

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the current era of globalization, developments in digital technology had brought about major changes in the world of education. Various digital innovations had changed the way teachers and students interacted, communicated, and acquired knowledge. Learning, which was previously limited to the classroom, could now take place on a variety of interactive and flexible digital platforms. One of the fastest growing and most popular social media platforms among the younger generation was TikTok.

In the beginning, TikTok was created only for entertainment and sharing short content. However, as its use increased, educators and researchers began to utilize this platform as a creative learning tool. This was because TikTok had various advantages, such as easily accessible short video formats, interesting multimedia features, and the ability to present microlearning. According to Gálvez-Ruiz (2025), TikTok had great potential to be used as an educational medium because it could facilitate the delivery of learning materials in a concise, interactive, and contextual manner.

In the context of English language learning, reading comprehension was one of the most important skills. Reading was not just about recognizing words, but also understanding meaning, interpreting messages, and connecting information in the text with the reader's existing knowledge. However, in many countries where

English was used as a foreign language (English as a Foreign Language / EFL), including Indonesia, students often still experienced difficulties in understanding English texts. These difficulties could be caused by limited vocabulary, lack of motivation to read, and minimal exposure to authentic reading materials (Peng, Jager, & Lowie, 2020; Okumuş Dağdeler, 2023). Therefore, innovative learning strategies that were relevant to the digital lives of today's students were needed.

One alternative that could be used to improve reading comprehension was through subtitled videos. Videos equipped with translated text (subtitles) allowed students to obtain visual, audio, and text input all at the same time, thereby helping them to better understand the content of the reading material. Several studies showed that subtitles played a positive role in language learning, as they helped students connect sounds and written forms, enriched their vocabulary, and improved their understanding of the context of the discourse (Dizon, 2021). Thus, subtitled videos on TikTok could be an effective learning resource, as they were short, interesting, easy to repeat, and suited the learning style of the digital generation.

Moving on to the local context, Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji as one of the state universities in the Riau Islands had an important role in producing young generations who were adaptive to technological advances and globalization. Most Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji students were part of the digital generation, so they were very familiar with various social media platforms, including TikTok. This condition made research on Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji EFL student's

perceptions of using TikTok Videos with English Subtitle relevant and contextual. This study was expected to provide an overview of how students considered the use of TikTok videos with English subtitles as an effective and interesting means of improving their reading comprehension skills.

In this study, perception referred to student's personal views, attitudes, and beliefs about the use of TikTok videos with English subtitles as a learning medium for reading. According to Lee and Chen (2022), perception played an essential role in determining learner's acceptance and engagement with new learning technologies. Therefore, understanding EFL student's perceptions provided valuable insight into how they responded to digital-based learning environments such as TikTok.

Based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), there were two main factors that influenced a person's acceptance and use of technology, namely perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Therefore, researching Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji EFL student's perceptions of using TikTok with English subtitles was important as a first step in understanding the potential of this platform as a modern and adaptive language learning tool.

Several previous studies had shown the potential of TikTok as a medium for learning English. For example, research conducted by Dewi et al. (2023) showed that the use of TikTok could improve student's speaking skills because this platform provided a place for students to practice pronunciation and speak more confidently. Furthermore, research by Escobar and Álvarez (2023) found that short videos with

text or subtitles played an important role in enriching student's vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, a study by Yang and Wang (2022) also revealed that microlearning through social media such as TikTok could increase student engagement and motivation in learning foreign languages, especially in listening skills.

However, although there had been a lot of research on TikTok in English language learning, most of it still focused on speaking, vocabulary, and listening skills. Research that specifically highlighted the use of TikTok as a tool for improving reading comprehension was still very rare. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill this gap by examining the EFL Student's perceptions of Using Tiktok Videos with English subtitles for reading comprehension.

1.2 Identification of Problem

The following problems were identified in this investigation based on the background issues mentioned:

1. Students had different opinions toward the use of TikTok as a medium for learning English. Some students considered TikTok helpful for learning, while others considered TikTok only as an entertainment platform.
2. Many students used TikTok in their daily lives, but it was still unclear how they perceived the use of TikTok videos with English subtitles in English learning.

1.3 Limitation of the study

This study was limited to EFL student's perceptions toward the use of TikTok videos with English subtitles in English learning in Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji. This study only focused on student's opinions about the use of TikTok as a medium for learning English, including both positive and negative opinions.

The TikTok videos used in this study were limited to short videos containing English subtitles and related to educational or semi-educational content. Entertainment videos without English subtitles were not included in this study. This study only examined student's perceptions based on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and motivation and engagement. The participants of this study were limited to students from the English Education Study Program, 2024 cohort, at Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji.

1.4 Formulation of the study

Based on the background, identification, and scope of the problem above, the research question for this study was How did EFL Students Perceptions of Using TikTok Videos with English Subtitles for Reading Comprehension?

1.5 Objective of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore EFL Students Perceptions of Using TikTok videos with English Subtitles for Reading Comprehension.

1.6 Significances of Study

1. Theoretically

Theoretically, This study contributed to existing theory about EFL student's perceptions toward technology-based learning media. The findings could enrich the literature on how students viewed and responded to digital learning environments, especially in the context of reading comprehension. By focusing on perception, this study helped describe student's attitudes, acceptance, and awareness of the role of English-subtitled TikTok videos in language learning.

2. Practically

a. For the Lecturers

The findings of this study could help lecturers understand how students perceived technology-assisted learning media. By knowing student's perceptions, lecturers could adapt their teaching approaches to match student's attitudes and preferences toward digital learning environments, making instruction more engaging and relevant.

b. For EFL Student

The study could increase student's awareness of their own perceptions toward the use of digital learning media. Understanding their perceptions helped them reflect on their learning attitudes and develop a more positive mindset toward integrating technology, such as English-subtitled TikTok videos, into their reading practice.

c. For the other researchers

The results of this study could serve as a reference for future researchers who wished to explore perception-based studies. It provided a basis for conducting further investigations on how student's perceptions influenced motivation, learning engagement, and outcomes in various technology-supported language learning contexts.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension was a person's ability to understand the meaning of written text through word recognition, literal meaning comprehension, and drawing conclusions about the content of the text. In this study, reading comprehension referred to the ability of students to understand the meaning of English subtitles in TikTok videos.

2. EFL Students of Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji

EFL students were students who studied English as a foreign language, that was in an environment where English was not the primary language of everyday communication. In the context of this study, EFL students referred to students at Raja Ali Haji Maritime University who english study programs.

3. TikTok

TikTok was a short-form video sharing platform (15–60 seconds) that allowed users to add English subtitles. In this study, TikTok was viewed as a potential

learning medium that could help EFL students improve their reading comprehension skills through subtitles that were synchronized with the audio and visual elements of the video.

