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Analyzing the impact of short-form video consumption on attention focus and language comprehension

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Abstract

Background: The rapid development of short-form video platforms has transformed university students' media consumption patterns and given rise to a new digital learning ecology in higher education. Although short-form videos are frequently used as sources of informal learning, their fast-paced, repetitive, and highly stimulating characteristics raise concerns about students' ability to maintain sustained attention, which is a crucial prerequisite for academic language comprehension. However, empirical studies that integrate short-form video consumption, attentional focus, and language comprehension within a single, comprehensive explanatory model remain limited, particularly in the context of Indonesian higher education.
Objective: This study aims to analyze the effect of short-form video consumption on university students' language comprehension and to examine the role of attentional focus as a mediating variable in this relationship.
Method: This study employed an explanatory quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected from 312 undergraduate students enrolled in Indonesian higher education institutions using a Likert-scale questionnaire. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis, and mediation testing with a bootstrapping approach.
Results: The findings indicate that short-form video consumption has a significant negative effect on students' language comprehension. In addition, short-form video consumption negatively affects attentional focus, while attentional focus has a positive and significant effect on language comprehension. Mediation analysis demonstrates that attentional focus serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between short-form video consumption and language comprehension.
Conclusion: This study concludes that short-form video consumption not only has a direct impact on university students' language comprehension but also exerts an indirect effect through a reduction in sustained attentional focus.

INTRODUCTION

The consumption of short-form video among university students has increased markedly, as platforms such as TikTok and similar features promote exposure to fast-paced, repetitive, and highly arousing content. This trend has contributed to the emergence of a new learning ecology in higher education, which has the potential to influence how students allocate attention and process academic information (Alfatih et al., 2024; Mao & Liao, 2025; Xie et al., 2023). At the same time, research evidence indicates that the use of short-form video is associated with symptoms of inattention and/or a weakening of attentional control, which constitutes a critical prerequisite for university-level learning that requires sustained focus (Chiencharoenthanakij et al., 2025; Xie et al., 2023). In the context of language learning in higher education, short-form videos are frequently used by students as sources of authentic input for listening and pronunciation practice or content-based language activities. Consequently, this topic is relevant not only to media studies but also to research on language comprehension and academic literacy (Azzahro et al., 2025; Rahmat & Assafari, 2025; Wira Hestiningrum & Susanto, 2025) .

However, the increasing consumption of short-form video has also raised academic concerns regarding a potential decline in sustained attention, which is essential for advanced language comprehension, particularly in reading academic texts and processing complex lecture discourse. Research suggests that exposure to rapidly shifting short-form video content disrupts the allocation of attentional resources and reduces prospective memory capacity as well as deep cognitive engagement. At the same time, other empirical studies emphasize attentional shifting effects and a tendency toward shallow processing among intensive digital media users (Chiossi et al., 2023; Šimkutė, 2025; Xie et al., 2023).

From a contemporary cognitive linguistics perspective, sustained attentional focus is understood as a fundamental prerequisite for inferential processing, discourse integration, and the construction of complex meaning in academic language comprehension (Suzuki-2022-Grammar-ID, n.d.; Zhao & Wang, 2023). Disruptions to these attentional mechanisms have the potential to weaken students' ability to construct coherent meaning representations from extended academic texts or spoken discourse (Asif & Kazi, 2022; Xie et al., 2023d; Yan et al., 2024). Therefore, short-form video consumption needs to be examined empirically not merely as a media phenomenon, but as a cognitive environmental factor that is highly relevant to university students' language comprehension in higher education.

A growing body of research across cognitive psychology and higher education indicates that exposure to high-speed digital environments contributes to increased distraction and fragmentation of students' attention, which in turn undermines sustained cognitive engagement in academic activities. Studies on media multitasking have shown that individuals who are frequently exposed to rapid stimulation tend to exhibit lower attentional control and a greater reliance on shallow information processing. (Ophir et al., 2009; Uncapher & Wagner, 2018). These findings are consistent with the perspective of cognitive load theory, which emphasizes the limited capacity of working cognitive resources when attention is divided. (Mayer, 2020; Sweller, 2011). In the context of higher education, digital distractions—including the presence of devices and the consumption of short-form media—have been shown to interfere with the comprehension of complex material and the integration of meaning across information sources.(Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017; Sana et al., 2013; Ward et al., 2017). Thus, attention is not merely an individual resource but also a capacity shaped by the media ecology, with direct implications for the quality of academic language processing and advanced learning.

Prior studies over the past five years indicate that short-form video consumption among university students has generally been examined within the frameworks of media psychology, digital addiction, or overall academic performance, with attention frequently positioned as a primary mediating variable (Xie et al., 2023; Yan et al., 2024). Meanwhile, studies in the field of language education that examine TikTok or short-form video tend to emphasize micro-level benefits, such as improvements in vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, or learning motivation, without directly investigating their implications for attentional focus and academic language comprehension as complex linguistic–cognitive processes (Attruk & Yasin, n.d.; Azzahro et al., 2025b; Saputri et al., 2025) . This condition indicates a research gap, namely the lack of integration between these two strands of literature within a single, cohesive empirical model focusing on the university student population.

In the Indonesian context, quantitative studies that simultaneously examine the relationships among short-form video consumption, attentional focus, and university students' language comprehension remain relatively limited and are not yet well integrated into the broader global discourse on digital linguistics (Alfatih et al., 2024). This limitation underscores a conceptual and methodological research gap, particularly regarding the need for data-driven empirical investigations that link digital media variables, cognition, and language comprehension within higher education contexts in the Global South (Levy & Hanulíková, 2023). Unlike prior studies, this article conceptualizes short-form video consumption as a linguistic environmental factor that directly affects university students' attentional focus and language comprehension, rather than merely as a form of entertainment or a digital behavioral phenomenon. The novelty of this study lies in its integrative quantitative approach, which bridges two previously separate strands of literature—research on short-form video exposure and attention control, and studies on short-form video as a language-learning ecology—to simultaneously examine the relationships among short-form video consumption, attentional focus, and academic language comprehension.

This approach extends the current state of the art by providing empirical evidence from the Global South, particularly Indonesia, a context that has been underrepresented in the international digital linguistics literature. Building on this research gap, the present study aims to quantitatively analyze the impact of short-form video consumption on attentional focus and language comprehension among university students in Indonesia. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of digital applied linguistics and to offer practical implications for the design of language learning in higher education within the era of short-form media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Short-Form Video Consumption in the Context of Higher Education

Short-form video (SFV) refers to brief audiovisual content distributed through algorithm-driven platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. This content is designed to maximize user engagement through rapid transitions, repetition, and highly arousing stimuli (Gong & Tao, 2024; Mao & Liao, 2025).

Short-Form Video (SFV) as a New Media Ecology in Higher Education

Short-form video (SFV) refers to brief audiovisual content—typically ranging from several seconds to a few minutes—circulated through algorithm-driven platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. The defining characteristics of SFV include rapid transitions, heightened stimulus intensity (high arousal), infinite scrolling formats, and algorithmic recommendations designed to maximize user retention. These features give rise to a "fast–repetitive–fragmented" consumption pattern that differs fundamentally from engagement with long-form video or academic texts, which require sustained and deep processing. Within the media psychology literature, such conditions are commonly understood as part of the *attention economy*, wherein users are encouraged to shift focus continuously and rapidly, thereby potentially reshaping attentional habits in learning-related activities (Levy & Hanulíková, 2023). In the university student context, SFV functions not only as a form of entertainment but also as an informal "learning ecology." Students use short-form videos for practical knowledge, concept summaries, and micro-educational content. However, because this format relies on fragmenting information into small units, concerns have emerged that intensive exposure may foster a preference for brief information and weaken tolerance for tasks requiring sustained attention, such as reading scholarly articles or attending extended academic lectures.

SFV, Digital Addiction, and the Decline of Attentional Control

A number of recent quantitative studies situate SFV within the framework of digital addiction or problematic use and examine its consequences for self-regulatory functions, including attention. A key finding in this body of literature is that addictive patterns of SFV use are associated with reduced attentional control—that is, the ability to direct attention, resist distractions, and sustain focus—which is in turn linked to negative academic behaviors such as procrastination. Studies involving university students further indicate that attentional control often functions as a mediating variable: SFV use undermines attentional control, which subsequently exacerbates poor academic outcomes or maladaptive learning habits.

In addition, clinical and population-based evidence suggests that SFV use is correlated with inattentive behaviors (e.g., heightened distractibility), reinforcing the assumption that platform design features—such as rapid content delivery, instant rewards, and infinite scrolling—are aligned with reactive patterns of attention. Although these relationships do not necessarily imply causality, the consistency of findings across studies strengthens the argument that intensive exposure to SFV may constitute a risk factor for diminished attentional functioning among young adults.

Media Multitasking, Attentional Fragmentation, and Text Comprehension

The broader literature on media multitasking and digital distraction is also relevant for explaining the mechanisms through which SFV may exert its effects. Numerous experimental findings demonstrate that habitual media multitasking is associated with poorer reading comprehension performance and reduced quality of cognitive engagement, even after controlling for specific cognitive factors. This is particularly important given that SFV, in practice, often operates as a "multitasking trigger": users shift rapidly from one video to another within seconds, interspersed with notifications and novel content, thereby reinforcing shallow information-processing habits.

Within this framework, intensive exposure to SFV can be understood as a form of *fragmented information processing* that may reduce students' capacity to sustain attention on extended and complex linguistic input. In other words, SFV may foster a preference for brief, segmented information, rendering activities that require elaborative processing—such as comprehending scholarly arguments—more cognitively demanding.

Attention as a Prerequisite for Academic Language Comprehension

Within cognitive linguistics and applied linguistics, academic language comprehension requires higher-order processes such as cross-sentential information integration, inferencing, discourse coherence maintenance, and the management of cognitive load during reading or listening. These processes rely heavily on sustained attentional focus and the ability to suppress distractions. When attention is weakened, language processing tends to become shallower: readers or listeners may grasp isolated pieces of information but struggle to construct coherent and stable meaning representations.

Accordingly, attention (attentional control/sustained attention) can be positioned as a key variable that bridges SFV exposure and language comprehension performance. Intensive SFV use may reduce the quality of attention**,** and diminished attention, in turn, leads to lower levels of academic language comprehension. Such a mediation model is consistent with empirical findings demonstrating indirect pathways from SFV use to academic outcomes through attentional control.

SFV in Language Learning: Micro-Level Benefits versus Cognitive Risks

Conversely, studies on digital media–based language learning frequently highlight the micro-level benefits of SFV/TikTok, including vocabulary development, pronunciation practice, exposure to authentic input, and increased learning motivation. This perspective is important, as it demonstrates that SFV is not inherently detrimental and can function as an effective learning resource when used purposefully. However, much of the language learning literature focuses on these micro outcomes and has yet to systematically examine medium-term cognitive consequences, such as attentional stability or the depth of academic language comprehension.

This situation reveals a tension within the literature: while SFV can serve as an engaging medium for language learning, its fast-paced and fragmented characteristics may simultaneously undermine the cognitive prerequisites necessary for advanced language comprehension. Therefore, there is a need for empirical models that integrate these two strands of research—media psychology (attention) and language education (comprehension)—rather than treating them as separate and non-intersecting discourses.

Research Gap and Conceptual Framework

Based on recent developments in the literature, both conceptual and empirical gaps can be identified. First, studies on SFV predominantly examine issues such as digital addiction, procrastination, or psychological well-being, without specifically mapping their consequences for academic language comprehension. Second, research on TikTok or SFV in language learning largely emphasizes micro-level benefits, while paying limited attention to their potential impact on sustained attentional focus, which constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for academic discourse processing.

Accordingly, this study is relevant in proposing an integrative model that links SFV consumption (X), attentional focus (M), and language comprehension (Y), while also testing the possibility of a direct effect of SFV consumption on language comprehension. This model is aligned with prior findings suggesting that attentional control may function as a psychological mechanism explaining the relationship between SFV use and academic outcomes among university students.

Drawing on the synthesis of the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: SFV consumption has a negative effect on students' attentional focus.
- H2: Attentional focus has a positive effect on academic language comprehension.
- H3: SFV consumption has a negative effect on academic language comprehension.
- H4: Attentional focus mediates the effect of SFV consumption on language comprehension (partial or full mediation).

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed an explanatory quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design, aimed at examining the causal relationships among short-form video consumption, attentional focus, and students' language comprehension. The explanatory approach was chosen because the study not only describes the phenomenon under investigation but also seeks to explain patterns of relationships among variables based on a previously formulated cognitive–linguistic theoretical framework. A cross-sectional design was adopted because all variables were measured at a single point in time, allowing for an efficient analysis of structural relationships within a large student population.

Participants

The population of this study consisted of undergraduate (bachelor's level) students enrolled in Indonesian higher education institutions. This population was selected because university students represent a group of active users of short-form video platforms while simultaneously serving as primary actors in academic activities that require high levels of attentional focus and language comprehension. The research sample was determined using a stratified random sampling technique, with strata based on the type of higher education institution (public and private). This technique was employed to enhance sample representativeness and to reduce institutional bias. The minimum sample size was set at 300 respondents, following recommendations for multivariate quantitative analysis and mediation testing, which require relatively large samples to ensure stable and reliable parameter estimation.

Research Variables and Operational Definitions

This study involved three main variables, which are operationally defined as follows:

1. Short-Form Video Consumption (X)
   This variable is defined as the level of intensity and frequency with which students consume short-form video content on digital platforms. It was measured through indicators such as daily viewing duration, frequency of access, and usage patterns.
2. Attentional Focus (M)
   Attentional focus is defined as students' ability to sustain attention over time and to regulate distractions during academic activities, particularly when processing linguistic information.
3. Language Comprehension (Y)

Language comprehension is defined as students' ability to understand academic discourse coherently, encompassing meaning integration, inferential processing, and the evaluation of linguistic information.

Instruments

The research instrument consisted of a closed-ended questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), comprising three main sections:

- Short-Form Video Consumption Scale, which measured the intensity, duration, and habitual patterns of short-form video consumption.
- Attentional Focus Scale, which assessed sustained attention, distraction control, and concentration within academic contexts.
- Language Comprehension Instrument, which measured students' ability to comprehend academic texts or discourse through perception-based statements and/or short comprehension items.

All instruments were subjected to content validity testing through expert judgment and construct validity testing using item–total correlation analysis. Instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum acceptable threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected online using a digital survey platform. Prior to completing the questionnaire, respondents were provided with information regarding the purpose of the study, data confidentiality, and their right to voluntary participation. Respondents who indicated their agreement by providing informed consent subsequently proceeded to complete the research instruments.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in stages using statistical software, following these procedures:

- Descriptive statistical analysis to describe respondent characteristics and data distribution.
- Classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, to ensure the appropriateness of subsequent analyses.
- Multiple regression analysis to examine the direct effect of short-form video consumption on language comprehension.
- Mediation analysis to test the role of attentional focus as a mediating variable in the relationship between short-form video consumption and language comprehension, using a bootstrapping approach.

A significance level of 0.05 was applied in all statistical tests.

Data Validity Criteria

Data validity was ensured through rigorous validity and reliability testing of the instruments, an adequate sample size, and the fulfillment of statistical assumptions. This approach ensured that the findings could be interpreted accurately and possessed sufficient generalizability within an academic context.

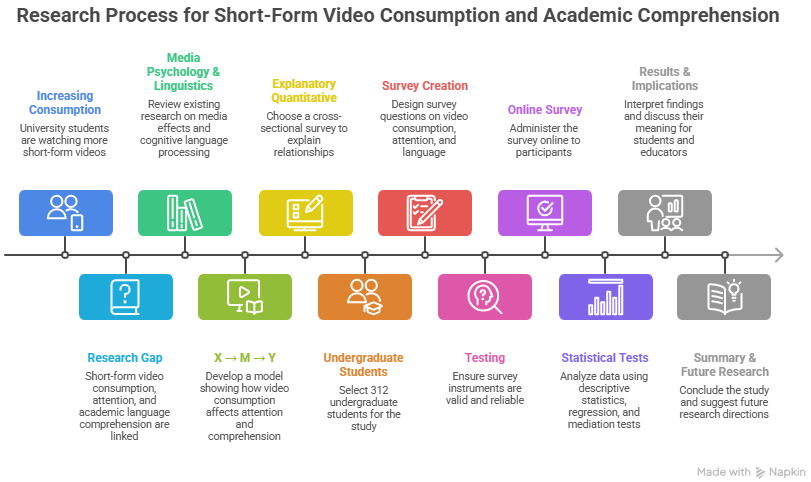

Figure 1. Research Process

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

Variable	ean	D	in	ax

Short-Form Video Consumption	12	.87	.68	.10	.90
Attentional Focus	12	.21	.71	.95	.80
Language Comprehension	12	.34	.66	.05	.85

Note. N = number of participants; SD = standard deviation.

Table 1 indicates that all research variables contain complete data (N = 312), with no missing values that could potentially affect the results of the analysis. Short-form video consumption exhibits the highest mean value among the variables, indicating that respondents generally demonstrate a relatively high level of short-form video consumption. The standard deviation is smaller than the mean, suggesting that the data distribution is relatively concentrated and does not display extreme dispersion.

Attentional focus shows a lower mean value compared to short-form video consumption, with a slightly larger standard deviation. This pattern indicates greater variability in levels of attentional focus across respondents. Language comprehension has a mean value that falls between those of attentional focus and short-form video consumption, with a relatively moderate standard deviation. The range between minimum and maximum values across all three variables suggests that respondents represent a broad spectrum of abilities and behavioral patterns, indicating that the data are sufficiently representative for analyzing relationships among the variables.

Regression Assumption Testing

Table 2. Results of the Multicollinearity Test

Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Short-Form Video Consumption	0.78	1.28
Attentional Focus	0.78	1.28

Table 2 presents the results of the multicollinearity test, which was conducted to ensure that no excessively high correlations existed among variables in the regression model. The tolerance values for all variables are well above the minimum acceptable threshold, while the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are far below the critical cutoff. These results indicate that each variable contributes unique information to the model, allowing regression coefficients to be estimated in a stable and accurate manner.

Furthermore, the results of additional assumption tests, including normality and heteroscedasticity, indicate that the residuals are randomly distributed and do not exhibit systematic patterns. Accordingly, all regression assumptions were satisfied, and subsequent analyses could be conducted without violations of the primary statistical assumptions.

Effect of Short-Form Video Consumption on Language Comprehension

Table 3. Regression Results of Short-Form Video Consumption on Language Comprehension

Independent Variable	B	S E	β	t	Sig.
Short-Form Video Consumption	-0.42	.05	-0.46	-8.40	.000

Table 3 shows that short-form video consumption has a negative regression coefficient with a very high level of statistical significance. The standardized beta coefficient indicates that an increase in short-form video consumption is associated with a decrease in students' language comprehension scores. The large absolute value of the *t* statistic suggests that this effect is robust and unlikely to occur by chance. Moreover, the relatively small standard error indicates that the regression coefficient is estimated with a high degree of precision. Overall, these results confirm a statistically significant relationship between short-form video consumption and language comprehension within the simple regression model.

Effect of Short-Form Video Consumption on Attentional Focus

Table 4. Regression Results of Short-Form Video Consumption on Attentional Focus

Independent Variable	B	S E	β	t	Sig.
Short-Form Video Consumption	-0.51	.06	-0.52	-8.67	.000

Table 4 indicates that short-form video consumption has a significant negative effect on students' attentional focus. The standardized beta coefficient, which is larger in absolute terms than that observed in the previous model, suggests that short-form video consumption is more strongly associated with attentional focus than with language comprehension directly. The high *t* value further demonstrates that this relationship is stable and statistically robust. These findings suggest that variations in students' levels of attentional focus can be

explained to a significant extent by variations in their short-form video consumption. The relatively small standard error also indicates a reliable estimation of the regression coefficient.

Effect of Attentional Focus on Language Comprehension

Table 5. Regression Results of Attentional Focus on Language Comprehension

Independent Variable	E				ig.
Attentional Focus	.48	.05	.50	.60	.000

Table 5 demonstrates that attentional focus has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' language comprehension. The relatively large standardized beta coefficient indicates that attentional focus is a strong predictor of language comprehension. The very high *t* statistic reflects a consistent and stable relationship at a high level of confidence. These results suggest that increases in sustained attentional focus are associated with improvements in academic language comprehension. Overall, attentional focus makes a substantial contribution to explaining variation in students' language comprehension scores.

Mediation Analysis of Attentional Focus

Table 6. Summary of the Attentional Focus Mediation Analysis

Pathway	β	Sig.
Short-Form Video Consumption → Attentional Focus	-0.52	0.000
Attentional Focus → Language Comprehension	0.50	0.000
Short-Form Video Consumption → Language Comprehension (Direct Effect)	-0.22	0.001
Indirect Effect (via Attentional Focus)	-0.26	0.000

Table 6 indicates that short-form video consumption affects language comprehension both directly and indirectly through attentional focus. The significant indirect effect demonstrates that part of the influence of short-form video consumption on language comprehension is transmitted through changes in students' levels of attentional focus. Although the direct effect remains statistically significant, its magnitude decreases after attentional focus is included in the model, indicating the presence of partial mediation.

Discussion

This study aimed to analyze the impact of short-form video consumption on students' attentional focus and language comprehension. The results indicate that short-form video consumption is significantly associated with language comprehension both directly and indirectly through attentional focus as a mediating variable. These findings underscore that patterns of short-form digital media consumption are not merely related to behavioral or entertainment aspects, but also exert influence on the cognitive–linguistic processes that underlie learning in higher education, as documented in recent empirical studies on short-form video use and attentional regulation among university students (Mao & Liao, 2025; Xie et al., 2023d; Yan et al., 2024). These results also extend previous research findings indicating that short-form video use is associated with changes in attentional control and academic engagement, by providing quantitative evidence that such effects have direct implications for academic language comprehension as a higher-order cognitive ability (Gong & Tao, 2024).

The negative effect of short-form video consumption on students' attentional focus identified in this study is consistent with recent literature highlighting the characteristics of short-form video as a medium marked by rapid stimulation and frequent transitions, which may undermine attentional control. Recent quantitative studies have shown that higher levels of short-form video consumption are associated with increased inattentiveness and a reduced capacity to maintain sustained attentional focus among university students (Chiencharoenthanakij et al., 2025; Xie et al., 2023d; Yan et al., 2024). In contrast to earlier studies on media multitasking, more recent research emphasizes that the algorithmic design of short-form video platforms reinforces patterns of reactive attention, whereby users become habituated to brief and fragmented information processing. This pattern potentially conflicts with the cognitive demands of university-level learning, which require stable and sustained attention over extended periods, such as reading academic texts and engaging with complex lecture discourse (Gong & Tao, 2024; Mao & Liao, 2025).

The finding that attentional focus exerts a positive and significant effect on students' language comprehension reinforces contemporary cognitive linguistic perspectives that position sustained attention as a fundamental prerequisite for academic language processing. Recent research in applied linguistics indicates that academic discourse comprehension requires cross-sentential information integration, inferencing of implicit

meaning, and effective management of cognitive load, all of which depend critically on the stability of attention (Storesund & Helle, 1975).

In the context of digital media, reductions in attentional focus resulting from short-form video consumption may hinder the depth of students' linguistic processing, leading to language comprehension that is more superficial and less integrated. This finding is consistent with recent empirical studies demonstrating that attentional disruptions are associated with diminished quality of text comprehension and academic discourse processing among university students (Gong & Tao, 2024; Yan et al., 2024). The mediation analysis reveals that attentional focus functions as a partial mediator in the relationship between short-form video consumption and students' language comprehension. This finding strengthens contemporary empirical models that position attentional control as a key mechanism through which exposure to digital media is translated into cognitive and academic consequences (Mao & Liao, 2025; Xie et al., 2023d; Yan et al., 2024).

The persistence of a significant direct effect after attentional focus is included in the model indicates that short-form video consumption may also influence language comprehension through alternative pathways, such as the adoption of faster and less reflective information-processing habits. This interpretation is consistent with recent findings suggesting that short-form video affects not only attentional processes but also cognitive strategies involved in processing linguistic information (Chiencharoenthanakij et al., 2025; Gong & Tao, 2024).

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of digital linguistics by integrating perspectives from media psychology and cognitive linguistics within a single quantitative model. In contrast to prior research that tends to separate studies of media addiction from language learning, these findings demonstrate that short-form video consumption should be understood as a cognitive environmental factor that influences processes of academic language comprehension (Mao & Liao, 2025). Thus, this study extends the state of the art by providing empirical evidence from the context of Indonesian higher education, which has thus far been relatively underrepresented in the international literature on digital linguistics and media-based learning (Yang et al., 2025). From a practical perspective, the findings of this study highlight the need for pedagogical approaches that are more adaptive to the realities of short-form media consumption among university students. Rather than merely restricting the use of short-form videos, higher education institutions can develop instructional strategies that strengthen students' attentional focus and attention regulation, thereby minimizing the potential negative effects of short-form media consumption on academic language comprehension.

Although this study provides empirical contributions to understanding the relationship among short-form video consumption, attentional focus, and students' language comprehension, several limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional research design limits the ability to draw causal inferences, while the use of self-report–based instruments may be subject to respondents' perceptual biases. In addition, this study did not differentiate specific types of short-form video content consumed, even though content characteristics may moderate their effects on attentional focus and language comprehension. Therefore, future research is recommended to employ longitudinal or experimental designs, combine subjective and objective measures, and account for variations in content type and context of digital media use.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that short-form video consumption is significantly associated with students' attentional focus and language comprehension. The findings indicate that higher levels of short-form video consumption are associated with lower levels of sustained attentional focus, which in turn contribute to a decline in academic language comprehension. These results underscore that the consumption of short-duration digital media has implications not only for behavioral or entertainment-related aspects but also for the cognitive–linguistic processes underlying academic activities.

Furthermore, this study finds that attentional focus functions as a partial mediator in the relationship between short-form video consumption and language comprehension. This indicates that the impact of short-form video consumption on language comprehension is not entirely direct but operates through a cognitive mechanism related to the ability to sustain attention. These findings position attentional focus as a key factor in explaining how exposure to digital media translates into linguistic outcomes within higher education contexts.
From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the advancement of digital linguistics and cognitive linguistics by strengthening the understanding of how media environments shape processes of academic language comprehension. Empirically, this study provides quantitative evidence from the Indonesian context, which remains relatively underrepresented in the international literature, thereby expanding both the geographical and conceptual scope of prior research.

From a practical standpoint, the findings imply the need for educational approaches that do not solely emphasize restricting digital media use, but also focus on strengthening students' attentional focus and attention regulation. In this way, higher education institutions can design learning strategies that are more adaptive to the realities of short-form media consumption without compromising the quality of academic language comprehension.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The first author was responsible for the conceptualization of the study, the formulation of the theoretical framework, and the development of the research methodology. The first author also led the manuscript writing process and conducted substantive revisions based on academic feedback. The second author contributed to the development of the literature review, the design of the research instruments, and data collection. The second author was also involved in preliminary data analysis and data verification. The third author was responsible for advanced statistical analysis, interpretation of the research findings, and the preparation of the results and discussion sections. The third author also provided critical input regarding theoretical argumentation and clarity of presentation.

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