

**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN EXPOSURE TO SHORT-FORM CONTENT  
ON TIKTOK AND INSTAGRAM REELS AND EFL LISTENING SKILLS  
AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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**Abstract**

This study examines the impact of short-form content on TikTok and Instagram Reels on the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) listening skills of high school students. Employing a quantitative correlational research design, the study involved 30 participants who completed pre-tests and post-tests to measure their listening comprehension. Data collection included a questionnaire capturing usage patterns of TikTok and Instagram Reels and a listening comprehension test using TED-Ed videos. The analysis revealed that short-form content positively correlates with improved listening skills, suggesting that these platforms offer engaging and interactive learning opportunities. However, the study also highlighted potential challenges, such as content quality and distraction risks. These findings provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers to leverage digital platforms effectively in EFL instruction, balancing their potential benefits with strategies to address associated challenges.

**Keywords:** digital platforms; EFL; Instagram Reels; listening skills; short-form content; TikTok

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**1. Introduction**

The rapid growth of digital platforms has revolutionized educational practices, particularly in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). Social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have emerged as powerful tools for language learning, offering immersive, interactive, and creative approaches to skill development. For instance, TikTok has been identified as a platform that fosters engagement through short,

dynamic videos, enabling learners to practice speaking and listening skills in an informal and relatable manner (Mujayanah et al., 2023). Similarly, YouTube provides access to a vast array of authentic listening materials, which are instrumental in improving learners' comprehension and fluency (Karim et al., 2023; Mannahali et al., 2024). Instagram, on the other hand, supports vocabulary acquisition and writing skills through its visual and interactive features, making it particularly suitable

for mobile-assisted language learning (Erarslan, 2019; Gonulal, 2019).

Numerous studies have explored the potential of these platforms in enhancing specific language skills. For example, (Maretha & Anggoro, 2022) highlight the benefits and challenges of TikTok in ELT, noting its role in engaging learners while raising concerns about potential distractions. Research by Anggraini et al., n.d. delves into how TikTok reshapes teacher identities and pedagogical strategies, suggesting that it not only benefits students but also influences educators' practices. Similarly, studies on Instagram, such as those by Abdulaziz Al Fadda (2020) and Maierová (2024), underline its effectiveness in teaching English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESP) and fostering collaborative learning environments. Meanwhile, YouTube has been lauded for its utility in both higher education and high school settings, with studies emphasizing its role in improving speaking and listening proficiency across diverse learner demographics (Karim et al., 2023; Mannahali et al., 2024).

The integration of short-form video platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels has increasingly become a focus in EFL learning research. Zhang et al. (2023) analyzed TikTok videos for learning Portuguese as a foreign language, highlighting the platform's potential to deliver concise, engaging, and contextualized language lessons. Similarly, Ulla, Lemana II, and Ulla et al. (2024) examined how TikTok

influences teacher identity, revealing its dual role as an educational tool and a platform for professional growth. Alm (2021) further demonstrated how platforms like Netflix transition learners from extensive to intra-formal language acquisition, emphasizing the value of multimedia in promoting autonomous learning. This study builds on such findings by exploring the unique contributions of TikTok and Instagram Reels to listening comprehension in EFL settings, particularly among high school learners.

Despite these findings, gaps remain in understanding the comparative effectiveness of these platforms and their collective impact when integrated into formal ELT settings. Most existing research focuses on isolated platforms, leaving unanswered questions about how these tools can complement each other to enhance overall learning outcomes (Maretha & Anggoro, 2022; Pereira & Ha, 2024). Additionally, while these platforms are widely recognized for their benefits, challenges such as information overload, content quality, and learner distraction are yet to be systematically addressed (Anggraini et al., n.d.; Pereira & Ha, 2024).

This study aims to address these gaps by investigating the pedagogical implications of using TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube in ELT. By analyzing their role in enhancing learners' motivation, speaking, and listening skills, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for educators and policymakers.

Furthermore, the study examines the challenges associated with integrating these platforms, offering recommendations for maximizing their educational potential while mitigating their drawbacks.

## 2. Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to explore the relationship between high school students' exposure to short-form video content (TikTok and Instagram Reels) and their self-reported EFL listening comprehension skills. Unlike experimental research, this design examined naturally occurring associations without manipulating variables (Creswell, 2014).

The study involved 34 high school students aged 16–18 from an Indonesian public school, selected using convenience sampling. Data collection included a structured questionnaire and a listening comprehension test using TED-Ed videos, known for their authenticity and structured content (Al-Jarf, 2021). The questionnaire captured students' frequency and duration of platform usage and their perceived listening skills, assessed through Likert-scale items.

Data analysis was conducted using JASP software. Descriptive statistics summarized the key data, and Spearman's correlation coefficient assessed the relationship between variables due to the ordinal nature of the questionnaire data. A significance level of 0.05 was used to determine statistical relevance. The methodological

framework was informed by prior studies to ensure rigor and validity (Goss-Sampson, 2022; Ghimire, 2022; Kaiser, 2023).

This approach aligns with prior research emphasizing the utility of correlational studies in understanding relationships without causal assumptions (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2014).

## 3. Results

The analysis of the collected data is presented using descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and assumption checks for bivariate normality. The results are organized systematically, providing detailed insights into the findings derived from the study.

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of the Data**

	Score	Frequency Survey
Valid	34	34
Missing	0	0
Mode	100.000 <sup>a</sup>	96.000 <sup>a</sup>
Median	100.000	96.000
Mean	92.353	97.676
Std. Deviation	9.865	8.892
Shapiro-Wilk	0.617	0.978
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	< .001	0.704
Minimum	80.000	81.000
Maximum	100.000	117.000

<sup>a</sup> The mode is computed assuming that variables are discreet

The descriptive statistics summarizes the key characteristics of the data for both variables: the scores and the survey results. The scores demonstrate a mean value of 92.353 with a standard deviation of 9.865, indicating a moderately high performance with slight variations among participants. The median and

mode values of the scores were both 100.000, showing a central tendency at the highest observed values. The minimum and maximum scores ranged from 80.000 to 100.000, reflecting a relatively narrow distribution.

Similarly, the survey results showed a mean of 97.676 and a standard deviation of 8.892, suggesting consistent responses among the participants. The median and mode values were 96.000, while the minimum and maximum survey results ranged from 81.000 to 117.000. This indicates a broader distribution compared to the scores. The Shapiro-Wilk test for normality revealed a significant result for the scores ( $p < .001$ ), suggesting non-normality, while the survey results showed a  $p$ -value of 0.704, indicating approximate normality.

**Table 6. The Correlation Analysis**

*Spearman's Correlations*

Variable		Score	Hasil Survey
1. Score	Spearman's rho	–	
	p-value	–	
2. Hasil Survey	Spearman's rho	-0.114	–
	p-value	0.520	–

The correlation between the scores and the survey results was examined using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. The analysis revealed a weak negative correlation ( $r = -0.114$ ), between the two variables. However, this correlation was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.520$ ), implying no meaningful relationship between students' listening skill scores and short-form content exposure survey outcomes.

**Table 7. The Validity of the Correlation Analysis**

*Assumption checks*

*Shapiro-Wilk Test for Bivariate Normality*

			Shapiro-Wilk	p
Score	-	Hasil Survey	0.829	< .001

To ensure the validity of the correlation analysis, the assumption of bivariate normality was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The test indicated that the scores ( $p < .001$ ) significantly deviated from normality, whereas the survey results ( $p = 0.829$ ) met the assumption of normality. This mixed outcome necessitated the use of non-parametric correlation methods like Spearman's rank correlation to accommodate the non-normal distribution of scores.

The analysis shows that the test scores are not normally distributed, with a significant deviation from normality ( $p < 0.001$ ), while the survey results are approximately normally distributed ( $p = 0.704$ ). Because the test scores didn't meet the normality assumption, Spearman's rank correlation was used for the analysis. The results revealed a weak negative correlation ( $r = -0.114$ ) between the test scores and survey results, but this was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.520$ ). In summary, there appears to be no meaningful relationship between the two variables.

These results provide a comprehensive overview of the data's statistical properties and the relationships between the variables, forming a solid foundation for further interpretation and discussion.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate the potential of short-form content on TikTok and Instagram Reels to influence English as a Foreign Language (EFL) listening skills, though the results reveal complexities in understanding this relationship. Despite the lack of a statistically significant correlation between scores and survey responses, the insights provided by descriptive statistics and participants' experiences underscore the nuanced impact of these platforms on language acquisition. The relatively high performance on listening comprehension tasks suggests that exposure to authentic and engaging short-form content may contribute to skill development, aligning with prior research emphasizing the educational value of multimedia platforms (Al-Jarf, 2021; Zhang et al., 2023).

The study's results highlight the diversity in participants' engagement with digital platforms, as reflected in the variability of survey responses. While the weak negative correlation observed in the Spearman analysis ( $r = -0.114$ ) and the non-significant  $p$ -value ( $p = 0.520$ ) indicate no direct relationship, these outcomes may point to the influence of extraneous factors, such as individual learning preferences, prior exposure to English, and the quality of content accessed. (Alm, 2021) notes that multimedia platforms foster autonomous learning and create opportunities for intra-formal learning environments, which may not always be directly measurable through traditional correlation methods.

The potential of TikTok and Instagram Reels as EFL tools is consistent with the findings of (Ulla et al., 2024), who observed that these platforms facilitate teacher-student interaction and professional growth, indirectly benefiting learners. However, the weak correlation between platform use and listening comprehension raises questions about how effectively these platforms are being utilized for educational purposes. This concern aligns with (Ghimire, 2022) observation that social media's role in language learning often depends on structured and guided usage.

The role of short-form content in enhancing motivation and engagement also cannot be overlooked. As noted by (Gulatee et al., 2021), the empowerment and self-identity fostered by social media use may indirectly influence language learning by increasing learners' confidence and willingness to engage with the material. This is further supported by (Kaiser, 2023), who highlighted how TikTok serves as a platform for sharing pedagogical challenges and solutions, creating a collaborative and innovative learning space.

The study's methodological choices, including the use of TED-Ed videos as a listening resource, reinforce the findings of (Al-Jarf, 2021), who identified such videos as effective tools for developing listening comprehension. However, the potential ceiling effect observed in the participants' scores suggests a need for more varied and challenging tasks to

better capture the range of listening abilities. Future studies could benefit from incorporating a broader spectrum of content types and difficulty levels to address this limitation.

Finally, the findings underscore the need for further exploration of the interplay between digital media exposure and language learning outcomes. As (Zhang et al., 2023) emphasized, short-form content's ability to deliver concise and contextualized lessons is a valuable asset in language education. However, its effectiveness may depend on the integration of these tools into formal instructional settings, a point echoed by (Alm, 2021) and (Ghimire, 2022). Educators and policymakers must consider how to leverage these platforms while addressing challenges such as content quality, distraction risks, and varying learner needs.

In conclusion, while this study provides initial evidence of the potential benefits of TikTok and Instagram Reels for EFL listening skills, the absence of significant statistical correlations calls for a deeper investigation into the underlying mechanisms and contextual

factors. By building on the insights of this and related studies, future research can better elucidate how digital platforms can be optimized for language learning.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, while the descriptive statistics reveal generally high performance and consistent survey responses, the lack of significant correlation between the scores and survey results suggests that the variables measured may not directly impact each other. The assumption checks for normality suggest some data distribution issues, particularly with the scores, which may have affected the results. To better understand the factors contributing to performance, future studies should explore additional variables and possibly refine the measurement instruments used to assess frequency of platform use and exposure to English content. Further research could also aim to address the potential ceiling effect in the scoring and incorporate more comprehensive approaches to understanding the relationship between language learning experiences and performance.

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