

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In today's digital era, technology is growing very fast and has changed many parts of our daily lives, including how people learn and teach. One of the areas that has been impacted the most is language education. Teachers and students now have access to many digital tools that can support language learning in new and creative ways. In particular, listening has become one of the main skills that can benefit from digital innovation. Listening is an important part of communication. Without good listening skills, it is difficult for students to understand what others are saying in English and to respond correctly. However, in many classrooms, especially in countries like Indonesia, listening is still not given enough attention. Many students do not have enough opportunities to listen to real English, and the materials used in class are often boring and not realistic.

Listening is considered one of the most difficult skills in learning a second language. Unlike reading or writing, listening happens in real time. This means students must understand what they hear immediately, without having much time to think. It also requires understanding different accents, speeds of speech, and pronunciation. According to (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016) many learners find listening difficult because they are not used to hearing natural English. Most of the materials in textbooks are slow and artificial. The conversations are often made just for practice and do not represent how people really speak. As a result, students cannot train their ears to understand English as it is used in real life.

Hamouda 2013 ( as cited in Pathan et al., 2021) also explains that students are often not interested in listening activities because the materials are not exciting. Teachers usually play recordings from textbooks, and students are asked to answer questions based on what they hear. This method has been used for many years, but it does not motivate students. Many students become bored and do not try to improve their listening skills. This problem is even more serious when students do not hear English outside of class. In Indonesia, for example, students usually only hear English during English lessons, and that too with materials that are not natural. Several previous studies have explored the use of digital media like YouTube, podcasts, and audiobooks to improve students' listening comprehension. (Astuti, 2022) investigated the use of YouTube videos and found that students showed better engagement and understanding compared to textbook-based activities. Similarly, Al Qasim and Al Fadda (2020) reported that using podcasts improved students' listening performance by providing more authentic input. However, these studies also revealed some limitations. YouTube videos often require longer concentration spans, which can be challenging for younger learners. Podcasts usually lack visual support, making it difficult for visual learners to follow the content. In addition, both YouTube and podcasts may include content that is too long, complex, or not directly related to students' interests. These weaknesses show the need for a platform that provides short, engaging, and visually supported content something that TikTok can offer.

One platform that is very popular with teenagers today is TikTok. TikTok is a social media app where users share short videos, usually between 15 seconds to 3 minutes long. The videos can be funny, educational, or creative. Students are already familiar with TikTok and use it every day. This makes it

a great opportunity for teachers to bring something that students enjoy into the learning process. TikTok is different from other platforms because it is short, fast, and full of visual and audio support. This can help students stay focused and interested while practicing listening. However, while YouTube and podcasts have been widely studied in relation to listening comprehension, there is still very limited research that specifically investigates the use of TikTok for improving listening comprehension skills. Most existing studies focus on vocabulary acquisition or speaking skills, leaving a clear gap in exploring TikTok's potential in the area of listening. Tiktok has many features that can be helpful for language learners. One of them is the Duet feature, where students can record themselves repeating what another speaker says. This is very useful to practice pronunciation and mimic the sounds they hear. Another is the Stitch feature, which lets students stop a video and reply to a specific part. This helps students focus on short parts of a longer video, which makes the listening task easier. TikTok also provides automatic captions in many videos, so students can read while they listen (Emma J McDonnell et al., 2024) Finally, the For You Page (FYP) is based on the user's interests and shows them content that matches their preferences. For students, this means they can listen to many different videos that use real English and are interesting to them personally. This kind of exposure is very important for language learning.

In Indonesia, many junior high school students still struggle with listening. One of the reasons is because they are not exposed to real spoken English. (Septiani et al., 2021) found that students in Indonesia often only hear English through textbooks, and these materials are not realistic. The dialogues are slow, scripted, and do not include common features of natural speech, such as connected speech, informal phrases, or

natural intonation. Students also do not hear different accents. Because of this, when they listen to real English for example in movies or with native speaker they feel confused and cannot understand. This makes them feel nervous and less confident. Although the Indonesian government supports the use of technology in education, in practice, not all schools or teachers use it well. Many teachers still use traditional teaching methods and are not trained to use digital tools or social media in the classroom. TikTok, for example, is often seen as a tool for fun, not for learning. Although some studies have found that TikTok can help students improve their vocabulary and speaking (Hongsa et al., 2023), its impact on listening comprehension remains underexplored and underreported. This study aims to fill that research gap.

At SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surabaya, English lessons still use a very traditional method. Teachers focus on textbooks and worksheets (Lembar Kerja Siswa/LKS). Although the school allows students to bring smartphones, these are not used for learning in class. Teachers rarely use audio or video materials. As a result, students mostly memorize grammar and vocabulary, but do not practice listening to natural English. They do not hear real pronunciation, intonation, or expressions that are commonly used in daily conversation. This leads to passive learning and weak listening skills. The specific problem at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surabaya is that students' listening comprehension remains low because of the continued use of boring and traditional teaching methods, the lack of authentic English listening materials, and the failure to use available technology, like smartphones and TikTok, as learning tools.

Because of this, many students cannot understand native speakers or fast conversations in real life. They are

not familiar with how English sounds when spoken naturally, especially when the speaker uses informal language, slang, or idioms. This creates a big challenge, especially when students take national exams or need to understand spoken English for academic or real-life purposes. In fact, even when smartphones are available, teachers still do not use them to support listening activities. (Rostaminejad et al., 2022) said that some students also do not know how to use digital media for learning, and teachers are afraid that students may get distracted. While this is a real concern, the potential of TikTok in education should not be ignored, especially because students are already using it every day.

This research aims to explore whether TikTok can be used to help improve students' listening comprehension. The researcher believes that TikTok, as a popular and engaging platform, can be turned into a useful tool for language learning. Students can hear real English, improve their vocabulary, and train their ears to understand natural speech. By specifically investigating how TikTok videos influence listening comprehension, this study seeks to address the lack of empirical evidence in this area.

In addition, this research aims to help teachers learn how to use TikTok in the classroom. It will give examples of how TikTok features can be used for listening activities. Hopefully, this study can also encourage other schools in Indonesia to explore digital media in teaching English, especially in schools that do not have access to expensive or high-quality materials. By using tools that are already familiar to students, such as TikTok, schools can make language learning more modern, interactive, and effective. Most of all, this study wants to show that simple digital tools,

when used creatively, can connect students' daily habits with real educational goals.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

What is the effect of TikTok videos on eighth-grade students' English listening comprehension?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

To examine the effect of TikTok videos on the English listening comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surabaya

## **1.4 Significance of the Research**

This research holds significant relevance for multiple stakeholders in the field of education, particularly learners, educators, and future researchers or policymakers. The integration of TikTok as a digital learning tool offers innovative insights into how English listening comprehension can be developed in a more effective and engaging way, especially within the context of junior high school students in Indonesia. The findings of this study have the potential to inform classroom practices, enhance learning experiences, and contribute to the advancement of educational strategies in the digital age.

### **1.4.1. Learners**

The most immediate and direct benefit of this research is for learners, particularly eighth-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surabaya. In today's digital era, students are constantly engaged with various social media

platforms, with TikTok being one of the most popular among adolescents. By utilizing a platform that is already familiar and enjoyable to students, this study presents an alternative and motivating mode of learning. TikTok's short, creative, and authentic video content enables students to access real-life English usage, exposing them to natural pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, and conversational contexts used by native speakers. Such exposure is often lacking in traditional listening materials used in classrooms, which are usually scripted and limited in variety. Through the integration of TikTok videos, students are encouraged to actively listen and engage with the content, which can lead to improved listening comprehension skills. The study also contributes to increased student motivation, as learning becomes less monotonous and more dynamic. This shift in student attitude plays a crucial role in language acquisition, particularly for listening, which is a foundational skill in mastering a new language. Ultimately, the research suggests that TikTok can support learners in becoming more confident and capable in understanding spoken English in real-world situations.

#### **1.4.2. Educators**

For educators, the study offers practical implications and insights into how teaching methods can be adapted to include digital platforms like TikTok in order to enhance English language instruction. Teaching listening skills has long been considered one of the more challenging aspects of language education, often due to the lack of engaging and authentic materials. This research shows that TikTok can serve as an effective supplementary tool that helps address these challenges.

By incorporating TikTok into the classroom, educators can design more interactive and student-centered learning activities that align with the curriculum while also capturing students' attention and interest. Teachers can select or create videos that correspond to specific topics, vocabulary sets, or grammar points, and use them as the basis for listening exercises, discussions, or assessments. This approach promotes not only language development but also digital literacy, creativity, and critical thinking. Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of adapting teaching practices to the evolving preferences and learning habits of students. As digital natives, students are more likely to respond positively to multimedia content than to conventional audio recordings or textbook exercises. Therefore, educators are encouraged to embrace innovation and explore the possibilities offered by digital media to create a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment.

### **1.4.3. Future Researchers and Policymakers**

Beyond its implications for learners and educators, this research also contributes valuable insights to future researchers and educational policymakers. In the growing field of educational technology, studies like this help build a deeper understanding of how digital platforms can be effectively integrated into pedagogical practices. Specifically, this research provides evidence of TikTok's educational potential, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in Indonesia.

The findings serve as a foundation for future investigations on similar topics, encouraging researchers to explore different aspects of digital media use in education such as student engagement, learning outcomes, media literacy, and long-term retention. In addition, the study opens

opportunities for comparative studies across different regions, age groups, or educational levels. For policymakers, the results offer guidance on how digital media can be included in formal education systems.

## **1.5 Scope and Delimitation**

This study targets the effect of TikTok on enhancing eighth-grade students' listening comprehension at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surabaya. The scope of the research is limited to assessing the effect of TikTok-based listening exercises on students' listening skills in relation to spoken English.

The study is confined to eighth-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surabaya to maintain a specific and manageable sample population. It does not investigate other language skills such as speaking, reading, or writing, as the focus is solely on listening comprehension. Furthermore, the study does not compare TikTok with other online media platforms, such as YouTube or podcasts, in order to maintain a unique and focused investigation. While the findings may offer implications for the use of TikTok in education more broadly, the results cannot be generalized to all grade levels or schools without further research. By setting these boundaries, the study aims to provide a detailed and focused analysis of whether TikTok can enhance students' listening comprehension, while acknowledging its scope and limitations.

## 1.6 Key Term Definitions

1. **Listening Comprehension:** The ability to hear, interpret, and process verbal language. It involves the identification of sounds, word meaning understanding, grammatical construction comprehension, and context-dependent inference of meaning (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012) This study proposes to improve the listening skill for comprehending verbal English using TikTok videos.
2. **Digital Media:** Media and devices offering content in digital format, such as social media, podcasts, videos, and websites. In education, it serves as a tool to enhance learning processes through interactive (Mustapha & Kurt, 2021)
3. **TikTok:** A social media platform specializing in short-form video content (15-60 seconds) that incorporates music, filters, and interactive features (Omar & Dequan, 2020) While primarily recreational, its engaging interface and authentic content offer potential learning applications (Notes & Collection, n.d.) This study examines TikTok as a tool for listening comprehension development.
4. **Educational Technology:** The study and ethical practice of using technological resources to facilitate learning and improve performance (Richey, 2008). This encompasses learning management systems, educational apps, and social media platforms when used with pedagogical intent (Spector, 2015).