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WRITING CHALLENGE ON TIKTOK: A SOCIAL MEDIA TREND HELPING FOURTH-SEMESTER STUDENTS PRACTICE CONCISE WRITING

Nur Aisyah Dlt
English Department, STAIN Mandailing Natal, North Sumatra, Indonesia
e-mail: aisyahdlt005@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi pengalaman mahasiswa semester empat di STAIN Mandailing Natal dalam memanfaatkan TikTok Writing Challenge sebagai sarana berlatih menulis secara ringkas. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologis dengan melibatkan delapan mahasiswa yang berpartisipasi aktif dalam tantangan menulis di TikTok. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam semi-terstruktur, observasi konten, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data menggunakan teknik Moustakas melalui empat tahapan, yaitu *epoche*, *horizontalization*, pengelompokan unit makna ke dalam tema, serta penyusunan deskripsi tekstural dan struktural untuk memperoleh esensi pengalaman partisipan. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan empat tema utama, yaitu TikTok Writing Challenge sebagai ruang pembelajaran informal yang mandiri, peningkatan kesadaran terhadap penggunaan kata secara efisien, terbentuknya komunitas pembelajaran informal, serta tantangan dalam mempertahankan keseimbangan antara keringkasan dan kedalaman makna. Secara keseluruhan, partisipan memandang aktivitas ini sebagai ruang untuk berlatih memilih kata, menyampaikan gagasan secara ringkas, dan memperoleh umpan balik dari pengguna lain. Namun, keterbatasan dalam mempertahankan kedalaman makna menjadi tantangan yang perlu diperhatikan dalam pemanfaatannya sebagai aktivitas pendukung pembelajaran menulis.
Kata kunci: *Fenomenologi, Media Sosial, Menulis Ringkas, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, TikTok Writing Challenge*

ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences of fourth-semester students at STAIN Mandailing Natal in using the TikTok Writing Challenge as a means of practicing concise writing. A phenomenological approach was employed, involving eight students who actively participated in writing challenges on TikTok. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, content observation, and documentation. Data were analyzed using Moustakas's technique through four stages: *epoche*, *horizontalization*, clustering meaning units into themes, and developing textural and structural descriptions to identify the essence of participants' experiences. The findings revealed four main themes: the TikTok Writing Challenge as a self-directed informal learning space, awareness of efficient word usage, the development of informal learning communities, and challenges in balancing brevity and depth of meaning. Overall, participants perceived this activity as an opportunity to practice word selection, express ideas concisely, and receive feedback from other users. However, maintaining the depth of meaning while producing brief texts remained a challenge that should be considered when incorporating this activity as a supplementary approach to writing instruction.
Keywords: *Concise Writing, English Language Learning, Phenomenology, Social Media, TikTok Writing Challenge*

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has created new opportunities for integrating social media into language learning, particularly in writing instruction. Among various digital platforms, TikTok offers distinctive features through short-form videos, captions, comments,

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and interactive challenges that encourage users to communicate ideas within limited formats. One activity that has emerged from this environment is the TikTok Writing Challenge, which provides opportunities for learners to practice expressing ideas through short, focused, and engaging written content. Unlike conventional writing assignments that generally emphasize extended compositions, this activity encourages students to select relevant information, organize ideas, and communicate messages using concise language. These characteristics make TikTok a potentially relevant medium for developing concise writing skills.

Concise writing refers to the ability to communicate ideas accurately, clearly, and efficiently without sacrificing essential meaning or substance (Laie et al., 2023). This skill requires writers to identify the central message, eliminate unnecessary words, select appropriate vocabulary, and construct effective sentences. However, developing concise writing skills can be challenging, particularly for students learning English as a foreign language. Previous research indicates that students continue to experience difficulties in punctuation, idea development, and paraphrasing, which may affect the clarity and overall quality of their written work (Kadek et al., 2024). In this regard, the TikTok Writing Challenge offers a learning activity that encourages students to practice selecting essential information and expressing their thoughts within a limited writing space. The requirement to produce short captions or written responses may encourage students to consider word choice, sentence structure, and message clarity more carefully.

In the context of English language education at STAIN Mandailing Natal, developing concise writing skills requires learning activities that are relevant to students' digital experiences and communication practices. The TikTok Writing Challenge provides an alternative learning environment in which students can produce written content, share their ideas with an audience, and receive responses through interactive platform features. These activities may create a more authentic writing experience because students are not only writing to fulfill classroom assignments but also communicating with actual readers. Digital media can facilitate interaction, feedback, and creativity during the writing process, potentially supporting students' engagement in language learning (Riyanti & Lapasau, 2024). Thus, the educational potential of TikTok lies not simply in its popularity but in how its features can be utilized to create meaningful opportunities for writing practice.

Previous studies have demonstrated the potential of social media to support students' writing development. Nurfadilah et al. (2025) reported that digital platforms can encourage greater engagement in writing activities through flexible access, social interaction, and immediate feedback. Similarly, Riyanti and Lapasau (2024) identified a positive relationship between the academic use of social media and students' writing skills. Ardiansyah et al. (2026) also demonstrated that integrating social media content into writing instruction can enhance students' intrinsic motivation. These findings establish the relevance of digital platforms in writing education. However, the primary emphasis of these studies concerns students' engagement, general writing development, and motivation rather than the specific process of developing concise writing skills through structured writing challenges.

Research focusing specifically on TikTok has also highlighted its potential in language learning. Rahayu and Rakhmawati (2022) examined language-based challenges on TikTok and reported their potential to support vocabulary acquisition and sentence construction among foreign language learners. Wijaya et al. (2023) similarly identified TikTok as an effective medium for supporting language knowledge and skills. Meanwhile, Mazarakis and Bräuer (2023) explained that gamification elements, including rewards and continuous feedback, can strengthen user motivation and engagement. Although these studies provide important insights into the educational use of TikTok, they do not specifically explain how students experience the process of selecting, organizing, and condensing ideas when participating in writing

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challenges. Consequently, the relationship between TikTok's short-form communication characteristics and the development of concise writing skills remains an important area for further investigation.

The relationship between the TikTok Writing Challenge and concise writing can also be understood through relevant learning theories. Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective emphasizes that learning develops through social interaction, guidance, and collaboration. In the context of TikTok, students can exchange ideas, observe other users' writing practices, and receive feedback through comments and shared content. Such interactions may provide opportunities for scaffolding and collaborative learning during writing practice (Meidina, 2025). This process can also be associated with the concept of *Community of Practice*, in which participation, interaction, and the exchange of experiences contribute to the development of knowledge and skills within a learning community. Furthermore, the process of adapting writing practices from social media interactions to academic contexts involves transforming and adjusting knowledge to meet the demands of a new situation (Dohn, 2021). These perspectives help explain how students may develop concise writing skills not only through individual practice but also through participation in a socially interactive digital environment.

In addition, Self-Determination Theory proposed by Deci and Ryan provides a perspective for understanding students' motivation to participate in the TikTok Writing Challenge. The platform may support autonomy by allowing students to choose topics and express ideas independently, competence by providing opportunities to practice and improve their writing, and relatedness through interactions with other users via comments, sharing, and collaboration. The fulfillment of these three psychological needs can contribute to students' motivation and engagement in learning activities (Alturki & Aldraiweesh, 2024). Therefore, the combination of social interaction, community participation, and motivational support provides a theoretical basis for examining students' experiences in using TikTok as a medium for concise writing practice.

Despite the growing body of research on social media and TikTok in language education, several research gaps remain. Previous studies by Nurfadilah et al. (2025), Riyanti and Lapasau (2024), and Ardiansyah et al. (2026) primarily highlight students' engagement, general writing development, and motivation in digital learning environments. Meanwhile, studies by Rahayu and Rakhmawati (2022) and Wijaya et al. (2023) focus on the broader contribution of TikTok to language learning, particularly vocabulary acquisition, sentence construction, and language skills. Although these studies establish the educational potential of social media and TikTok, they provide limited insight into the specific experiences of students in practicing concise writing through structured writing challenges. Furthermore, the existing studies do not sufficiently explain how students perceive the process of selecting essential ideas, constructing effective sentences, responding to audience feedback, and managing the challenges of expressing meaning within limited writing formats. This study addresses these gaps by focusing on the subjective experiences of fourth-semester students at STAIN Mandailing Natal participating in the TikTok Writing Challenge. By employing a phenomenological perspective, this research seeks to explore not only the perceived benefits and challenges of the activity but also how students experience the development of concise writing skills within an interactive digital learning environment.

Based on this background, the present study addresses the following research question: How do fourth-semester students at STAIN Mandailing Natal experience the use of the TikTok Writing Challenge as a medium for practicing concise writing? Specifically, this study aims to (1) explore students' perceptions and subjective experiences of participating in the TikTok Writing Challenge; (2) identify the benefits and challenges they encounter during the writing

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activities; and (3) examine the pedagogical implications of these experiences for developing writing instruction strategies in higher education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a transcendental phenomenological design developed by Moghaddas and Khoshnevis (2021). This design was selected to explore the meaning and essence of students' lived experiences in participating in the TikTok Writing Challenge. The researcher applied *epoche* or *bracketing* by identifying and setting aside personal assumptions about TikTok and writing instruction before data collection. During interviews, neutral and open-ended questions were used to avoid influencing participants' responses, while reflective notes were maintained during analysis to distinguish participants' descriptions from the researcher's interpretations (Neubauer et al., 2019).

The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (a) active fourth-semester students in the English Language Education Program at STAIN Mandailing Natal; (b) having an active TikTok account for at least six months; (c) having participated in or produced content as part of a TikTok writing challenge; and (d) being willing to participate fully in the research. Eight students participated, consisting of six female and two male students aged 19–21 years. The number of participants was determined based on informational sufficiency, considering the depth and relevance of their experiences, recurring patterns, and the adequacy of information in addressing the research questions (Tian et al., 2022).

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted in two sessions per participant, each lasting 45–75 minutes, covering participants' motivations, writing processes, challenges, and perceived benefits. Examples of interview questions included: What motivated you to participate in the TikTok Writing Challenge? How do you select and organize ideas when writing short captions? What difficulties do you encounter when expressing ideas using limited words? How does audience feedback influence your writing? Observations of participants' TikTok content were conducted over one month, focusing on captions, vocabulary choices, sentence structures, message clarity, and interactions through comments. Documentation included screenshots of writing challenge entries and participants' reflection notes. The one-month period referred to the researcher's observation activities, whereas the six-month requirement referred to participants' minimum experience of maintaining an active TikTok account. All interviews were recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Before data collection, participants received information about the research objectives and procedures and provided informed consent. Their identities were protected using pseudonyms or participant codes, while TikTok usernames, profile links, and other identifying information were kept confidential.

Data analysis followed Moustakas's phenomenological procedure, consisting of four stages: *epoche*, horizontalization, clustering of meaning units, and synthesis of textural and structural descriptions. First, the researcher reflected on personal assumptions to minimize subjective bias. Second, interview transcripts were read repeatedly to identify significant statements relevant to participants' experiences, such as difficulties in selecting vocabulary, shortening sentences, and maintaining message clarity. Third, similar statements were grouped into meaning units and thematic categories. For example, statements about word selection, sentence reduction, and maintaining meaning were grouped into a theme concerning challenges in producing concise writing. Finally, textural descriptions (what participants experienced) and structural descriptions (how the experiences occurred) were integrated to formulate the essence of the phenomenon. Data credibility was strengthened through *member checking* by sharing interview transcripts or summaries with participants for confirmation, source triangulation by

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comparing interviews, observations, and documentation, and *peer debriefing* through discussions with academic colleagues to examine the consistency of data interpretation and theme development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The TikTok Writing Challenge as a Self-Directed Informal Learning Space

The findings indicate that participants initially engaged in the TikTok Writing Challenge because of social influence and personal interest rather than academic requirements. Most participants became interested after observing similar content posted by people they followed. However, their participation gradually encouraged greater attention to the way they expressed ideas in writing. P2 explained:

"At first I was just following my friends' lead, but over time I realized I started thinking more carefully about my word choices before posting. In class, I just write whatever comes to mind, but on TikTok, people read it, so I'd be embarrassed if it's a mess."

This statement illustrates how the presence of an audience influenced participants' awareness of word choice and writing presentation. Unlike classroom assignments, TikTok content was intended for public or semi-public audiences, encouraging participants to consider how their messages would be perceived by readers. Furthermore, some participants selected topics related to Islamic values and Mandailing local wisdom. This suggests that the writing challenge also provided opportunities to express personal and cultural interests through digital content.

Raising Awareness of Efficient Word Usage

The second theme concerns participants' growing awareness of efficient word usage when producing short written content. Participants described the importance of selecting appropriate vocabulary, removing unnecessary expressions, and maintaining the intended meaning within limited writing space. P5 described this experience:

"I started to think twice before using a word. If there was a word that could be removed without changing the meaning, I removed it. That habit has now carried over into my academic writing."

Similar experiences were reported by P1, P3, and P7, suggesting that the practice encouraged them to become more conscious of sentence construction and word selection. Participants perceived that these writing habits were also relevant to their academic activities, although the extent of their transfer to formal academic writing varied.

Observations of participants' TikTok content over the one-month data collection period provided additional evidence of their writing practices. The captions contained different approaches to expressing ideas, including the selection of essential information, the use of shorter sentences, and the removal of repetitive expressions. These observations illustrate how participants applied concise writing strategies in their digital content. However, the findings are interpreted as evidence of writing practices and awareness rather than measurable improvement in writing proficiency.

Dynamics of Informal Learning Communities

The third theme relates to social interaction and peer learning within the TikTok Writing Challenge. Six of the eight participants reported interacting with other users through comments on their posts, including receiving appreciation, suggestions, corrections, and discussions about word choices. P4 described this experience as:

"A writing class that doesn't feel like a class."

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This statement reflects how participants perceived informal interactions as an alternative learning experience outside conventional classroom activities. In addition to interactions on TikTok, some participants reported forming small discussion groups through messaging platforms to exchange feedback before publishing their content. These activities provided opportunities to discuss writing choices, evaluate expressions, and obtain suggestions from peers.

The findings also indicate that participants' interactions were not limited to fellow students at STAIN Mandailing Natal. They also communicated with TikTok users from other regions who shared similar interests. Such interactions created opportunities for exchanging ideas and receiving different perspectives on written content. Nevertheless, the extent to which these interactions contributed to participants' writing development depended on the nature and usefulness of the feedback they received.

Challenges and Tensions in the Writing Challenge

Despite the perceived benefits, participants also encountered challenges when producing concise written content. The most prominent challenge concerned balancing brevity with the need to maintain meaning and depth. P6 explained:

"Sometimes I feel my writing becomes too superficial because it has to be short. I cut out important sentences just to make it catchier."

This statement demonstrates the tension between reducing the number of words and preserving the completeness of ideas. Participants had to consider which information was essential and which expressions could be removed without changing the intended message. Consequently, writing concisely was not always an easy process, particularly when the topic required detailed explanations or the expression of complex ideas.

Other challenges mentioned by participants included concerns about content visibility, emotional responses to audience engagement, and differences between informal digital writing and academic writing conventions. These challenges indicate that participation in the TikTok Writing Challenge involved not only linguistic considerations but also social and contextual factors. However, the specific experiences of algorithm-related pressure and writing anxiety require further supporting evidence from participants' interview statements and digital observations before they can be established as distinct findings.

Summary of Research Findings

The analysis identified four main themes and several related subthemes describing students' experiences of participating in the TikTok Writing Challenge. The themes, subthemes, and supporting evidence are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Themes, Subthemes, and Supporting Evidence

Main Themes	Subthemes	Supporting Evidence
The TikTok Writing Challenge as a Self-Directed Informal Learning Space	Social motivation and audience awareness	P2: "At first I was just following my friends' lead..."
	Cultural and personal expression	Participants selected topics related to Islamic values and Mandailing local wisdom.
Raising Awareness of Efficient Word Usage	Vocabulary selection and word reduction	P5: "I started to think twice before using a word..."
	Perceived transfer to academic writing	Similar experiences were reported by P1, P3, and P7.

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Dynamics of Informal Learning Communities	Peer feedback and interaction	P4: "A writing class that doesn't feel like a class."
	Collaborative writing practices	Six participants reported interactions through comments, while some formed discussion groups.
Challenges and Tensions in the Writing Challenge	Brevity versus meaning	P6: "Sometimes I feel my writing becomes too superficial..."
	Social and contextual challenges	Participants described concerns about audience responses and differences between informal and academic writing.

Source: Interview transcripts, TikTok content observations, and research documentation.

The findings demonstrate that the TikTok Writing Challenge provided students with an informal environment for practicing concise writing through audience awareness, efficient word selection, and social interaction. At the same time, participants experienced challenges in maintaining meaning while reducing the length of their writing. Overall, the findings highlight students' perceptions and writing practices rather than objectively measured changes in writing proficiency.

Discussion

The TikTok Writing Challenge as an Informal Learning Environment

The findings indicate that the TikTok Writing Challenge provided an informal learning environment in which students developed writing practices through personal interest, social interaction, and audience awareness. Initially, most participants joined the challenge because of social influences rather than academic purposes. However, their involvement gradually encouraged them to pay greater attention to word choice and the clarity of their captions. This finding suggests that digital platforms can create learning opportunities beyond formal classroom activities. Mahmod (2024) and Meidina (2025) similarly highlight the potential of TikTok as an alternative learning space, although their studies examine different forms of learning activities.

The participants' experiences can be understood through the perspective of social constructivism, in which learning develops through interaction with others and engagement in meaningful activities. The presence of comments, responses, and feedback allowed students to encounter different perspectives on their writing. Dao et al. (2023) explain that peer feedback in second-language interaction is influenced by communication modes and learner familiarity. Similarly, Tinggie et al. (2023) demonstrate that peer scaffolding can support learners during writing activities. These perspectives help explain why interaction within the TikTok community became part of the participants' informal writing experiences.

The findings also reflect the importance of motivation in digital learning environments. Participants initially engaged in the challenge for social reasons, but some began to recognize its value for developing their writing habits. This development can be associated with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the roles of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in learning motivation. Alturki and Aldraiweesh (2024) discuss the relationship between social media use and affective learning engagement, while Mazarakis and Bräuer (2023) show that gamification elements can influence user engagement. Zheng et al. (2022) also examine how personality traits and content characteristics relate to users' tendency to give likes on social media. In the present study, however, social responses are understood as part of the participants' engagement rather than direct evidence that their intrinsic motivation increased.

Concise Writing and Relevance to Digital Communication

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A central finding of this study concerns participants' growing awareness of efficient word usage. They described reviewing their word choices, removing unnecessary expressions, and shortening sentences without changing their intended meanings. Participant P5 explained that this habit had also influenced how they approached academic writing. These experiences suggest that the challenge encouraged participants to consider how meaning could be communicated clearly with fewer words.

This finding is relevant to the characteristics of digital communication, where short captions and brief written responses are common. Plester et al. (2009) discuss the relationship between knowledge of text-message abbreviations and literacy outcomes, illustrating the importance of examining how digital language practices relate to conventional literacy. Nevertheless, concise writing should not be equated with excessive abbreviation or the removal of important information. In this study, participants' accounts indicate an effort to eliminate unnecessary words while maintaining meaning, rather than simply using informal abbreviations.

Previous research has also explored the contribution of digital media to writing development. Moghaddas and Khoshnevis (2021) examine social media-based writing in relation to EFL learners' writing performance and motivation. Nurfadilah and Masitoh (2025) discuss digital platforms as spaces for students' writing creativity, while Nurfidah and Fandir (2024) review the effectiveness of digital platforms in improving writing skills in higher education. Riyanti and Lapasau (2024) further examine the use of digital media in popular article writing. These studies provide a broader context for understanding digital platforms as potential spaces for writing practice. The present study adds a more specific perspective by exploring students' experiences of developing concise writing practices through a TikTok challenge.

The participants' accounts also indicate that the practice of selecting and revising words may involve self-regulated writing. Tian et al. (2022) explain that learners use self-regulated strategies when revising their writing in response to different forms of feedback. In the present study, participants described reviewing their captions and removing expressions they considered unnecessary. However, the findings represent participants' perceived experiences and do not establish a measurable improvement in their overall writing proficiency.

Social Interaction and Development of Informal Writing Practices

Social interaction was another important aspect of the participants' experiences. Six participants reported interacting with other users through comments, feedback, or discussions about word choice. Some participants also described using messaging groups to exchange opinions about their writing. Participant P4 characterized this experience as "a writing class that doesn't feel like a class." This statement illustrates how informal digital interaction could provide opportunities for writing-related discussion without the structure of a formal classroom.

These experiences are consistent with the concept of a learning community, in which participants develop knowledge through interaction and shared activities. Blayone et al. (2017) conceptualize online learning communities as environments that support participation and collaboration. Dao et al. (2023) and Tinggie et al. (2023) also emphasize the contribution of peer interaction and scaffolding to language-learning activities. In the current study, comments and discussions offered participants opportunities to receive responses from other users and reconsider their word choices. Nevertheless, the quality and usefulness of feedback may vary depending on the relevance and clarity of the responses.

The findings can also be considered in relation to knowledge transfer. Dohn (2021) conceptualizes knowledge transfer as a process of transformation and attunement rather than the simple application of previously acquired knowledge. This perspective is relevant to participants who perceived that their experience of shortening TikTok captions influenced their

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approach to academic writing. However, informal writing practices do not automatically transfer to academic contexts. Students still need to adjust their language, organization, and level of detail according to the requirements of each writing task.

Challenges and Limitations of Concise Writing on TikTok

Despite the perceived benefits, participants also experienced challenges in maintaining a balance between brevity and meaning. Participant P6 explained, "Sometimes I feel my writing becomes too superficial because it has to be short. I cut out important sentences just to make it catchier." This experience demonstrates that the demand for short content may create difficulties when students attempt to preserve the completeness of their ideas. Conciseness is therefore not simply a matter of reducing the number of words; it also requires decisions about which information is essential.

The characteristics of TikTok as an algorithm-driven platform provide an additional context for understanding these experiences. Bhandari and Bimo (2022) discuss how algorithmic systems shape users' self-presentation and social media practices. Chen et al. (2026) examine academic burnout in the TikTok era, particularly the tension between entertainment and concentration. These studies offer relevant perspectives on the broader digital environment. However, algorithmic pressure and academic burnout were not established as direct findings in the present study. The participants' reported challenges were primarily related to maintaining meaning while producing concise writing.

The distinction between informal and academic writing also requires attention. Wijaya et al. (2023) analyze English-language teaching content on TikTok through the cognitive theory of multimedia learning, demonstrating the platform's relevance to language education. Alvermann and Wilson (2011) further emphasize the importance of comprehension strategies when engaging with multimodal texts. Although TikTok combines written and audiovisual content, the present study primarily focuses on participants' experiences of writing captions and interacting through comments. Therefore, multimodal literacy provides a broader context rather than a central finding of this research.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings suggest that TikTok writing activities may serve as supplementary opportunities for developing students' awareness of concise writing. Lecturers can adapt the principles of writing challenges into classroom activities by asking students to communicate ideas through short captions, summaries, or brief reflections. Such activities should emphasize clarity, relevance, and the preservation of meaning rather than merely limiting the number of words. Hamadi et al. (2021) discuss the use of social media as a pedagogical instrument in higher education, supporting the consideration of digital platforms as complementary learning environments.

Lecturers may also incorporate peer feedback into these activities. Students can review one another's writing by identifying unnecessary expressions, unclear sentences, and information that should be retained. This approach is consistent with the role of peer scaffolding discussed by Tinggie et al. (2023) and the revision strategies examined by Tian et al. (2022). Furthermore, Zhao et al. (2022) demonstrate that social media use can be associated with foreign-language motivation, anxiety, and attitudes toward learning. Although their study focuses on Telegram rather than TikTok, it provides a broader reference for considering the relationship between social media-supported interaction and language learning.

Other TikTok-based learning research, including Mahmod (2024), Meidina (2025), and Maria and Sujarwati (2025), also illustrates the platform's potential as an alternative space for learning and language practice. However, its educational use should be guided by clear learning objectives. Students need opportunities to distinguish between informal digital communication and academic writing conventions. A writing portfolio containing initial captions, revised

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versions, and reflections could help students recognize their writing decisions and evaluate whether their revisions preserve the intended meaning.

Overall, the TikTok Writing Challenge offered participants an informal space to practice concise writing through individual reflection and social interaction. The experience encouraged awareness of word choice, sentence reduction, and audience expectations, while also presenting challenges in maintaining depth and completeness. These findings suggest that TikTok can complement formal writing instruction when its activities are accompanied by reflection, appropriate feedback, and explicit attention to writing purposes.

CONCLUSION

This phenomenological study explored the experiences of fourth-semester students at STAIN Mandailing Natal in using the TikTok Writing Challenge to practice concise writing. The findings reveal that participants perceived the challenge as an informal learning space that encouraged greater awareness of word choice, linguistic efficiency, and audience expectations. Social interaction through comments and peer feedback also provided opportunities to exchange ideas and reflect on writing practices. Some participants perceived that these practices were relevant to their academic writing. However, they also experienced challenges in maintaining a balance between brevity and meaning, particularly when shortening their writing risked reducing the completeness of their ideas. These findings represent the experiences and perceptions of the participants and do not establish that TikTok directly improves writing proficiency or academic writing skills.

The findings suggest that TikTok writing challenges may be considered supplementary activities in writing instruction when accompanied by appropriate pedagogical guidance, opportunities for reflection, and constructive peer feedback. Further research could examine the relationship between participation in TikTok writing challenges and measurable writing outcomes through a longer observation period, more diverse participants, and the perspectives of instructors and curriculum designers. Such investigations may provide a broader understanding of how informal digital writing practices can complement formal writing instruction.

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