The Influence of Duolingo Application to EFL Classroom Students' Motivation in Learning English

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A B S T R A C T

The advancement of technology have triggered the development of English language learning application. The massive use of smartphones is one of the factors in the emergence of the ELL application. This study aims to investigate the influence of Duolingo application to EFL students. This research is using quantitative method even though the data that had been collected from questionnaire, which used Likert Scale, were analyzed and interpreted using qualitative style. The results show that most of the students have positive sentiment towards the use of Duolingo as it is shown by the dominant prevalence of "Agree" and "Strongly agree" answers. However, in terms of competitiveness, Duolingo might not that convincing in making students have the desire to compete and get better score than their peers. Overall, students are aware with the motivational value that Duolingo potentially offers.

Introduction

English proficiency is one of the crucial skills in today's globalized world. Whether for academic, professional, personal, even politic affairs. In Indonesia, English is used as a foreign language (EFL) (Lauder, 2008). As an EFL, students often encounter problems in their learning process. Most of EFL learning is conducted in the classroom (Habibie, 2020). To be able to significantly increase the English proficiency level of the students, some factors need to be considered. One of the factors is motivation (Silalahi et al., 2022). Hedge (2001) claims that motivation is a crucial importance in EFL classroom, whether EFL students possess it from the start or whether they acquire it through classroom experiences. Some studies have been conducted to find out that motivation plays a vital role in EFL learning (Ajisoko, 2020; Irawan et al., 2020; Jin, 2014; Loewen et al., 2019; Matra, 2020; Peng & Fu, 2021; Silmi, 2020; Widyastuti & Kusumadewi, 2018). Students need to actively engage with the language. They also face some challenges in the classroom. Those problems can be overcome with the right motivation and attitudes so they can achieve higher level of English proficiency (Hidayati & Diana, 2019).

The use of English language learning (ELL) applications to increase the ELL experience had been studied by some researchers (Ahmadi, 2015; Mclean et al., 2014; Nursyamsiah, 2021; Uchihara & Clenton, 2020).With the increasing usage of ELL application, EFL students need to incorporate these applications in their learning experience. The effectiveness of learning using smartphones is considered to have several advantages compared to using computers. Nowadays, the use of mobile applications as a learning medium is increasing (Ameri, 2020; Herlina et al., 2021; Widyastuti & Kusumadewi, 2018). Those applications are various in terms of their usage. Some applications are free, and some are not. Paid applications are usually equipped with more complete technical support and services than the free version. However, there are several

applications that provide services both in the form of material and practice questions that are the same as paid applications, one example is Duolingo.

English language learning applications such as Duolingo have gained popularity due to their convenience and accessibility, providing learners with opportunities for self-paced and independent language learning experiences (Ajisoko, 2020). These features might enhance the exposure of English to EFL students so they can increase their English skills outside the classroom. Duolingo, with its gamified and interactive interface, has captured the interest of language learners worldwide (Shortt et al., 2023). Its user-friendly design, bite-sized lessons, and progress tracking features have made it particularly appealing to EFL students (Herlina et al., 2021; Irawan et al., 2020). As a supplement to traditional classroom instruction, Duolingo offers a flexible and engaging platform for students to improve their English language skills (Aulia et al., 2020). However, the use of Duolingo need to be assessed as it might influence the motivation of EFL students. Most of EFL students found several problems in their classroom activity. One of the significant problems is their lack of motivation in their EFL class. It might be influenced by the learning resources used in the classroom. The learning resources must be varied and engaging to encourage and increase students' motivation. One of the innovative solution to increase EFL students' motivation is to use the gamification approach like Duolingo. This approach was successful to enhance students' learning engagement (Kang & Recard, 2023). This article aims to examine the influence of the Duolingo application on the motivation of EFL students in their pursuit of English language proficiency. This research provides an opportunity to explore the effectiveness of Duolingo as a language learning tool and its potential to enhance motivation among students in an EFL context.

Research Method

This study aims to investigate the influence of Duolingo application to EFL students of Universitas Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang. This research is using quantitative method even though the data that had been collected from questionnaire, which used Likert Scale (Bertram, 2007), were analysed and interpreted using qualitative style. Cheng & Dornyei (2007) said that a study that is characterized by a dominant quantitative style, though it was the supported by a follow-up interview, it can be categorized as quantitative research. The data used in this study is questionnaire collected from students of third semester who are taking English subject. A total of 16 students were partaking in this study as participants. However, one student needed to be eliminated because he did not meet the criteria. The age rank of the participants is 19-23 with the most dominant English proficiency of level of intermediate. Most of them have studied English for 350-400 hours from elementary school to university level.

In this study, the students chosen as participants are those who own smartphone, are familiar with Google translate, and have no experience in using English language learning application. One student in this class had already used Duolingo before this study was conducted so he needed to be eliminated from the list of participants. In the beginning of the semester, students are introduced to Duolingo applications. The researchers explained how to download, how to register, and how to use Duolingo. After that, the participants were asked to download the Duolingo in their smartphone. The researchers then explained and guided the students on how to operate and learn from Duolingo so that they can learn by themselves outside the classroom. The next step was to send the invitation to all the students email to join Duolingo Classroom. After joining the Duolingo Classroom, the students' activity and progress can be monitored. The researchers gave tasks to students that must be completed every week. Each task consists of finishing one

unit, so students need to finish a total of 14 units in 14 weeks. Those assignment need to be done outside the classroom and will be checked each week when they have face to face meeting. The researchers kept monitoring the students' progress by reminding those who have not finished the tasks via WhatsApp class group. At the end of the semester, after all students finished a minimum of 14 units, they were given questionnaire regarding the use of Duolingo. The study used questionnaire in Astarilla's study (2018), which had been validated by experts. These questionnaires were then modified according to this research needs. Then the questionnaires were re-examined and validated by experts.

Result and Discussion

This study aims to investigate how the use of Duolingo application can increase students' motivation in EFL classroom. Based on the questionnaire that has been given to the students, most of the students have an adequate background of English knowledge as the majority of proficiency level is in intermediate level. However, most of the participants have not heard about Duolingo as shown by 80% of the students and all of them never used Duolingo before.

Students' perception of Duolingo

Some of the participants have heard about Duolingo application and other English language learning application. However, all of the participant never used Duolingo application which become the characteristic of the participant. After using Duolingo for 14 weeks, the participants are given questionnaire so that they can answer those question based on their experience in using Duolingo. From the questionare, there are some information related to how the students' perceived Duolingo as an English language learning application.

Tabel 1. Easiness of learning English using Duolingo

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	I think Duolingo is easy to access whether from mobile phone or laptop	0	0	0	60	40	4.4
2.	I feel Duolingo features are easy to use and to interact with other users	0	0	26.7	60	13.3	3.5
3.	I think it's convenient to practice English using Duolingo since I can access it anytime and anywhere	0	0	0	66.7	33.3	4.3

Table 1 shows that the majority of participants think that Duolingo is easy to use. This is shown by 100% of participants stating that Duolingo is easy to access using either their smartphones or laptops. The dominance of "Agree" and "Strongly agree" is in line with the interpretation which shows that the accessibility aspect of Duolingo application is its strength or advantage. An interesting finding is shown by the participant's perception of Duolingo features that can be used to interact with other users, which has a mean score of 3.5. Although the "Agree" response is dominant, the presence of a significant "Neutral" response indicates a difference of opinion. These differences may stem from differences in users' comfort level with technology, previous language learning experiences, or individual learning preferences. The easiness of Duolingo application directly influence to its usefulness to the students.

Tabel 2. Usefulness of learning English using Duolingo

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	I feel Duolingo is helpful to practice my English skills	0	0	6.7	60	33.3	4.2
2.	I think Duolingo is helpful in improving my English skills	0	0	6.7	53.3	40	4.3
3.	I feel Duolingo give me opportunities to enhance my English outside classroom	0	0	6.7	46.7	46.7	4.4
4.	I think Duolingo features are variative, interesting and useful	0	0	13.3	40	46.7	4.3

With the mean score that almost spread evenly in each question regarding the benefits and usefulness of Duolingo in learning English. Table 2 shows the that the participants gave positive sentiments towards Duolingo usefulness. The dominance of "Agree and "Strongly disagree" indicates a consensus regarding the value of this application in improving English skills through practice which ultimately contributes positively to participants' language learning. From the researchers' point of view, these results highlight the alignment between the participants' linguistic perceptions and the carefully crafted questionnaire questions. The linguistic signal provided in the questions involve verbs such as "feel" and "think". The use of "think" wants to focus on participants' cognitive assessment of the impact of Duolingo on participants' language proficiency while the use of "feel" implies a more subjective assessment, aiming to reveal the participant's emotional connection and their learning experience.

Tabel 3. Effectiveness of learning English using Duolingo

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	I think Duolingo is an effective way to improve my English anytime and anywhere	0	0	13.3	33.3	53.3	4.3
2.	I practice reading and writing through Duolingo	0	0	13.3	53.3	33.3	4.1
3.	I practice listening and speaking through Duolingo	0	0	0	60	40	4.4
4.	I learn grammar and structure through Duolingo	0	0	6.7	40	53.3	4.4
5.	I practice translating words and sentences through Duolingo	0	0	13.3	46.7	40	4.2
6.	I think Duolingo enrich my vocabulary	0	0	6.7	60	33.3	4.2
7.	I believe that my achievement is possible to increase after the use of Duolingo	0	0	6.7	60	33.3	4.2

In measuring the effectiveness of learning English using Duolingo, positive reactions are also shown by the students as shown in table 3. The mean scores of 4.1 and above are also almost evenly distributed. This underscores the mutual agreement among the participants that Duolingo is an effective tool for improving English skills. The dominant combination of "Agree" and "Strongly agree" answers shows that participants view Duolingo as a useful platform for honing their listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. Participants also expressed strong positive sentiments regarding Duolingo's

629

role in grammar practice, linguistic structure, vocabulary enrichment, and translation practice.

Table 4. Attitudes toward leaning English by using Duolingo

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	I think doing assignment through Duolingo is more fun than in conventional way	0	0	20	53.3	26.7	4.0
2.	I think using Duolingo develop self-learning skills among students because e can measure our progress on Duolingo	0	0	0	53.3	46.7	4.4
3.	I feel learning English through Duolingo makes it more interesting	0	0	13.3	33.3	53.3	4.3
4.	I have positive attitudes towards learning English through Duolingo	0	0	6.7	73.3	20	4.1
5.	I think using Duolingo makes learning English easier	0	0	13.3	60	26.7	4.1
6.	I feel Duolingo encourages me to spend more time in learning English	0	0	46.7	40	13.3	3.6
7.	I enjoy when learning English through Duolingo	0	0	33.3	33.3	33.3	3.9

The attitudes of students towards learning English using Duolingo is mostly positive. In general, the positive sentiment is shown by the dominance of "Agree" and "Strongly agree" answers. This sentiment reflects a perception that Duolingo offer assignments or tasks with an engaging and novel learning experience. This experience is capable to empower students to monitor their growth so they can be inspired to spend more time in learning English. However, with the appearance of 3.6 mean score, students express a somewhat mixed sentiment about Duolingo's impact on their study time. Some students feel motivated to invest more time, others might not experience the same level of influence.

Students' motivation in learning in EFL classroom

The students' motivation in learning is interpreted from several questions. These questions are specifically designed to find out students' perception about the influence of Duolingo towards their motivation in learning English. Based on the findings in table 5, almost all participants agreed that Duolingo could increase their motivation in learning English. The mean in all of the questions related to students' motivation in learning English has mean of 3.6 and above. In table 5, participants are asked some elements that motivate them to learn English. One of them is the competitive element in their learning experience when using Duolingo. The answers "Neutral", "Agree", and "Strongly agree" indicate different levels of agreement with the statement. Neutral answers may indicate that not all respondents are significantly affected by competitive aspects, while the answers "Agree" and "Strongly agree" indicate that some participants do get motivation from the progress of their friends' development.

630

Table 5. Enhancing students' motivation in learning English by using Duolingo

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	I feel motivated in playing Duolingo when my friends get higher score or finish more Unit than me	0	0	26.7	60	13.3	3.8
2.	I feel Duolingo can increase my motivation in learning English	0	0	20	60	20	4.0
3.	I feel motivated to practice my English skill through Duolingo outside classroom	0	0	20	53.3	26.7	4.0
4.	I think Duolingo application can enhance my motivation to learn English	0	0	6.7	86.7	6.7	4.0
5.	I think Duolingo is a good App for self-practice	0	0	6.7	66.7	26.7	4.2
6.	I think using Duolingo is fun	0	0	20	53.3	26.7	4.0
7.	I feel satisfied when I can accomplish difficult questions when using Duolingo	0	0	6.7	40	53.3	4.4
8.	I feel satisfied with being able to exercise my English skill using Duolingo	0	0	13.3	73.3	13.3	3.9
9.	I experience pleasure in learning new things through Duolingo	0	0	13.3	53.3	33.3	4.1
10.	Duolingo helps me to have more interaction with my friends	0	0	46.7	40	13.3	3.6

Furthermore, participants view Duolingo as a platform that encourages active language practice outside of formal education environment. They consider Duolingo has the potential to increase their motivation to learn English. The dominant prevalence of "Agree" and "Strongly agree" answers at all points is in line with the positive sentiment towards the use of Duolingo. It also indicates that participants are aware of the motivational value obtained from this platform in their English learning journey.

Conclusion

This research aims to identify the influence of using the Duolingo application on the learning motivation of EFL students. This research used questionnaire in Likert Scale the to collect the data. Those data are analyzed and interpreted by calculating the mean in all the questions. The results shows that most of the participant of this research strongly agree that the use of Duolingo can improve their motivation in learning English. Duolingo is equipped features that can spark student enthusiasm for learning English. Aside from becoming a platform for exercising users' listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills, Duolingo also offers grammar practice, linguistic structure, vocabulary enrichment, and translation practice. It also has special feature, which is the interaction feature with other users which can encourage students to study English more actively. However, in terms of competitiveness, Duolingo might not that convincing in making students have the desire to compete and get better score than their peers.

This research is only using small number of participants in conducting this study, that is one of the limitations of this study. Further research might consider this factor for

the future studies related to identifying the influence of an ELL application to their motivational aspects.

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