EXPLORING ESL STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE USE OF TIKTOK CHANNEL ENGLISH BY GIOVANA TO ENHANCE SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract

This study explored ESL students' attitudes toward the use of the TikTok channel *English by Giovana* as a supplementary tool to enhance English speaking skills. The study focused on students' perceptions of the channel, and its perceived influence on their speaking fluency, confidence, and motivation, as well as the benefits and challenges they experienced when using TikTok-based content for speaking practice. A qualitative case study design was employed. Data collection took place in two phases: firstly, an observation checklist was used with 16 students in paired speaking activity, and secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 selected participants. The observations involved students creating and presenting short dialogues based on a provided situation and target word and then engaging in interviews to discuss their personal perspectives following the activity. The data were analyzed descriptively and thematically. The results showed that students' attitudes towards learning English by Giovana overall were positive as the students said the videos were easy to understand, interesting, funny, and helpful. The channel was seen to benefit students' perception of improving their vocabulary, pronunciation, phrase use, grammar awareness, confidence, and motivation. There were some problems that were found such as short length of video, distraction, fast speed of speech, unfamiliar words, less direct feedback, and the preference for face-to-face learning. Based on the results of the study, English by Giovana has potential as a supplementary digital tool in the practice of ESL speaking which is integrated with teacher guidance, student interaction, and structured classroom activities.

Keyword(s): *ESL speaking skills, TikTok, English by Giovana, student attitudes, digital learning*

INTRODUCTION

Short-form videos of social media are a valuable tool for students to learn English in real world speaking, particularly in the secondary school. Digital resources provide students with the flexibility to access language input, repeated exposure, and interactive learning opportunities (Haleem et al., 2022; Mad Nordin & Alias, 2023). TikTok combines elements such as short videos, audio, captions and visuals, which might enhance the accessibility and engagement of language

content. While the platform is primarily associated with entertainment, it also features educational content related to vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and everyday expressions (Aprillia et al., 2024; Sarkila et al., 2024).

English as a Second Language (ESL) is a language that relies on speaking as a key part of the language learning process, allowing learners to express ideas, participate in class activities, and communicate in an English environment. However, students often face challenges such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, anxiety, low level of confidence, and fear of making mistakes while speaking English (Rahmat et al., 2021). These obstacles can decrease their involvement in speaking. Hence, the teacher should provide additional resources to give adequate input to students in English and motivate students in a positive environment.

English by Giovana is an educational TikTok channel with short videos focusing on vocabulary differences, pronunciation, grammar corrections and common phrases for everyday interactions. Past studies have shown that TikTok can be used to enhance vocabulary learning, pronunciation practice, confidence, motivation, and speaking-related learning (Sarkila et al., 2024; Jantan et al., 2024; Nguyen & Tran, 2024; Romsi et al., 2023). Most studies, however, have been conducted at the level of the TikTok app as a whole, and paid little attention to students' responses to particular teaching channels or to the consumption of such content in the context of formal classroom interactions.

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the responses of the Malaysian secondary ESL students to English by Giovana following the use of selected videos in the context of a paired speaking activity. The research provides qualitative contextual evidence through interview accounts by comparing them with what is observed in the classroom. This comparison provides insights into students' attitudes towards the channel and the use of language input from TikTok in speaking practice. Students' engagement, motivation, modeling, imitation, and scaffolded classroom interaction are interpreted with reference to the theories of Uses and Gratifications Theory and Sociocultural Theory.

Thus, this study examines the attitudes of ESL students towards using English by Giovana as a supplementary resource for speaking practice. It also examines the perceived effect of the channel on students' fluency, confidence, and motivation in speaking and explores the benefits and challenges it encounters. While there was no formal evaluation of speaking fluency, references for improvement were based on the participants' self-perceptions.

To fulfil these aims, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What are the attitudes of ESL students toward utilizing the TikTok channel English by Giovana for enhancing their speaking skills?
2. How do ESL students perceive the influence of English by Giovana content on their speaking fluency, confidence, and motivation?
3. What benefits and challenges do ESL students identify in using English by Giovana as a resource for practising spoken English?

LITERATURE REVIEW

TikTok as a Digital Tool for ESL Speaking Practice

The use of digital platforms in language learning has become increasingly relevant as students are more exposed to online and social media-based learning resources. With regard to language input, speech, captions, demonstrations, and contextual examples, TikTok provides a short and

succinct audiovisual input for language learners. The videos that are uploaded to the platform may demonstrate pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and expressions that are used in real-world communication. Unlike conventional classrooms, these videos can be played back and viewed outside class. This allows students to listen to spoken English several times and witness the words and phrases being used in context.

The use of TikTok for English language learning has been found to generally have positive effects in previous studies. It has been said to be easy to understand, entertaining, fun to use. Furthermore, its audio-visual design could provide opportunities for learners to practice vocabulary, pronunciation, confidence, and motivation. Frequent exposure may attract learners to pronunciation aspects and familiarise with expressions which can then be rehearsed for speaking exercises. This is important because speaking is often challenging for ESL learners due to limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, fear of making mistakes, and low confidence (Rahmat et al., 2021**)**.

However, there are disadvantages to using TikTok to learn a language. Some of its content may be difficult to comprehend due to its fast speech and vocabulary, and complex language items may be hard to explain in the short format of its videos. Learners can also be distracted by entertaining videos or may be unable to get immediate corrective feedback. The constraints are that TikTok is not a replacement for classroom learning but should be used alongside it.

While there have been previous studies that investigated the perceptions of English learners by the use of TikTok, the studies have tended to focus on TikTok as a platform. There is less focus on a specific educational channel and on using its content in a structured classroom speaking task. In the context of this, the objective of the present study is to see how students respond to the channel English by Giovana, and to compare their accounts in the interviews with their observed behaviour during paired speaking sessions.

Uses and Gratifications Theory and Sociocultural Theory

This study is guided by the theories of Uses and Gratifications Theory and Sociocultural Theory. These theories collectively describe why students consume educational TikTok content and how it can be utilized in educational speaking tasks.

Uses and Gratifications Theory is a perspective that sees media consumers as active individuals who choose media based on their needs and goals (Katz et al., 1973, as cited in Ruggiero, 2000). For language learning, students can use TikTok to gain information, learn vocabulary, practice pronunciation, experience enjoyment, or increase their motivation. The theory is applicable to this study because it helps understand the attitude of participants toward English by Giovana and their perception of the channel as meeting both affective and cognitive needs of the learners such as learning useful English, enjoyment and confidence.

Sociocultural Theory focuses on the processes of mediation, modelling, scaffolding, and social interaction as key processes of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). In this research, English by Giovana provided language models of pronunciation, vocabulary and phrase use. Students were able to watch the speaker and mimic the language used and apply selected expressions during their paired dialogues. The teacher's direction and interaction with the students and the speaking activity in the classroom were additional scaffolding elements that supported the students' connection of the video input to the language.

The two theories therefore address complementary aspects of the study. Uses and Gratifications Theory explains students' reasons for engaging with the TikTok content, whereas Sociocultural Theory explains how video-based input may be developed through imitation, guided

practice, and interaction. Theoretical perspectives and their links to this study are illustrated in Figure 1.

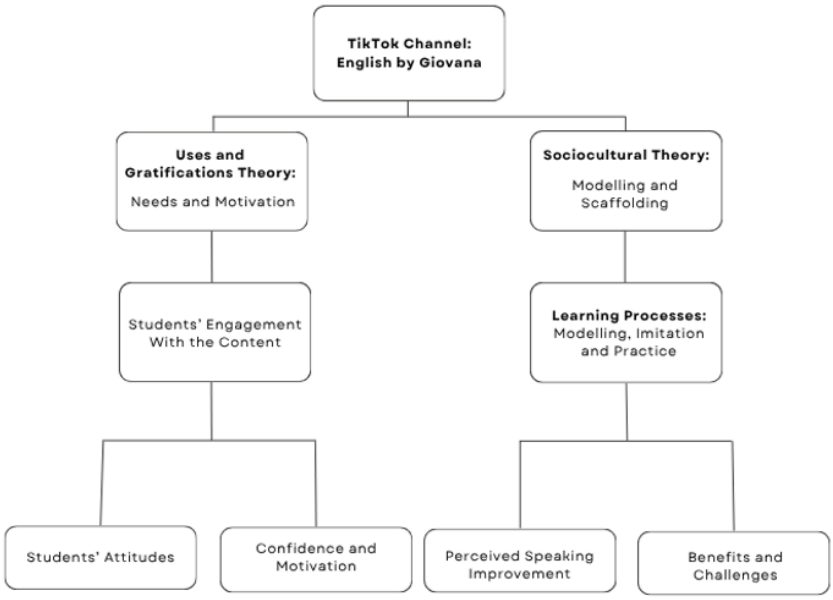

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of TikTok-Supported ESL Speaking Practice

Figure 1 shows that students' learning needs and motivation may shape their engagement with English by Giovana. The channel offers language input which can be modelled, imitated, and practiced through scaffolded classroom interaction. These processes are discussed in relation to students' attitudes, perceived improvement in their speaking skills, confidence, motivation, and the benefits and challenges they experienced. The framework represents an interpretive guide for qualitative analysis rather than a model of statistically tested causal relationships.

Previous Studies on TikTok and ESL Speaking Skills

Previous studies have shown that TikTok can support English language learning, particularly in improving speaking skills (Aprillia et al., 2024; Sarkila et al., 2024; Nguyen & Tran, 2024). The use of TikTok for English learning has been reported to stimulate generally positive responses from previous studies. It is described by learners as accessible, interesting and enjoyable, and its audiovisual format could contribute to vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, confidence, and motivation (Jantan et al., 2024; Romsi et al., 2023). Pronunciation features can also be highlighted with repeated exposure, and expressions can be familiarised which can then be used in speaking activities.

However, there are some limits to the reported benefits. Often, the short video format does not convey enough information on complex language concepts, fast speech, and unfamiliar words can make some content hard to understand (Aprillia et al., 2024; Sarkila et al., 2024). Learners may also become distracted by entertainment videos and may be unable to obtain immediate feedback and correction. The results suggest that TikTok can be more effective in conjunction with teacher guidance and structured speaking practice than on its own.

Although previous research has examined learners' perceptions of TikTok for English learning, much of it has treated TikTok as a general platform. Considerably less attention has

been paid to a specific channel of learning to the use of its content by students in a planned speaking event in the classroom. The present study addresses this gap by examining students' responses to English by Giovana and comparing their interview accounts with their observed behaviour during paired speaking practice.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate Malaysian secondary ESL students' attitudes toward using English by Giovana as a supplementary resource for speaking practice. This design was suitable because it centred on participants' perceptions, experiences, and observable behaviour within a specific classroom context. The study initially planned to involve 20 participants in the observation and 15 participants in the semi-structured interviews. However, four participants were absent during the speaking activity. As a result, 16 participants were observed in pairs of eight, identified as PR1-PR8. The predetermined interview sample of 15 participants was retained.

Fifteen of the 16 observed participants were purposively selected for the interviews. The selection criteria included participation in the paired speaking activity and sufficient functional English ability to understand the interview questions and communicate their experiences. This ability was determined from the researcher's observations of participants' comprehension and oral responses during the classroom activity. The chosen participants were not necessarily highly proficient, and a standardised proficiency test was not given. One observed participant needed more language assistance to comprehend and respond to the interview questions and was therefore not chosen for the interview phase. The interview participants were assigned the numbers P1 through P15. In the observation records, PR refers to an observed pair. The suffixes A and B were used when recorded behaviour applied to only one participant within a pair, such as PR3-B.

Data was collected in two stages using an observation checklist and semi-structured interviews. Before the observation, participants were introduced to selected videos from English by Giovana. During the paired activity, each pair received a situation and a target word. They created a short dialogue using the given information and subsequently presented it to the class. The observation checklist recorded six aspects of participants' behaviour: use of English phrases learned from the videos, imitation of pronunciation from the videos, confidence when speaking, reference to the TikTok videos, active participation in presenting, and interest in speaking before the class. These aspects are referred to as OC1 to OC6 in the Findings. The accompanying notes were used to describe differences in behaviour between and across the eight pairs.

After the activity, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 15 selected participants. The questions explored what participants liked or disliked about the content, whether they perceived that the videos supported their speaking skills, whether they repeated or imitated words and phrases, their confidence and motivation, the benefits and challenges they experienced, and whether they would recommend the channel.

In this study, references to speaking fluency represent participants' perceived or self-reported improvement rather than objectively measured performance. No formal speaking test or quantitative fluency measures, such as speech rate, pause frequency or response length, were employed.

The observation checklist data were analysed descriptively at the pair level. In each point of the checklists, the researcher noted how many pairs of observations were made and considered the accompanying notes, making comments about any differences within and between the pairs.

The counts were used only as descriptive summaries of the qualitative observations. Patterns of phrase use, pronunciation imitation, participation, confidence, hesitation and interest in speaking were given attention.

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which allows researchers to identify, analyze, and report repeated patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). First, the researcher read the transcripts repeatedly to become familiar with the participants' responses. Relevant responses were then coded, and codes expressing similar ideas were grouped into potential themes. Themes were identified within the transcriptions and were established based on the central meaning of each theme and then arranged in relation to the research questions. Four main themes were identified: attitudes toward English by Giovana, perceived improvement in speaking skills, confidence and motivation to speak English, and the benefits and challenges of learning through TikTok.

Methodological triangulation was used to establish credibility by comparing observation records with the accounts given in interviews by the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Alexander, 2019). This comparison allowed the researcher to examine whether participants' reported experiences were reflected in their classroom behaviour. Participant (P) and pair (PR) codes were used to protect their identities, participation was voluntary, and data collected were used only for academic research purposes.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

This section presents findings from observations of eight pairs (PR1-PR8) and semi-structured interviews with 15 participants (P1-P15). The results are presented in the order of the three research questions. A table summarises the themes, sub-themes, interview codes, and pair-level observation evidence for each research question. The table is followed by a narrative presentation of the findings and then a separate discussion that connects the findings with the theoretical framework and previous studies.

Research Question 1: ESL Students' Attitudes Toward English by Giovana

Research Question 1 discussed the attitudes of the participants toward the use of English by Giovana as a supplementary resource to practice speaking. Interviews and observations showed generally positive attitudes, with a few reports of concerns about the length of some videos, and the lack of clarity in a few.

The observation results in Table 1 indicated that six of the eight pairs actively engaged with speaking in the presentation and seven pairs of students expressed interest in speaking in front of the class. However, there were indications of variation in participation, as reflected in the observation notes. Some pairs actively engaged in the task while others were less actively engaged and needed more encouragement or were less consistent. Thus, the engagement in the classroom was positive, but not necessarily equal in all pairs.

This pattern was confirmed by the interview results. The channel was often described as interesting, enjoyable, accessible and useful by participants. P2 described the content as "interesting and easy to understand", while P11 considered it "funny and easy to understand". P14 particularly valued the use of situations that learners might encounter in daily life. The overall responses indicate that the participants valued the educational and entertaining aspects of the channel.

Table 1: Themes, Categories and Codes Derived from Research Question 1

Research Question	Theme	Categories/Sub-themes	Codes and Data Audit Trail
RQ1: What are the attitudes of ESL participants towards using the TikTok channel English by Giovana for enhancing their speaking skills?	Attitudes towards English by Giovana	Engaging and accessible content	Content was described as interesting, fun, funny, or easy to understand (P2, P3, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11). Daily-life situations were perceived as relatable (P14).
		Perceived educational usefulness	Participants reported learning English words, phrases, grammar, and speaking expressions (P1, P4, P5, P12, P13, P14, P15). P6 particularly liked the comments accompanying the videos.
		Reservation about the content	Some videos were described as too short (P2, P8, P9, P10), difficult (P10), or confusing (P14). These responses indicate generally positive but not entirely uncritical attitudes.
		Recommendation and behavioral engagement	All 15 interview participants stated that they would recommend the channel (P1-P15). OC5: Active participation was recorded in 6 of 8 pairs (PR1, PR2, PR4, PR5, PR6, PR7), although the level of participation varied. OC6: Interest in speaking before the class was recorded in 7 of 8 pairs (PR1, PR2, PR4, PR5, PR6, PR7, PR8)

P = interview participant; **PR** = observed pair; **PR-A** and **PR-B** = Participant A and Participant B within an observed pair; **OC** = observation checklist item; **RQ** = research question.

However, their attitudes were not entirely positive. Some videos were too brief for P2, P8, P9 and P10, some content was difficult for P10, and some explanations were confusing for P14. Although some participants expressed reservations, all 15 stated that they would recommend the channel. Their reasons included its usefulness for learning words, phrases, pronunciation, and speaking expressions. The results indicate that in general participants considered English by Giovana to be a useful and accessible supplement to their language, and the clarity and length of the videos was a factor in the usefulness.

The positive attitudes can be interpreted through Uses and Gratifications Theory. Participants appeared to engage with English by Giovana because it fulfilled cognitive needs by providing vocabulary, pronunciation, and practical expressions. The presentation was also entertaining and accessible fulfilling the affective needs of making learning enjoyable and less intimidating. This is part of the reason all the interview respondents were willing to recommend the channel.

The results align with previous studies that suggest that learners are positive towards TikTok when the language content is accessible, useful and enjoyable (Aprillia et al., 2024; Sarkila et al., 2024; Kaur & Kamaruddin, 2024). However, the reservations about short, difficult, or confusing videos show that positive attitudes were conditional rather than uncritical. The participants appreciated the platform when the content was presented in a comprehensible way and relevant to them, but at the same time fuller explanations and teacher support were needed by some of them. The results of this study have implications in the current classroom setting because interest in a digital tool did not equitably lead to equal participation among all pairs. English by Giovana may therefore be used to attract learners' attention and to offer input for speaking but should not be used as a language resource on its own, but in conjunction with structured tasks, clarifications and teacher guidance.

Research Question 2: Students' Perceptions of the Influence of English by Giovana on Their Speaking Fluency, Confidence, and Motivation

Research Question 2 examined how participants perceived the influence of English by Giovana on their speaking fluency, confidence, and motivation. Two themes emerged: perceived improvement in speaking skills, and confidence and motivation to speak English.

Based on Table 2, the first theme focused on the participants' perception of their own speech improvement. Responses to the interview questions suggested that the participants were more likely to link improvement to vocabulary, pronunciation, phrase use, and grammar awareness. P1 said that the videos taught them 'new words and sentences' and P2 said that she learned vocabulary and pronunciation. P4 referred to the correction of grammar mistakes, and P11 highlighted conversational expressions such as "speak up". The responses demonstrate that participants felt the videos were useful for language input for speaking.

The results of the observation revealed that all eight pairs adopted a few English phrases related to the TikTok content, but PR3 used them only partially. Six pairs produced clear pronunciation imitation. These observations demonstrate that participants applied some video-based language during the task. However, they do not establish measurable improvements in fluency or speaking performance.

The second theme was confidence and motivation. Ten participants said that they were more confident after viewing the videos, and four said that they were "a little bit" more confident. P4 did not report greater confidence and continued to express concern about grammar errors. The observation findings similarly showed uneven confidence. Six pairs of participants had at least one participant with a high level of confidence, whereas some had a participant with low level confidence, or it was minimal in pairs.

Table 2: Themes, Categories and Codes Derived from Research Question 2

Theme	*Categories/Sub-themes*	*Codes and Data Audit Trail*
Perceived improvement in speaking skills	Vocabulary and useful expressions	Participants reported perceived improvement through learning new vocabulary, phrases, or expressions (P1, P2, P3, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15).
	Pronunciation and grammar awareness	Perceived pronunciation improvement or pronunciation practice was reported by P2, P6, P8, P9, and P10. P4 reported greater grammar awareness, while P11, P12, and P14 referred to learning contextually appropriate phrases.
	Application of language input	OC1: Some of the English phrases learned from TikTok were recorded across all eight pairs (PR1-PR8), although PR3 used only a limited number of phrases. OC2: Clear pronunciation imitation was recorded in six pairs (PR1, PR4, PR5, PR6, PR7, PR8), while limited imitation was noted in PR2 and PR3.
Confidence and motivation	Self-reported confidence	Ten participants reported clear increases in confidence (P1, P2, P3, P6, P8, P9, P11, P12, P14, P15). Four reported feeling only slightly confident (P5, P7, P10, P13), while P4 reported not feeling substantially more confident.
	Observed confidence	OC3: Clear confidence from at least one participant was recorded in six pairs: PR3-B, PR4-B, PR5, PR6, PR7-B and PR8-A. PR2 showed minimal confidence, while PR1 showed effort but lacked seriousness during the presentation.
	Motivation and interest in speaking	Fourteen participants reported that the videos motivated them to speak English more frequently (P1-P12, P14, P15). P13 reported no change in motivation. OC6: Interest in speaking before the class was recorded in seven of eight pairs (PR1, PR2, PR4, PR5, PR6, PR7, PR8)

P = interview participant; **PR** = observed pair; **PR-A** and **PR-B** = Participant A and Participant B within an observed pair; **OC** = observation checklist item; **RQ** = research question.

Motivation was more consistently reported. Fourteen participants stated that the videos encouraged them to speak English more frequently. For instance, P2 indicated that they were motivated to practice speaking daily and P9 linked motivation with enjoying the topic and how easily it was presented. There were no reports of change in motivation in P13. In seven of the

eight pairs, it was observed that there was interest in speaking in front of the class. Overall, the channel was seen as motivational, although not all effects on confidence were found.

From the perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory, participants engaged with English by Giovana because the videos appeared to satisfy learning needs involving vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and practical expressions. The enjoyable presentation also fulfilled affective needs and may have contributed to the motivation reported by most participants. However, the differences in confidence indicate that engaging content alone did not remove anxiety or concerns about accuracy.

The videos also served as models of spoken language, as explained by the Sociocultural Theory. Participants listened to pronunciation, repeated words and phrases, and applied some of the language during paired dialogues. Peer interaction and teacher guidance provided additional opportunities for supported practice. The observation findings therefore indicate classroom application of the input, but not independently measured improvement in speaking fluency.

The results are also consistent with previous studies, which reported that TikTok can support vocabulary development, pronunciation practice, speaking confidence, and motivation among English language learners (Sarkila et al., 2024; Nguyen & Tran, 2024; Romsi et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the present findings provide a more qualified interpretation. While most participants felt benefits, confidence levels were low for some participants, and P13 had no motivational change. This means that learners react differently in response to their linguistic needs, confidence and understanding of the content.

The findings are significant because they distinguish exposure to useful language from demonstrated improvement in speaking performance. While English by Giovana may offer easy access to input and motivation for speaking practice, the need for repeated speaking opportunities, teacher explanation, and corrective feedback remains. As no formal fluency test was administered, the findings should be understood as perceived or self-reported improvement rather than objective evidence of increased fluency.

Research Question 3: Benefits and Challenges of Using English by Giovana for Speaking Practice

The findings for Research Question 3 were organized into two themes: the benefits of using English by Giovana for speaking practice and the challenges experienced by participants. Table 3 summarises the categories and supporting data.

The first theme concerned the benefits of using English by Giovana for speaking practice. Repetition and imitation were frequent, with 12 participants reporting that they repeated words, phrases or pronunciation from the videos. This was confirmed with observation data, where 6 pairs of the 8 pairs exhibited clear pronunciation imitation. Participants also remembered practical vocabulary and expressions that might be useful in everyday conversation, such as "at the back", "edible", "poisonous", and "venomous".

The observation findings further indicated that the video content was transferred into classroom activity. Some of the phrases learned from the channel were recorded in all eight pairs, and every pair referred to the videos during preparation. These findings suggest that participants were able to draw upon the video input when constructing and presenting their paired dialogues, although the extent of imitation and application varied between pairs.

Table 3: Themes, Categories and Codes for Research Question 3

Theme	Categories/Sub-themes	Codes and Data Audit Trail
Benefits of using English by Giovana	Repetition and pronunciation imitation	Twelve participants reported repeating or mimicking the content (P2, P3, P4, P6-P14). P1 did so occasionally, while P5 and P15 did not. **OC2:** Clear imitation was observed in six pairs (PR1, PR4-PR8), with limited imitation in PR2 and PR3.
	Vocabulary, phrases and practical expressions	Participants recalled vocabulary and expressions relating to directions, greetings, pronunciation, British and American terms, food and daily communication (P1-P15). Examples include "at the back", "uneven", "edible", "audible", "poisonous" and "venomous".
	Transfer into classroom speaking	**OC1:** Some of the TikTok-related English phrases were recorded in all eight pairs (PR1-PR8). **OC4:** Reference to the TikTok videos during preparation or presentation was recorded in all eight pairs (PR1-PR8)
Challenges and limitations	Linguistic difficulties	Difficulties included unfamiliar vocabulary (P1, P5), fast speech and remembering vocabulary (P2), pronunciation differences (P3), difficulty understanding or differentiating meanings (P13), and confusing explanations (P14).
	Content, technical and feedback limitations	Videos were perceived as too short or distracting (P2, P8, P9, P10). Technical problems included slow internet or device lag (P6, P14). P11 identified the inability to ask content creator questions or receive immediate feedback.
	Confidence and learning preferences	P4 identified limited confidence as a challenge. P13 and P14 preferred face-to-face learning because it allowed greater explanation and understanding. P7, P12, and P15 reported no major challenges.
	Observed classroom limitations	The observation notes showed uneven participation and confidence. PR3 demonstrated minimal participation; PR1 participated but lacked seriousness; and only one participant showed clear confidence in PR3, PR4, PR7 and PR8. These patterns suggest that some participants still required teacher guidance and peer support.

P = interview participant; **PR** = observed pair; **PR-A** and **PR-B** = Participant A and Participant B within an observed pair; **OC** = observation checklist item; **RQ** = research question.

The second theme focused on challenges and limitations. Participants encountered language problems, such as unknown words, rapid speech, pronunciation variations, and

conflation of similar language meanings. Some pointed out that the videos were short and distracting, internet connectivity issues, device lag, and the lack of instant clarity. For instance, P11 stated that questions couldn't be directed directly towards the content creator or receive immediate feedback.

Confidence and learning style differences were also found. P13 and P14 showed preference for face-to-face teaching, whereas P4 indicated lack of confidence. Observation results also indicated that there were uneven participation and confidence between some of the pairs. Nevertheless, P7, P12, and P15 reported no major difficulties, demonstrating that participants did not experience the challenges in the same way.

The results suggest that English by Giovana provided models of vocabulary, expressions and pronunciation which were accessible to the participants for repetition and application in paired speaking. This is consistent with Sociocultural Theory, as the videos provided language models while the paired activity enabled participants to imitate and practice the language through social interaction. All eight pairs used the words related to TikTok, indicating that an audiovisual input can be linked to language in the classroom when it is accompanied by a well-designed speaking task.

Previous studies have reported perceived benefits of TikTok for vocabulary learning, pronunciation practice, confidence, motivation and speaking development. (Sarkila et al., 2024; Nguyen & Tran, 2024; Romsi et al., 2023). However, the results also highlight that the short video format can be both positive and negative. While short videos could make language focused and accessible, they can be inadequate in terms of providing explanation for difficult vocabulary and could allow learners to hear the language at a fast speed without opportunities for immediate clarification.

The challenges found in this study also support previous research which highlighted that TikTok may cause distraction, provide limited explanation, and expose learners to fast speech or unfamiliar vocabulary (Aprillia et al., 2024; Sarkila et al., 2024). The difference in the levels of confidence and participation that were observed also suggests that exposure to the TikTok content does not guarantee successful speaking performance. Some participants may still need to practice using vocabulary, watch the video multiple times, be explained by the teacher, need help from peers, and receive feedback from the teacher.

Thus, English by Giovana is best suited as an additional tool than a substitute for classroom teaching. It can be enhanced by using videos that are appropriate for the students' level, previewing unfamiliar words, giving students multiple chances to watch the video, integrating pair work sessions, and offering timely clarification and feedback.

CONCLUSION

The research in this study examined the attitudes of the ESL participants towards the TikTok channel English by Giovana as an aid to speaking practice. Findings revealed generally positive attitudes towards the channel from both the semi-structured interviews and observation checklists. The videos were found to be understandable, interesting, enjoyable, and useful for English learning, as described by the participants. All 8 pairs of students referred to the English phrases learned from the channel in the paired speaking activity.

Participants also perceived improvement in vocabulary, pronunciation, phrase usage and grammar awareness. Many reported repeating or imitating the language presented in the videos, while some associated the content with increased confidence and motivation to speak English. The results are also based on the participants' self-reported or perceived improvement in their

speech, rather than objective assessments of speaking development. There was also some variation in level of confidence and participation among participants and those pairs observed.

Some difficulties were listed such as fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, different pronunciations, brief or confusing explanations, distraction, technical difficulties, and lack of immediate feedback. Others of the participants preferred "real time" learning opportunities as it enabled them to ask questions and get immediate clarification. Thus, TikTok can be considered as a supplementary, not a replacement for the classroom.

The results indicate that the teachers can utilize TikTok videos that have been carefully selected as short input materials that can be used in introducing the vocabulary, pronunciation, and useful expressions before involving the learners in dialogues, role plays, or presentations. Repeated viewing, vocabulary preparation, peer interaction, teacher scaffolding, and corrective feedback may help learners apply the video content more effectively. The videos can also be used for self-study purposes as well as for self-exposure to spoken English.

The sample size of this study was small and restricted in context, and the study's sole focus was on one TikTok channel. It is a qualitative study that used interviews and observations and did not rely on formal speaking tests or quantitative assessments of fluency. Observations were recorded by a single researcher in one paired activity, and students' responses may have been influenced by the researcher's presence. Thus, the results are not meant to be generalizable to all ESL learners or TikTok learning materials. Future research could involve larger and more diverse samples, compare multiple English-learning channels, or employ mixed methods and pre- and post- speaking assessments to examine changes in speaking performance.

In general, English by Giovana was found to have potential in supporting students' ESL speaking practice as supplementary digital resource. The value seems to rely on the appropriateness of what has been chosen for content and the way this is incorporated into a well-organized lesson. With teacher guidance and interactive opportunities, TikTok videos could be effective in supporting students in vocabulary learning, pronunciation practice, confidence and motivation.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contribution

The sole author conducted the fieldwork, prepared the literature review and methodology, organized and coded the qualitative data, conducted the thematic analysis, and interpreted the findings.

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Ethics Statement

This study was conducted following ethical guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and their parents.

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