

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

Grammar is often considered one of the most challenging aspects of learning English, even for students majoring in English Education. Although they have studied English for many years and have chosen to pursue it at the university level, many still struggle to fully understand and use grammar correctly.

A study conducted by Amin (2024) among English department students at Parwan University revealed that most participants face various difficulties in learning grammar. As many as 82% admitted to struggling with subject-verb agreement, and 76% found it difficult to apply grammar rules in speaking and writing. In addition, many students reported confusion when using passive voice, modal verbs, and distinguishing between formal and informal grammar. These findings show that grammar difficulties are not limited to general learners but also affect those who are formally studying English at an academic level. One of the contributing factors is the traditional and less interactive teaching methods, which often make grammar lessons feel monotonous and difficult to grasp.

In the face of the challenges of grammar learning, technological advancements have brought about revolutionary changes in the way learners interact with learning content, especially through social media. Social media includes activities that involve online interaction through text, images, and videos that facilitate connections between users. Young people, including college students, have adopted social media, utilizing it on laptops and mobile devices most of the time to interact with friends and share content (Wibowo & Ellysinta, 2022).

Research shows that the use of social media has a positive impact in the context of learning. Al Arif (2019) noted that foreign language learners show a cheerful outlook towards the use of social media in their English learning. This is reinforced by the findings of Juitania and

Indrawan (2020), which show that when used appropriately, social media can increase students' interest in learning. The use of information technology, especially social media, can produce positive results when students utilize these tools for the purpose of improving knowledge. Various social media platforms have become an integral part of students' learning lives, from Facebook and Instagram which provide visual and textual sharing spaces, YouTube with its diverse video content, to increasingly popular platforms such as TikTok which offers innovative ways to learn languages.

TikTok, which arrived in Indonesia in 2017, has rapidly become the fastest-growing social media application, boasting users in over 150 countries (Rahmawati & Anwar, 2022). This video-sharing platform allows users to create and share 60-second videos on various subjects, utilizing a range of engaging features such as face filters, sound effects, and the ability to incorporate audio or music. Users can also participate in live sessions, stitch videos, or engage in duet challenges, making it easy to share content across other applications (Pratiwi et al., 2021). TikTok's user-friendly interface enables individuals to effortlessly create and edit video content, allowing them to function as content surfers, content makers, and learner-creators (Rahmawati & Anwar, 2022).

The platform's appeal lies in its short, easily created videos that are convenient to share (Syah, 2020). TikTok videos significantly contribute to both entertainment and the language learning process, enhancing students' interests and motivation, as well as their understanding of language context (Koniah et al., 2021). The brief duration of TikTok videos helps capture the attention of learners with shorter attention spans, also making it an effective medium for learning English skills, especially grammar.

Based on previous studies, research on the use of TikTok in English learning has been conducted with various focuses, such as speaking skills explored by Prestika (2025), vocabulary mastery examined by Suriasmini (2024), and general English learning along with

its challenges investigated by Syamsiani and Munfangati (2023). While these studies have contributed valuable insights, they mainly focused on different language aspects and were conducted using qualitative approaches such as interviews and observations. None of them specifically addressed the use of TikTok for English grammar learning, especially in the context of autonomous learning. Furthermore, studies that highlight grammar tend to be limited, even though grammar is one of the core components in mastering English. Therefore, this research, entitled "Investigating English Department Students' Perception Toward the Use of TikTok Content as a Supporting Media for Autonomous English Grammar Learning," is considered important to fill this gap. By using a descriptive quantitative approach and involving 67 fourth-semester English Education students at Universitas Jambi, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how students perceive TikTok as a supplementary medium in learning grammar independently, and to explore its potential in supporting more flexible and self-directed English learning.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates two research questions:

1. What are English Department students' perceptions toward the use of TikTok content as a supporting media for autonomous English grammar learning?
2. What are the perceived benefits and challenges encountered by English Department students' when using TikTok for English grammar learning?

## **1.3 Research Purpose**

In line with the background and problems identified, the purposes of this study are formulated as follows:

1. To describe English Department students' perception toward the use of TikTok content as a supporting media for autonomous English grammar learning
2. To understand the benefits and challenges of TikTok in English grammar learning from English department students' perceptions

#### **1.4 Significance of Research**

This research is expected to bring meaningful contributions to several parties involved in English language learning and teaching, including the following:

##### **1. Educators**

The insights gained from this study regarding university students' perception on using TikTok can provide valuable information for educators in designing their teaching strategies. Understanding students' views can help educators create more effective lesson plans, select appropriate media, and evaluate the impact of using TikTok or similar platforms in their teaching practices.

##### **2. Students**

This research will provide valuable information to students about their perspectives on TikTok as a medium for learning English grammar. Positive feedback from participants may encourage other students to view TikTok as an educational tool, potentially motivating them to engage more actively with the platform for language learning.

##### **3. Researchers**

The findings of this study are expected to offer insights into the perceived benefits and challenges of using TikTok for English grammar learning among Indonesian learners. This research can serve as a reference for future studies exploring similar themes, helping researchers build upon their findings and further investigate the role of social media in language education.

#### **4. Content Creators**

The results of this study can also provide guidance for content creators in developing relevant and engaging materials on TikTok for English language learning. By understanding students' perspectives, content creators can design videos that are more effective and aligned with learning needs, thereby enhancing student engagement and motivation in their studies.

### **1.5 Limitation of Research**

To maintain clarity and focus, the study considers the following limitations:

1. The purpose of this study is to investigate English department students who use the TikTok application as a medium to help learn English grammar. In particular, the subjects in this study are English department students of the Class of 2023 at the University of Jambi who use TikTok to learn English grammar.
2. This research focuses on students' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of learning English grammar using the help media of the TikTok application.

### **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid ambiguity and ensure a clearer understanding of this study, several essential terms are defined as follows:

#### **1. Perception**

In this study, perception is understood as how students view and interpret the use of TikTok in their learning process, particularly in relation to learning grammar. The researcher sees perception as something subjective, influenced by students' experiences, beliefs, and attitudes toward digital learning tools. Arfin, Kuswadi, and Kuswarno (2017) define perception as the

process by which individuals interpret and organize sensory information derived from their experiences to understand objects, people, or occurrences.

## **2. Autonomous Learning**

Autonomous learning in this study refers to students' ability to take responsibility for their own grammar learning outside of the traditional classroom, especially when using platforms like TikTok. The researcher considers this concept important because it shows how students manage their learning independently, especially in digital environments. Wulandari and Mustofa (2021) explain that autonomous learning involves learners' capacity to control their own learning process, including planning, implementing, and evaluating their learning activities.

## **3. TikTok**

TikTok, as referred to in this research, is not only seen as a social media application but also as a potential learning platform that supports autonomous and engaging grammar learning. The researcher views TikTok as a modern medium that blends entertainment with education. According to Ferstephanie and Pratiwi (2021), TikTok is a social media application developed by Zhang Yiming in 2016, which is now widely used beyond entertainment, including for educational purposes such as English language learning.

## **4. Grammar**

In this study, grammar is considered a fundamental aspect of language learning that helps students construct meaningful and correct sentences. The researcher sees grammar not just as a set of rules, but as a crucial skill that students need to develop through various media, including TikTok. Fitria (2022) defines grammar as the system of rules that governs how words are structured and used to form meaningful sentences in a language.