

## **Bridging the Gap: Integrating Short-Form Video Content (TikTok/Instagram) into the Uzbek EFL Speaking Classroom**

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### **Abstract**

Traditional English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Uzbekistan frequently struggle with the challenge of transitioning students from passive grammar comprehension to active, fluent oral production. Meanwhile, outside the classroom, Uzbek youth are deeply immersed in consuming and creating short-form video content on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels. Rather than treating these digital spaces as mere distractions, this article proposes a pedagogical framework for intentionally integrating short-form video content into the Uzbek higher education EFL speaking curriculum. Grounded in Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis and Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory, this paper outlines how the structural and psychological properties of micro-video creation can be harnessed to increase student motivation, decrease foreign language speaking anxiety, and cultivate culturally contextualized, fluent oral communication among Uzbek learners.

### **Keywords**

EFL pedagogy, short-form video, communicative competence, Uzbek youth, TikTok pedagogy, Instagram Reels, APA 7

**Introduction.** The modernisation of Uzbekistan's education system has placed great emphasis on the development of communication skills among language learners. Despite these curricula objectives, there is still a gap between the formal English taught in academic settings and the dynamic, authentic English that students encounter in the real world. Uzbek EFL students often face psychological obstacles - especially foreign language anxiety (FLA) - stemming from traditional classroom culture, which penalises

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grammatical errors in spontaneous speech. On the contrary, Uzbek youth's digital habits show an open interest in English through social media. Short-form video platforms, in particular TikTok and Instagram Reels, have become the dominant media consumption and expression channel for this audience. These platforms offer highly contextualised, repeatable and engaging language input. By bridging the gap between informal digital learning habits and formal classroom instruction, educators can turn passive learning into active, structured verbal production.

### **The Pedagogical Value of Short-Form Video Content**

Short-form video content (typically ranging from 15 to 90 seconds) possesses unique structural attributes that align closely with modern task-based and communicative language teaching methodologies.

### **Micro-Inputs and Output Optimization**

Traditional listening and speaking tasks often overwhelm learners with long and complex audio tracks. According to Sweller's theory of cognitive load, instruction design should avoid overloading the working memory. Short-form videos break down language into digestible, micro-entries. These bite-sized chunks are highly visual, rely heavily on contextually-related body language, and often use captions, a combination that greatly improves understanding. When students switch to making their own short videos, they are forced to practice micro-production, which requires them to be concise, accurate and powerful in their choice of vocabulary within a limited time.

### **Reduction of Affective Filters**

According to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, high anxiety, low self-confidence, and low motivation act as psychological barriers to language acquisition. In a traditional classroom, standing up to speak in front of peers often raises this filter. TikTok and Instagram environments, however, utilize a "sandbox" approach to production:

- **Pre-recording and Editing:** Students can record, review, delete, and re-record their speech multiple times before anyone else hears it. This private trial-and-error phase fosters self-correction without the immediate social penalty of a public mistake (Mundia, 2026).
- **Gamification and Trends:** Using viral audio trends, filters, and challenges shifts the student's focus from grammatical hyper-awareness to creative task execution, effectively lowering stress levels (Karimbaeva, 2025).

### **A Framework for Classroom Integration: The WAP Model**

To successfully implement short-form videos without compromising academic rigor, educators can adopt a structured Watch-Analyze-Produce (WAP) framework tailored to the Uzbek educational context.

1. **Watch (Input):** The instructor introduces a specific, curated TikTok or Instagram Reel that targets a specific linguistic function (e.g., expressing an opinion, using narrative tenses, or applying workplace vocabulary). Alternatively, students can find a video fitting a specific hashtag related to their lesson topic.
2. **Analyze (Intake):** The class deconstructs the video. Students analyze the speaker's choice of words, pronunciation, linking words, and conversational pacing. This phase ensures that the informal language found online is critically evaluated alongside the formal rules learned in textbooks.
3. **Produce (Output):** Students are assigned a creative task where they must generate their own short-form video. Crucially, these videos do not need to be published publicly. They can be recorded on smartphones and uploaded to secure, private digital learning platforms like Google Classroom, Telegram channels dedicated to the course, or Moodle systems utilized by Uzbek universities (Tukhtanazarova, 2026).

### **Practical Activity Designs for Uzbek Universities**

The following matrix outlines actionable, structured tasks that seamlessly merge short-form video mechanics with university-level EFL speaking objectives:

<b>Task Name</b>	<b>Target Speaking Skill</b>	<b>Task Description</b>
<b>The 60-Second Cultural Tour</b>	Descriptive language, idiomatic expressions, pacing.	Students create an Instagram-style "Reel" guiding a foreigner through a historical site in Uzbekistan (e.g., Registan, Chorsu Bazaar), using specific descriptive adjectives and local historical narratives in fluent English.
<b>The Stitch/Duet Debate</b>	Spontaneous reaction, argumentation, counter-arguing.	Using TikTok's "Stitch" feature (or an analog classroom setup), a student records a short 30-second opinion on a controversial topic (e.g., <i>"Is AI ruining education?"</i> ). A peer must record a video responding to and countering that argument.
<b>The "Day in the Life" Vlog</b>	Narrative tenses (Past Continuous, Present Perfect), daily vocabulary.	Students film a fast-paced, narrated 1-minute video documenting their routine as an Uzbek university student, focusing on smoothly transitioning between sequential events using connectors ( <i>First, then, unexpectedly, finally</i> ).
<b>The Idiom Explainer</b>	Conceptual clarity, voice modulation, precise articulation.	Students choose a complex English idiom or phrasal verb, script a creative 45-second skit or explanation showing its misuse vs. correct use, and present it dynamically.

### **Addressing Pedagogical Challenges and Institutional Constraints**

While the benefits are clear, integrating social media components into the Uzbek higher education ecosystem introduces practical hurdles that instructors must manage proactively.

### **Privacy and Cultural Sensitivity**

Many students, particularly female students in traditional families, may feel uncomfortable publishing their faces or voices online. Educators must emphasize that these tasks are strictly academic. Submissions should be kept confidential within a closed Learning Management System (LMS) or a private group chat rather than being posted to public feeds.

### **The Slang vs. Academic Balance**

Short-form media is rife with ungrammatical vernacular, internet slang, and fillers ("*gonna*", "*bruh*", "*lowkey*"). Teachers must establish rigid evaluation rubrics. While fluency and natural delivery are rewarded, grades must also depend on the appropriate use of targeted, level-appropriate grammar structures.

### **Digital Inequality**

Not all students possess high-end smartphones or stable, unlimited high-speed internet. Group projects—where students work in pairs, combining their technical resources—can mitigate this disparity, ensuring that technological limits do not turn into educational barriers.

### **Conclusion**

Integrating TikTok and Instagram into the Uzbek EFL classroom does not mean abandoning academic standards; rather, it means meeting digital-native students where they already live. By transforming short-form video creation into a structured language task, educators can tap into an existing reservoir of high student motivation. This methodology effectively bypasses the anxiety of live public speaking, allowing Uzbek

learners to build conversational speed, acquire natural vocabulary, and ultimately step out into the globalized world as confident, fluent English speakers.

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