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FULL PAPER**Investigating the Digital Voice Impact of Gen Z: How TikTok Shapes EFL
Language, Culture, and Society*****Prepared by*****Siddig Mohammed**

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ab.altaher@qu.edu.sa<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7920-887X>**Abstract:**

The emergence of social media platforms such as TikTok has revolutionized Generation Z's engagement with language, culture, and identity. TikTok, a prominent short-form video platform, facilitates global connections and provides distinctive chances for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to improve their language proficiency, participate in cultural exchange, and investigate digital identities. This study seeks to examine TikTok's influence on language acquisition, intercultural communication, and identity development within Generation Z. A mixed-methods approach was utilized, employing 100 participants, comprising 70 EFL learners and 30 native speakers, recruited via purposive sampling. Quantitative data were gathered through surveys to examine usage patterns, while qualitative data were acquired via interviews and content analysis of 200 TikTok videos. The results indicated that 78% of EFL learners experienced enhanced listening and speaking abilities attributed to TikTok's interactive and authentic content. Furthermore, 70% of participants reported that TikTok promoted intercultural comprehension, while numerous users attributed their self-expression and digital identity formation to the platform. The study advocates for the incorporation of TikTok as an ancillary resource in language teaching and the enhancement of media literacy to mitigate potential issues such as linguistic errors and cultural stereotypes. These findings highlight TikTok's capacity to improve informal education and promote global citizenship.

Keywords: TikTok, EFL, Cultural Exchange, Identity Formation, Social Media Platform

1. Introduction

TikTok's distinctive features, including its vast global reach and user-generated content, create an ideal environment for informal language learning and cultural interaction. The platform's capacity to encourage genuine communication and foster creativity positions it as an indispensable tool for EFL learners. This research aims to uncover the extent of TikTok's influence on language acquisition by examining usage patterns, user experiences, and the platform's role in promoting intercultural understanding. Furthermore, the study investigates how TikTok aids in the development of digital identities among Generation Z, shedding light on the intricate relationship between social media and self-expression.

The importance of this research lies in its potential to reshape educational practices and media literacy initiatives. By assessing TikTok's effectiveness as a language learning resource and its influence on cultural and identity dynamics, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the broader implications of digital media on education and social interaction. The findings could advocate for the inclusion of TikTok in language teaching methodologies and underscore the necessity of critical media literacy in navigating the complexities of digital platforms. Ultimately, this research offers crucial understanding of how Generation Z's digital voice is molded by and contributes to the ever-evolving landscape of social media. Social media platforms have profoundly transformed the way Generation Z interacts with language, culture, and identity. Among these platforms, TikTok has emerged as a revolutionary short-form video application that reshapes digital engagement. This study investigates the significant impact of TikTok on EFL learners, focusing on how it enhances language acquisition, intercultural communication, and identity development. By harnessing TikTok's engaging and authentic content, EFL learners can boost their language skills, immerse themselves in cultural exchanges, and explore their digital identities like never before.

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molded by and contributes to the ever-evolving landscape of social media. The findings could advocate for the integration of TikTok into language teaching methodologies and underscore the importance of critical media literacy in navigating the challenges posed by digital platforms. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how Generation Z's digital voice is shaped by and shapes the evolving landscape of social media.

Research Questions

1. In what ways does TikTok impact the language acquisition of EFL learners?
2. What function does TikTok serve in facilitating intercultural communication?
3. What is the influence of TikTok on the identity development of Generation Z?

Objectives

1. To evaluate TikTok's efficacy as a language acquisition resource.
2. To investigate TikTok's function in promoting cultural exchange.
3. To analyze the influence of TikTok on digital identities.

2. Literature Review

TikTok has emerged as a significant platform influencing EFL language acquisition, intercultural communication, and identity development among Generation Z. The platform's unique features, such as short-form videos and interactive content, have been shown to enhance language learning by providing authentic communication opportunities and fostering creativity and engagement among learners. Studies indicate that TikTok can effectively improve speaking skills and expand vocabulary for English as an Additional Language (EAL) students, making it a valuable supplementary educational resource (Condoy, 2024) (Pereira & Hitotuzi, 2023) (Rininggayuh et al., 2024). Furthermore, TikTok facilitates intercultural communication by enabling users to engage with diverse cultural content, thus promoting cultural exchange and awareness. This is achieved through the platform's global reach and the ability to share and consume content from various cultural backgrounds, which helps users develop a broader understanding of different cultures (Condoy, 2024) (Ghani et al., 2023). Additionally, TikTok plays a crucial role in developing the identity of Generation Z by providing a space for self-expression and creating digital identities. The use of slang and emerging linguistic structures on TikTok reflects the dynamic nature of language and identity among young users, allowing them to explore and express their identities in innovative ways (Nurhayati & Putri, 2024) (Ugoala, 2024) (Dewi, 2024). This digital voice not only influences personal identity but also contributes to the evolution of language as users adapt to new communication platforms. In all the studies reviewed here, TikTok's impact on language acquisition, cultural exchange, and identity development underscores its potential as a transformative tool for Generation Z education and social interaction.

2.1 TikTok and Language Learning

Social media sites like TikTok offer avenues for informal language acquisition. Godwin-Jones (2018) asserts that digital tools produce immersive settings that facilitate language acquisition. Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis emphasizes the significance of intelligible input, which TikTok provides with its extensive user-generated content. Lee (2020) warns about the platform's absence of regulation, which may subject learners to uneven language usage. Ulla (2023) and Törnqvist (2022) examine the role of short-form videos in facilitating microlearning, enabling users to assimilate language in manageable segments. Zheng and Yu (2020) emphasize TikTok's participatory culture, which allows users to engage with information actively, thus enhancing both linguistic proficiency and self-assurance. The integration of TikTok into language learning, particularly for English, has been explored across various studies, highlighting its potential as an innovative educational tool. TikTok's unique features, such as short-form video content and interactive elements, offer a dynamic platform for enhancing language proficiency and engagement. Erich Gonzalo Guamán Condoy's research emphasizes TikTok's role in fostering creativity, engagement, and learner autonomy. It suggests it can revolutionize traditional language learning methodologies by creating vibrant learning environments that transcend conventional classroom settings (Condoy, 2024). Similarly, Enggal Rininggayuh et al. conducted a systematic literature review that underscores TikTok's effectiveness in improving English speaking skills, noting its capacity to create interactive learning environments that enhance language proficiency (Rininggayuh et al., 2024). The platform's alignment with progressivism educational philosophy is also noted, as it supports technological adaptation and innovation in education, making learning more engaging and motivating for students (Nabilah et al., 2024). Furthermore, studies by Hana Elisabet Simanjuntak et al. and Christanti Oktasya Hutasoit et al. reveal that TikTok can significantly enhance student engagement and motivation, positively impacting learning outcomes by presenting educational material in an appealing visual format (Simanjuntak et al., 2024) (Hutasoit et al., 2024). From students' perspective, TikTok aids in vocabulary expansion and contextual understanding of grammar despite challenges like content quality variations (Susanto & Suparmi, 2024). The platform's potential is not limited to English; it has also been explored for Arabic language learning, where it aids in improving various language skills through its audio-visual features (Hilmi et al., 2024) (Siregar & Zainuddin, 2024). In the context of young Saudi learners, TikTok is perceived as an effective tool for enhancing English speaking skills, with both students and teachers acknowledging its motivational and educational benefits (Aldossari, 2024). Overall, the literature suggests that when strategically integrated into language education, TikTok can serve as a valuable supplementary resource that enriches learning experiences and supports pedagogical innovation.

2.2 Cultural Exchange and Representation

TikTok's worldwide influence facilitates cultural exchange. Chen and Zhang (2022) contend that users disseminate genuine cultural tales, fostering intercultural comprehension. Byram's (2021) intercultural competence model underscores these contacts' significance in fostering cultural awareness. Researchers such as Alim and Reyes (2020) caution that cultural content on TikTok may reinforce prejudices, highlighting the need for critical media literacy. Recent research, including that of Kim and Park (2023), indicates that TikTok promotes global citizenship by

presenting users with varied cultural viewpoints. Cultural exchange and representation are complex processes that involve the interaction and mutual influence of different cultures, often mediated through various forms of media and literature. Media representation is crucial in shaping cultural identity and intercultural relations, as it can challenge and reinforce cultural norms and stereotypes. This dual role is evident in the dominance of Western narratives and cultural expressions in Eastern media, highlighting the need for more accurate and inclusive representations to enhance cultural understanding in a globalized world (Wheatley, 2024). Societal changes and demands for inclusivity have driven the transformation of cultural representation in international media over the past decade. However, challenges remain in achieving equitable representation, particularly behind the scenes (Dembe, 2024). As Stuart Hall notes, representation is central to producing and exchanging meaning within a culture, linking concepts and language to real and imaginary worlds (Hall, 2020). The Belt and Road Initiative exemplifies cultural exchange between China and Malaysia, promoting cooperation and cultural inclusiveness across various fields such as education, tourism, and art (“China-Malaysia Cultural Exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative: Literature Review from 2018 to 2023 “, 2023). However, the commodification of indigenous cultures in a global market risk reducing cultural differences to mere representations, as seen in the works of Māori writers (Prentice, 2017). Transcultural exchanges in Italy illustrate how modern diasporas can connect cultures, fostering creativity and critique through diverse forms of expression (Wilson & Maher, 2020). Historical perspectives on cultural transfers, such as those between seventeenth-century France and England, reveal the interplay between material and symbolic exchanges, enriching our understanding of cultural interactions (Stedman, 2016). Finally, postcolonial literature offers a lens through which to view cultural exchange as a shared historical process, mediating between different models of history and highlighting the interconnectedness of cultural narratives (Gohrisch, 2006). These studies underscore the importance of fostering diverse and accurate cultural representations to promote global understanding and cooperation.

2.2.1 How TikTok's Algorithm Facilitates Cultural Exchange Across Different Regions and Languages?

TikTok has emerged as a pivotal platform for cultural exchange, leveraging its algorithm to bridge regional and linguistic divides. This response explores how TikTok's algorithm facilitates cultural exchange, drawing insights from various studies to provide a comprehensive understanding.

2.2.1.1 The Role of TikTok's Algorithm in Promoting Cross-Cultural Content

TikTok's algorithm plays a crucial role in promoting cross-cultural content by prioritizing videos that resonate with diverse audiences. The algorithm's ability to identify and amplify content that transcends cultural boundaries is a key factor in facilitating global cultural exchange. For instance, the popularity of reaction videos, as highlighted in a study focusing on cultural exchange between Korea and China, demonstrates how the algorithm can create cross-border

consensus and increase familiarity between different cultures (Jung & Seo 2022). Similarly, the algorithm's promotion of local identities and place-making practices, as discussed in the context of algorithmic cosmopolitanism, further underscores its role in fostering multiculturalism (Lin, 2024).

2.2.1.2 User-Generated Content and Its Impact on Cultural Exchange

User-generated content (UGC) is a cornerstone of TikTok's cultural exchange ecosystem. The platform's user-centered design allows marginalized communities, such as migrant workers in Singapore, to share their experiences and connect with a global audience (Kaur-Gill, 2022). This democratization of content creation not only provides a voice to underrepresented groups but also facilitates the exchange of diverse cultural perspectives. For example, the rise of subcultures on TikTok, such as cottagecore and dark academia, highlights how the platform's algorithm promotes niche identities, enabling creators to connect with like-minded individuals across the globe (Suriyapong, 2024).

2.2.1.3 The Role of Challenges and Viral Trends in Cross-Cultural Communication

TikTok challenges and viral trends have become a significant driver of cross-cultural communication. The success of K-pop group BLACKPINK, as analyzed in a study, demonstrates how TikTok challenges can engage users across different regions and cultures, thereby boosting global exposure and fostering cultural exchange (Liang et al., 2024). The algorithm's ability to identify and promote trending content ensures that cultural practices, such as dances and music clips, are disseminated widely, often leading to the creation of new cultural phenomena.

2.2.1.4 The Counter-Flow of Cultural Content

TikTok has also facilitated the counter-flow of cultural content from non-Western regions to the West. A study focusing on the MENA region's cultural content on TikTok reveals that Western audiences are increasingly interested in Middle Eastern culture, particularly in areas such as dance, humor, and fashion (Tamim et al., 2021). This counter-flow challenges the traditional dominance of Western cultural content and highlights TikTok's role in promoting cultural diversity and exchange.

2.2.1.5 The Dual Role of TikTok's Algorithm

While TikTok's algorithm has been instrumental in promoting cross-cultural communication, it also has its limitations. The algorithm's "loneliness effect," which restricts the dissemination of cross-cultural content, can diminish the depth and quality of cross-cultural understanding (Yin, 2025). Additionally, the platform's algorithmic cosmopolitanism is often constrained by its consumerist approach, which can flatten cultural complexities (Lin, 2024). These limitations underscore the need for a balanced approach to algorithm design to maximize the positive impacts of cross-cultural exchange.

2.2.1.6 The Future of Cultural Exchange on TikTok

The future of cultural exchange on TikTok will depend on its ability to navigate the complexities of algorithmic design and platform governance. As discussed in the context of TikTok's mediatic split, the platform must address the challenges of cultural globalization while maintaining its commitment to promoting diverse cultural content (Wagner, 2022). Furthermore, the rise of platform nationalism, as highlighted in the context of the TikTok ban in the US, poses significant challenges to the platform's ability to facilitate cross-cultural exchange (Lin, 2024).

TikTok's algorithm has played a pivotal role in facilitating cultural exchange across different regions and languages. By promoting cross-cultural content, enabling user-generated content, and driving viral trends, TikTok has created a platform where diverse cultural perspectives can thrive. However, the algorithm's limitations and the challenges of platform governance must be addressed to ensure that TikTok continues to serve as a catalyst for global cultural exchange.

2.3 Identity Formation on TikTok

Digital platforms serve as crucial arenas for identity exploration. Buckingham (2008) observes that TikTok allows users to explore many personas, whereas Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016) emphasize the influence of social validation on self-perception. Johnson et al. (2022) assert that TikTok facilitates identity negotiation, especially for EFL learners articulating themselves in a second language. Identity formation on TikTok is a multifaceted process influenced by the platform's unique features, user interactions, and the broader socio-cultural context. TikTok's short, looping video format and powerful recommendation algorithm have facilitated the emergence of diverse subcultural communities, such as cottagecore and WitchTok, which use distinct aesthetic and narrative strategies to construct niche identities. These communities leverage visual styles and soundscapes to communicate their values and philosophies, with the algorithm playing a crucial role in shaping their visibility and evolution (Suriyapong, 2024). Users engage in impression management to construct identities that resonate with audiences, employing strategies that range from promoting personal achievements to sharing cross-cultural knowledge (Hong-ya & An, 2024). For young people, TikTok is a significant platform for identity construction and virtual socialization, influencing their self-perception and social experiences (Cedrún, L.C., & Civilá, S., 2024). Political identity is another dimension explored on TikTok, where users engage in political discourse and activism, often reflecting generational and ideological divides (Bach et al., 2023). The platform's affordances allow for the expression of complex identities, such as the Two-Spirit identity, through multimodal discourse and stance-taking, challenging traditional norms (Marino, 2023). Additionally, in Jakarta, Indonesia, TikTok allows adolescents to explore and present their identities, balancing real-life and pseudonymous expressions (Mahmudah et al., 2023). Overall, TikTok's dynamic environment fosters a rich tapestry of identity formation, influenced by its technological affordances, cultural trends, and individual user strategies.

2.4 Potential Long-Term Effects of TikTok Use on Language Learning Outcomes

The integration of TikTok into language learning has sparked significant interest due to its engaging and interactive nature. This response explores the potential long-term effects of TikTok use on language learning outcomes, drawing insights from the provided research papers.

2.4.1 Enhanced Vocabulary Acquisition

TikTok's short, engaging videos can expose learners to new vocabulary in context, which is beneficial for acquisition. A study on English major students found that using TikTok improved vocabulary retention, suggesting its effectiveness as a supplementary tool for vocabulary learning (Tran, 2023). The platform's ability to present words in authentic, real-life scenarios can enhance learners' understanding and retention of new terms.

2.4.2 Improvement in Speaking Skills

Research indicates that TikTok can positively impact speaking skills. A mixed-methods study revealed that EFL students who used TikTok showed significant improvement in speaking skills, with students perceiving the platform as enjoyable and motivating (Hongsa & Yonwilad, 2023). Another classroom action research study confirmed these findings, noting that TikTok's interactive nature increased students' motivation and performance in speaking English (Mujayanah et al., 2023).

2.4.3 Development of Listening Skills

While the primary focus of many studies has been on speaking and vocabulary, the use of short videos on TikTok can also enhance listening skills. Learners are exposed to diverse accents, pronunciation, and conversational styles, which can improve their ability to understand spoken English in various contexts (Assakhi & Fakhurriana, 2023).

2.4.4 Increased Motivation and Engagement

TikTok's engaging and interactive features, such as challenges and duets, can increase learner motivation. A study found that students perceived TikTok as a fun and creative tool for language learning, which promoted their willingness to communicate in English (Hongsa & Yonwilad, 2023). This increased motivation can lead to more consistent practice and engagement in language learning activities.

2.4.5 Cultural Awareness and Authentic Communication

TikTok provides learners with exposure to diverse cultures and authentic language use. This exposure can enhance cultural awareness and promote authentic communication, which are critical components of language proficiency (Condo, 2024). Learners can gain insights into cultural nuances and practices, which can complement formal language instruction.

2.4.6 Potential Drawbacks and Challenges

Despite its benefits, several challenges and limitations have been identified. The prevalence of informal language and internet slang on TikTok can be detrimental to formal language learning (Bjornsson, 2023). Additionally, the lack of structured content and the potential for

distraction can hinder effective language learning if not managed properly (Assakhi & Fakhurriana, 2023).

2.4.7 The Role of Educators

Educators play a crucial role in maximizing the benefits of TikTok for language learning. They should curate high-quality content, provide clear objectives, and guide learners in discerning between formal and informal language (Bjornsson, 2023; Assakhi & Fakhurriana, 2023). Teachers can also use TikTok's features, such as video-related features and duet challenges, to promote collaborative and experiential learning (Tan et al., 2022).

2.4.8 Long-Term Implications

The long-term implications of TikTok use in language learning are largely positive, with potential improvements in vocabulary, speaking, and listening skills, as well as increased motivation and cultural awareness. However, further research is needed to fully understand the sustained impact of TikTok on language learning outcomes and to develop best practices for its effective integration into language education (Assakhi & Fakhurriana, 2023; Rininggayuh et al., 2024).

TikTok offers a promising avenue for enhancing language learning outcomes, particularly in vocabulary acquisition, speaking skills, and cultural awareness. However, its effectiveness depends on how it is used and the guidance provided by educators. As research continues to uncover the potential of TikTok in language learning, educators and policymakers must consider its role in creating dynamic and interactive learning environments that support learner autonomy and engagement.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating surveys, interviews, and content analysis to investigate TikTok's impact on language, culture, and identity.

3.2 Sampling and Participants

The research encompassed 100 TikTok users from Generation Z, comprising 70 EFL learners from different Saudi universities and 30 native speakers from Islamic University of Minnesota, USA. Participants were chosen using purposeful sampling to guarantee varied linguistic and cultural representation.

3.3 Data Collection

Surveys: Administered to get quantitative data on TikTok usage patterns. Interviews were conducted with 50 individuals to provide comprehensive insights into their experiences. Content analysis used and analyzed 50 TikTok videos to discern linguistic and cultural tendencies. The survey responses indicated that the participants were predominantly within the age group of 18-22 years, with a significant majority being female (80%). This demographic is representative of Gen Z, who are known for their active engagement with digital platforms. The native languages of the respondents include English, Spanish, and Mandarin, with English proficiency levels

ranging from intermediate to fluent. This diversity in language and proficiency highlights the global nature of Gen Z's digital interactions.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were subjected to statistical analysis, and qualitative data were thematically coded. The examination of content concentrated on language attributes, cultural narratives, and identification indicators.

4. Results, Analysis, & Discussion

4.1 Language Learning

Seventy-eight percent of EFL learners indicated enhanced listening and speaking abilities. Short-form videos and interactive elements were recognized as primary catalysts for engagement.

4.2 Cultural Exchange

Seventy percent of users engaged with content from various cultures. Users emphasized TikTok's contribution to cultivating empathy and understanding.

4.3 Identity Formation

TikTok offered a medium for the exploration and expression of digital identities. Social validation impacted users' confidence and self-image.

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 TikTok Usage Patterns

Aspect	Findings
Usage Frequency	60% use TikTok multiple times a day
Daily Time Spent	40% spend more than 3 hours daily on the app
Most Engaged Content Types	Educational & cultural content, followed by entertainment
Content Creation	80% occasionally create their own TikTok videos
Key Insight	TikTok serves as both entertainment and a tool for learning & cultural exchange

The survey revealed that TikTok is a widely used platform among the respondents, with 60% using it multiple times a day and 40% spending more than 3 hours daily on the app. The type of content engaged with most includes educational and cultural content, followed by entertainment. This suggests that TikTok is not only a source of amusement but also a tool for learning and

cultural exchange. Interestingly, 80% of respondents occasionally create their own TikTok videos, indicating a high level of content creation and participation.

4.4.2 Language Learning on TikTok

Aspect	Findings
Role in Language Learning	TikTok plays a significant role in language learning for Gen Z.
Improvement in English	80% of respondents reported that TikTok helped improve their English (vocabulary & pronunciation).
Perceived Reliability of Content	Only 20% believe TikTok provides accurate and reliable language-learning content.
Key Takeaway	There is a need for more structured and verified educational content on the platform.

TikTok appears to play a significant role in language learning for Gen Z. 80% of respondents reported that TikTok has helped them improve their English, particularly in vocabulary and pronunciation. However, only 20% believe that TikTok provides accurate and reliable language-learning content. This discrepancy points to the need for more structured and verified educational content on the platform.

4.4.3 Cultural Exchange

Survey Findings on TikTok and Cultural Exchange	Percentage/Details
Respondents who often watch content from creators of other cultures	60%
Most popular cultural topics on TikTok (e.g., festivals, celebrations, social norms)	Festivals, Celebrations, Social Norms
Respondents who believe TikTok promotes positive interactions between people from different cultures	80%
Perceived impact of TikTok on understanding and appreciation of diversity	Enhanced understanding and appreciation

The survey responses show that TikTok facilitates cultural exchange, with 60% of respondents often watching content from creators of other cultures. The most popular cultural topics include

festivals, celebrations, and social norms. 80% of respondents feel that TikTok promotes positive interactions between people from different cultures, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of diversity.

4.4.4 Identity Formation on TikTok

Aspect	Details
Platform Used	TikTok
Purpose	Express personality and identity
Frequency of Expression	60% do so often
Key Aspects of Identity Expressed	Cultural heritage, personal hobbies
Importance of Engagement Metrics	Likes, comments, and shares are moderately important for confidence
Content Adaptation for Engagement	60% have sometimes changed content to gain more engagement
Overall Insight	Social validation plays a crucial role in their digital presence

Gen Z uses TikTok to express their personality and identity, with 60% doing so often. The aspects of identity most expressed include cultural heritage and personal hobbies. Likes, comments, and shares are moderately important for their confidence, and 60% have sometimes changed their content to gain more engagement. This indicates that social validation plays a crucial role in their digital presence.

4.4.5 Gen Z-Specific Language and Expressions on TikTok

Aspect	Statistic/Detail
Prevalence of Gen Z slang on TikTok	60% of respondents use Gen Z-specific slang often.
Common expressions	"bet," "cap/no cap," "slay" are frequently used.
Perceived connection	60% feel that using such slang helps them feel more connected to other users.
Comprehension difficulty	40% initially struggle to understand these expressions, indicating a generational gap.

The use of Gen Z-specific slang and expressions is prevalent on TikTok, with 60% of respondents using them often. Expressions like "bet," "cap/no cap," and "slay" are commonly encountered. 60% believe that using such slang makes them feel more connected to other users. However, 40% find it difficult to understand these expressions initially, highlighting a generational gap in language comprehension.

4.4.6 Understanding Gen Z Language

Survey Findings on Gen Z Language on TikTok	Percentage of Respondents
Gen Z language is evolving naturally rather than being intentionally confusing.	-
The use of slang and non-standard grammar makes communication more creative.	60%
Gen Z language creates a communication gap with older generations.	100%
The gap is attributed to the constant evolution of new slang and cultural references not widely known.	-

The survey responses suggest that Gen Z language on TikTok is evolving naturally rather than being intentionally confusing. 60% of respondents feel that the use of slang and non-standard grammar makes communication more creative. However, 100% acknowledge that it creates a gap in communication with older generations. This gap is attributed to the constant evolution of new slang and cultural references that are not widely known.

4.5 Discussing Research Questions in Connection with the Results

4.5.1 Research Question 1: In what ways does TikTok impact the language acquisition of EFL learners?

TikTok enhances language acquisition by offering users authentic, intelligible input and interactive learning experiences. The results indicated that 78% of EFL learners experienced enhanced listening and speaking abilities by interacting with TikTok material. The platform's short-form films enable learners to engage with language in manageable segments, consistent with Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, which underscores the significance of exposure to language in digestible portions. Moreover, user-generated content, such as language challenges, pronunciation tutorials, and vocabulary strategies, promotes active engagement and learning. The absence of content control presents difficulties, as observed by Lee (2020), emphasizing the necessity for learners to apply critical judgment while interacting with language resources.

Notwithstanding this, the overall influence of TikTok on language acquisition is beneficial, particularly in improving informal and conversational language abilities.

4.5.2 Research Question 2: What function does TikTok serve in facilitating intercultural communication?

TikTok significantly facilitates international connection by allowing users to interact with a variety of cultural narratives. Approximately 70% of participants indicated that they consistently engaged with content from diverse cultures, hence enhancing their cultural understanding and empathy. The platform's worldwide accessibility enables users to engage with and disseminate diverse cultures, languages, and cultural norms, hence endorsing Byram's (1997) framework of intercultural competency. By interacting with global material, consumers acquire insights into the perspectives of others, enhancing their comprehension of international concerns. Alim and Reyes (2020) warn that certain cultural representations may reinforce preconceptions, resulting in misinterpretations. This underscores the need of critical media literacy in assisting consumers to traverse the intricacies of cultural content. TikTok exhibits significant promise for promoting global citizenship, bridging cultural boundaries, and enhancing intercultural understanding.

4.5.3 Research Question 3: What is the influence of TikTok on the identity development of Generation Z?

TikTok offers a vibrant platform for Generation Z to investigate and articulate their digital identities. A multitude of individuals indicated utilizing the platform to explore various identities and partake in self-presentation. The research indicated that social validation, including likes, comments, and shares, substantially affected users' confidence and self-perception, corroborating Buckingham's (2008) conclusions regarding digital identity formation. TikTok provides EFL learners the opportunity to enhance their confidence in a second language through peer interaction, content creation, and positive community feedback. Nonetheless, the compulsion to adhere to trends and pursue validation may result in difficulties regarding self-esteem and authenticity, as observed by Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016). The pursuit of validation via engagement measures may occasionally result in an excessive focus on trends and performance, rather than genuine self-expression. Nevertheless, TikTok continues to serve as a significant platform for Generation Z to construct and express their identities in a digital environment, impacting their self-perception and social presence.

5. Conclusion

The findings from the survey provide a comprehensive understanding of how TikTok influences various aspects of Gen Z's digital lives, particularly in terms of language acquisition, intercultural communication, and identity formation. According to the demographics involved in this study, the survey participants predominantly aged 18-22 and mostly females, represent a segment of Gen Z that is highly engaged with digital platforms. Their diverse linguistic backgrounds and varying levels of English proficiency underscore the global nature of their interactions on TikTok. Regarding TikTok usage patterns, the data indicated that TikTok is a significant part of the daily lives of the respondents, with a majority using the app multiple times

a day and spending considerable time on it. The preference for educational and cultural content, alongside entertainment, highlights TikTok's dual role as both a source of amusement and a tool for learning and cultural exchange. The high level of content creation among users further emphasizes their active participation and engagement with the platform. In terms of language learning on TikTok, it plays a notable role in language learning for Gen Z, particularly in improving English vocabulary and pronunciation. However, the perceived lack of reliable language-learning content points to a need for more structured educational resources on the platform. Despite this, the overall impact on language acquisition is positive, especially in enhancing informal and conversational language skills. Concerning cultural exchange TikTok facilitates significant cultural exchange, with many respondents engaging with content from different cultures. This interaction promotes understanding and appreciation of diversity, aligning with the principles of intercultural competency. However, the potential for reinforcing stereotypes highlights the importance of critical media literacy in navigating cultural content.

As for identity formation on TikTok, the platform serves as a crucial space for Gen Z to explore and express their identities. Social validation through likes, comments, and shares plays a significant role in their digital presence and self-perception. While this can boost confidence, it also poses challenges related to self-esteem and authenticity, as users may feel pressured to conform to trends for validation. Gen Z-Specific Language and Expressions on TikTok: The prevalent use of Gen Z-specific slang and expressions on TikTok fosters a sense of connection among users. However, it also creates a communication gap with older generations, highlighting the evolving nature of language and the creative aspects of Gen Z communication. Understanding Gen Z Language: The natural evolution of Gen Z language on TikTok, characterized by slang and non-standard grammar, enhances creativity in communication. However, it also contributes to a generational communication gap, necessitating efforts to bridge this divide.

In conclusion, TikTok significantly impacts Gen Z's language acquisition, intercultural communication, and identity formation. While it offers numerous benefits, such as enhanced language skills and cultural understanding, it also presents challenges that require critical engagement and media literacy. Overall, TikTok remains a powerful platform for Gen Z, shaping their digital interactions and self-expression in profound ways.

6. Recommendations

1. Integrating TikTok as a supplementary tool in language instruction.
2. Improving media literacy to address potential challenges such linguistic inaccuracies and cultural stereotypes.
3. Raising EFL learners' awareness that TikTok may perpetuate non-standard English language. Excessive dependence on colloquial language, may increase susceptibility to linguistic mistakes.
4. localizing adaptations of global trends since cultural hybridization is widespread.

5. Paying attention to algorithmic suggestions which may preferentially support specific dialects, such as American English over British English.

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