

DUOLINGO AS AN EDUCATIONAL LANGUAGE TOOL TO ENHANCE EFL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract

Duolingo is one of the modern applications that facilitate acquiring a second language. This research aims at investigating students' motivation in learning English through Duolingo as one of educational language tool. This study used mixed method to explore and describe the phenomenon. Subjects of this study were 40 students of English department, which consisted of 10 male and 30 female. Data collection techniques in this study were questionnaire and interviews, while the data analysis techniques in this study were data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The study revealed that the use of Duolingo application was quite effective to enhance the students' motivation in learning English. This study showed that Duolingo is an app where every beginner can start learning a second language as it motivates him / her to keep on making progress. Nevertheless, Duolingo also needs improvement to cover more vocabulary, grammar rules and languages, especially English, since it is the lingua franca of the world.

Keywords : *Duolingo Application; Educational Language Tool, English Learning Motivation*

INTRODUCTION

Technology plays an important role in the life of the wider community, especially the role of technology in language. Language and technology have been deeply intertwined ever since the invention of writing some 5,000 years ago (Chun et al., 2016, p. 65). In language instruction, technology now has its role in the teaching and learning process. Instructors or educators are now experiencing the effects of technological growth in both marketing education and practice. For example, the Internet has grown exponentially over the last few years (Clarke et al., 2001). Access to technology, ownership and connectivity are among key success factors for integrating mobile learning in higher education (Naismith, L., & Corlett, 2017). Mobile learning or m-learning has recently emerged as a new type of learning model that enables learners to access learning materials anywhere and at

any time using mobile devices and the Internet (Lan & Sie, 2010). This fact revealed that technology has great potential to increase students motivation and teaching and learning process especially inside and outside classroom.

The social psychological method of Gardners was one of the most influential in establishing L2 motivation principle (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei et al., 2006; Lai, 2013). In this definition, motivation was regarded as the combination of three complex components, including enthusiasm, the desire to learn the language and the attitude towards language learning. These three components belong to motivation concept should be included when studying students' motivational. Despite the fact that mobile technology offers inherent powerful motivational potential through its sophisticated features, language learners possibly have different perspectives concerning the use of mobile technology for learning L2/FL. Stockwell (2013) argued that the motivation of students can essentially be divided into two categories. First, students are particularly interested in technology and thus turn it into a means of learning English. Second, students are interested in learning English and technology will help them learn English.

The motivation problem of students indicated in low level when the process of learning in classroom only emphasized on the material given by the lecturer. The lecturing processes only focus on how students were understandable the whole materials whereas language learning combined with various media today is very common. As stated by (Blake, 2016; Chun et al., 2016) that the integration of mobile technology in language learning can facilitate teachers to have authentic learning materials and to guide learners to interact with other language learners or even with the native speakers. One of a new and interesting m-learning is Duolingo application.

Duolingo is One of the most popular writing learning media. (Wilbert et al., 2016) defines Duolingo as the future of language learning and global communication. Duolingo is a mobile-based language application that uses a combination of visual, audio and also questions about a grammar of a language. The advantages that exist on the Duolingo website according to (Putri & Islamiati,

2018) are the method of delivering learning material that is very enjoyable with a system such as a game that makes users feel learning while playing, then a very attractive visual display that is supported by audio. The language skills learned in this application are quite complete, ranging from listening, writing, speaking, grammar and vocabulary, and available on various platforms, this application is very light when used so it does not overburden the platform used. And there are almost no weaknesses in this application. However this application has some advantages, this application also has some weaknesses, those are some activities can not be conducted on both PC and smartphone, lack of available language material for Asian learners and this application also requires an internet connection to access it, so it is quite difficult for learner in remote area (Kenny, 2014).

There are several studies to investigate this application in language learning such as (Kenny, 2014; Kusumadewi & Widyastuti, 2018; Putri & Islamiati, 2018; Taalas et al., 2018; Wilbert et al., 2016). However, these studies focus on the improvement of English language skill in general. Even though students' motivation in language learning also needs special attention, because when students are motivated to learn, of course the positive effect caused is an increase in student learning outcomes going forward. The current study focuses especially on the motivation of students to learn English and their desire to use the application independently to learn English. Two research questions have been developed for this purpose: 1) How is the motivation of students to learn English? 2) How do students use Duolingo to learn?

RESEARCH METHOD

The research explored the use of Duolingo by 40 students who were currently learning English. The recruitment of participants was conducted via a questionnaire for the fourth-year students of IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. The questionnaire gathered information about their experience with internet access and use of smartphone applications to help their study. They knew well how to use the smartphone for study purposes such as Google to search for learning materials or

Google translate to find the meaning of English words they wanted, but did not have the knowledge to use a specific English learning app. After ensuring that selected participants have the same knowledge about using internet access and Android-based applications, researchers then explore information about how motivated students are in learning English using the Duolingo application. To strengthen the results of the questionnaire, the researcher then conducted an interview as the second instrument in this study. Researchers chose 10 people to represent the level of motivation that belongs to two categories, namely medium and high levels obtained from the results of the previous questionnaire.

The procedures in collecting data, first, the researcher introduced the Duolingo application to all participants, researcher asked all participants to download the Duolingo application on their smartphone, then researcher guided the participants how to register and log in to Duolingo application. Students were asked to use Duolingo for 3 days then they were asked some question related to the Application. In the last day, students were asked to fill in motivational questionnaire based on Gardners theory which mentioned motivation was combining three complex components, those were enthusiasm, the desire to learn the language, and the attitude towards language learning. After getting motivational results from the questionnaire, the researchers then interviewed 10 students. Interview techniques use Open-Ended Questions that aim to get broad answers. All details from the questionnaire of the students were analyzed and tabled using SPSS, while the results of the interview were presented briefly in a descriptive manner.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A brief Definition of Duolingo

Duolingo as quoted from an article from The Guardian is a free language learning app created by Luis Von Ahn and Severin Hacker was launched in November 2011, and offers 68 different language courses in 23 Languages, with 22 additional courses still under development. Duolingo implements dictation and written learning, as well as speaking practice for users who have entered a

certain level. Applications that can be used on iOS, Android, and Windows Phone is made in such a way that users can continue to improve the ability to discuss anytime and anywhere. Learning in Duolingo is designed like a game, to be attractive and easily absorbed. For the innovation, Duolingo was awarded Google Play's Best of the Best 2013 by Google because of the powerful gamification techniques used to get many people to learn new knowledge (Kusumadewi & Widyastuti, 2018) .

Step to Operate Duolingo

In the first step, make sure the smartphone has internet network access. Then download the Duolingo application through the App Store. After downloading, open the Duolingo application.

Image . 1. Login View

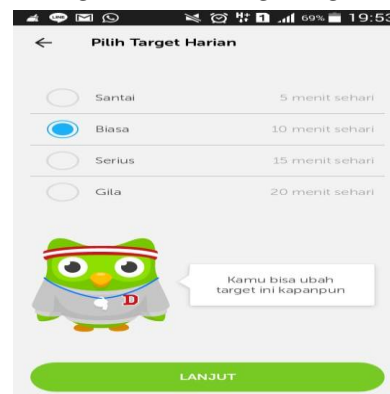


The second step, users can register with a google or facebook account to maintain their progress.

Image.2. Account Register

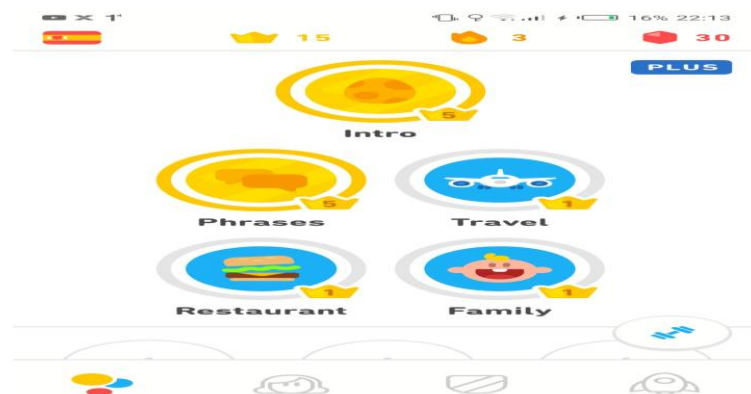


Image. 3. Selecting Target



The third step, at the start screen select Get started menu and the language you want to learn (English) then select the language used (Indonesian) picture. Then there will be a choice of daily learning goals in which there are relaxed choices (5 minutes a day), normal (10 minutes a day), serious (15 minutes a day), and crazy (20 minutes a day).

Image .4. Get Menu & Language



The fourth step, which is to choose the level of English proficiency. Then users can learn English starting from the basic level. At the basic level, there are English speaking competencies including Pronunciation, Grammar and Vocabulary from questions provided both in oral and written form. Students who routinely use Duolingo will be adjusted to the level of difficulty according to their abilities.

Nushi and Eqbali (2017) in Ananda (2019) describe the exercises in Duolingo that there are many types, such as:

- 1) Translation exercises, participants translate from the language they know into the language they want to learn or vice versa. Figure 5
- 2) Matching exercises, in which participants look at photos and match them with the words given or vice versa. Figure.6
- 3) Pair practice, where participants are given an equal number of words from both languages and are asked to pair them.

- 4) Listening exercises, where participants listen to short phrases in the second language and must write them correctly. Figure 7
- 5) Speaking exercises, in which participants must say what they hear.

Figure.5. Translation Exercises



Image.6. Matching Practice

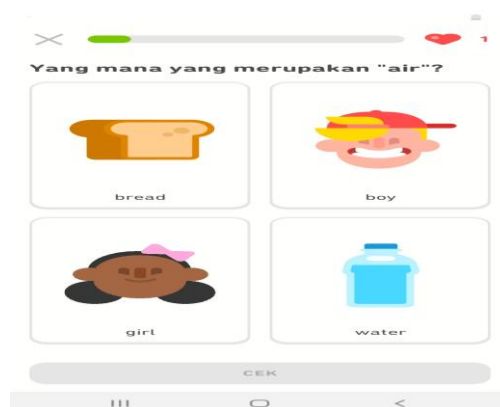
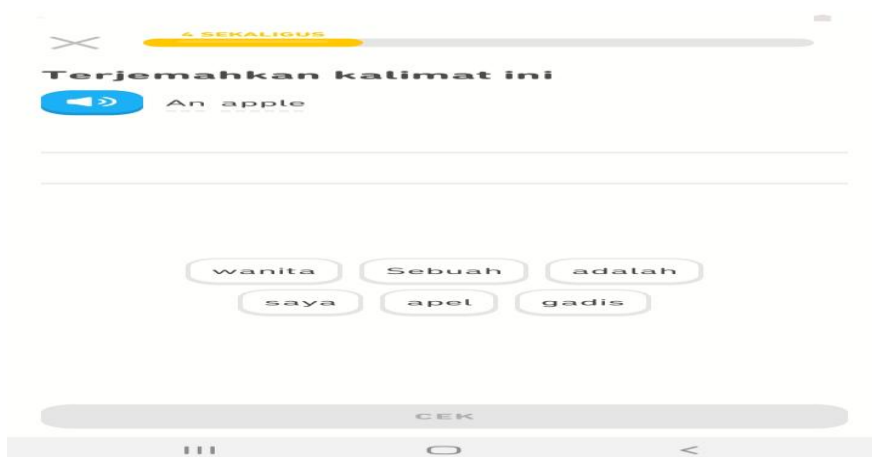
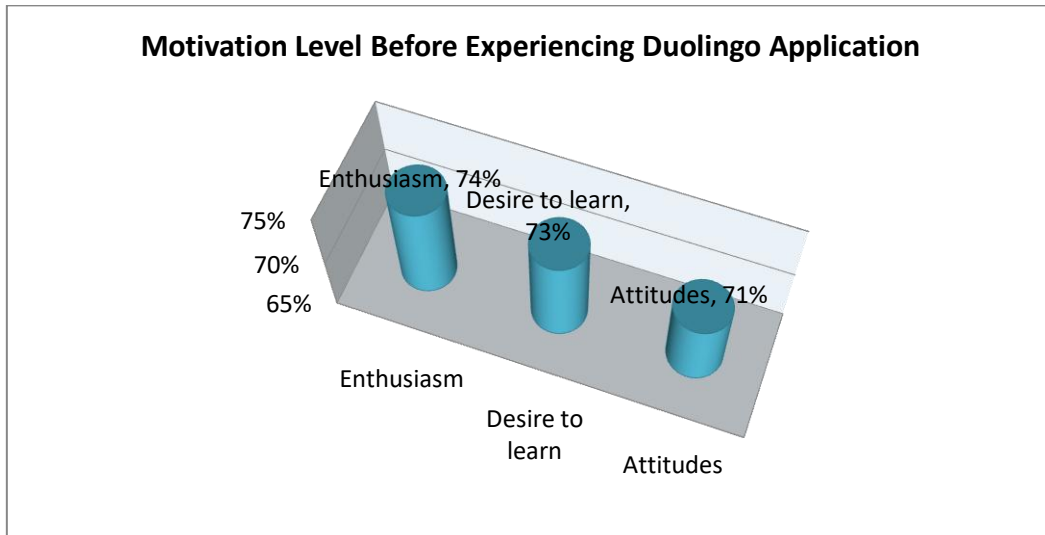


Image.7. Listening Practice

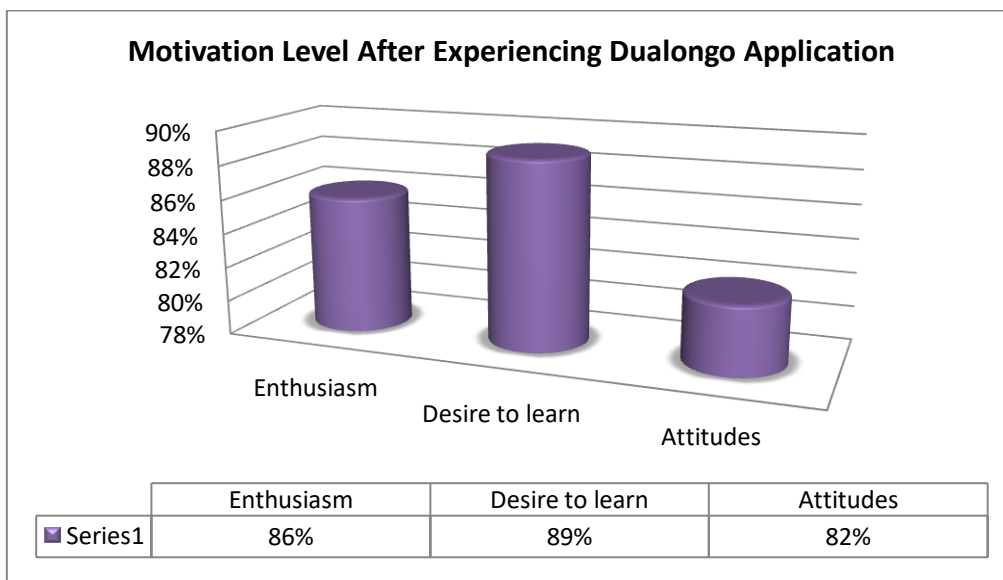


Based on the results of questionnaires and interviews which was represented by 40 students of English department. The results from this two instruments are described in frequency using table and narrative form bellow.

Questionnaire Results



The level of student motivation before having experience with using the Duolingo application in English learning looks quite above standard. Three categories or motivational components are more than 70 percent, but still less than 75 percent.



After getting an account and getting an explanation of using the Duolingo application, students then use this application for three days. The learning experience using this smartphone-based application makes student motivation seem to increase from before. The spirit category is seen to have increased by

12%, the desire of student learning has also increased dramatically by 15% and the attitude has also increased by 11%.

Interview Results

The techniques of taking the interview in this study are face to face and by phone. Here are some description of conversation. This brief interviews script only took 10 respondent to participate.

1. Have you ever used the internet as a tool to find information?

Of the 10 respondents stated that they had used the internet as a tool to find information because according to them there was a lot of information that they got from the internet, especially in doing a task and with the help of the internet they also can easily search information anywhere.

2. How often do you open the internet in a day?

Participants 5, 9 have a same assumed that is rarely open the internet they will only surf in the internet when they do assigment which needs internet. Participant 2 stated media social that force them to open internet in a day, but they will not take too longer to use it, and participant 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8,10 of the subjects do very often to use internet in a day, event they spend for almost a half day to surf and play online games.

3. Do you like using applications on Smartphone to learn English?

Participants 1,2 and 4, 7, 8 stated that they like to use applications on smartphones to learn English because according to participants learning to use applications can help and motivate participants in learning. Participant 3, 10 stated that they did not really like learning to use the application because participants preferred to learn directly with the teacher / lecturer. Respondents 5, 6, 9 prefer use laptop or cumputes to learn.

4. What is your opinion about learning to use the application?

Basically all students like to use a smartphone in the learning process because of several things, the first is all students have a smartphone, second is easy to carry anywhere, third is simpler even though there are limitations in terms of accessing certain things.

5. *Have you ever heard of the Duolingo app before?*

All respondents answered yes. Some of them used it from last semester, and others used since a month ago and even there one of them currently downloaded it. It means that all participants mostly familiar with this application.

6. *What do you think about the Duolingo application?*

All participants have similar statement that the Duolingo application is very good and one of the applications that can help participants learn English because the material in the Duolingo application is easy to understand and matches the ability of each user besides that the Duolingo application is free and provided some interesting feature.

7. *Do you think the Duolingo application can enhance your motivation to learn English?*

All participants felt enthusiastic, the desire to learn and respond to the learning process became higher than before. Participants felt the impact on the urge to learn felt more interesting and enjoyable after getting to know and try the Duolingo application. In addition to convenience, this application is assessed according to the current character of students.

8. *Which of you think is more effective learning using the Duolingo application or face to face learning?*

Participants 1 and 3 stated that learning directly with the teacher/lecturer was more effective because there was feedback from the teacher/lecturer and it was easy to understand and could find out where the error was. Participant 2 stated that both of them were effective in learning English. Participants 4-10 stated that using the Duolingo application is more effective than learning directly with the teacher / lecturer.

From the results of the questionnaire and interviews above, it can be assumed that the application of Duolingo was quite effective in influencing students' motivation to learn English. To confirm this finding then researcher elaborated with some theoretical and other findings related to this study in discussion part below.

Discussion

This study seeks the effect of Duolingo Application to students' motivation in writing English both men and women in English Education Department, IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. Data were gathered from 40 total respondents who had participated since November-December 2019. Based on the results, it can be described that Duolingo Application has a positive impact on students' motivation to write. This application offers some interesting features, material and test to study. This application provides a lot of vocabulary and also grammar that can help students to construct an English sentence correctly. This application also attaches many pictures to support the learning process. The finding indicates that students are generally quite enthusiastic about using the applications and can greatly enjoy their flexibility and practicality. This finding strengthens the fact that many literature highlighted great potential and positive responses to mobile language learning (Alkhezzi & Al-Dousari, 2016; Hamidi & Chavoshi, 2018; Morris et al., 2016).

The process of learning and teaching in this era is inseparable from technology. The benefits of technology most felt in the learning process, especially language is the efficiency of time and energy. Other facilities offered to learners are the availability of attractive features that arouse curiosity and motivation to learn more. There are a number of research focused on teaching and learning process using technology such as (Cheng, n.d.; Gangaiamaran, R., & Pasupathi, 2017; Rossing et al., 2012; Taalas et al., 2018). This all study revealed that teaching language using technology was helpful both teacher and students.

In reality, language teachers today face so many interesting opportunities for technology-enhancing language learning that it can be daunting. Because most of us are reluctant to experiment with emerging technologies, it may be difficult to determine which resources, tools, or websites are ideally suited to a specific lesson, exercise, or desired outcome. Many of the most promising prospects lie within the same global trends in social and technology which have become common in our daily lives, including social media, machine learning, data mining, and virtual reality (Kessler, 2018).

Teacher readiness on the use of technology in language instruction has confronted many challenges: it is often completely neglected or focused on learning to use existing technologies rather than looking forward to ways in which advanced technologies can enhance or revolutionize teaching and learning. Thus, well practicing and fit the technology with students' need in teaching process also should be considered by all language teachers.

In other fact, Students are now more experienced to use technology than a part of the teacher or lectures. It needs a lot attention for teacher to provide a positif during a process of language teaching in the classroom, moreover in writing instruction. As familiar for us that writing is the most complicated skill in a language. In teaching writing students and teachers should have a same effort to achieve the main objective. The main objective is students are able and easier to express their ideas in one text or at least students have a high motivation to write during the process of language teaching either in class or outside the classroom. Duolingo as stated from the result above presented many interesting features. There are a lot of correct sentence which provided by this application. Thus, it will be helpful to form students' memorizing which best fit to English grammar and finally students are able to construct a good sentence structure.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Aligned with a number of previous studies investigating and exploring mobile application in language learning, the current study also makes it possible for mobile applications to help language learners learn the target language. It provides an opportunity for students to learn independently. Students felt comfortable and easy to use the application in their daily activities. Although the time used in this study was only 3 days. However, intensive use of this application is enough to make students motivated to want to know more and open this application to learn the material in it. Thus, more studies on the use of the current mobile applications for English language learning need to be carried on. Author was aware that there are still many shortcomings in this study, then further research can be done by

comparing several applications of language learning and the long research time will make it even better.

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