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Use of TikTok Short-Form Videos to Improve the Vocabulary Size of Grade 7 Students: A Basis for a Proposed TikTok-based Vocabulary Learning Module

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the use of TikTok short-form videos in improving the vocabulary size of Grade 7 students at Marawi City National High School and served as basis for a proposed TikTok-based vocabulary learning module. A single-group pretest-posttest design with quantitative and qualitative components was employed. The quantitative phase involved 189 Grade 7 students selected from a population of 357 through Slovin-based quota sampling, while the qualitative phase involved 10 conveniently selected students who participated in post-intervention interviews. A validated 20-item vocabulary test was administered before and after a one-week intervention using selected TikTok videos featuring 20 target words aligned with the Grade 7 English curriculum. Descriptive statistics, standard deviation, and the Wilcoxon signed-ranks test were used for quantitative analysis, while thematic analysis was used for interview data. Results showed that the participants' mean raw score increased from 6.698 in the pretest, equivalent to a failed transmuted grade of 66.746, to 12.217 in the posttest, equivalent to a fair/satisfactory transmuted grade of 80.542. The difference was statistically significant, $Z = -11.966$, $p = .000$. Qualitative findings revealed that TikTok supported vocabulary learning through engagement, multimodal cues, relatable content, and teacher-guided reinforcement, although students experienced challenges related to fast-paced videos, audio clarity, and temporary confusion. The developed module received a highly acceptable overall validation mean of 4.24. The study concludes that TikTok-based short-form videos can support vocabulary development when embedded in structured, teacher-facilitated instruction.

Keywords: *microlearning, mobile-assisted language learning, multimedia learning, TikTok, vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary size*

INTRODUCTION

Short-form video platforms have become part of the everyday digital practices of adolescents. Among these platforms, TikTok has gained attention not only for entertainment but also for education through hashtags such as #LearnOnTikTok and through content created by teachers, language users, and subject-matter experts. For English language instruction, TikTok offers a familiar digital space where students encounter words through captions, sounds, images, gestures, and contextualized examples.

Vocabulary size is a foundational component of language proficiency because learners need adequate lexical knowledge to comprehend texts, express ideas, and participate in classroom communication. In second-language learning, limited vocabulary can restrict reading comprehension, speaking ability, writing quality, and overall academic performance. This concern is relevant in the Philippine basic education context, where English is used in schooling and where students must understand increasingly complex academic texts.

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TikTok's short-form video format aligns with microlearning because it delivers information in brief, focused, and manageable units. Its audiovisual features also support multimedia learning by allowing learners to hear, see, read, and contextualize words at the same time. These features may reduce cognitive overload and make vocabulary instruction more engaging for young learners. However, educational use of TikTok requires structure, teacher guidance, and carefully selected content to prevent distraction and ensure that learning objectives are met.

Although studies have reported positive learner experiences with TikTok-assisted language learning, much of the existing evidence focuses on tertiary or older learners. Limited research examines how TikTok short-form videos affect vocabulary size among Grade 7 learners in the Philippine context. This study addressed this gap by examining the effectiveness of TikTok short-form videos in improving the vocabulary size of Grade 7 students at Marawi City National High School and by developing a TikTok-based vocabulary learning module based on the findings.

Literature Review

Vocabulary Size and English Language Development

Vocabulary knowledge has long been recognized as a major component of language proficiency. Vocabulary breadth refers to the number of words a learner knows, while vocabulary depth refers to the quality of that knowledge, including meanings, usage, relationships, and contextual appropriateness. Nation (1993, 2001) emphasized vocabulary size as a key indicator of language proficiency, while Anderson and Freebody (1981) distinguished breadth and depth as complementary dimensions of word knowledge.

For English as a second language learners, vocabulary size supports listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Limited lexical knowledge may make comprehension and communication difficult because learners cannot easily connect new ideas to known words. Studies cited in the source manuscript show that vocabulary development supports literacy, academic success, and subject learning, particularly in settings where English is used as a medium of instruction.

Measuring vocabulary size is methodologically complex because vocabulary may be counted by words, lemmas, or word families. The source study used a 20-item vocabulary test based on Grade 7 English curriculum content and target words that could be represented through TikTok videos. This curriculum-linked approach made the assessment suitable for the intervention and the learners' level.

TikTok, Multimedia Learning, and Microlearning

TikTok has been explored as a language-learning tool because of its short-form video structure, algorithmic content exposure, captions, audio, images, interactive features, and popularity among young learners. Research cited in the manuscript reports that TikTok can support vocabulary learning by presenting words repeatedly and in context, allowing learners to connect meaning with pronunciation, images, and usage.

Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning explains that students learn more effectively when information is presented through both verbal and visual channels. TikTok videos reflect this principle because vocabulary items are often accompanied by spoken pronunciation, captions, visual demonstrations, gestures, and contextual examples. These multimodal cues can help learners remember and understand new words more effectively than text-only exposure.

The Theory of Learning in Micro also supports the intervention because it emphasizes short, focused, and accessible learning units. TikTok's brief video format can deliver vocabulary content in manageable segments, which may reduce cognitive overload and increase attention. When these segments are organized into a structured module, the platform can become a teacher-guided learning resource rather than an unstructured entertainment tool.

TikTok-Assisted Vocabulary Learning and Research Gaps

Empirical studies cited in the manuscript generally support TikTok's positive role in English vocabulary learning. Cantika (2023), Tampubolon et al. (2023), and Juwita and Syahputra (2024) reported vocabulary gains

after TikTok-based learning activities. Other studies also found that learners view TikTok positively because it is accessible, engaging, and aligned with their digital habits.

However, researchers also warn that TikTok may become distracting when used without instructional design. Rita and Subekti (2023), for example, noted that learners appreciated the educational value of TikTok but remained cautious about relying on it as a primary learning tool. This supports the need for teacher supervision and clear learning objectives when integrating the platform in formal instruction.

In the Philippine context, De Matta et al. (2023) reported improvements in vocabulary and grammar among elementary learners exposed to TikTok English teaching videos. Nevertheless, evidence remains limited for Grade 7 learners, particularly in Marawi City and similar contexts. The present study addressed this gap by combining pretest-posttest data, student interviews, and module validation.

METHODS

Research Design

The study used a single-group pretest-posttest design with quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative component measured changes in vocabulary size before and after exposure to selected TikTok short-form videos. The qualitative component gathered students' perceptions and challenges after the intervention. The design allowed the researchers to compare vocabulary scores while also documenting students' experiences of TikTok-based learning.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Marawi City National High School in Datu Saber, Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The school was selected because it served a diverse Grade 7 population likely familiar with TikTok and because its leadership supported the exploration of microlearning tools for improving vocabulary learning.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants were Grade 7 students of Marawi City National High School. From a population of 357 students, 189 participated in the quantitative phase based on Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error and quota sampling. The participants were required to be currently enrolled Grade 7 students and willing to provide informed consent. For the qualitative phase, 10 students who participated in the intervention and were available for interview were selected through convenience sampling.

Research Instrument

The researchers developed a 20-item vocabulary test used for both the pretest and posttest. The selected words met two criteria: they appeared in the prescribed Grade 7 English curriculum under the MATATAG program and were discussed in existing TikTok video clips. The words were taken from the MBHTE-BARMM Lesson Guide in English 7. The test consisted of multiple-choice items requiring students to identify the correct meaning or synonym of each target word. A Grade 7 English teacher with at least three years of teaching experience validated the instrument for difficulty, level appropriateness, content validity, and relevance.

An interview guide was also used to gather qualitative data on students' perceptions of TikTok as a vocabulary-learning tool and the challenges they encountered. The questions were open-ended to allow the students to describe their experiences meaningfully.

Data Gathering Procedure

Formal permission was sought from the Division Superintendent and the School Head of Marawi City National High School before the study was conducted. After approval, the participants were oriented about the objectives of the study and their rights. A pretest was administered to determine the learners' initial vocabulary knowledge. The intervention was then implemented for one week during the last class period. Students watched 20 selected TikTok videos introducing and reinforcing the target vocabulary words. The intervention consisted of four

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lessons per day, with five videos per lesson, and each video was viewed three times to promote familiarity and retention. After the intervention, the same vocabulary test was administered as the posttest. Interviews were then conducted with 10 students to document their perceptions and challenges.

Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used to describe the students' pretest and posttest vocabulary scores. The Wilcoxon signed-ranks test was used to determine whether a significant difference existed between the pretest and posttest scores because the same group of students took both tests. The qualitative interview responses were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in students' perceptions and challenges.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their rights before data collection. Responses were kept confidential and reported in aggregate or through coded qualitative themes. Because the participants were minors, the documented parental or guardian consent and learner assent procedures should be confirmed and retained in the final submission records.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pretest and Posttest Vocabulary Size Scores

The pretest results showed that the students had limited vocabulary knowledge before the intervention. The mean raw score was 6.698 out of 20, equivalent to a transmuted grade of 66.746 and interpreted as Failed. Scores ranged from 1 to 14, with the most frequent score being 5. This indicates that many students had difficulty with the target vocabulary words before exposure to the TikTok videos.

After the one-week intervention, the posttest mean increased to 12.217 out of 20, equivalent to a transmuted grade of 80.542 and interpreted as Fair/Satisfactory. Scores ranged from 5 to 20, with the highest frequency at a raw score of 13. The increase suggests improved vocabulary knowledge after exposure to short-form TikTok videos supported by classroom discussion and repeated viewing.

Table 1. *Summary of Pretest and Posttest Vocabulary Size Scores*

Test	N	Mean raw score	Transmuted grade	Qualitative description	Highest-frequency raw score
Pretest	189	6.698	66.746	Failed	5 (15.3%)
Posttest	189	12.217	80.542	Fair/Satisfactory	13 (19.6%)

The results support the view that short, visually rich, and contextualized videos can help learners acquire vocabulary more effectively. Interview data also confirmed that students remembered words better when they saw actions, read captions, heard pronunciation, and received teacher explanations.

Significant Difference Between Pretest and Posttest Scores

The Wilcoxon signed-ranks test showed a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest vocabulary scores, $Z = -11.966$, $p = .000$. The null hypothesis was rejected. This result indicates that students' vocabulary scores improved significantly after the TikTok-based intervention.

Table 2. *Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test on Pretest and Posttest Scores*

Comparison	Z-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Posttest - Pretest	-11.966	.000	Reject Ho	Significant difference

The significant improvement is consistent with the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and the Theory of Learning in Micro. TikTok's combination of audio, visuals, captions, and brief explanations may have made the words easier to process and remember. However, because the study used a single-group design without a

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control group, the result should be interpreted as significant improvement after the intervention rather than as conclusive causal proof.

Students' Perceptions of TikTok Short-Form Videos

The thematic analysis of the students' responses generated four major perception themes. Students viewed TikTok as engaging, multimodal, familiar and relatable, and useful as an instructional-support platform. They described the videos as enjoyable and less stressful than traditional text-only learning. They also emphasized that captions, actions, images, sounds, and pronunciation helped them understand and remember new words.

Table 3. *Themes on Students' Perceptions of TikTok for Vocabulary Learning*

Theme	Supporting codes	Synthesis
TikTok as an engaging learning platform	Interesting, appealing, enjoyable learning experience	Students found vocabulary learning more enjoyable and less stressful when presented through TikTok videos.
TikTok as a multimodal vocabulary support tool	Visual, audio, subtitles, captions, contextual cues, microlearning	Students understood and remembered words more easily when they could see, hear, read, and contextualize them.
TikTok as a source of familiar and relatable content	Local content, familiar creators, relatable pronunciation	Students valued videos that reflected familiar language users, local contexts, and accessible pronunciation.
TikTok as an instructional support platform	Teacher support, repeated viewing, comprehension reinforcement	Students still needed teacher guidance to clarify meanings and connect video content to lesson objectives.

The findings show that TikTok was not perceived merely as entertainment. When guided by a teacher and aligned with lesson objectives, the platform became a learning support that promoted attention, vocabulary recall, and motivation. The importance of teacher support also suggests that TikTok should supplement, not replace, formal instruction.

Challenges Encountered During TikTok-Based Vocabulary Learning

Although the students generally responded positively to TikTok, they also identified several challenges. Some videos were too fast, some audio clips were not clear enough, and some students experienced temporary confusion when encountering unfamiliar words. These challenges were manageable because students could replay videos and ask for teacher explanation.

Table 4. *Themes on Challenges Encountered in Using TikTok Short-Form Videos*

Theme	Supporting codes	Synthesis
Fast-paced content	Fast video delivery; fast speech	Some learners found it difficult to follow videos or speech that moved too quickly.
Technical barriers in learning	Low audio volume; unclear pronunciation; audio clarity issues	Audio quality affected students' ability to hear pronunciation and understand the target words.
Temporary learning difficulties	Confusion; difficulty following lessons; need for replay	Students encountered confusion at first but overcame it through repetition and teacher guidance.

These findings suggest that teachers should carefully screen TikTok videos before using them in class. Videos should have clear audio, appropriate pacing, accurate captions, and content aligned with the target vocabulary. Teacher-led previewing, replay, discussion, and assessment remain essential.

Validation of the Proposed TikTok-Based Vocabulary Learning Module

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, the researchers developed a TikTok-based vocabulary learning module for Grade 7 students. Validation results showed that the module was highly acceptable overall,

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with a mean of 4.24. Module Format and Language obtained the highest mean of 4.42, followed by Learning Activities at 4.33 and Module Presentation at 4.27. Module Objectives and Module Content were moderately acceptable, indicating that these components may still be refined for clearer alignment and content sequencing.

Table 5. *Summary of Validation of the TikTok-Based Vocabulary Learning Module*

Category	Mean	Verbal interpretation
Module Objectives	4.13	Moderately Acceptable
Module Content	4.07	Moderately Acceptable
Learning Activities	4.33	Highly Acceptable
Module Format and Language	4.42	Highly Acceptable
Module Presentation	4.27	Highly Acceptable
Overall Mean	4.24	Highly Acceptable

The validation results indicate that the module is a practical instructional resource for integrating TikTok into vocabulary teaching. It provides teachers with organized learning activities while preserving the motivational value of short-form videos. The results also show that social media content becomes more educationally useful when organized into a module with objectives, activities, assessment, and teacher facilitation.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that TikTok short-form videos supported the improvement of Grade 7 students' vocabulary size at Marawi City National High School. The students' vocabulary performance increased from a failed pretest mean to a fair/satisfactory posttest mean, and the Wilcoxon signed-ranks test confirmed a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. Qualitative findings showed that students perceived TikTok as engaging, multimodal, familiar, relatable, and useful when combined with teacher support. At the same time, the students experienced challenges related to video speed, audio clarity, and temporary confusion, which were addressed through replay and teacher explanation. The proposed TikTok-based vocabulary learning module was validated as highly acceptable, indicating its potential as a structured and learner-centered resource for technology-assisted vocabulary instruction. The findings contribute to research on microlearning, multimedia learning, mobile-assisted language learning, and the educational use of social media in junior high school English classrooms.

Recommendation

English teachers may integrate the TikTok-based vocabulary learning module as a supplementary resource for Grade 7 vocabulary instruction. They should carefully select videos with clear audio, appropriate pacing, accurate captions, and curriculum-aligned vocabulary. Teachers should also provide pre-viewing guidance, repeated viewing opportunities, vocabulary exercises, and post-viewing discussion to ensure that TikTok use remains educational and focused. School administrators may support teachers by providing training on mobile-assisted language learning, responsible social media integration, and module-based instruction. Curriculum developers may consider the findings when designing contextualized digital learning resources that reflect learners' media habits while maintaining instructional quality. Parents may guide students in using TikTok responsibly by encouraging educational content and limiting distractions. Future researchers may use experimental or quasi-experimental designs with control groups, larger samples, longer intervention periods, delayed posttests, and measures of vocabulary retention to further examine the effectiveness and sustainability of TikTok-based vocabulary learning.

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