

The Effect of an Offline Tiktok 'Duet Me' on Primary Rural School Learners' Speaking Skills in Banggi Island, Malaysia

¹Aaron Charles, ²Megawati Soekarno

¹SK Palak Banggi, Kudat, Sabah, ²Faculty of Psychology and Education,
Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, 88400, Sabah, Malaysia

Email: aaron_charles_mp20@iluv.ums.edu.my, megawati.s@ums.edu.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i1/20788>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i1/20788

Published Online: 08 February 2024

Abstract

The field of teaching English has been revolutionized by the rapid development of social media. TikTok, the recent social media hit application, supplies plenty of English videos for 'duet me' with various topics for ESL learners. However, Banggi Island, Sabah, is facing an internet issue, making it difficult for rural learners to follow the trend of learning and acquire the language through 'duet me' on TikTok. In response to that, the videos were made offline for the learners to participate in 'duet me.' This study was conducted to investigate the effect of TikTok 'duet me' in improving learners' English-speaking skills in a rural school on Banggi Island, Malaysia. There were 25 participants involved, ranging from the age of 10 to 12 years old in SK Palak, Banggi Island. This study was conducted using mixed method. The methods of data collection are observations and semi-structured interviews. The research findings identified that 92% of the participants were at the mastery level of three to four compared to before the intervention, which was only 4%. This indicates an increment of 88%. Data from observations and interviews revealed that the participants were improving due to the offline TikTok 'duet me' used in delivering the lesson. From the data, it can be concluded that the offline TikTok 'duet me' has improved learners' English-speaking skills.

Keywords: Application, Social Media, Speaking Skill, Rural Learners, Offline Tiktok 'Duet Me'

Introduction

Proficiency in the English language, particularly in speaking skills, is indispensable for ESL (English as a Second Language) learners. It empowers them to communicate effectively across diverse social and professional contexts. The mastery of speaking skills holds significance not only within the classroom but also plays a pivotal role in unlocking future job opportunities. In the contemporary world, effective communication acts as a catalyst for personal and professional achievements.

Recognizing the multifaceted importance of speaking skills, the Ministry of Education in Malaysian aligns its educational objectives by placing specific emphasis on enhancing speaking proficiency alongside the standard curriculum (Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025, 2013). Educators at all levels understand and prioritize the development of speaking

skills, acknowledging their pivotal role in nurturing well-rounded individuals capable of thriving in various aspects of life.

However, in rural primary schools, a significant challenge persists as learners continue to exhibit an inability to communicate effectively in the English language. Thus, there is a pressing need for educators to implement innovative techniques within a teacher-learner-friendly environment. This approach aims to effectively address these challenges, ensuring learners are equipped with the essential skills needed for successful careers (Srinivas, 2018).

The landscape of English language teaching has undergone a profound transformation with the rapid evolution of social media. One such noteworthy platform is TikTok, a recent social media sensation that provides an abundance of English videos available for 'duet me,' covering diverse topics specifically curated for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners (Diko, 2022). Recognizing TikTok's undeniable impact, it has become widely utilized as a medium for English language learning, particularly for enhancing speaking skills, given the industry's emphasis on employability and career advancement (Ting *et al.*, 2017).

However, certain regions in Malaysia lack robust connectivity, hindering learners from accessing the opportunities presented by social media for language learning. This includes the target research setting, Banggi Island. Therefore, this research aims to address this gap by exploring an alternative approach, focusing on providing rural learners with an avenue to enhance their speaking skills through the use of an offline version of TikTok's 'Duet Me' feature. This offline approach is designed to cater to the unique challenges faced by learners in areas with limited internet access, ensuring that they can still benefit from the advantages offered by technology in improving language proficiency.

Problem Statement

Speaking is a dynamic and interactive process in language construction, involving the production, reception, and processing of information (Brown, 1994). According to the Document Standard Curriculum set by the Ministry of Education (2020), learners are expected to attain fluency and confidence in speaking by the end of primary six. However, a significant proportion of rural learners still grapple with basic conversational English during teaching and learning sessions. They struggle with tasks such as seeking permission, making requests, asking for help, seeking clarification or meaning, borrowing items, and expressing opinions in English. This observed challenge in speaking proficiency among rural learners can be attributed to two major factors: the methods and approaches employed in teaching and the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.

The pandemic has further exacerbated the existing issues, making it imperative to develop a targeted strategy that aligns with the unique needs of rural learners (Lukas and Yunus, 2021). A tailored approach is essential to address the emerging challenges in speaking skills and bridge the gap in linguistic competence. This research aims to formulate an effective strategy that not only acknowledges the complexities introduced by the teaching methods but also takes into account the impacts of the pandemic-induced disruptions on the speaking abilities of rural learners.

Research Questions

The research aims to explore the impact of incorporating offline TikTok's 'Duet Me' feature on learners' speaking skills and to investigate the learners' perspectives on the effectiveness of this strategy in enhancing their speaking abilities. The research questions of this research are:

- i. what is the effect of using offline Tiktok 'Duet Me' on learners' speaking skills?
- ii. what is the learners' opinion on the use of the offline Tiktok 'Duet Me' strategy in speaking?

By answering these research questions, the research seeks not only to contribute insights into the potential efficacy of using offline TikTok 'Duet Me' for improving speaking skills but also to offer a nuanced understanding of learners' perceptions and experiences with this unconventional language learning strategy. This information could be valuable for educators, curriculum designers, and technology developers interested in incorporating engaging and effective methods into language learning programs.

Literature Review

Technology plays a pivotal role in shaping the contemporary world, and among the recent social media phenomena, TikTok has garnered significant attention in the realm of education. A growing number of educators are leveraging TikTok as a medium to deliver content knowledge, especially in the context of English language learning (Adhani *et al.*, 2023). This innovative approach aims to captivate learners' attention and enhance their engagement in the language acquisition process. A study conducted by Herlisya and Wiratno (2021) highlighted the effectiveness of using TikTok in education, revealing that 76.75% of participants actively participated in learning activities. This active engagement had a pronounced impact on participants' speaking skills, fostering fluency and the ability to communicate confidently in English with their peers.

While the positive outcomes are evident, it is essential to acknowledge a prevalent challenge – the reliance on internet connectivity for the functionality of the TikTok application. This issue is particularly acute in rural schools, including those in Banggi Island, where internet access is limited. However, it is crucial to note that this challenge extends beyond rural areas, affecting schools in non-rural mainland locations as well.

An intriguing aspect of the TikTok application is its appeal to young learners. Teaching aids that capture learners' interest significantly influence their attention span during lessons (Dewi, 2023). TikTok's ability to engage learners globally has been documented by Ferstephanie and Pratiwi (2021), who found that the application not only enhanced motivation but also improved speaking abilities. Learners demonstrated progress in fluency, pronunciation, gestures, content delivery, and creativity, empowering them to effectively express their thoughts.

In another study conducted by Firdaus (2022), TikTok was found to motivate 11th-grade learners to learn English, boosting their self-confidence in speaking the language, as reflected in their performance. The method of learning, therefore, needs to be adapted to better suit the preferences and characteristics of young learners. The 'Duet Me' feature in TikTok, as highlighted by Herlisya and Wiratno (2021), facilitates effective and enjoyable teaching and learning activities. This interactive feature not only enhances the learning experience but also accelerates the absorption of English vocabulary, aligning with learners' interests and preferences.

In conclusion, the integration of TikTok into English language teaching presents a promising avenue for educators to meet the evolving needs of students, offering an engaging and effective platform to enhance speaking skills and overall language proficiency. Teachers are encouraged to adapt their methods to align with the preferences of today's learners, ensuring that the learning process remains relevant, enjoyable, and impactful.

Research Gap

The literature review has brought to light several notable gaps in the research context, indicating areas that warrant further investigation. The primary and glaring gap centers around internet connectivity, which poses a significant hindrance to the effective use of the TikTok application for teaching speaking skills. The requirement for a robust internet connection becomes a formidable challenge, particularly in geographical areas like Banggi Island, characterized by its rural setting. Many schools in this region face reception problems, necessitating modifications to accommodate the constraints posed by limited internet access.

Another noteworthy gap emerges concerning the age groups involved in past studies. Previous research has predominantly focused on participants from secondary to tertiary levels, neglecting the age bracket of 10 to 12 years old. This gap is a consequence of the age restrictions imposed by TikTok on creating individual accounts for participants in this age range. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that despite these restrictions, TikTok has captivated the attention of the younger generation. The engaging nature of the video-based content on TikTok is particularly appealing to individuals who prefer visual learning over traditional text-based methods. This shift towards visual learning is evident in the popularity of platforms like YouTube, where various informational and educational videos have become easily accessible at the fingertips of users.

Besides that, another gap identified is the offline solutions to internet challenges. The literature, including insights from Herlisya and Wiratno (2021), underscores the weakness of TikTok – its reliance on internet connectivity. Recognizing this challenge, particularly in areas with limited internet access, a crucial response has been taken to create offline videos. This offline approach enables learners facing internet issues, especially those in rural areas, to actively participate in language learning activities using the 'Duet Me' feature on TikTok. By addressing the connectivity constraint, this offline solution seeks to make the benefits of TikTok's interactive learning accessible to a broader audience.

In summary, addressing these identified gaps not only requires a modification of teaching strategies in areas with internet connectivity challenges but also encourages a broader exploration of the potential of TikTok in catering to the unique needs and preferences of younger learners who are increasingly inclined towards visual and interactive modes of learning. The development of offline solutions presents a promising avenue to overcome internet-related barriers, ensuring a more inclusive and effective approach to utilizing TikTok for language learning.

Proposed Strategy: An Offline Tiktok 'Duet Me' Strategy

The landscape of education is undergoing a profound transformation, propelled by the integration of high-technology tools and devices. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, has accelerated the shift towards virtual education. In this context, the offline adaptation of TikTok's 'Duet Me' feature emerges as an innovative medium for teaching speaking skills. This adaptation is a response to the challenges faced by rural learners, providing them with a unique and effective opportunity to learn English by harnessing technology.

The offline TikTok 'Duet Me' approach is derived from its online counterpart, tailored to cater specifically to the needs of rural learners. This method serves a dual purpose: building a robust body of knowledge encompassing vocabulary and sentence structures, and concurrently, fostering confidence while enhancing learners' English speaking skills.

Recognizing the omnipresence of entertainment content in the lives of contemporary learners, it becomes imperative to modify teaching strategies. The adaptation of TikTok's

interactive features is designed to align with the current interests of learners, thereby making the process of learning English both interesting and relevant to pupils in this era.

In essence, this innovative approach not only leverages technology for educational purposes but also addresses the evolving preferences of learners. By integrating elements of entertainment and utilizing platforms familiar to learners, the offline TikTok 'Duet Me' strategy aims to create a dynamic and engaging learning experience, ultimately contributing to the improvement of speaking skills among rural learners.

Conceptual Framework

The figure below is the conceptual framework for this study.

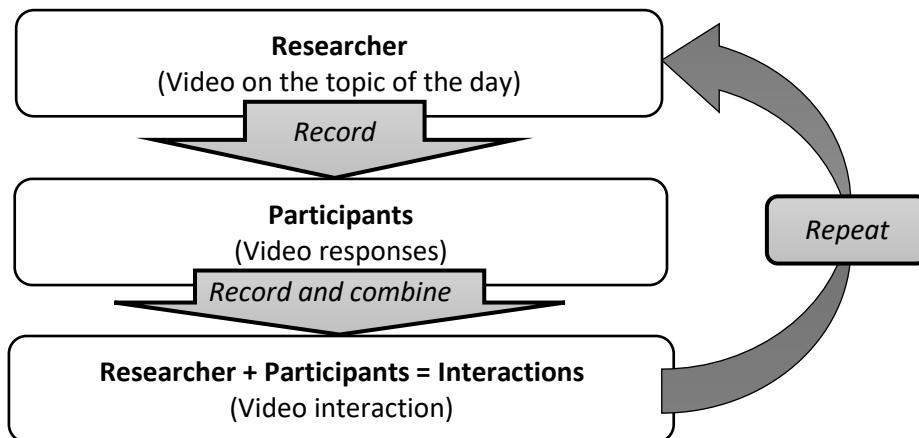


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of An Offline Tiktok 'Duet Me'

Methodology

This research employed a case study and utilized a mixed-method approach to gather all the data based on the research questions. The data were collected through observations and interviews. Subsequently, the data from observations were analyzed using percentages, and the interview responses were analyzed thematically. The table below serves as a guideline for assigning participants their Mastery Level for observation.

Table 2

Classroom Assessment (PBD) Descriptions

| Level of Mastery | Descriptions |
|-------------------------|---|
| TP1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardly asks and answers straightforward questions using fixed phrases even with a lot of support from the teacher. |
| TP2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks and answers a few straightforward questions using fixed phrases with a lot of support from the teacher. |
| TP3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks and answers straightforward questions using fixed phrases with support from the teacher. • Participates and manages simple interactions on familiar topics using words, phrases and non-verbal responses with support from the teacher. |
| TP4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks and answers straightforward questions using fixed phrases with minimal support from the teacher. • Participates and manages simple interactions on familiar topics using words, phrases and non-verbal responses with minimal support from the teacher. |
| TP5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks and answers straightforward questions using fixed phrases with increasing confidence and self-reliance. • Participates and manages simple interactions on familiar topics using words, phrases and non-verbal responses confidently. |
| TP6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks and answers straightforward questions using fixed phrases with ease and great confidence. • Participates and manages simple interactions on familiar topics using words, phrases and non-verbal responses independently. • Displays exemplary model of language use to others. |

Source: Ministry of Education Malaysia (2020)

Research Participants

This study involved 25 participants selected purposively from one of the primary schools in Banggi Island, SK Palak. This school is categorized as Low Enrolment School (SKM). The participants were comprised of a mixed of both males and females ranging from the age of 10 to 12 years old. Notably, the participants demonstrated a lower proficiency level in the English language.

Findings and Discussion

In this study, the findings are described based on the two research questions stated earlier. To see the effect of using the offline Tiktok 'Duet Me' feature on the participants' speaking skills, the data is presented in numerical form. Concurrently, qualitative descriptions derived from interviews complement and support the observational data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the effects of offline Tiktok 'Duet Me' on participants speaking skills.

RQ1: What is the effect of using offline Tiktok 'Duet Me' on learners' speaking skills?

Upon close observation, it was observed that 92% of the participants progressed to at least TP3 from an initial 4% at the first week of the intervention. Notably, there was a significant

88% increase in participants transitioning from their initial Mastery Level (TP). During the initial week, none of the participants achieved a TP level of at least TP3. By the end of week 6, a subset of participants demonstrated remarkable improvement in their speaking skills. The recorded escalation highlights the progression and effectiveness of the strategy for the participating individuals. Table 3 below shows the comparison of participants' Mastery Levels.

Table 3
Comparison of Participants' Mastery Level

| Mastery Level (TP) | Week 1 | Pass (%) | Week 6 | Pass (%) | Difference +/ - TP3 to TP6 |
|--------------------|--------|----------|--------|----------|----------------------------|
| TP1 | 18 | | 1 | | |
| TP2 | 6 | | 1 | | |
| TP3 | 1 | 4 | 19 | 76 | 73 |
| TP4 | | | 4 | 16 | 16 |
| TP5 | | | | | |
| TP6 | | | | | |
| | 1 | 4 | 23 | 92 | 92/88 |

Table 3 indicates that offline TikTok 'Duet Me' has an impact on the participants' speaking skills. The total number of participants transitioning from lower than TP3 to at least TP3 proves that the use of offline TikTok 'Duet Me' in the teaching of speaking skills is effective and thus supports the findings from (Herlisya and Wiratno, 2021; Ferstephanie and Pratiwi, 2021). Referring to the Classroom Assessment (PBD) description (Table 2), participants who achieved at least TP3 are capable of asking and answering straightforward questions using fixed phrases with support from the teacher. Additionally, they participate in and manage simple interactions on familiar topics using words, phrases, and non-verbal responses with support from the teacher. This suggests that they were able to speak in English after undergoing the six weeks of intervention sessions.

RQ2: What is the learners' opinion on the use of the offline Tiktok 'Duet Me' strategy in speaking?

Based on the interview responses, it appears that there is a positive outlook on enhancing speaking skills through TikTok's 'Duet Me' feature. The interviews conducted with participants yielded valuable insights into their perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward utilizing TikTok as a tool for speaking practice.

Table 4

Positive Perception on Offline Tiktok 'Duet Me'

| Theme | Positive Perception on Offline TikTok 'Duet Me' |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| N of participants contributing (N=3) | 3 |
| Excerpts from interviews | <p>"The use of offline TikTok 'Duet Me' is interesting. I love it." (P08: Code – Interesting)</p> <p>"I like using offline TikTok 'Duet Me' in learning. It is new to me, and I think this can help me to speak in English." (P09: Code – Can help me to speak in English)</p> <p>"Offline TikTok 'Duet Me' is very good. I love it because it's fun. I can speak in English. It's a modern way of learning. Very good." (P09: Code – Very good strategy)</p> |

The results from the table above revealed that the participants accepted the strategy as one of the methods of learning in English classes. Based on the responses, Participant 08 expressed enthusiasm, Participant 09, who is new to TikTok, conveyed optimism about its effectiveness, and Participant 10 described TikTok as a modern and enjoyable learning method. The participants' positive perceptions of TikTok as a beneficial tool for improving speaking skills are evident in these excerpts.

The findings underscores an offline TikTok's ability to captivate learners' attention and actively engage them in the language learning process. This is corroborated by the study's findings by Herlisya and Wiratno (2021), which reveal high levels of participation and active engagement among participants due to the TikTok's interactive features. It was effectively promote engagement and contribute to language skill development.

Table 5

Communication and Speaking Skills Improvement

| Theme | Communication and Speaking Skills Improvement |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| N of participants contributing (N=3) | 3 |
| Excerpts from interviews | <p>"I can speak with my friends using offline TikTok without internet. I feel it is nice. It is difficult at first because I never use it before. But now, I know already." (P03: Code – Able to speak with friends using English)</p> <p>"My experience using an offline TikTok 'Duet Me' in learning to speak is good. I use English without being scared of making mistakes because it is fun. I hope we continue this in the future." (P05: Code – not afraid of making mistakes)</p> <p>"I would like to have this kind of learning so that I can speak better in English. This offline TikTok is very helpful for me." (P08: Code – speak better in English)</p> |

Initially, they found it challenging because they had never used it before, but now they feel comfortable with it. The participant (P03) expresses satisfaction with the ability to communicate with friends using offline TikTok without an internet connection. The participants appreciate the opportunity to practice English without fear of making mistakes, finding it enjoyable and hoping for its continuation in the future. They find offline TikTok to be very helpful and believe it contributes significantly to their language proficiency.

Table 6
Initial Difficulty and Learning Curve

| Theme | Initial Difficulty and Learning Curve |
|---|---|
| N of participants contributing (N=2) | 2 |
| Excerpts from interviews | <p>It is not difficult to use offline TikTok 'Duet me' actually. But, we have to do only what the teacher asks us to do." (P10: Code – act based on instruction)</p> <p>"It is difficult at first because I never use it before. But now, I know already." (P03: Code – initial difficulty)</p> |

The responses collected reflect a strong positive sentiment toward the offline TikTok 'Duet me', with participants expressing a keen interest in continued usage and underlining the significance of teacher guidance. Although some participants initially encountered challenges during the intervention sessions, they gradually honed their speaking skills through consistent practice utilizing the offline TikTok 'Duet me' feature. These findings are corroborated with a study done by Firdaus (2022) which highlights TikTok's capacity to motivate learners in acquiring English skills, thereby enhancing their self-assurance in spoken communication, as evidenced by their performance. Despite the initial hurdles, participants eventually triumphed over them.

In summary, participants' perceptions and experiences indicate a favorable outlook on TikTok as a medium for interaction and improvement in speaking skills. This positive sentiment aligns with the findings supported by participants' Classroom Assessment or Pentaksiran Bilik Darjah (PBD) achievements. The study's findings reflect participants' overall satisfaction with TikTok as a language learning tool, echoing sentiments expressed in the literature. Learners perceive numerous benefits, including increased engagement, motivation, and enjoyment in language practice. However, challenges such as time management and self-consciousness in video creation are also acknowledged, highlighting the importance of addressing these barriers to optimize TikTok's benefits in language learning. The study underscores the need for educators to adapt teaching methods to align with the preferences of today's learners, leveraging platforms like TikTok to create dynamic and impactful learning experiences.

Implication and Recommendation

Improvement in Fluency and Pronunciation

The findings indicate that offline TikTok 'Duet Me' usage contributes to enhanced fluency and pronunciation skills among ESL learners. TikTok has been found to have a positive impact on specific aspects of fluency and pronunciation among language learners. This study revealed

that the repetitive nature of watching and imitating TikTok videos contributed to increased fluency in learners' speaking abilities. Furthermore, TikTok's audiovisual format provided learners with visual cues and audio input that supported their pronunciation practice.

Vocabulary Expansion and Usage

The offline TikTok 'Duet me' provides opportunities for vocabulary development through exposure to authentic language use. Based on the findings of this research, the offline TikTok 'Duet me' has demonstrated a positive impact on vocabulary expansion, acquisition, and usage among ESL learners. Through watching videos and engaging with interactive features, such as duets, the participants encountered new vocabulary in context and had opportunities to practice using these words in their own video creations.

Enhanced Self-Confidence and Motivation

This study shows that an offline TikTok 'Dute me' brought a positive influence on learners' self-confidence and motivation in speaking English. It is revealed that engaging with offline TikTok's interactive features, such as recording and sharing videos, fostered a sense of accomplishment and boosted learners' self-confidence in using English for speaking. Furthermore, the study highlighted that the visual and creative nature of an offline TikTok 'Duet me' enhanced learners' enjoyment and engagement, leading to sustained motivation in language learning.

These implications highlight the participants' positive perspectives on the use of an offline TikTok 'Duet me' for speaking skill improvement, while acknowledging the importance of addressing challenges to optimize its benefits in language learning.

Future Research Directions

To further explore the use of offline TikTok's 'Duet Me' feature in ESL speaking instruction, it is suggested to investigate the long-term effects of the offline TikTok 'Duet Me' and explore the potential of other social media platforms that can be utilized offline, similarly to their online versions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, improving speaking skills is crucial for learners, especially in rural education settings. Introducing the offline TikTok 'Duet Me' strategy proves to be a promising and innovative solution. It provides numerous benefits, such as enhancing vocabulary and sentence structures, boosting learners' confidence in speaking English, and offering ample opportunities for practice in a supportive environment. The interactive nature of the 'Duet Me' feature allows for real-life interactions and aligns with learners' interests, making English learning engaging and enjoyable. Overall, the offline TikTok 'Duet Me' strategy is a comprehensive solution that caters to the diverse needs of rural learners, fostering linguistic capabilities and effective communication skills.

References

- Adhani, O. F., Fadhillah, A. N., Yahya, R. A., & Apoko, T. W. (2023). *EFL Students' Perceptions on the Use of Tiktok in Improving Speaking Skill*. Journal of English Teaching and Research, October 2023: 8(2), p. 180-188.
- Brown, H. D., & Lee, H. (1994). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy, Volume 1*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Dewi, Y. P. (2023). The Use of Tiktok Application to Enhance Students' Speaking Skill. Journal Corner of Education, Linguistics, and Literature, November 2023: 3(2), p. 92-99.
- Diko, P. S. M. (2022). The Effectiveness of Using TikTok to Improve EFL Learners' Speaking Ability. *MIMESIS Journal*, July 2022: 3 (2), p. 101-110.
- Ferstephanie, J., & Pratiwi, T., L. (2021). TikTok Effect to Develop Students' Motivation in Speaking Ability. *English Journal for Teaching and Learning*, December 2021: 9(2), p. 163-178.
- Firdaus, A. M. (2022). *The TikTok Application to Enhance 11th Grade's Speaking Skill*. Master's Thesis, Faculty of Language and Science. Surabaya: Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University.
- Herlisya, D., & Wiratno, P. (2021). Having Good English Speaking Skill through TikTok Application. *Journal Corner of education, Linguistics, and Literatur3*, February 2021. 1(3), p. 191-198.
- Lukas, B., & Yunus, M., M. (2021). ESL Teachers' Challenges in Implementing E-learning during COVID-19. International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research. 20(2), 330-348.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2013). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Preschool to Post-Secondary Education)*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Education Malaysia.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. 2022. *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (Year 6)*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Education Malaysia.
- Srinivas, R. P. (2018). The Role of Teachers in Developing Speaking Skills in English Language Classrooms. An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal. 8 (12), 5-14.
- Ting, S. H., Ernisa, M., Kee, M. C., Misieng, J., & Jerome, C. (2017). Employers' Views on the Importance of English Proficiency and Communication Skill for Employability in Malaysia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*. 7(2).