

# One click closer: harnessing the power of educational TikTok videos to elevate Filipino language proficiency

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**Abstract.** This study investigates the effectiveness of TikTok as an instructional tool for learning the Filipino language, particularly in the context of Barayti at Baryasyon ng Wika (Language Variety and Variation). As a widely used social media platform among young learners, TikTok offers opportunities for presenting educational content through short-form videos that combine visual and auditory elements. This research employs a mixed-method design, combining a single-group pre-test/post-test assessment with focus group discussions to gather insights from 30 Bachelor of Secondary Education students majoring in Filipino. The study explores how TikTok videos can enhance students' understanding of language register, grammar concepts, and language variation. Findings indicate statistically significant improvements across all three assessed areas following exposure to the instructional videos, with large effect sizes observed. Qualitative data reveal that students found the content engaging, though challenges related to internet connectivity and unfamiliarity with using social media for academic purposes were noted. The study concludes that TikTok can serve as a supplementary instructional tool when integrated with classroom discussion, though its effectiveness depends on addressing technical barriers and providing adequate pedagogical scaffolding.

**Keywords:** TikTok, language education, Filipino, instructional media

## 1. Introduction

In today's increasingly connected world, digital technologies have transformed how individuals communicate, learn, and access information. This transformation is primarily driven by globalisation and the rapid development of new technologies [15]. The evolving media landscape influences young people's socialisation processes, values, and educational preferences, consequently shaping their approaches to learning and knowledge acquisition.

Social media platforms have become integral to daily life, particularly with the widespread adoption of smartphones and constant internet accessibility [5]. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) have become primary means for individuals to connect, socialise, and share information [11]. Among these platforms, TikTok has emerged as particularly influential among younger demographics, offering unique affordances for content creation and consumption.

Launched in 2016 by ByteDance, TikTok enables users to create, share, and discover short-form videos spanning various genres, including entertainment, lifestyle, and educational content [9]. The platform's algorithm enhances content visibility based on engagement rather than follower count, allowing diverse voices to reach broad audiences [19]. TikTok's interface features, including filters, effects, and music integration, facilitate the creation of visually engaging content with relative ease [9]. These tools encourage collaboration through challenges and duets, fostering active user participation [19].

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The platform's appeal lies partly in its accessibility and the opportunity it provides for creative self-expression through features like duets, challenges, and an extensive library of music and effects [13]. While TikTok is primarily associated with entertainment, researchers have begun examining its potential applications in educational contexts.

The adoption of TikTok as a teaching tool has been explored in various studies, demonstrating its capacity to engage students in learning activities. Sağar [17] found that university students who used social media extensively showed higher rates of platform engagement, suggesting both opportunities and risks for educational applications. Given the need for a better understanding of how social media platforms can support academic learning, this study explores the effectiveness of TikTok in Filipino language education.

In the Philippine educational context, integrating digital platforms presents both challenges and opportunities for learners and educators. TikTok's short video format and interactive features may support language learning by making content more engaging and accessible, while its global reach can expose students to diverse linguistic expressions. This study investigates these possibilities within the specific context of teaching *Barayti at Baryasyon ng Wika* (Language Variety and Variation) to Filipino major students.

## 2. Literature review

Several studies have investigated the impact of TikTok on students' learning experiences. Zhu, Liu and Hwang [23] investigated the effects of TikTok use on academic achievement, identifying both beneficial and detrimental outcomes while emphasising that multiple media factors influence student performance. Isman and Yahya [8] found that users discovered TikTok through various channels, including advertisements and recommendations from peers and family members. Their study revealed that ease of use was a primary factor encouraging platform adoption, as it requires no prior experience and is freely accessible. Participants reported advantages, such as access to diverse content; however, the researchers noted that students may experience academic challenges, including distraction and a reduced attention span. Research has also shown correlations between students' proficiency with the TikTok application and their levels of engagement with content [19, 22].

Much of the existing research on TikTok focuses on associated mental health concerns [2, 6], highlighting the need for more research specifically examining TikTok's role in language learning and student engagement.

Regarding language learning applications, Ubaedillah et al. [20] found that students exhibited positive attitudes toward using TikTok videos as learning aids in English classes, noting that the platform captured students' attention and reduced boredom through its engaging features. TikTok's global downloads reached 45 million within three months, indicating its widespread adoption [7]. Zaitun, Hadi and Indriani [21] reported that TikTok enhanced viewers' English language skills, including vocabulary and speaking abilities, through features such as duet videos that encourage interactive participation.

TikTok has been recognised as a potential source for nano-learning, serving as a tool that bridges formal and informal learning contexts. While the platform is primarily entertainment-oriented, it hosts informative content from creators who provide educational tips and explanations [9]. Though definitive conclusions about TikTok's role as a nano-learning platform are premature, substantial educational content and engagement from learners have been observed.

Despite acknowledging challenges, research participants have generally viewed learning from TikTok as complementary to traditional methods. Questions about learning efficiency, limited teacher interaction, and ensuring content quality persist, and balancing social media learning with traditional pedagogical approaches remains an ongoing challenge.

### 3. Research objectives and questions

Three primary objectives guide this study. First, it aims to determine the effectiveness of instructional TikTok videos in improving students' understanding of language register (*Register ng Wika*). Second, it aims to assess how TikTok videos impact students' understanding and application of Filipino grammar concepts. Third, the study intends to explore the perceived challenges and benefits of utilizing TikTok as an educational platform in language learning contexts.

To address these objectives, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How effective are educational TikTok videos in enhancing the understanding of language register among Filipino majors?
2. What is the impact of incorporating TikTok videos on grammar comprehension and application in Filipino language learning?
3. What challenges and benefits do students perceive in using TikTok as an educational platform?

### 4. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative pre-test/post-test assessments with qualitative focus group discussions, to investigate how TikTok videos can support Filipino language learning. The study used thematic analysis [4] to interpret students' lived experiences with TikTok as a learning tool.

#### 4.1. Participants

The participants were 30 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Secondary Education program with a major in Filipino at Pangasinan State University – Alaminos City Campus. All participants were actively engaged with TikTok content designed for language instruction. The sample comprised 20 female and 10 male students, aged 18–21. Most participants had prior experience using TikTok for entertainment purposes, though varying levels of digital competency were observed. Socioeconomic background data indicated that many students relied on mobile data for internet access, and connectivity challenges were common due to the campus's rural location. Only one class of Filipino majors exists at this campus due to enrollment restrictions under the quota system, which determined the sample size.

#### 4.2. Instructional materials

Three TikTok videos were created by the researchers as instructional materials aligned with lessons on Barayti at Baryasyon ng Wika. Each video ranged from 3 to 5 minutes in duration – longer than typical TikTok content to accommodate the educational objectives. The videos incorporated clear narration, text overlays, and contextual examples. The design adhered to multimedia learning principles by combining visual cues with auditory explanations and incorporating reinforcement questions. Quality control involved peer review of the content to ensure accuracy and alignment with learning outcomes. While this duration exceeds TikTok's typical short-form format (commonly 15–60 seconds), the extended length was deemed necessary to cover the lesson content adequately; the videos were subsequently elaborated upon during classroom discussion.

#### 4.3. Procedure

A pre-test was administered to assess students' baseline competency in the target areas. Following the pre-test, students were exposed to three instructional TikTok videos, accompanied by classroom discussions to elaborate on the content. A post-test was then administered to measure learning gains. This study employed a single-group pre-test/post-test design without a control group. While this design limits causal inference – since improvements may be partially attributable to classroom

instruction, the Hawthorne effect, or natural learning progression – it provides initial evidence regarding the intervention’s potential effectiveness.

#### 4.4. Data collection

Quantitative data were collected through pre-test and post-test assessments measuring students’ understanding of: (1) language register (*Register ng Wika*), (2) grammar concepts, and (3) language variation (*Barayti ng Wika*). To complement the quantitative findings, focus group discussions were conducted with a select group of students. These discussions explored students’ experiences with the instructional videos, identifying factors that facilitated or hindered their learning and their perceptions of using social media for academic purposes.

#### 4.5. Data analysis

Paired-samples t-tests were used to compare pre-test and post-test scores. Given the potential for inflated t-values due to sample homogeneity and relatively low standard deviations, effect sizes (Cohen’s *d*) were calculated to provide a standardised measure of the magnitude of improvement. Cohen’s *d* was computed as  $d = t / \sqrt{n}$ , where values of 0.2, 0.5, and 0.8 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively.

Qualitative data from focus group discussions were analysed using thematic analysis. Diverse representative quotes were selected to capture both positive and negative experiences. Data saturation was achieved after repeated themes emerged across participants, and member checking was conducted to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. Themes were triangulated with quantitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intervention’s effects.

#### 4.6. Ethical considerations

This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement. Data privacy was strictly observed, with responses anonymised and videos used only for instructional purposes within the class setting. No identifying student information was disclosed in reporting.

### 5. Results and discussion

#### 5.1. Quantitative findings

In teaching topics within the Barayti at Baryasyon ng Wika subject, the instructor developed three TikTok videos that served as instructional materials. These videos were designed to engage students dynamically while addressing specific learning objectives.

Analysis of the pre-test and post-test results revealed significant improvements in respondents’ scores across all three assessments, as shown in Table 1. These improvements suggest that the instructional TikTok videos, combined with classroom elaboration, contributed to enhanced learning outcomes.

For Test 1 (Language Register), the mean score increased from 15.20 (SD = 2.759) before the intervention to 24.40 (SD = 2.415) after the intervention. The comparison yielded a *t*-value of -20.525 and a *p*-value of 0.000, with a large effect size (Cohen’s *d* = 3.75). This suggests substantial improvement in students’ understanding and application of language register concepts. The visual and interactive aspects of TikTok videos may have contributed to enhanced retention and recall of the material [16]. Niyomsuk and Polyiem [14] argued that social network applications, particularly TikTok’s interactive features, can enhance learning experiences by providing engaging platforms that support effective learning management. This aligns with research demonstrating how social media can create dynamic learning environments [2]. Ala-Mutka [1] emphasised the importance of

**Table 1**

Pre-test and post-test score comparison with effect sizes.

Test	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value (two-tailed)	Cohen's <i>d</i>	Remarks
Pre-test 1	30	15.20	2.759	-20.525	.000	3.75	Significant
Post-test 1	30	24.40	2.415				
Pre-test 2	30	13.27	1.617	-49.455	.000	9.03	Significant
Post-test 2	30	23.80	1.919				
Pre-test 3	30	13.67	2.139	-39.161	.000	7.15	Significant
Post-test 3	30	24.03	1.691				

collaborative learning in digital spaces, suggesting that platforms allowing users to learn through shared content can improve learning outcomes.

For Test 2 (Grammar Concepts), the pre-test mean of 13.27 (SD = 1.617) increased to a post-test mean of 23.80 (SD = 1.919). The *t*-value of -49.455 and *p*-value of 0.000 confirm a highly significant difference, with an effect size of Cohen's *d* = 9.03. The improvement in grammar comprehension may be attributed to how TikTok videos break down complex grammar lessons into concise, digestible segments. By combining visual elements with clear examples, the videos captured students' attention and maintained their interest [20]. The presentation of grammar rules through contextual examples allowed learners to observe how language functions in various situations [12]. The accessible format facilitates repeated exposure to language rules, which may help reinforce these concepts. When combined with classroom discussion, the platform's content can foster collaborative learning as students share their interpretations of grammatical structures [23]. The integration of TikTok as a supplementary educational tool demonstrates how technology can complement traditional teaching methods [22].

Test 3 (Language Variation) showed similar results, with the pre-test mean of 13.67 (SD = 2.139) rising to a post-test mean of 24.03 (SD = 1.691). The *t*-value of -39.161 and *p*-value of 0.000 demonstrated a significant improvement, with an effect size of Cohen's *d* = 7.15. The TikTok videos likely supported learning by combining instruction with an accessible platform that provided opportunities for repeated exposure to language structures and active participation through comments and interactions with the content [13]. Bristow [3] explored the potential of video as a teaching tool, noting that while short-form videos can enhance emotional connection and engagement, their excessive use may affect students' capacity for deep learning. Laouadji, Khenteur and Messaoudi [10] investigated the use of social media reels as teaching aids for grammar instruction, finding that while such content can stimulate student motivation, overreliance on brief formats may impede the development of sustained attention.

The large effect sizes observed across all three tests warrant consideration. While these values indicate substantial improvements, they are unusually high compared to those typically seen in educational interventions. This may be attributable to the homogeneity of the student group, relatively low standard deviations, or the combined effect of the TikTok videos with classroom elaboration. The single-group design also limits the ability to isolate the specific contribution of the TikTok intervention from other instructional factors.

## 5.2. Qualitative findings

To deepen understanding of students' experiences with TikTok as an educational tool, focus group discussions were conducted and thematically analysed. The emerging themes highlight both challenges and benefits associated with using TikTok videos in Filipino language education. Table 2 summarises the key themes, associated subthemes, and representative participant quotes.

Despite the positive quantitative results, students reported encountering challenges when using

**Table 2**

Themes from focus group discussions on TikTok use in Filipino language education.

Theme	Subthemes	Sample quote
Engagement and motivation	Visual appeal; ease of access; increased recall	“Mas engaging ang content ng mga topics.”
Learning limitations	Short video duration; lack of depth	“Medyo maikli po 'yung content... pero okay kasi na-discuss naman po sa klase.”
Technical barriers	Weak internet connectivity; device limitations	“Mahina po 'yung signal... minsan sa labas na lang po ng classroom.”
Digital divide	Unfamiliarity with TikTok; distraction issues	“Hindi lang ako sanay... minsan nakaka-distract din.”
Pedagogical value	Complement to discussion; enhanced comprehension	“Okay lang 'yung TikTok video sa Baryasyon kasi na-elaborate sa klase.”

TikTok for educational purposes.

### 5.2.1. Video duration and content depth

Some students found the video format challenging for processing complex academic content:

*“Nahirapan po ako noong una kasi major po namin tapos medyo maikli po iyong content ng video. Pero nakatulong naman po kasi mas engaging ang content ng mga topics.”* (“I had a hard time at first because it’s our major, and the content of the video was quite short. But it was helpful because the topics’ content was more engaging.”) (Participant 1)

*“Medyo maikli po yung video pero nailaborate po yung topic sa discussion na po kaya okay lang po iyong TikTok video sa Baryasyon.”* (“The video was a bit short, but the topic was elaborated well in the discussion, so the TikTok video for Variation is okay.”) (Participant 2)

These responses indicate that while the short video format was engaging, it required supplementation through classroom discussion to achieve adequate depth. This finding aligns with Bozzola et al. [2], who noted that brief video formats may limit opportunities for in-depth exploration of complex topics. The students’ feedback suggests that TikTok videos function more effectively as supplementary materials rather than standalone instructional resources.

### 5.2.2. Internet connectivity

The school’s rural location created connectivity challenges that affected students’ access to the videos:

*“Hindi po ako gaano nakakasunod noon kasi po mahina po iyong signal. Makakaaccess lang po kami minsan kapag sa labas na po ng classroom o sa school.”* (“I wasn’t able to follow along much before because the signal was weak. We can only access it sometimes when we’re outside the classroom or off-campus.”) (Participant 4)

Unreliable connectivity affected students’ ability to access online learning resources during class [13]. Slow or inconsistent internet speeds disrupted video streaming and interfered with learning activities.

### 5.2.3. Digital literacy and distraction

Not all students felt equally comfortable using TikTok for academic purposes:

*“Hindi lang ako sanay na kailangang TikTok yung gamitin namin sa discussion. Minsan kasi nakakadistract din.”* (“I’m just not used to having to use TikTok for our discussions. Sometimes, it can be distracting.”) (Participant 3)

This response highlights the digital divide in platform familiarity and the challenge of using an entertainment-oriented platform for educational purposes. Students with less experience using social media for academic work may struggle to utilise TikTok effectively, while the platform’s design for entertainment consumption may create distractions [18]. The addictive qualities of social media platforms can draw students away from focused learning [17]. These findings suggest that educators should provide guidance to ensure equitable benefit from digital tools.

### 5.2.4. Perceived benefits

Despite these challenges, students recognised TikTok’s potential as an instructional tool, particularly for enhancing engagement and content retention in Filipino language learning. The visual and interactive nature of TikTok videos reinforced key concepts, and the accessible format encouraged students to revisit content for review. When combined with classroom elaboration, TikTok videos contributed to improved understanding and recall of language concepts.

## 6. Conclusion

This study examined the use of TikTok as an instructional tool for learning the Filipino language in the context of Barayti at Baryasyon ng Wika. Despite challenges, including internet connectivity issues and student unfamiliarity with using social media for academic purposes, the intervention yielded positive learning outcomes.

The study found statistically significant improvements in students’ understanding of language register, grammar concepts, and language variation, with large effect sizes observed across all assessments. These findings suggest that incorporating TikTok videos into classroom discussions can contribute to improved language learning outcomes. Qualitative data revealed that students found the content engaging and valued its visual appeal, though they emphasised the importance of classroom elaboration to address the depth limitations of short-form video content.

The theoretical framework underlying this intervention draws on Mayer’s multimedia learning theory and constructivist learning principles. The TikTok videos employed dual coding through combined visual and auditory presentation, segmented complex concepts into manageable portions, and encouraged learner engagement through relatable scenarios. Constructivist approaches were reflected in students’ active meaning-making during classroom discussions following video exposure.

Several limitations should be noted. This study employed a single-group pre-test/post-test design without a control group, which limits the ability to make causal inferences. The observed improvements may be partially attributable to classroom instruction, the Hawthorne effect, or natural learning progression rather than the TikTok intervention alone. The sample size ( $n = 30$ ) was small, drawn from a single institution in a rural setting with connectivity challenges, which limits the generalizability of the results. The unusually large effect sizes may reflect sample homogeneity and low variability rather than exceptionally strong intervention effects.

Future research should include control groups to strengthen internal validity and isolate the specific effects of TikTok-based instruction. Researchers should report effect sizes with 95% confidence intervals and apply sensitivity analyses when interpreting results. Studies should include larger and more diverse populations across various educational environments to improve generalizability. Investigating the optimal video duration and finding the appropriate balance between social media-based and traditional instruction would also be valuable.

This study provides preliminary evidence that TikTok can serve as a supplementary instructional tool in Filipino language education when integrated with classroom discussion and supported by adequate technical infrastructure. Its effectiveness depends on addressing technical barriers, providing pedagogical scaffolding, and helping students navigate the use of entertainment platforms for academic learning.

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