Does the Idiomatic Language/Informal Structure in Short Videos Have an Impact on the Foreign Language Academic Writing of Young Viewers under Sixteen?

Yupeng Xu[1,a,*]

[1]*Shanghai Leighton School, Shanghai, 200000, China*
a. yupeng.xu2025@gmail.com
*corresponding author

Abstract: This literature review examines how short videos have affected the digital era, with an emphasis on apps such as TikTok and Instagram. It draws attention to how short videos may drastically alter how people consume material and emphasises the necessity for a well-rounded strategy, particularly with younger audiences. The research also delves into the controversy surrounding the use of casual language in educational settings, with experts voicing varying opinions on how it affects formal writing abilities. It highlights the potential advantages of brief video material for language learning, such as improved comprehension and vocabulary retention. It demands that platforms for short videos be included in instructional frameworks in a curated manner. It notes a research lack in the systematic evaluation of instructional practises designed for this medium, despite the potential of short videos in education. This review offers a thorough synopsis of the many effects of brief video material in the digital age.

Keywords: Digital media consumption, short videos, TikTok, language learning, academic writing skills

1.   Introduction

In the digital age, short videos, especially those seen on platforms such as TikTok, or Instagram, have become a popular medium for learning, especially among younger people. One of the most popular methods for learning English is through digital storytelling [1]. This literature review aims to offer a fair assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of short video material by examining its effects on digital consumption habits, language acquisition, and formal writing abilities. It discusses about addiction, informal language, digital consumption balance, the advantages of language acquisition, writing quality, and research gaps in each following sections.

2.   Literature Review

2.1. Digital Age and Short Video Content

Short video content on social media platforms has been engaging due to its duration and variety. The digital age has transformed content consumption with short videos emerging as a popular medium of influence among the younger generation [2]. Short videos on TikTok stand out for their dynamic and

captivating format and focus on entertaining content through amusing and relatable real-world scenarios, fostering a casual and personal connection with followers [3]. The 'prepared' content of the short videos, reinforced gratification through continuous scrolling, has been reported to be potentially addictive, and the users have expressed having both negative as well as positive consequences [4]. In light of this evidence, it is clear that short videos have profoundly influenced how individuals engage with digital media. Striking a balance between the benefits and potential drawbacks of this form of content consumption is essential, particularly for younger viewers who may be more susceptible to the addictive nature. While many users report positive outcomes such as enhanced entertainment and information acquisition, there are also concerns about potential negative consequences such as excessive time spent on screen and its impact on well-being. This dynamic landscape calls for thoughtful consideration where short videos are integrated into the digital experiences, ensuring a valuable and enriching aspect of media consumption habits. A unique fusion of fun and information transmission is found in these short videos. They are a desirable option for people looking for easily consumable material because of their succinct structure, which makes it possible to consume content quickly and engagingly. Furthermore, the relatability element that permeates these films helps viewers and producers feel more connected. One particular element that distinguishes short films from other types of material is their personalised touch.

These short videos have revolutionized digital platforms and the age itself. Users of Douyin watch brief videos to keep up with the current trends, develop virtually personal connections with content producers, and gain expertise and information on a variety of subjects [5]. A study notes that short videos on social media platforms like TikTok offer enjoyable but limited educational content, while YouTube provides more specialized and detailed information, that influences the acceptance of the users in the medical field [6]. Due to its explosive growth (attracting 200 million in the first two years) and preteens making up the majority of its user base, TikTok stood apart from other short video apps [7]. The emergence of short videos reflects a shift in content consumption patterns, where users seek not only entertainment but also valuable information from short videos. Studies suggest that there is a need for a proper understanding of the types of content that each social media platform could deliver. The demographic provided by one of the studies on TikTok suggests that it has tapped into a specific segment of the audience, catering to their preferences and consumption habits. All of the information points to a complex environment for short video platforms. Although all of them could provide amusement and knowledge., their efficacy in education settings may differ. TikTok has set itself apart in the digital entertainment market based on its explosive growth and distinct demographic appeal. The emergence of social media platforms featuring short videos signals a change in the way people interact with digital material. To properly utilise platforms such as Douyin and TikTok, content creators and educators need to be aware of their unique advantages and disadvantages. It will be interesting to see how these platforms change and impact content consumption habits in the years to come as the digital landscape keeps changing.

2.2. Balancing Digital Consumption

Balancing the amount of digital content consumed by people is necessary to keep mental health in shape and look after the well-being of oneself. The excessive use of digital technology and social media platforms, including these videos, could lead to a decline in the well-being of an individual [8]. A study by Zhang et al. revealed that social interaction anxiety, social isolation, personalization, and entertainment influence interpersonal attachment, leading to addiction to short-form video apps, with neuroticism playing a moderating role [9]. The general well-being of an individual may be adversely affected by the overuse of digital technology which includes social networking sites and short video content. These results demonstrate that the attachment of a person to these platforms is strongly influenced by elements such as entertainment value, feelings of social isolation, anxiety related to

social interactions, and a sense of personalisation. Additionally, one of the studies presents the position of neuroticism as a moderator, implying that some personality types may have a greater effect than others on the relationship between these variables and short-form video app addiction. Connecting these insights, it becomes evident that excessive consumption of digital content, especially in the form of short videos can have multifaceted effects on the well-being of individuals. Taking into account the larger picture of digital well-being is essential. Short videos may be both entertaining and enlightening and maintaining a good well-being in the digital era requires finding a balance between online and offline activities. Controlling the consumption of digital material is a complex process that takes into account both the amount and the quality of user involvement. The research offers insightful information on the difficulties and complexity involved in maintaining this equilibrium. In a society that is becoming more and more reliant on technology, people must prioritise their mental health and be aware of how they use technology.

Social media has the potential in both positive and negative effects on a person's well-being and mental health. Positive connections on social media improve well-being and platform use, however, isolation might reduce self-worth. The significance of social media's influence on general well-being is shown by the way the need for belonging affects emotional experiences and use habits [10]. According to the research, perceived information overload brought on by social networking site usage may eventually positively predict depressed symptoms, which are then likely to have a detrimental influence on people's general well-being [11]. Watching short videos impacts users' subjective well-being, with younger people being more likely to be concerned about social comparisons and self-control, while older users show concerns about health problems linked to watching videos for extended periods [12]. The studies highlight the intricate relationship between social media content consumption habits and mental health outcomes. All of these results point to the complex relationship that exists between social media, short videos, and personal well-being. They contend that the consequences are complex and impacted by a range of variables, including social connections, age, and information-consuming habits. It is important to understand that the relationship depends on a variety of contextual elements and is neither just good nor negative. Because of all these factors, people have to be cautious when using social media and watching short videos, keeping in mind their particular requirements and sensitivities. It is critical to find a balance between using these platforms for enjoyment and connection and being aware of any possible risks to one's mental health. Furthermore, further study in this field is necessary to fully comprehend the complex relationships between digital involvement and well-being.

2.3. Debate on Informal Language Influence

There is an ongoing discussion on how consuming short video content affects normal academic writing. According to some experts, learning formal academic writing techniques might be hampered by an excessive amount of exposure to informal language [13]. Informal language usage; particularly in the Chinese context, TikTok's distinctive qualities, such as its short video format and wealth of English-teaching content, present an unrealized opportunity as a teaching and learning tool for EFL [14]. From the evidence it could be posited that some scholars are concerned that frequent exposure to informal language and non-standard grammar structures could potentially hinder the development of precise and formal writing skills. Bite-sized, visually appealing information, that is both visually appealing and instructive are some of the features of TikTok videos. Because of its style, TikTok promotes aesthetically appealing, bite-sized material that may be both instructive and amusing. This style can hold the attention of language learners and facilitate the absorption of information in the context of language acquisition. Furthermore, user participation and conversations are made possible by the platform's interactive features, which include comments and shares. This has the potential to create a collaborative learning environment. Learners could encounter real-world language in

contexts outside of traditional classrooms because of the emphasis of the platform on realistic and authentic scenarios. Comprehension and interaction skills in real-world scenarios can be improved by exposure to realistic language use. There are legitimate concerns regarding the impact of informal language on formal academic writing abilities, but it is important to acknowledge the special potential that TikTok and other such social sites possess for language teaching, especially in EFL environments. TikTok may be a dynamic instrument for language learning when used carefully and in conjunction with formal training, giving students real-world, realistic, and useful language experiences.

Other scholars go against this idea and provide evidence for the short videos being very helpful in language learning. Conversely, it has been proposed that brief materials might broaden linguistic perspectives without necessarily impending formal writing capabilities [15]. It offers a wider vocabulary that people may use to fit in with different linguistic contexts. By giving EFL students, especially Chinese international undergraduate students during the Covid-19 pandemic, a platform for sharing short videos and exposure to real-world English language communication situations, the TikTok mobile application offers benefits such as its short video format that caters to short attention spans [16]. Scholars argue that short videos can broaden linguistic perspectives, providing learners with a wider vocabulary. This perspective challenges the traditional view that informal language consumption hinders formal writing. The short videos on TikTok provide students with real-life exposure to real-world English language communication situations, allowing for a dynamic and interactive learning experience. The appeal of TikTok is found in its user-generated material, which frequently captures subtle cultural differences and real language usage. As they interact with material that mirrors actual language situations, learners are given a feeling of relevance and relatability with the help of authenticity. Learners could actively interact with the information thanks to the interactive features of the videos, which promote a participatory learning environment. These elements include comments and answers. It is important to understand that the learning preference and style of every person determines how effective TikTok is as a language learning tool. While some students could flourish in the dynamic and interactive learning environment, others might need more formalised and regulated language training. As a result, teachers must view the short videos as one of many resources available in the larger field of language education, combining it with formal teaching strategies to provide a comprehensive and successful learning environment.

2.4. Benefits of Language Learning

The short videos, being small grab the attention and help students to engage more in the language learning videos. Engaging with social media content, especially repetitive and relatable content, can enhance vocabulary retention and comprehension skills [17]. With the use of Tiktok's video editing features, users may produce language-related materials that improve language learning through participative, multi-modal, and interactive methods. As a result, the platform becomes an interactive tool for language acquisition [18]. The short videos are helpful as they break information into small parts that help the students to remember [19]. TikTok is an excellent language learning tool, as evidenced by the research by Herlisya and Wiratno that showed students majoring in English education at STKIP PGRI Bandar Lampung had considerably better English-speaking abilities after using the app as a medium for speaking instruction [20]. Notably, the active engagement with the videos fosters a deeper understanding of the languages, as learners are exposed to a wide range of contexts and usage scenarios. Moreover, the videos' interactivity promotes active engagement, allowing users to react to content, craft their videos, and partake in dialogues with fellow learners and video makers. This cooperative aspect fosters a communal atmosphere, enabling learners to both assist and learn from one another. Consequently, despite TikTok's benefits for language learning, it must be thoughtfully integrated into a broader educational context. Rather than taking the place of formal teaching strategies it should be able to enhance their abilities. Teachers should also assist

students in selecting activities and materials that match their individual language learning goals. Educators may exploit the particular qualities of TikTok to create a dynamic and engaging language learning experience by utilising its interactive features and dynamic content production capabilities. By doing this, TikTok could be transformed into a potentially useful tool in the process of better language competency.

TikTok has a high potential to be a heavily engaging platform for learning languages for students. Noteworthy, TikTok is a powerful and entertaining teaching tool for English as a foreign language, as evidenced by the study of Cagas which shows a considerable increase in the language abilities of students due to its use [21]. TikTok provides good chances for language acquisition and improves students' perspectives on expressive communication. L1 and L2 learners and bilingual speakers engage in inter-linguistic mediation, use humorous content, and present cultural generalizations in TikTok, which helps them in language learning [22]. The study by Si on Russian language education content on TikTok revealed various teaching approaches, including traditional and cross-cultural methods, highlighting its potential for being a great learning app [23]. The studies demonstrate noteworthy advancements in the proficiency of language that could be attributed to TikTok's short video contents. To promote language acquisition, the videos make use of humour, cultural generalisations, and a variety of linguistic techniques. These exchanges foster a dynamic learning environment that enables users to modify their language proficiency in a variety of settings. Studies reveal a range of instructional strategies, including conventional and non-traditional techniques.

2.5. Concerns about Formal Writing Quality

Experts show concerns about learning from TikTok and using that knowledge in academic or formal writing because of the presence of excessive informal language. There is concern that excessive consumption of short videos, which often employ informal language, may lead to a decline in the quantity of formal academic writing in foreign languages [24]. TikTok has some limitations in language learning like it includes fragmented knowledge and may not align with traditional classroom methods, requiring psychological readiness [25]. The use of TikTok in EFL training presents several challenges, including privacy concerns, content quality concerns, task constraints, and the potential for addiction and distraction that might affect academic performance [14]. The main issue with TikTok integration in official writing and academic settings is the amount of informal language that is used. The informal, conversational tone of these materials frequently deviates from the formal language rules needed for academic writing. This has experts concerned about whether students who use TikTok a lot might find it difficult to switch to more traditional writing styles. These short videos consist of brief, bite-sized videos—which poses a possible drawback in terms of offering thorough information. Since these social media platforms are user-generated, there is a high degree of diversity in the quality of the content, including resources for learning English. Teachers who try to provide their students with accurate and dependable materials have a problem because of this variation in the quality of the content. The addictive nature of the short videos and the propensity for distraction pose a threat. There is a potential for students to get attracted towards non-academic or non-informative videos. This could result in decreased academic performance and hindered progress in language learning.

It has become evident from recent studies that short videos are shaping the online language learning experience. The study by Azman et al. found that TikTok, a window to online learning, and a tool for improving communication and technology skills in education significantly, influence the acceptance of the app for educational development among university students [26]. Language learners may improve their English proficiency by watching short videos on TikTok, especially those that concentrate on pronunciation [27]. Wulandari found that watching Instagram could increase fluency and vocabulary. Short videos for learning English provide flexible learning, fast feedback, and

chances for social contact among students [28]. They also improve pronunciation, listening comprehension, and cultural awareness [29]. These studies provide evidence against the short videos being very concerning and could be a hindrance in language learning. These studies emphasize how these platforms and short videos could be valuable educational tools for enhancing communication and language skills among students. Because of their versatility, learning experiences may be customised to meet the requirements and interests of each individual. Quick feedback loops stimulate students to actively interact with the content, which makes learning more dynamic. Additionally, the social component of the platforms encourages student involvement and builds a feeling of community, both of which can improve the learning environment. TikTok has important qualities that can enhance educational growth and language acquisition. By making use of its special qualities, educators can allay some of the earlier worries. Concerns over the effect of casual language can be mitigated, by improving communication skills and offering focused language teaching. A secure and effective learning environment may be ensured with careful curation and direction from educators, even though privacy and material quality are still important factors. Many of the early worries may be successfully addressed, enabling a more well-rounded and enjoyable learning experience, by acknowledging the potential advantages of the short videos and integrating it wisely within the educational framework.

2.6. Research Gap

Despite the growing interest in leveraging short video platforms for educational purposes, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the systematic evaluation of pedagogical strategies and instructional design principles tailored specifically for this medium. While recent studies have shown that there are potential positive aspects in helping students enhance language learning and academic skills, there is a dearth of guidelines to help educators effectively add these methods to the curriculum. By addressing these scholars can gain a more intricate understanding of how to use these platforms in language teaching.

3. Conclusion

This literature review aimed to offer a fair assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of short video material by examining its effects on digital consumption habits, language acquisition, and formal writing abilities. The digital age has transformed content consumption habits, with short video platforms such as TikTok gaining prominence. However, concerns about addictive behaviour and its impact on well-being persist. Balancing the benefits and drawbacks of short video consumption is crucial, especially for younger viewers. The debate surrounding informal language usage in educational contexts complicates the situation. While some experts argue it can improve formal writing skills, others believe it can broaden linguistic perspectives. Despite these debates, short video content holds significant promise in language learning. However, a research gap exists in evaluating pedagogical strategies for this medium. Integrating short video platforms within the educational framework is essential for maximizing their benefits.

References

[1] Kristiawan, D., Ferdiansyah, S., & Picard, M. (2022). Promoting vocabulary building, learning motivation, and cultural identity representation through digital storytelling for young Indonesian learners of English as a foreign language. Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 10(1), 19-36.

[2] Xu, L., Yan, X., & Zhang, Z. (2019). Research on the causes of the "TikTok" app becoming popular and the existing problems. Journal of Advanced Management Science, 7(2). 10.18178/joams.7.2.59-63

[3] Barta, S., Belanche, D., Fernández, A., & Flavián, M. (2022). Influencer marketing on TikTok: The effectiveness of humor and followers' hedonic experience. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 70, 103149. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103149

[4] Yang, Z., Griffiths, M. D., Yan, Z., & Xu, W. (2021). Can watching online videos be addictive? A qualitative exploration of online video watching among Chinese young adults. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(14), 7247.

[5] Lu, X., & Lu, Z. (2019). Fifteen seconds of fame: A qualitative study of Douyin, a short video sharing mobile application in China. In Social Computing and Social Media. Design, Human Behavior and Analytics: 11th International Conference, SCSM 2019, Held as Part of the 21st HCI International Conference, HCII 2019, Orlando, FL, USA, July 26-31, 2019, Proceedings, Part I 21 (pp. 233-244). Springer International Publishing.

[6] Al-Maroof, R., Ayoubi, K., Alhumaid, K., Aburayya, A., Alshurideh, M., Alfaisal, R., & Salloum, S. (2021). The acceptance of social media video for knowledge acquisition, sharing and application: A comparative study among YouYube users and TikTok users' for medical purposes. International Journal of Data and Network Science, 5(3), 197.

[7] Savic, M. (2021). Research perspectives on TikTok & its legacy apps| from musical. ly to TikTok: Social construction of 2020's Most downloaded short-video app. International Journal of Communication, 15, 22.

[8] Dienlin, T., & Johannes, N. (2022). The impact of digital technology use on adolescent well-being. Dialogues in clinical neuroscience. https://doi.org/10.31887/DCNS.2020.22.2/tdienlin

[9] Zhang, X., Wu, Y., & Liu, S. (2019). Exploring short-form video application addiction: Socio-technical and attachment perspectives. Telematics and Informatics, 42, 101243.

[10] Smith, D., Leonis, T., & Anandavalli, S. (2021). Belonging and loneliness in cyberspace: impacts of social media on adolescents' well-being. Australian Journal of Psychology, 73(1), 12-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530.2021.1898914

[11] Matthes, J., Karsay, K., Schmuck, D., & Stevic, A. (2020). "Too much to handle": Impact of mobile social networking sites on information overload, depressive symptoms, and well-being. Computers in Human Behavior, 105, 106217.

[12] Ying, S., & Phu-ngamdee, S. (2023). The Effect of Short Video on People's Subjective Well-being. Journal of Namibian Studies: History Politics Culture, 33, 3147-3157.

[13] Carraro, K., & Trinder, R. (2021). Technology in formal and informal learning environments: Student perspectives. Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 11, 39-50. https://folia.unifr.ch/global/documents/309667

[14] Yang, H. (2020, June). Secondary-school Students' Perspectives of Utilizing Tik Tok for English learning in and beyond the EFL classroom. In 2020 3rd International Conference on Education Technology and Social Science (ETSS 2020) (Vol. 1, pp. 162-183).

[15] Fang, Z. (2021). Demystifying academic writing: Genres, moves, skills, and strategies. Routledge.

[16] Xiuwen, Z., & Razali, A. B. (2021). An overview of the utilization of TikTok to improve oral English communication competence among EFL undergraduate students. Universal Journal of Educational Research, 9(7), 1439-1451.

[17] Tan, K. H., Rajendran, A., Muslim, N., Alias, J., & Yusof, N. A. (2022). The Potential of TikTok's Key Features as a Pedagogical Strategy for ESL Classrooms. Sustainability, 14(24), 16876. https://doi.org/10.3390/su142416876

[18] Lee, Y. J. (2023). Language learning affordances of Instagram and TikTok. Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 17(2), 408-423.

[19] Choi, Y., Wen, H., Chen, M., & Yang, F. (2021). Sustainable determinants influencing habit formation among mobile short-video platform users. Sustainability, 13(6), 3216. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063216

[20] Herlisya, D., & Wiratno, P. (2022). Having Good Speaking English through Tik Tok Application. Journal Corner of Education, Linguistics, and Literature, 1(3), 191-198.

[21] Cagas, R. L. D. (2022). The use of Tiktok videos in enhancing the speaking and grammar skills of higher education students. In Language Education Forum (Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 1-3).

[22] Vázquez-Calvo, B., Shafirova, L., & Zhang, L. T. (2022). Language learning hashtags on TikTok in Chinese, Italian, and Russian. Identity, Multilingualism & CALL. CALICO Book Series: Advances in CALL Research and Practice. Equinox.

[23] Si, X. (2020). Short video—A new approach to language international education. Communication trends in the post-literacy era: polylingualism, multimodality and multiculturalism as prerequisites for new creativity Ekaterinburg, 2020, 121-129.

[24] Schmid, R., Pauli, C., & Petko, D. (2023). Examining the use of digital technology in schools with a school-wide approach to personalized learning. Educational technology research and development, 71(2), 367-390. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-022-10167-z

[25] Duan, C. (2023). Tik Tok: A new way of English learning. Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, 8, 127-133.

[26] Azman, A. N., Rezal, N. S. A., Zulkeifli, N. Y., Mat, N. A. S., Saari, I. S., & Ab Hamid, A. S. (2021). Acceptance of TikTok on the youth towards education development. Borneo International Journal eISSN 2636-9826, 4(3), 19-25.

[27] Fitria, T. N. (2023). Value Engagement of TikTok: A Review of TikTok as Learning Media for Language Learners in Pronunciation Skill. EBONY: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature, 3(2), 91-108.

[28] Wulandari, M. (2019). Improving EFL learners speaking proficiency through Instagram vlog. LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching, 22(1), 111-125. https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v22i1.1796

[29] Akhiar, A., Mydin, A. A., & Kasuma, S. A. A. (2017). Students perceptions and attitudes towards the use of Instagram in English language writing. Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction, 47-72.