



## Students' Engagement in Learning Recount Text through TikTok-Based Projects: A Senior High School Case Study

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji keterlibatan siswa dalam mempelajari teks recount melalui proyek berbasis TikTok di tingkat sekolah menengah atas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana proyek berbasis TikTok memengaruhi keterlibatan perilaku, kognitif, dan emosional siswa selama proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif yang melibatkan 36 siswa kelas X dan seorang guru bahasa Inggris yang dipilih melalui teknik sampling purposif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi, serta dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Untuk memastikan keandalan data, triangulasi sumber, metode, dan teori diterapkan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa proyek berbasis TikTok meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dalam pembelajaran teks recount. Para siswa berpartisipasi secara aktif dalam diskusi kelompok, penulisan naskah, latihan pengucapan, dan produksi video, yang menunjukkan keterlibatan perilaku yang kuat. Mereka juga menunjukkan keterlibatan kognitif melalui pengurutan peristiwa secara kronologis, penyempurnaan naskah, dan peningkatan ketepatan bahasa, sementara keterlibatan emosional tercermin dalam meningkatnya rasa percaya diri, kesenangan, dan motivasi. Keakraban dengan TikTok dan fitur-fitur kreatifnya mendorong keterlibatan aktif siswa dalam proses pembelajaran. Meskipun beberapa siswa pada awalnya mengalami tantangan terkait tata bahasa, pengeditan video, dan berbicara di depan kamera, kesulitan-kesulitan ini secara bertahap dapat diatasi melalui kolaborasi sesama siswa dan dukungan guru. Kesimpulannya, proyek berbasis TikTok memberikan pendekatan yang efektif dan berpusat pada siswa untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

### ABSTRACT

This study investigated students' engagement in learning recount texts through TikTok-based projects at the senior high school level. It aimed to explore how TikTok-based projects influenced students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement during the learning process. This research employed a qualitative case study design involving 36 tenth-grade students and one English teacher selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. To ensure trustworthiness, source, method, and theoretical triangulation were applied. The findings revealed that TikTok-based projects enhanced students' engagement in learning recount texts. Students actively participated in group discussions, script writing, pronunciation practice, and video production, demonstrating strong behavioral engagement. They also showed cognitive engagement through organizing events chronologically, revising scripts, and improving language accuracy, while emotional engagement was reflected in increased confidence, enjoyment, and motivation. The familiarity of TikTok and its creative features encouraged students' active involvement in the learning process. Although some students initially experienced challenges related to grammar, video editing, and speaking in front of the camera, these difficulties were gradually overcome through peer collaboration and teacher support. In conclusion, TikTok-based projects provide an effective and student-centered approach to promoting student engagement in English language learning.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has significantly transformed various aspects of society, including education (Akour & Alenezi, 2022). Today's high school students belong to a generation that is highly engaged with social media platforms (Samala et al., 2024). Among these platforms, TikTok has become one of the most popular applications used by adolescents and young adults worldwide (Psihogios et al., 2022). Beyond entertainment, TikTok serves as a space for creativity, social interaction, and information sharing (Schellewald, 2024). As students increasingly interact with digital media in their daily lives, their learning preferences have also shifted toward more interactive, visual, and technology-supported experiences (Emma, 2024).

Despite these technological developments, student engagement remains a challenge in English language learning in Indonesia (Nur et al., 2024). Many students are still reluctant to participate actively in classroom activities, lack confidence in using English, and show limited motivation in writing tasks. These challenges are particularly evident in learning recount texts, which require students to organize past experiences chronologically while applying appropriate language features and text structures (Al-Wossabi, 2024). Students often experience difficulties in generating ideas, selecting suitable vocabulary, and using the simple past tense accurately (Hulopi et al., 2025). As a result, recount text instruction is frequently perceived as less engaging and meaningful.

In response to these challenges, the Merdeka Curriculum encourages student-centered learning that promotes creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and the integration of digital technology into classroom practices (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, 2022). Teachers are expected to design learning activities that are relevant to students' real-life experiences and digital culture. One potential approach is the implementation of TikTok-based projects, in which students create short videos to present recount texts based on their personal experiences. Through this activity, students can engage in collaborative planning, script writing, speaking practice, and content creation, allowing them to participate more actively in the learning process.

Previous studies have highlighted the educational potential of TikTok in language learning. (Yuliasri & Faridi, 2024) reported that TikTok positively influences students' speaking skills, vocabulary development, confidence, and learning motivation. Similarly, (Abdurrachman & Ar-Rachmah, 2025) found that TikTok content increases students' interest in learning because it is concise, engaging, and aligned with the characteristics of digital-native learners. Research by (Saputra, 2024) further demonstrated that social media platforms provide opportunities for creative expression, idea generation, and peer feedback. In addition, (Kurniawati et al., 2026) revealed that TikTok-supported project-based learning can enhance students' creativity, collaboration, and emotional involvement.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of TikTok for language learning, most have focused on language outcomes such as speaking ability, vocabulary acquisition, motivation, or the general use of social media in education. Limited attention has been given to how TikTok-based projects influence student engagement across behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions, particularly in the context of recount text learning at the senior high school level. Therefore, this study seeks to explore students' engagement in learning recount texts through TikTok-based projects. By examining how students participate, think, and respond emotionally throughout the learning process, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of student engagement in technology-enhanced English language learning and provides practical insights for teachers seeking innovative approaches that align with the characteristics of today's digital generation.

## 2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to investigate students' engagement in learning recount texts through a TikTok-based project at the senior high school level. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to explore students' experiences, interactions, and engagement during the learning process in a natural classroom setting. According to (Muzari et al., 2022), qualitative research is appropriate for examining participants' perceptions, behaviors, and meanings within a specific context. A case study design was adopted because the research focused on a single case, namely the implementation of a TikTok-based project in recount text learning in one tenth-grade classroom.

The participants were 36 tenth-grade students and one English teacher at a senior high school. Purposive sampling was employed because the selected class implemented a TikTok-based project as part of recount text instruction, making it relevant to the objectives of the study. The research was conducted over a period of four weeks, covering the planning, implementation, and presentation stages of the project. During this period, students worked in small groups to create TikTok videos based on personal experiences

presented in recount text form. The activities included planning story ideas, writing scripts, practicing pronunciation, recording videos, and presenting the final products in class.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Classroom observations were conducted during four learning sessions to record students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement throughout the project activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with one English teacher and eight students selected purposively. The student participants were chosen based on their level of participation during the project activities, representing highly active, moderately active, and less active students to obtain diverse perspectives regarding the learning experience. Each interview lasted approximately 15–20 minutes and focused on students' experiences, motivation, challenges, and perceptions of using TikTok in learning recount texts.

Documentation was used as supporting data and included students' TikTok videos, photographs of classroom activities, lesson materials, and teacher notes. These documents helped strengthen and verify the findings obtained from observations and interviews.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting and organizing information related to behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. The data were then presented in descriptive narratives and thematic categories to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns and relationships emerging from the observation, interview, and documentation data.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and theoretical triangulation were applied (Donkoh & Mensah, 2023). Ethical considerations were also observed throughout the study. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the school administration and the English teacher. All participants were informed about the purpose of the research and voluntarily agreed to participate. Informed consent was obtained from participants, and their identities were kept confidential by using pseudonyms in all research records and reports.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### Results

Based on the data obtained through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, the findings revealed that TikTok-based projects enhanced students' engagement in learning recount texts. Student engagement was reflected through three main dimensions: behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, and emotional engagement (Naibert et al., 2022). Table 1 presents a summary of the main findings.

**Table 1. Summary of Student Engagement in TikTok-Based Recount Text Projects**

Engagement Dimension	Observation Findings	Supporting Interview Data
Behavioral Engagement	Students actively participated in group discussions, script writing, pronunciation practice, and video production. They showed responsibility in completing assigned tasks and collaborating with peers.	"I became more active because we had to make a TikTok video together. Everyone had their own job, so I could not stay silent like in usual class." (S2)
Cognitive Engagement	Students organized events chronologically, applied the structure of recount texts, selected appropriate vocabulary, revised scripts, and corrected grammatical errors based on feedback.	"We had to think carefully about the story order and grammar before recording, because if it was wrong we repeated again." (S4)
Emotional Engagement	Students showed enthusiasm, confidence, enjoyment, and motivation during project activities. They were excited to create and present their videos.	"I liked this project because TikTok is already familiar to me, and I could make the task more interesting with music and effects." (S1)
Challenges Encountered	Some students experienced difficulties with grammar, video editing, and speaking in front of	"At first, I was nervous because I did not like speaking in front of a camera." (S3); "Editing the video

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the camera. However, they was difficult because I had never gradually adapted through peer done it before.” (S8) and teacher support.

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### **Behavioral Engagement**

The findings showed that students demonstrated strong behavioral engagement throughout the implementation of the TikTok-based project. During classroom activities, students actively participated in group discussions to select personal experiences, collaboratively wrote scripts, practiced pronunciation, and creatively recorded their videos. Compared with conventional writing activities, students showed greater responsibility and initiative in completing the assigned tasks.

Interview data supported these observations. One student (S2) stated, “I became more active because we had to make a TikTok video together. Everyone had their own job, so I could not stay silent like in usual class.” Similarly, another student (S5) explained, “During the project, we discussed many ideas together. I felt responsible for finishing my part because my friends depended on me.” The English teacher also reported that students who were usually passive became more involved during group work and video preparation activities. These findings indicate that students actively participated in learning activities and demonstrated collaborative responsibility throughout the project.

### **Cognitive Engagement**

The project also promoted students’ cognitive engagement during recount text learning. Observation data showed that students were required to organize events chronologically, apply the generic structure of recount texts, select appropriate vocabulary, and use correct past tense forms. Several groups revised their scripts after receiving feedback from the teacher and peers before recording their videos.

Interview findings further illustrated this process. One student (S4) explained, “We had to think carefully about the story order and grammar before recording, because if it was wrong we repeated again.” Another student (S7) stated, “At first, I made mistakes in the past tense, but after discussing with my friends and teacher, I corrected them.” These responses suggest that students were actively involved in planning, revising, problem-solving, and improving the quality of their work during the project.

### **Emotional Engagement**

In addition to behavioral and cognitive engagement, students demonstrated positive emotional engagement throughout the learning process. Observation data indicated that students appeared enthusiastic during discussions, recording sessions, and classroom presentations. Many students showed excitement while planning their videos and presenting the final products.

Interview data confirmed these findings. One student (S1) stated, “I liked this project because TikTok is already familiar to me, and I could make the task more interesting with music and effects.” Another student (S6) commented, “I felt more confident speaking English because we could practice before recording.” The teacher also noted that students appeared more motivated and enthusiastic compared with regular writing lessons.

However, several challenges were also identified. Some students initially lacked confidence in appearing on camera, while others experienced difficulties in using grammar accurately or editing videos. One student (S3) stated, “At first, I was nervous because I did not like speaking in front of a camera.” Another student (S8) explained, “Editing the video was difficult because I had never done it before.” Despite these challenges, most students gradually adapted through peer support and teacher guidance.

Overall, the findings indicate that TikTok-based projects encouraged students’ behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement in learning recount texts. Students became more active participants in classroom activities, demonstrated greater effort in organizing and revising their texts, and expressed positive emotional responses during the learning process. At the same time, the findings revealed several challenges related to self-confidence, language accuracy, and technical skills, suggesting that continuous support from teachers and peers remained important throughout the project.

### **Discussion**

Another significant finding concerns the supporting factors that influenced students’ engagement during the project. Interviews revealed that students’ familiarity with TikTok made the learning activities feel easier, more enjoyable, and less stressful because the platform was already integrated into their daily lives. In addition, TikTok’s creative features, such as music, filters, transitions, and storytelling tools, motivated students to express themselves more confidently. This finding is consistent with (Tzur et al., 2023), who found that familiar social media platforms can enhance students’ motivation by connecting classroom learning with their everyday digital culture. Similarly, (Damayanti et al., 2026) reported that

TikTok-based learning activities increased students' willingness to participate because students were already comfortable navigating the platform. One student (S1) stated, "I liked this project because TikTok is already familiar to me, and I could make the task more interesting with music and effects."

The findings also support previous studies highlighting the role of creativity in promoting engagement. (Lukmana & Priyatmojo, 2025) argued that integrating familiar social media platforms into language learning can increase emotional engagement because students perceive learning activities as more enjoyable and relatable. Likewise, the present study found that students were more motivated to complete learning tasks when they were given opportunities to create personalized video content. However, the findings also extend previous research by showing that students' engagement was influenced not only by familiarity with the platform but also by the freedom to combine language learning with creative self-expression through multimedia features.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study also identified several challenges. Some students initially experienced difficulties in creating and editing videos, particularly when organizing content, managing technical aspects, or ensuring the accuracy of their English language use. A few students also reported feeling nervous about recording themselves and sharing their work publicly. These findings are in line with previous research suggesting that while social media-based learning can enhance engagement, it may also create challenges related to digital literacy, self-confidence, and task management (Damayanti et al., 2026). Therefore, the positive impact of TikTok-based projects should be viewed alongside the support students need to overcome such difficulties.

Overall, these findings imply that technology integration in language learning should not only focus on the use of digital tools but also on selecting platforms that match students' interests, habits, and learning characteristics. At the same time, teachers should provide sufficient guidance and technical support to help students address potential challenges during the learning process. By balancing familiarity, creativity, and instructional support, TikTok-based projects can create more meaningful and engaging learning experiences while minimizing obstacles that may reduce student participation.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of TikTok-based projects contributed positively to students' engagement in learning recount text. The integration of TikTok into project-based learning created a more interactive, meaningful, and student-centered learning environment by encouraging students to participate actively in the learning process while engaging cognitively with the content. The familiarity of the platform and its creative features also supported students' motivation and involvement in learning activities.

The findings suggest that integrating social media platforms that are familiar to students can be an effective strategy for enhancing engagement in English language learning. Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to utilize digital platforms such as TikTok as complementary learning tools, particularly when designing project-based activities that promote creativity, collaboration, and authentic language use. However, teachers should also provide sufficient guidance and technical support to help students overcome challenges related to content creation, language accuracy, and digital literacy.

This study also has implications for curriculum developers and educators who seek to integrate technology into language instruction. Selecting learning media that align with students' interests and digital experiences may increase the relevance and effectiveness of classroom learning in the digital era.

For future research, it is recommended to investigate the long-term impact of TikTok-based projects on students' language proficiency and learning engagement. Further studies may also involve larger and more diverse participant groups, compare TikTok with other social media platforms, or explore its effectiveness in teaching different language skills and text genres. Such research would provide a broader understanding of the role of social media-based learning in English language education.

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