Artículo científico

The use of TikTok® to improve first year undergraduates' speaking accuracy

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Abstract: Este estudio corresponde a una investigación acción y tiene como propósito examinar el aporte de la estrategia de descripción de imágenes implementada mediante la aplicación TikTok® para mejorar la precisión oral de un grupo de cinco estudiantes de primer año de pregrado del curso de Lengua Inglesa I, del programa de Traducción e Interpretación de una universidad chilena. Se utilizó un muestreo intencional, ya que los participantes fueron elegidos por tener dificultades para expresarse oralmente en inglés. La recopilación de datos incluyó evaluaciones orales previas y posteriores, así como un grupo focal y una autoevaluación, en concordancia con los objetivos de la investigación. La intervención constó de seis sesiones en las que los participantes practicaron diferentes estructuras gramaticales y vocabulario específico relacionado con la descripción de imágenes. Los resultados obtenidos mostraron que el uso de la técnica de descripción de imágenes implementada a través de vídeos subidos a la aplicación TikTok® fue beneficioso para los estudiantes, ya que les permitió mejorar su precisión oral tanto en el uso adecuado de la gramática como en el manejo del vocabulario. Además, las opiniones de los participantes en el grupo focal y en la autoevaluación en cuanto al uso de TikTok® en un contexto educativo fueron positivas, y destacaron su utilidad y facilidad de uso.

Keywords: TikTok, social media, picture description strategy, oral expression, recordings.

Abstract: The present study corresponds to action research and aims to examine the contribution of the picture description strategy implemented through the TikTok® application to improve the speaking accuracy of a group of five first-year undergraduate students in the English Language I course, fits into the Translation and Interpretation program at a Chilean university. Purposive sampling was used as participants were chosen for having difficulties in their oral expression in English. The data collection included conducting oral evaluations before and after the study, holding a focus group, and asking participants to complete a self-assessment. These methods were chosen to align with the research objectives and gather comprehensive and accurate data. The percentage analysis and the thematic analysis were used in the data analysis technique. The intervention consisted of six

sessions where different grammatical structures and specific vocabulary related to image description were practiced. The results indicated that the use of the picture description technique implemented through videos uploaded to the TikTok® appproved to be beneficial for the students, allowing them to improve their speaking accuracy in both the appropriate use of grammar and vocabulary management. Additionally, participants' opinions in the focus group and self-assessment regarding the use of TikTok® within an educational context were positive, highlighting its usefulness and ease of use.

Keywords: TikTok, social media, picture description strategy, oral expression, recordings.

Resumo: Este estudo corresponde a uma investigação-ação e tem como objetivo examinar a contribuição da estratégia de descrição de imagens implementada por meio do aplicativo TikTok® para melhorar a precisão oral de um grupo de cinco estudantes do primeiro ano de graduação do curso de Língua Inglesa I, do programa de Tradução e Interpretação em uma universidade chilena. Foi utilizada amostragem intencional, uma vez que os participantes foram escolhidos por apresentarem dificuldades para se expressar oralmente em inglês. A coleta de dados incluiu pré e pós-avaliações orais, bem como grupo focal e autoavaliação, de acordo com os objetivos da investigação. A intervenção consistiu em seis sessões nas quais os participantes praticaram diferentes estruturas gramaticais e vocabulário específico relacionado à descrição de imagens. Os resultados obtidos demonstraram que a utilização da técnica de descrição de imagens implementada através de vídeos carregados na aplicação TikTok® foi benéfica para os estudantes, pois permitiu-lhes melhorar a sua precisão oral tanto no uso adequado da gramática como na gestão do vocabulário. Além disso, as opiniões dos participantes no grupo focal e na autoavaliação quanto à utilização do TikTok® em contexto educativo foram positivas, destacando a sua utilidade e facilidade de utilização.

Palavras-chave: TikTok, Redes sociais, Estratégia de descrição de imagens, Expressão oral, Gravações.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, mobile phones have evolved in terms of their use, going beyond their original purpose of oral communication. Nowadays, they offer a wide range of possibilities and mobile apps, which can be used for various purposes such as entertainment, meetings, and even for educational purposes. According to Zain & Bowles (2021), not only mobile phones but other handheld devices such as laptops and tablets allow for improved and easier access to a worth of practical, multi-context knowledge with ease and spontaneity. Handheld devices offer convenient and extensive learning capabilities, making education accessible anytime, anywhere.

The idea of using handheld devices in education is called Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), and it involves using mobile tools and programs to complement and improve language learning experiences. One of the benefits of MALL is that it makes learning more engaging and enjoyable for learners by offering interactive multimedia features, as stated by Morris et al. (2016). Another advantage of MALL is that it encourages "spontaneous and personal learning experiences to take place both within and outside of the classroom environments" (Fithriani, 2021, p. 148). This motivates teachers to incorporate more innovative resources in their lessons to make their students get more engaged in their learning process and deeply involved in interactions with others. Moreover, mobile learning can "serve as an appropriate complementary method to other forms of course delivery thanks to its opportunities of frequent exposure to the target language" (Klimova, 2019, p. 7).

Along with MALL, social media also plays a major role as it involves the use of mobile devices. It has been established as an internet-based way of communication where people are not required to be face-to-face to share or have conversations. Over the years, the concept of social media has evolved with the introduction of new applications. According to a study conducted by Perrin (2015), social media users moved from LinkedIn® in 2005 to Myspace® in 2006, Facebook® in 2011, and Twitter® in 2015. Despite having different social networks, they all have the same purpose: access to new information, data exchange, and bringing people closer.

Nowadays, video-based apps are the most widely used among people, as these apps can share text and multimedia resources such as images or videos. Gupta & Bashir (2018) stated four main reasons for using social media: entertainment, socialization, informativeness, and academics. Regarding the academic aspect, social media can be used for educational purposes and has a significant impact in different educational contexts. Due to its features, replacing some traditional activities with more technological ones is viable, such as making a TikTok video rather than having a traditional oral presentation.

Social media platforms can benefit learning and favor students' learning styles. Shy-natured students seem more comfortable communicating online than expressing themselves in the classroom, and "teachers can also monitor students' progress through an online forum that is not constrained by classroom schedules and school hours" (Sah, 2015, p. 11). Students' adaptation process can be facilitated by using those social networks. A great example is TikTok, which promotes "student motivation, creates an engaging learning environment, and encourages the development of skills such as creativity and curiosity" (Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2021, p. 1).

From the different social media platforms, the following study was based on the use of TikTok, an app primarily used for entertainment purposes. However, some studies demonstrated that it can also be highly beneficial in an educational context. For instance, Herrick et al. (2021) studied the use of TikTok for sharing personal experiences and producing educational content on eating disorder recovery, where participants used

hashtags to share their experiences and provide recovery advice. Furthermore, Hayes et al. (2020) found that TikTok can facilitate scientific public engagement and contextualization of Chemistry. Students created and shared educational videos on Chemistry topics, resulting in 16 videos and around 8,500 views, demonstrating that TikTok can be useful for sharing educational material.

In the field of English language learning, a study conducted by Mei & Aziz (2022) stated that students in Malaysia had the perception of TikTok as a helpful tool for language learning. The study concluded that this app offered a fun and engaging learning experience and eliminated learning barriers. Pratiwi et al. (2021) claim that there is "a positive attitude towards TikTok application tun etused it as an English language learning strategy to help and enhance literacy and speaking skills" (p.371). Also, Zaial. (2021) expressed that using the "TikTok application in learning English is very interactive and effective to improve students' confidence skills in speaking in English" (p.93). Mandasari et al. (2022) reached a similar conclusion as participants stated that using social media for learning English provides meaningful experiences.

TikTok's format, which is focused on short videos, allows learners to practice condensing their thoughts and ideas into 45 to 60-second videos. This helps students analyze their performance, recognize speech errors, and identify areas for improvement. This can motivate students to make better videos, improve their speaking skills and confidence, and sharpen their creativity (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022). TikTok application also has some drawbacks, such as being a distracting source for students. The platform's primary use is for entertainment videos, and students can get easily distracted while spending more time watching those types of videos than using the app for educational purposes.

TikTok allows users to use images while recording videos. Teachers can use this feature to provide resources to students for their recordings. The use of this visual resource can "enhance students' participation and create a positive attitude towards English" (Lavalle & Briesmaster, 2017, p. 4).

Students can use different types of pictures; for instance, Novitasari (2020) considered the following types: flashcards, large wall pictures, cue cards, illustrations, photographs, and projected slides. When creating TikTok videos, incorporating these pictures can help students practice their speaking accuracy by describing the image. To enhance this activity, the teaching of the picture description technique can be implemented in class. This technique is one efficient method to help students improve their speaking accuracy, an essential component of language learning. One example of this is the study carried out by Suparlan& Rosyidi (2023), which concluded that using pictures in teaching "motivated students to develop their ability to speak English" (p. 2248).

There are different ways of implementing the picture description strategy. For instance, flashcards with images can be used to review vocabulary and grammar. Alternatively, picture prompts can be given for storytelling, encouraging students' imagination. At the same time, role-plays with specific situation images simulate real-life communication skills and improve speaking. All these types of activities can be implemented through an educational strategy. In this study, the picture description technique was applied by using the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) structure.

The PPP method is a structured language education framework for teaching and practicing new language concepts, and it consists of three stages. The presentation is when "the teacher begins the lesson by setting up a situation, either eliciting or modeling some language that the situation calls for" (Maftoon & Sarem, 2012, p. 32). Then, the practice is the stage where students are given guided activities to help them consolidate their understanding of the presented material and practice the language in a supervised setting. Finally, the production, where the teacher gradually provides more freedom to students, and they are expected to use the language "precisely through autonomous and more creative activities" (Criado, 2013, p. 100). It can be effectively used in picture description activities for meaningful language practice and production, particularly for improving speaking accuracy.

The idea of focusing this strategy mainly on the speaking skill development is that it allows the speaker to be understood deeply and to convey ideas clearly, as "good speaking skills are the act of generating words that can be understood by listeners" (Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014, p. 9). Moreover, speaking is considered a collaborative activity that occurs immediately while interacting with others. Leong & Ahmadi (2017) considered that the importance of speaking ability could be seen in people's daily activities as it has a "great significance for the people interaction where they speak everywhere and every day" (p. 35).

In the case of language learning, speaking is an essential tool for communication and one of the four productive language skills that need to be mastered by students. To achieve proficiency in speaking, learners must be skilled in the four components of speaking: fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Speaking accuracy can be defined as the study of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary in speaking activities (Fitri, 2018). In this action research study, the focus was on assessing students' improvement in their speaking accuracy in terms of their vocabulary and grammar accuracy. The purpose of being accurate is to effectively communicate the intended meaning by matching the rules and conventions of the language, and this is possible by avoiding any mistake that can interfere with communication.

A group of first-year undergraduate students enrolled in the Language I course from the Translation and Interpretation program at a Chilean university presented some difficulties in conveying their oral messages effectively in English. Based on the course program syllabus, students were expected to achieve an A2 level in speaking during the course, which means they should be able to describe their background, immediate environment, and areas of immediate need in English in simple terms, in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). However, their lack of grammar structures and vocabulary knowledge significantly affected their speaking performance in English. This deficiency also hindered their ability to integrate lexical and grammatical items while communicating accurately, ultimately affecting their overall communication skills.

To address this issue, the picture description technique implemented through videos recorded by students and uploaded to the TikTok app was considered an effective technique for helping them improve their speaking accuracy and reach the level required to pass the course.

Considering all the aspects presented above and the context in which this study was conducted, the main objective of this action research study was to explore the contribution of the description picture technique implemented through video recordings uploaded to the TikTok app as a way to improve a group of first-year undergraduate students' speaking accuracy where TikTok can be valuable and helpful in teaching as it only requires a cellphone, a resource most students have and supports students' speaking abilities. Two specific objectives were stated, which were aligned with the instruments chosen for the study.

SO1: To assess students' speaking accuracy after using the describing picture technique in videos recorded by students and uploaded to the TikTok® application.

SO2: To analyze students' perceptions regarding the use of TikTok® videos and the improvement in their speaking accuracy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is framed as a qualitative action research conducted in a specific educational context. Action research offers "one path to more deliberate, substantial, and critical reflection that can be documented and analyzed to improve an educator's practice" (Clark et al., 2020, p. 8). It actively requires analyzing a situation and aims to show "how making planned and intentional reflection visible can promote not only a change in the teacher but also the educational context" (Vaughan & Burnaford, 2016, p. 8). The participants chosen were a group of five first-year undergraduates from the Translation and Interpretation

program at a Chilean university. They were all enrolled in the English I course. The students' ages ranged from 17 to 18 years old, and most of them had recently joined university. Based on the English I course program, these participants were expected to integrate lexical, grammatical, and phonological items precisely to have competent and effective communication at a pre-intermediate level (A2). However, these students struggled to achieve that level required, as they were unable to produce meaningful messages in English and were not very accurate in their speaking accuracy. According to Xiuwen & Razali (2021), students' confidence can be affected by their deficient oral English proficiency. Participants' educational backgrounds may have influenced their English-speaking proficiency, especially because, during the pandemic, they did not have enough exposure to the English language. For instance, some of the participants had not had English lessons in high school during the pandemic, while others had had regular lessons.

This sample corresponds to a purposive sample as the participants were available for the researcher, and they also showed interest in participating in the study to reinforce their low performance in English. According to Dörnyei (2007), a purposive sample, a non-probability sampling, involves researchers using their discretion to select individuals who can offer diverse and valuable insights to participate in their study, thereby maximizing the knowledge gained.

Regarding the intervention conducted, this one involved six sessions. Each session involved the practice of the describing picture technique with the students selected. At the beginning of the intervention, a pretest (an oral interview) was used to assess students' speaking accuracy in English. Their speaking performance was assessed with a rubric, which included specific criteria. In each session, the presentation, practice, and production method (PPP) was implemented, where specific grammar structures and vocabulary were taught to these students using the picture description technique. After the initial review of grammar and vocabulary, participants had to use those contents and some useful phrases provided by the teacher while working as a group to describe an image collaboratively. Finally, they had to record their videos with their descriptions and upload them to the TikTok app, watch a classmate's video, and leave feedback regarding their strengths and points of improvement.

At the end of the intervention, a post-test (a second oral interview) was applied to students, and the same rubric applied in the pretest was used. Results from the students' performance in the pre and post-test were compared. A focus group and a self-assessment were used at the end of the intervention to collect data based on students' perceptions regarding the experience. Finally, the results that emerged from the data collection instruments were analyzed in terms of the objectives defined for the study. The process provided opportunities to reflect on and evaluate outcomes to benefit students' development (Lufungulo et al., 2021).

In relation to the instruments used to assess students' speaking accuracy, the pre- and post-speaking tests (oral interviews) were based on Cambridge PET speaking Part 2; specifically, the task involved participants looking at an image and describing it in detail in 60 seconds using complete oral sentences. In this case, students were expected to use the grammar structures related to present simple, present continuous, and past simple. This picture-description task was also part of the English I course as the last assignment of the semester. The analytic rubric implemented was the one used by the teachers in the English language course I, and it had the criteria of grammar accuracy, grammar range, vocabulary range, vocabulary accuracy, pronunciation, interactive communication, and fluency. However, only the grammar and vocabulary criteria were analyzed for the purpose of this study as they were strongly related to the first specific objective. The rubric had a total score of 16 points, considering 4 points as a maximum per criterion, and each criterion was described using one of the following four descriptors: Excellent (4 points), Good (3 points), Fair (2 points), or Poor (1 point). The information collected from the participants' speaking accuracy was examined considering the variation in average scores and individual scores they achieved in the pre- and post-speaking

tests, information which emerged from the criteria in the analytical rubric, specifically grammar and vocabulary accuracy and range. The data was analyzed through descriptive statistics: mean scores and standard deviation analysis to estimate the dispersion rate. These statistical procedures are designed to identify or display specific patterns or trends in the data (Cooksey, 2020).

To analyze students' self-perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the intervention and their potential improvement in speaking accuracy, a self-assessment was applied at the end of the intervention process, which aimed to verify if students could analyze their feedback regarding what they had learned about their strengths and weaknesses (Usher, 2023). Two dimensions were analyzed: the usefulness of both TikTok and picture description technique and participants' improvement in speaking accuracy. The statements were the following: I used the grammar structures practiced during the intervention at the moment of doing the speaking tasks, I was able to describe the picture in the time assigned for the task, I used key vocabulary learnt in the intervention through the picture description strategy, I think that the use of TikTok was very useful all along the intervention and my speaking accuracy improved due to the use of the description picture strategy. A simple percentage analysis was used to categorize participants' responses into the five different available options.

Furthermore, a focus group was held once at the end of the intervention and was conducted in Spanish. This was due to students' poor level of English and the idea of gathering more data if participants were able to speak in their mother tongue. The themes discussed in the focus group were five, all of them related to the categories of students' strengths, weaknesses, and improvements observed after the intervention was finished (Charbaji, 2022). A thematic analysis was used to analyze the audio-recorded data collected from the focus group. This analysis allowed the researcher to understand collective or shared meanings and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Once the focus group data was gathered, students' responses were deeply analyzed, aiming to find a relationship between the themes provided and their responses. The thematic analysis proved to be valuable as some sub-themes emerged, which were closely linked to specific objective two. A triangulation of the information was carried out to analyze the results by comparing the outcomes of both the pre- and post-intervention tests with the focus group analysis of the student's perceptions.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The discussion of the results is analyzed according to the two specific objectives defined for the study.

Research objective 1: To assess students' speaking accuracy after using the describing picture technique in videos recorded by students and uploaded to the TikTok® application.

Regarding the first specific objective, the results of both pre- and post-speaking tests were analyzed by using an analytic rubric used in the English language Course I, which considered four different criteria: grammar accuracy, grammar range, vocabulary accuracy, and vocabulary range with the corresponding descriptors: Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor. Figure 1 shows students' pre-intervention speaking test results
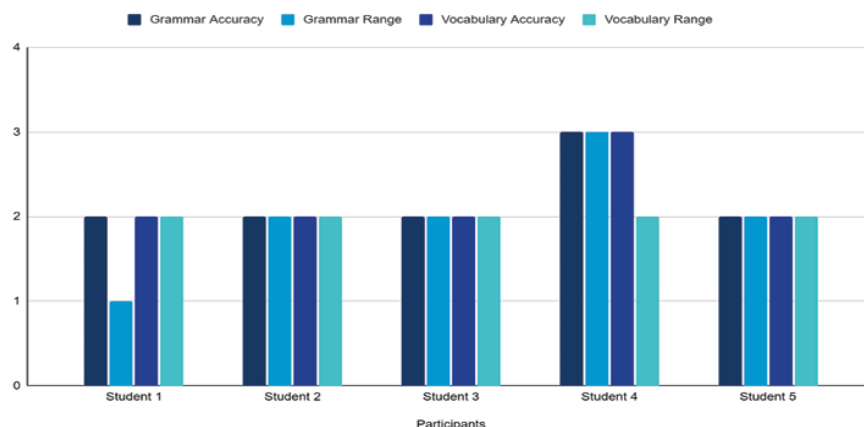
Figure 1
Students Pre-intervention speaking test results

Figure 1 presents the pretest results applied previously to the intervention, and it shows that four students (80%) had a deficient level of grammar accuracy. They achieved a "Fair" level, which means that they had at least 5 to 6 grammar or word order mistakes. Only student N°5 was able to score more than 2 points, demonstrating Good use of grammar accuracy. Moreover, the pretest results for the grammar range category showed that only one student scored 3 points (Good), while another one did it very poorly, achieving only 1 out of 4 points. It is worth mentioning that this was the only criterion where a participant scored less than 2 points, demonstrating that participants had limited use of the necessary structures required to perform the task.

In terms of vocabulary accuracy, the pretest scores showed that 4 out of 5 participants (80%) had a starting score of 2 points-a Fair level of achievement. These students needed to improve their use of words, phrases, and expressions, both in terms of quantity and quality. Only student N°3 demonstrated a superior level of achievement, as 3 points (Good) were achieved. Finally, in the vocabulary range criteria, all participants achieved a Fair level of vocabulary range (2 points), indicating that they used fewer fixed expressions and studied terms, as stated in the rubric criteria descriptor. This was the only area where all students achieved the same score.
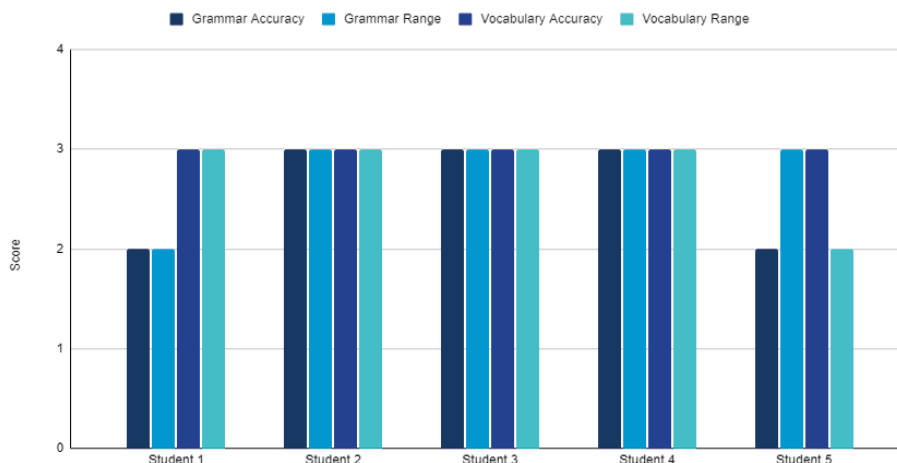
Figure 2
Students' post-intervention speaking test results

Figure 2 displays those two students (40%) improved their grammar accuracy level, moving from 2 (Fair) to 3 points (Good). In that case, students made fewer grammar mistakes (3 or 4). In the case of the other three participants, one had already achieved a good level, which did not show any change in the post-test; the same situation happened with the other two participants (40%), who kept a Fair level of grammar accuracy.

In the case of grammar range, post-intervention speaking test results improved, where four students (80%) scored 3 (Good) out of 4 points (Excellent). These students demonstrated the ability to use frequent grammar structures studied in class, according to the rubric criteria. It is worth noticing that one student did not improve his grammar range, as 3 points were scored in both the pre-and post-intervention tests.

Regarding vocabulary accuracy, 4 out of 5 participants (80%) increased their scores by 1 point, moving onto the good category. These students demonstrated the ability to use appropriate words, phrases, or expressions, having only 3 or 4 wrong words, based on the rubric criteria. However, one participant (20%) did not improve his vocabulary accuracy after the intervention, achieving the same 3 points (Good).

Finally, regarding vocabulary range, the post-intervention speaking test results indicated that 80% of the participants (4 out of 5) successfully raised their score by 1 point, moving from 2 (Fair) to 3 points (Good). This reflected an increment in the use of fixed expressions and lexical terms. Regarding the lowest improvement observed, one participant (20%) did not improve his performance, not reaching the 3 points and remaining in the Fair level of achievement.

The mean score and standard deviation of participants' pre- and post-intervention test results are presented in Table 1. The maximum achievable score in the oral interview was 16 points.

Table 1
Students' pre- and post-intervention speaking accuracy global scores

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Students' pre- and post-intervention speaking accuracy global scores.

Participants	Pre-intervention speaking score (16 points)	Post-intervention speaking score. (16 points)	Difference
Student 1	7	10	3
Student 2	8	12	4
Student 3	8	12	4
Student 4	11	12	1
Student 5	8	10	2
Mean Score	8,4	11,2	2,8
Standard Deviation	1.5	1.1	0,4

The results in Table 1 demonstrated that participants improved their speaking accuracy after the intervention. The analysis of individual scores showed that the five participants improved by at least 1 point their scores, resulting in an overall increase of the mean score from 8.4 to 11.2 points. This indicated that students were more proficient in their grammar, vocabulary accuracy and range after the intervention. Most students showed an improvement of at least 2 points between the pre- and post-intervention tests. A significant increase in the global score was observed in two students, moving from 8 to 12 points out of 16. Only one student improved by 1 point, moving from 11 to 12 points.

The standard deviation of both pretest and post-test scores was relatively low. For the pre-intervention test, it was 1.5, while a decrease of 0.4 points was observed in the post-intervention test, reducing it to 1.1. Students' results were tightly clustered around the average value, implying that most participants achieved scores close to the mean value. This consistency in performance indicates that students' overall performance was good, and that the intervention developed during the study might have had a uniform impact on the students. Zaitun et al. (2021) conducted a similar study in Indonesia, which aimed to investigate the improvement of students' speaking skills by storytelling using the TikTok application. The results of this study were similar to those of the current research, where the TikTok app was found to be beneficial for improving the speaking skills of 36 Indonesian students. By unconventionally learning English, the participants were able to increase their speaking ability and confidence.

Specific Objective 2: To analyze students' perceptions regarding the use of TikTok® videos and the improvement in their speaking accuracy.

Focus Group results analysis.

The instrument was applied to the participants after the final session of the intervention stage. Their responses were transcribed for a thematic analysis, which provided valuable insights. Students' responses were categorized into five main themes: lesson usefulness, students' involvement in class, pedagogical use of TikTok, TikTok challenges, and TikTok benefits. The focus group was conducted in their mother tongue as their English-speaking skills were limited.

Table 2

Thematic Analysis of the participant's perceptions of the intervention and TikTok's usefulness in a pedagogical context

Table 2
Thematic Analysis of the participant's perceptions of the intervention and TikTok's usefulness in a pedagogical context

Themes	Sub-Theme	Frequency	Interview extracts
Lesson Usefulness	1.Vocabulary	3	"I learnt new words, and my vocabulary increased"
	2.Grammar	3	"My grammar got better when I was connecting ideas"
Students' involvement in class	1.Level of Participation	2	"Being part of this was useful as I shared my knowledge"
	2.Embarrasement	3	"When I spoke in English, my head didn't work. I felt like nervous"
Pedagogical use of TikTok®	1.Group Work	3	"Working in groups would be useful because we get used to speaking with other people and not only with the camera"
	2.To receive feedback	3	"To have public videos as we can receive useful comments from other people who might be interested in the topics, that also work as feedback"
TikTok® Challenges	1.How to use TikTok	4	"I'd only used TikTok for watching videos, I never learnt how to record and upload videos before"
	2.Time Management	3	"Having only 60 seconds reduces our options while recording"
TikTok® Benefits	1.Learning by repetition	5	"It was useful as I had chances to watch my mistakes and improve my video"

Theme one: Lesson usefulness

During the focus group, the participants identified the usefulness of the lessons as the first criterion. They also highlighted the benefits of the intervention sessions, such as improving their grammar and vocabulary. Both subthemes were mentioned by three participants (60%), who stated that it was possible to review vocabulary that they had learnt in other classes and to expand their vocabulary repertoire through the intervention sessions. In terms of grammar, three students (60%) agreed that they were able to practice grammar structures that they had previously struggled with during the lessons.

Theme two: Students' involvement in class

In the case of theme two, students' involvement in class, all participants agreed that this intervention had been a great experience as it had allowed a higher level of interaction between peers, and the answers were immediately provided with no hesitation, demonstrating students' confidence regarding their answers. Two participants (40%) highlighted the subtheme of participation and noted that the intervention had provided more instances of English-speaking practice when students worked together. However, three students (60%) stated they had felt embarrassed about peer interaction at some point during the sessions because of their lack of English grammar and vocabulary, which interfered with their participation as during the practice and production stage of the sessions, participants had to actively interact between them by describing images.

Theme three: Pedagogical use of TikTok®

Participants suggested some drawbacks they saw regarding the use of the TikTok app as a tool for education. Three participants (60%) highlighted group work and feedback as areas that required improvement. They suggested that TikTok could be used more effectively in group work rather than working alone, as this instance would allow for more collaborative work with other participants.

Furthermore, three participants (60%) felt that having an open channel rather than a private one would provide more opportunities for feedback. There were few responses to this theme, as participants were hesitant when considering ideas for teaching. This may be because participants were part of the Translation program rather than a program focused on pedagogy.

Theme four: TikTok® Challenges

Some participants faced challenges while using the TikTok app. Two main issues were discussed: the first involved the use of TikTok, as some students had difficulty recording videos or uploading images. Students agreed that a more extensive lesson regarding TikTok functions and how to use them was necessary. Participants also struggled with time management. In this case, producing a 60-second video was challenging during the first few lessons, as they were not familiar with that format. Due to that, participants had to request an extended deadline to upload the videos.

Theme five: TikTok® Benefits

Finally, some of the answers provided by participants were related to the TikTok benefits, especially regarding speaking improvement due to TikTok use. Participants commented that the practice of their oral skills through repetition was highly beneficial during the intervention, and it was the only subtheme that was agreed upon by all the participants (5). The same concept of feedback was mentioned again, where participants commented that TikTok was beneficial as it allowed them to watch other students' videos, learn about new strategies and receive comments from the other participants.

Self-assessment scale

Once the intervention was over, participants were asked to complete a self-assessment form. This activity was the final step in the data-gathering process and consisted of five statements focused on two areas: speaking accuracy and lesson usefulness based on the use of TikTok and the picture description strategy. The self-assessment consisted of five different statements that students had to answer based on the options that Table 3 shows, and the data was analyzed using a percentage analysis. Table 3 summarizes the answers that students provided based on the five different statements presented.

Table 3

Students' self-assessment scale answers

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Students' self-assessment scale answers

Statement	Totally agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Totally disagree
1	80%	20%			
2		80%	20%		
3	60%	40%			
4	40%	60%			
5	80%	20%			

Statement 1: I used the grammar structures that we practiced during the intervention at the moment of doing the speaking tasks.

During the six intervention sessions, students had to use three different grammar structures to practice their speaking accuracy, which were the following: present simple, present continuous, and past simple. Regarding the number of sessions in which participants used grammar for the speaking tasks, 4 of 5 participants (80%) commented that they totally agreed with the statement as they had always used the grammar components required. In contrast, one participant stated that he had not been able to use the grammar structures required when doing the speaking activities and partially agreed with the statement.

Statement 2: I was able to describe the picture in the time assigned for the task.

Regarding the second self-assessment statement, students had some problems while trying to meet the 60 seconds for each production stage on the TikTok video, but also needed help to upload it before the end of the session. Based on Table 3, students' self-assessment answers, none of the participants totally agreed with the statement, as they could not meet the time requirement on all the TikTok videos uploaded. Four students (80%) partially agreed, while one participant (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Statement 3: I used key vocabulary learnt in the intervention through the picture description strategy.

Regarding the third question of the self-assessment scale, the data presented in Table 3 showed that participants utilized the vocabulary taught in class in at least six sessions. Using the picture description strategy, they used this vocabulary while recording their TikTok videos. 3 out of 5 participants (60%) agreed with the statement. However, the other two participants (40%) had some problems with the use of key vocabulary and only partially agreed with the statement.

Statement 4: I think that the use of TikTok® was very useful all through the intervention.

The participants' opinions on this statement were mixed, with two students (40%) partially agreeing that TikTok was helpful during the intervention process. This was due to the challenges that participants encountered when learning how to record the assessment videos. On the other hand, the other three participants (60%) totally agreed that the application had always been helpful.

Statement 5: My speaking accuracy improved due to the use of the description picture strategy.

The fifth and last question of the self-assessment was considered a success for most students (80%) completely agreed that their speaking accuracy had improved in all areas assessed due to the picture description strategy. One student (20%) partially agreed as she believed there were still issues with one aspect of speaking accuracy: grammar range. This student still required additional assistance in using the grammar structures taught during the intervention.

CONCLUSIONS

The following study revealed the effectiveness of using the picture description strategy and the TikTok application with a group of first-year undergraduates from a Chilean higher education institution. The study found that using TikTok® in the classroom can enhance speaking accuracy. Collaborative activities and video feedback help participants identify mistakes and improve. These findings highlight the benefits of technology in education and allow teachers to understand the use of TikTok in the classroom for future activities, as technology can be used for engaging activities and encourage students to participate and teach through the use of videos actively.

Regarding Specific Objective 1, which aimed to assess students' speaking accuracy after using the describing picture technique in videos uploaded to the TikTok application, it can be highlighted the fact that students' speaking accuracy improved after the intervention, as reflected in the average score of 11 out of 16 points reached in the post-test, 3 points more compared to the pretest scores. All five participants improved their overall scores due to collaborative work during sessions, as students were able to provide feedback to their peers and share some useful grammar, vocabulary, and even full sentences for the picture description.

TikTok positively impacted their performance by encouraging active participation, learning, and collaboration, helping them rehearse their speaking accuracy until they became confident. Such findings are in accordance with the study conducted by Dewi (2023), given the fact that both studies highlighted that TikTok was beneficial inside the classroom as it allows students to get new information and improve their interest by having new experiences in unconventionally learning English. Moreover, Mandasari et al.'s (2022) research found that TikTok usage had a positive effect on students' speaking skills and classroom participation. In the same line, Cagas (2022) reached similar conclusions as TikTok can be "utilized as an interactive learning tool to assist students develop their speaking abilities when used with the proper approaches and procedures" (p. 3).

Concerning the different aspects assessed in terms of speaking accuracy, the best criterion achieved was vocabulary accuracy, which significantly improved in the post-intervention speaking test, with no participants scoring less than 3 points (Good criterion), demonstrating their proficiency in using appropriate words and expressions, an improvement from the pretest, where students had made more than four mistakes regarding word use. A study by Rahman (2021) found that TikTok can be a valuable tool for enhancing vocabulary skills, which is like the findings of this study. On the other hand, some participants did not improve in grammar accuracy and maintained their pre-intervention scores. One participant already had a Good level of proficiency before the intervention and did not show any improvement. Social media may only be effective if the learner is familiar with it or interested in video recording. Yélamos-Guerra et al.'s study (2022) on using TikTok found that these factors could result in lower improvement, and TikTok and picture description may be more effective for individuals with lower English proficiency.

Regarding research objective 2, which aimed at analyzing students' perceptions regarding the intervention using TikTok and their improvement in speaking accuracy, during the focus group, participants highlighted the use of TikTok and picture description technique in intervention sessions to improve speaking accuracy, citing valuable features. For instance, participants' confidence in their speaking accuracy increased due to the use of TikTok. They had multiple instances of practicing their speaking as TikTok allowed them to record several times the image description, which promotes grammar and vocabulary practice and facilitates its use. Other studies support these findings regarding TikTok's benefits. For example, Rahmawati et al. (2023) study at a higher education institution in Indonesia concluded that TikTok had improved participants' ability, creativity, motivation, and vocabulary. Along the same line, Zaitun et al. (2021) study found that using TikTok had improved the speaking skills and confidence of 36 Indonesian students while using it for storytelling.

Based on the participants' answers, the TikTok app proved to be helpful in improving speaking accuracy and communication skills. One of the main reasons for this was the possibility that students could post their feedback on each other's videos, as TikTok provided a feature that allowed users to comment on other people's content. During the sessions, students were required to give feedback on a classmate's video, highlighting what they liked about it and what could have been improved. Students highlighted this feature as it allowed them to improve their speaking accuracy by considering the feedback provided. A study conducted by Hadijah et al. (2023) found that feedback through TikTok comments helped participants feel motivated and led to an increase in the number of videos recorded.

Moreover, participants expressed satisfaction with the picture description strategy employed through TikTok, as they found it effective in understanding and retaining the content presented to them. Similarly, Nabilah et al. (2021) found that TikTok was a positive learning tool that promoted engagement and understanding of content. These resources not only facilitated comprehension but also acted as a visual aid for the students. By associating the contents with images, students could better retain and recall the information. Using visual resources proved to be an effective teaching technique that enhanced the overall

learning experience. Also, the use of TikTok inside the classroom was beneficial for both students and teachers as it facilitates teaching and learning of contents. These findings might be beneficial for future activities inside the classroom, as participants provided positive comments regarding the use of technology in an educational context. O'Bannon & Thomas (2015) research, based on the use of technology by teachers, concluded that the more teachers used their phones, the more they saw the features that could be useful for schoolwork and the benefits of using phones for educational purposes. This discovery implies that educators who are at ease with phones will be more inclined to incorporate them as a teaching tool in the classroom.

In the case of the self-assessment results, participants had a positive perception of the intervention's usefulness and effectively applied learned grammar in various speaking tasks. This demonstrated effective learning and application of the content in different contexts. Similarly, using picture descriptions helped them reinforce key vocabulary taught in class. Participants found it a valuable visual aid, indicating its effectiveness. Anggraeni et al. (2020) found similar results, concluding that describing images can improve speaking skills and engagement.

The main difficulties faced by the participants were not related to grammar or vocabulary but somewhat related to the TikTok video recording process and the guidelines provided. Participants struggled to achieve a 60-second recording but were able to record longer videos over multiple sessions. Feedback on using TikTok was positive, with students reporting improved perception of their speaking accuracy level due to the picture description strategy. Students agreed that this strategy may help them enhance their speaking accuracy and confidence in their language abilities. This aligns with a similar study by Titik Komariyah et al. (2022), where participants agreed on TikTok's importance in improving speaking and boosting confidence. Overall, despite the challenges, participants had a positive experience using TikTok and the picture description strategy to enhance their speaking accuracy.

It is also essential to mention the different limitations the developed research faced during its implementation for further improvements in the future. The first limitation of the study was related to the sample that was part of the study. Initially, the entire group of students from the English Language Course I was considered for the study, meaning the sample would have comprised 20 students from the translation program instead of the smaller sample of 5 participants who were finally part of the study. This would have allowed the researcher to have more data regarding the impact of uploading videos to TikTok and the effectiveness of the picture description technique. However, this idea was dismissed as the only time available for this action research was outside regular class hours, in which not all participants had the same availability. Due to that, the only sample available was based on participants who had shown a deficient level of English during the first oral evaluation and were asked to be part of remedial classes. Having a more significant sample of participants that could have provided more reliable and consistent conclusions.

Another limitation was related to the time allotted to the intervention. Initially, the schedule was planned to be developed in six face-to-face interventions in 4 weeks. However, the university had a winter break that forced the researcher to have an online session instead of a face-to-face class. Due to that, collecting data about students' speaking performance in that session was challenging, as it took time for participants to get familiar with online platforms such as Teams. This interfered with the effectiveness of the lesson, as it was mainly based on speaking. Some participants needed help activating their microphones, which led to difficulties following the lesson. As a result, when participants had to collaborate, they preferred to use the chat instead of activating the microphone. Moreover, the post-intervention session, where the focus group was applied, had to be delayed several times as the students from the Translation program went on strike, which prevented them from participating in activities related to the program.

Moreover, using a specific educational TikTok account for privacy led to technological issues. Participants had to learn how to use the app, which was frustrating for some. This was mentioned during the focus group, where students highlighted this aspect as the most challenging of the study, as it was frustrating to spend so much time learning how to use TikTok. A special session was required to teach students how to use its features, and some participants had to use their free time to provide feedback and upload their videos. Also, an internet connection is required to use TikTok, which was not available at some moments during the sessions, delaying the activities.

Despite the limitations, this study can be helpful for researchers interested in using technology inside the classroom. Specifically, the use of mobile phones and social media applications. Using TikTok allowed the researcher to teach while using interactive resources that enhanced collaborative work and allowed students to use the grammar and vocabulary provided spontaneously. Further research could be done on different subskills that the speaking skill has. Teachers can use TikTok videos to practice English fluency by assessing pronunciation, coherence, and hesitation. Also, TikTok can be helpful for groupwork activities, as classmates can watch each other's videos and discuss them. Using visual cues such as images can facilitate writing skills. Describing a picture can help students practice descriptive writing, learn new vocabulary, and improve their overall writing ability. In addition, an area of research that can be further explored is how using TikTok over an extended period can enhance students' overall speaking proficiency. By utilizing TikTok for a semester, it is possible to compare students' speaking performance at the beginning and end of the semester to evaluate any improvement. Prolonged interaction with TikTok can provide more precise results on its effectiveness.

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