects of TikTok on language skills. This would then be monitored over a long period of time in order to determine whether any changes or improvements had been observed. Furthermore, a comparative study could be conducted to examine the effects of different social media platforms on language skills. If TikTok were compared with other popular platforms, such as Instagram or YouTube, it would provide a comprehensive understanding of how different platforms affect the learning and development of languages. Such research could involve assessing the types of language input, interaction, and feedback available on each platform. The results might also be analyzed in terms of vocabulary acquisition, grammar skills, and overall language proficiency.

Furthermore, investigating how teachers guide and intervene in the use of TikTok for language learning could be an interesting research topic. There may be opportunities to explore how teachers can curate or create TikTok content that is aligned with specific language learning objectives. Additionally, these interventions could be evaluated for their effectiveness in promoting language acquisition and skill development. Lastly, exploring students' perspectives regarding TikTok's impact on their language skills would provide valuable insights. Obtaining student opinions and experiences through interviews or surveys can help researchers understand what TikTok means from a student's point of view. Overall, these future research directions would contribute to a deeper understanding of TikTok's influence on language skills and learning. They would also provide practical insights for educators seeking to leverage social media platforms in language instruction.

Here, the perceptions of Norwegian teachers in the 6th grade regarding the impact of TikTok on their students' English skills was examined. By considering the theories of Mobile assisted language learning (MALL) and the input hypothesis, this research has provided a theoretical framework for analyzing the influence of TikTok on language development. The teachers provide a range of perspectives on the potential effects of TikTok on students' language

skills. The MALL theory suggests that incorporating technology, such as mobile phones, in language learning can create a conducive environment for effective English learning. The teachers' observations align with this theory, highlighting the opportunities TikTok offers for exposure to authentic language use, new vocabulary, and communication with peers. However, it is crucial to recognize that exposure to language input alone may not guarantee comprehension or accuracy in language acquisition. It is important to recognize that the impact of TikTok on language use and development can vary among individuals. While some teachers expressed concerns about complex concepts and ideologies presented on TikTok, others highlighted its potential for expanding vocabulary. Balancing the positive aspects of TikTok with potential challenges, such as grammar usage, requires active monitoring and guidance from educators and parents. Encouraging critical thinking and source evaluation skills can help mitigate any negative impacts.

6.1.2 Limitations

It is worth noting that this study does not utilize a recorder due to ethical concerns regarding personal data, and the time limit is insufficient to allow an application to be created to address these concerns. Instead of using a recorder, I had to take notes during the interview. I did not have the opportunity to have another researcher present which meant I had to take the notes during the interview. This meant that the conversation did not have the best flow since I had to finish my notes before moving on to the next question to be sure I got the key points. It is also worth mentioning that this is my first time conducting this type of study. This can have an impact on the results and the way the interview guide is constructed. In relation to the questions therein, whether they were too leading or if they were sufficiently general to allow the teachers to share their opinions about what was most important to them. While transcribing simultaneously as conducting the interviews was challenging, but manageable.. After the meeting, I reviewed and asked for clarification if there were any points that were unclear to me. Nevertheless, I think that my questions were followed up by effective follow-up questions such as "Why/Why not?" or "What makes you aware of this?" (See appendix 1). A qualitative study's reliability relates to the accuracy and quality of the data, the method of collecting the data, and the method of processing the data (Johannessen et al., 2010 p.40). Moreover, it is worth noting that one of the teachers in this study was relatively new, having only started teaching at the beginning of the semester, that being 5 months approximately. This limited experience may have impacted their responses to some questions such as the

questions about a change over time (See Appendix). Therefore, this study, if there would have been time, would have had a bigger recipient pool, which would have made a stronger conclusion.

7.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the perceptions of Norwegian teachers regarding the impact of TikTok on 6th – grade students' English skills. The findings contribute to the broader understanding of integrating social media platforms like TikTok into language learning contexts. However, it is important to acknowledge that further research and explorations are necessary to uncover the full potential and challenges associated with TikTok and similar platforms in enhancing language acquisition and fostering meaningful language development. Continued research in this area can explore different aspects, such as the impact of TikTok on specific language skills, the effectiveness of different teaching strategies that incorporate TikTok, and the long-term effects of using TikTok as a language learning tool. By addressing these research gaps and considering the perspectives of both teachers, future studies can further enhance our understanding of the potential benefits, challenges, and best practices for possibly integrating TikTok and similar platforms in language learning contexts as well as the potential role of such platforms outside the classroom. This knowledge can inform educators, researchers, and policymakers in making informed decisions and developing effective strategies to possibly leverage digital platforms like TikTok for language learning.

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9.0 Appendix

Interview guide (semi-structured)

Problem statement: What are Norwegian English teachers in 6th grade perceive TikTok's impact on the students' English skills?

Preparations: Interview guide and meeting either in person or on a digital platform (teams/zoom)

Interviewer: Elida Gjerde Thorvik (bachelor student)

Introduction: Hello and welcome, I'm Elida Gjerde Thorvik and we're going to have a conversation about students in 6th grade and their TikTok use and how this possibly affects their English skills. The digital age we live in now has changed children's lives and childhood, since they tend to end up on social media very early and therefore, I am very interested in teachers' impressions on this topic.

TOPIC: Workplace

I would like to know a little more about what impression you as teachers get of pupils' mobile phone use and screen time.

1. As a teacher in the 6th grade, what is your impression of the pupils' screen time on mobile phones?

Follow-up question:

- As you perceive it, has there been a change over time?

2. Is there a mobile phone ban at your school?

- Why/Why not?

3. Can you tell us a little about your impression of what they use their mobile phone for?

4. Do you have an impression of whether the students' ability to concentrate has changed over time?

Possible follow-up question:

- Do you have the impression that apps such as TikTok, known for short video clips, can have something to do with children's concentration over time?

TOPIC: Use of TikTok

1. Do you have the impression that your students use the popular social media app TikTok?

Any follow-up questions:

- Is it used a lot?
- What makes you aware of this?

2. What is your perception of TikTok use's effect on English skills?

Follow-up questions

- What are the possible positive and negative aspects of the use?

3. Are you aware that TikTok can potentially affect the students' English skills?

4. How do you measure the progress of the students' English skills?

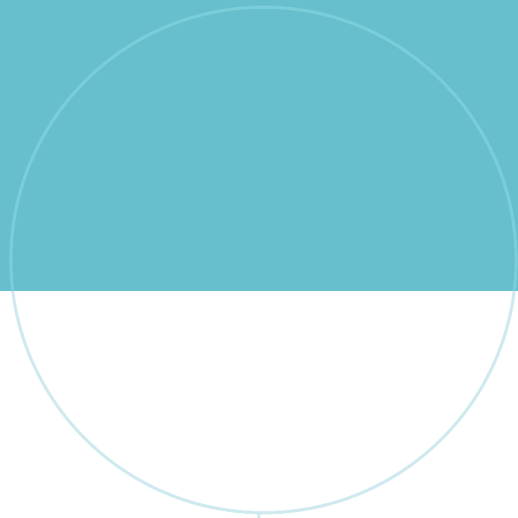
5. Do you think that the use of TikTok can help motivate students to learn English better and faster?

6. To what extent do you think there is a difference between TikTok and other popular social media such as youtube/tv etc.

SUBJECT: Anything else you want to say, something I may have missed?

1. Is there anything else you would like to say about the topic or anything you would like to comment or talk about related to this topic?

Answer:



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