

# THE IMPACT OF DUOLINGO PLATFORM ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Fani Indrawan<sup>1</sup>, Pipit Ertika Daristin<sup>2</sup>, Elisa Nurul Laili<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Hasyim Asy'ari

E-mail : [Indrawan.sch@gmail.com](mailto:Indrawan.sch@gmail.com)

---

## Abstract

*In this digital era, the use of technology in various areas of human life has had an impact on lifestyle changes. This also has emerged in education as the use of mobile applications as a learning medium is increasing. Duolingo is an English learning application packaged with a game concept. The aim of this research is to find out how the impact of Duolingo platform as an English learning application to the students' motivation. This research was carried out using quantitative methods. The data of this research was obtained from collecting questionnaires and interviews with student participants. The results shows that almost all participants agree that Duolingo can help them improve their English skills. They may also agree that using Duolingo as a learning medium outside the classroom can increase the motivation to learn English which they feel is still lacking.*

**Kata kunci:** Duolingo platform, students' motivation, English language learning

## Abstrak

*Di era digital ini, pemanfaatan teknologi di berbagai bidang kehidupan manusia telah membawa dampak pada perubahan gaya hidup. Hal ini juga muncul dalam dunia pendidikan seiring dengan semakin meningkatnya penggunaan aplikasi mobile sebagai media pembelajaran. Duolingo merupakan aplikasi belajar bahasa Inggris yang dikemas dengan konsep permainan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana dampak platform Duolingo sebagai aplikasi pembelajaran bahasa Inggris terhadap motivasi mahasiswa. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode kuantitatif. Data penelitian ini diperoleh dari pengumpulan angket dan wawancara terhadap partisipan mahasiswa. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa hampir semua peserta setuju bahwa Duolingo dapat membantu para mahasiswa menaikkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka. Mereka juga mungkin setuju bahwa penggunaan Duolingo sebagai media pembelajaran di luar kelas dapat meningkatkan motivasi belajar bahasa Inggris yang mereka rasa masih kurang.*

**Kata kunci:** Platform Duolingo, motivasi mahasiswa, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this digital era, the use of technology in various areas of human life has had an impact on lifestyle changes. In the education sector, application and website-based technological innovations are starting to emerge with different functions and benefits (Hidayati and Diana, 2019). This is influenced by the demands of current developments which are starting to shift conventional methods to digital. This also happens in the context of language learning.

Language and technology are two things that are very closely related (Peng and Fu, 2021). This means that language cannot be separated from technological developments. Vice versa, technology needs language to develop. In technological developments, language functions as a supporting language for modern science and technology. Without language, technology cannot grow and develop. Language also has implications

for the development of reasoning power, which makes language a means and infrastructure for modern thinking (Isdianto, 2020).

English is one of the mandatory courses at Universitas Hasyim Asy'ari. This means that every student is obliged to take and must pass this course. Mandatory courses is very important because it has the aim of providing the basics of ability or knowledge outside the respective field of students. This ability might be very beneficial for the students involved, which will be a good provision for students when they enter society. Considering the important role of English for university graduates, passing from English for Specific Purpose mandatory course will provide significant benefits for the graduates of Universitas Hasyim Asy'ari.

However, the English for Specific Purpose course apparently found several problems that could make the implementation of the course less than optimal. The first problem is the lack of learning motivation of the students in taking English courses. This problem is commonly found in non-English majoring students because it is not their interest (Matra, 2020). This motivation problem can also be influenced by the learning resources used in the classroom. If the only sources used are books, students' interest or motivation in learning English will also decrease (Habibie, 2020). Therefore, innovation in the use of media as a learning resource needs to be carried out in order to increase the motivation and interest of non-English major students in attending English lectures. When learning motivation starts to increase, another problem arises, namely the lack of time allocated to study English for students who are not majoring in English. 4 credits a week is considered insufficient to teach a foreign language to students who do not have a background in that language. Therefore, solutions to increase students' time to be exposed to English more often are also very necessary.

Now, the use of mobile applications as a learning medium is increasing (Herlina, Yundayani and Astuti, 2021). This is proven by the large number of studies investigating the effectiveness or impact of using mobile applications in learning English and the number of applications available on Playstore and Appstore (Alshareef, 2018).

Duolingo is an English learning application packaged with a game concept (Ajisoko, 2020). In the Duolingo game, users are given material in the form of vocabulary, phrases, basic words, etc. (Irawan, Wilson and Sutrisno, 2020). Apart from that, Duolingo also provides listening and speaking practice. The learning concept in the Duolingo application is made as attractive as possible by being equipped with pictures related to the vocabulary being studied (Aulia, Wahjuningsih and Andayani, 2020). Exercises are also provided to provide new experiences to users such as, translating sentences both from English to Indonesian and from Indonesian to English, and games such as completing incomplete sentences with missing words (Le and Nation, 2011).

The aim of this research is to find out how the impact of Duolingo platform as an English learning application to the students' motivation. This research is important to conduct to find out whether the use of English learning applications can help increase student learning motivation. The results of this research can be used as a reference in implementing English language courses at Hasyim Asy'ari University so that students, especially those from non-English majors, are more motivated and interested in learning English so that Unhasy can produce graduates who are competitive.

## 2. METHOD

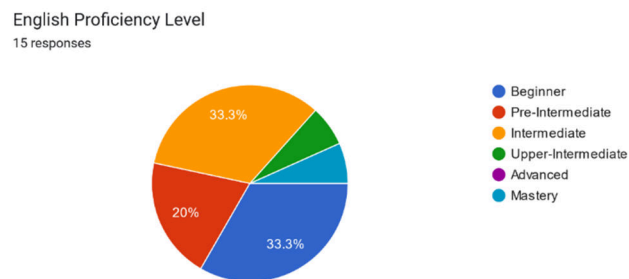
This research was carried out using quantitative methods. A study that is dominantly characterized by a quantitative style, though it was supported by a follow-up interview and interpretation, it can be categorized as quantitative research (Cheng and Dörnyei, 2007). The data of this research was obtained from collecting questionnaires and interviews with student participants. The questionnaires are using Likert Scale to measure preferences (Bertram, 2007). The participants were students of Universitas Hasim Asyari from the Science Education department and Mathematics Education department, totaling 15 students. They were required to take English for Specific Purpose course as it is included in the mandatory courses in university curriculum. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire filled in by all participants. All participants had never used Duolingo, which was a new experience for learning English using smartphone applications. Some of the students in the class had used Duolingo which are then eliminated from the participants. First, the researchers introduced Duolingo platform to the students. Some of the students might have heard of Duolingo but the never installed it. Second, the students used Duolingo for seven weeks. Each week students needed to finish two chapters. By the end of this research, students had finished 14 chapters. After the period of using Duolingo was over, students were asked to fill the questionnaire which

are formed in the Likert Scale. This questionnaire is specially designed to measure students' degree of preference.

### 3.FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research seeks to answer the question of whether using the English language learning application Duolingo can help increase motivation for learning English, especially for students who are not from English language study programs. In this research, participants were students from the Faculty of Education. After using Duolingo for several weeks, participants were then asked to fill out a questionnaire given by the researchers. From the questionnaires given to two classes in the Mathematics study program and Science study program, only 15 questionnaires were collected. This was because 1 student had previously used Duolingo so he was not asked to complete the questionnaire. The majority of the 15 participants had never heard of Duolingo and only 20% had heard of Duolingo even though they had never used it.

The level of English language skills of the participants varied greatly, ranging from beginner, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper intermediate and mastery categories. One third of the participants categorized their abilities as intermediate and another third as beginners in English. The distribution of student abilities can be seen in Figure 1:



Gambar 1: Participant's English proficiency level

From the questionnaire, their response to Duolingo platform is quite positive. From the five choices given to them, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, there are two answer who are dominantly chosen by the participant which are Agree and Strongly agree. From these results, it can be said that almost all participants agree that Duolingo can help them improve their English skills. They may also agree that using Duolingo as a learning medium outside the classroom can increase the motivation to learn English which they feel is still lacking.

To better understand the results of this research, the researchers have divided the questions in the questionnaire into four big categories: first, the easiness of using Duolingo, benefits of using Duolingo, effectiveness of using Duolingo, and the last one is their opinion about how Duolingo can increase their motivation in learning.

Tabel 1: Easiness of learning English using Duolingo

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	In my opinion, accessing Duolingo is convenient, whether it's from a mobile device or a laptop.	0	0	0	60	40	4.4
2.	In my opinion, Duolingo's features are user-friendly and it is simple to engage with other users.	0	0	26.7	60	13.3	3.5
3.	In my opinion, practicing English with Duolingo is convenient because I can use it at any time and from any location.	0	0	0	66.7	33.3	4.3

Table 1 shows that the majority of students agree that the Duolingo platform is very easy to use. Starting from the ease with which this platform can be accessed via smartphone or laptop, to its features which are very easy to operate. These conveniences are the reason why Duolingo can be accessed anytime and anywhere. The interesting finding is in the second question. While the "Agree" response is dominant, the existence of a "Neutral" response suggests a divergence in viewpoints. These variations may be attributed to the variances in students' digital literacy. Or it can be influenced by their English language proficiency that makes some students able to operate easier than others. Overall, the easiness of using the Duolingo application directly affects its value to students.

Tabel 2: Usefulness of learning English using Duolingo

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	I feel Duolingo is beneficial for honing my English language abilities.	0	0	6.7	60	33.3	4.2
2.	I think Duolingo is effective in enhancing my proficiency in English.	0	0	6.7	53.3	40	4.3
3.	I feel Duolingo provides me with chances to enhance my English skills beyond the classroom.	0	0	6.7	46.7	46.7	4.4
4.	I think the features of Duolingo are diverse, engaging, and valuable.	0	0	13.3	40	46.7	4.3

Table 2 shows relatively positive results as well. The mean scores shown in table 2 show almost even results in each question regarding the benefits of Duolingo in learning English. From the researcher's point of view, the results of this research show that there is harmony between students' linguistic perceptions and the questions on the questionnaire. The distinction between the words 'feel' and 'think' in questions is intended to determine students' emotional and cognitive evaluations. The use of the verb 'think' wants to assess how students' cognitive assessments of the impact of the Duolingo platform on participants' language proficiency. while the use of the verb 'feel' wants to assess how students understand their emotional relationships and learning experiences.

Tabel 3 Effectiveness of learning English using Duolingo

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	In my opinion, Duolingo is an efficient method for enhancing my English skills at any time and in any location.	0	0	13.3	33.3	53.3	4.3
2.	I engage in reading and writing exercises using Duolingo.	0	0	13.3	53.3	33.3	4.1
3.	I hone my listening and speaking skills using Duolingo.	0	0	0	60	40	4.4
4.	I acquire grammar and structural knowledge via Duolingo.	0	0	6.7	40	53.3	4.4
5.	I engage in word and sentence translation exercises on Duolingo.	0	0	13.3	46.7	40	4.2
6.	I believe that Duolingo enhances my vocabulary.	0	0	6.7	60	33.3	4.2
7.	I believe that my achievements can improve through the use of Duolingo.	0	0	6.7	60	33.3	4.2

Table 3 contains questions that aim to measure the effectiveness of Duolingo as an English language learning platform. In this category, the answers obtained from the questionnaire answered by students were also almost even. The mean score of the Likert scale calculated from this data shows relatively high results, namely above or equal to 4.1. This shows that there is an understanding among students that Duolingo is an effective tool for improving English language skills with considerable flexibility. The combination of the very dominant answers "Agree" and "Strongly agree" also shows that participants consider Duolingo to be a useful platform for honing listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. Not only that, Duolingo is also very useful for training their skills in grammar exercises, linguistic structures, translation practices and in enriching vocabulary.

Table 5.4: Enhancing students' motivation in learning English by using Duolingo

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	I find motivation to use Duolingo when my friends achieve higher scores or complete more units than I do.	0	0	26.7	60	13.3	3.8
2.	I believe that Duolingo has the potential to boost my motivation for learning English.	0	0	20	60	20	4.0
3.	I am inspired to enhance my English skills outside the classroom by using Duolingo.	0	0	20	53.3	26.7	4.0
4.	I believe that the Duolingo application can increase my motivation to study English.	0	0	6.7	86.7	6.7	4.0
5.	I believe Duolingo is a valuable app for self-directed practice.	0	0	6.7	66.7	26.7	4.2
6.	I find using Duolingo enjoyable.	0	0	20	53.3	26.7	4.0
7.	I experience a sense of satisfaction when I successfully tackle challenging questions while using Duolingo.	0	0	6.7	40	53.3	4.4
8.	I am content with my ability to exercise and improve my English skills through Duolingo.	0	0	13.3	73.3	13.3	3.9
9.	I am happy in acquiring new knowledge and skills through Duolingo.	0	0	13.3	53.3	33.3	4.1
10.	Duolingo facilitates me to have an increased interaction with my friends.	0	0	46.7	40	13.3	3.6

Table 4 shows fairly balanced results between each question. From calculating the mean of all these questions, the answers that emerged were "Neutral", "Agree", and "Strongly agree". From these three answers, it can be concluded that varying answers can mean different levels of agreement for students. The fairly high number of neutral answers to one question related to student interactions with other Duolingo users, indicates that this aspect does not have a significant impact. compared to the previous categories, neutral answers are almost always found in this category. This is also an interesting finding because not all students agree that Duolingo can increase their motivation to learn English. However, if you look at the percentage, the number is relatively small when compared to the agree and strongly disagree answers. So, it can be concluded that some participants did get motivation from their friends' development progress.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research aims to identify the impact of using Duolingo platform on the learning motivation of Unhasy students who are taking English subject. Several problems related to English learning, such as lack of student activity, lack of time allocation for students were the main background to the emergence of this research idea. After this research was completed, the results showed that using Duolingo could be a solution to increase student motivation. Duolingo has features that can spark student enthusiasm for learning. One example is the interaction feature with other users which can encourage students to study English more actively.

## 5. SUGGESTION

Suggestions from the researchers regarding this research are the limitations of this research, namely the number of participants. This research only collect data from 15 students as participant because other students did not fit the criteria set to become participants. For future research, the data might be better to be collected from a larger number to give different perspective from this research.

## REFERENCES

- Ajisoko, P. (2020) 'The use of duolingo apps to improve English vocabulary learning', *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 15(7), pp. 149–155. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3991/IJET.V15I07.13229>.
- Alshareef, F. (2018) 'The Importance of Using Mobile Learning in Supporting Teaching and Learning of English Language in the Secondary Stage', *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(15), pp. 71–88.
- Aulia, H.R., Wahjuningsih, E. and Andayani, R. (2020) 'The Effect of Duolingo Application on Students' English Vocabulary Mastery', *ELTR Journal*, 4(2), pp. 131–139. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.37147/eltr.v4i2.71>.
- Bertram, D. (2007) 'Likert scales', *Retrieved November*, 2(10), pp. 1–10.
- Cheng, H.-F. and Dörnyei, Z. (2007) 'The Use of Motivational Strategies in Language Instruction: The Case of EFL Teaching in Taiwan', *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), pp. 153–174. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2167/illt048.0>.
- Habibie, A. (2020) 'To Enhance Efl Students ' Motivation in Learning', *Jurnal bahasa dan literature*, 9(1), pp. 13–26.
- Herlina, E., Yundayani, A. and Astuti, S. (2021) 'Penggunaan Duolingo sebagai Media Pembelajaran Berbasis Teknologi dalam Meningkatkan Keterampilan Berbicara Siswa', *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan STKIP Kusuma Negara III*, (2012), pp. 244–253.
- Hidayati, T. and Diana, S. (2019) 'Students' Motivation to Learn English Using Mobile Applications: the Case of Duolingo and Hello English', *JEELS*, 13(1), pp. 104–116.
- Irawan, A., Wilson, A. and Sutrisno, S. (2020) 'The Implementation of Duolingo Mobile Application in English Vocabulary Learning', *Scope : Journal of English Language Teaching*, 5(1), p. 08. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.30998/scope.v5i1.6568>.
- Isdianto, M.E. (2020) 'Bahasa dan Teknologi', *Bahas*, 21(1).
- Le, T.C.N. and Nation, P. (2011) 'A bilingual vocabulary size test of English for Vietnamese learners', *RELC Journal*, 42(1), pp. 86–99. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688210390264>.



Matra, S.D. (2020) 'Duolingo Applications as Vocabulary Learning Tools', *Journal of English Literature, Linguistic, and Education*, 1(1), pp. 46–52. Available at: <https://englishtest.duolingo.com>.

Peng, R. and Fu, R. (2021) 'The effect of Chinese EFL students' learning motivation on learning outcomes within a blended learning environment', *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 37(6), pp. 61–74. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.6235>.