STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING THE DUOLINGO APPLICATION AS AN ONLINE ENGLISH LEARNING MEDIUM

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Abstract

The evolvement of technology has increased up a variety of educational applications that are increasingly interesting and innovative as online-based learning tools for English subjects, one of which is the Duolingo application, which has implemented ease, convenience, and effectiveness for students to learn languages, particularly English. Several studies have been undertaken to determine the impact of the Duolingo app on the educational system. As a result, the researcher was interested to know how students felt about using the Duolingo application to study English subjects. This study used qualitative descriptive methods by involving junior high school students in Karawang as participants. Five female volunteers from the second grade were among the participants. To collect the data of this study, researchers used Google forms to distribute questionnaires. The results of this study provide a positive perception of the Duolingo application in online learning.

Keywords: Duolingo Application, E-Learning, Students' Perceptions

INTRODUCTION

Technology is not as prevalent in English classes as it is in medical, engineering, and other subjects. E-learning is the term for the technology used in English classrooms to assist teachers in teaching and students in learning. E-learning is a type of distant learning that uses mobile devices such as computers, laptops, tablets, and other gadgets. Teachers and students may sense flexibility, allowing space and time management to be adapted to each student's needs. Students of the twentyfirst century, also known as Generation Z, might have found it simple to learn using technology tools. Students already know how to complete assignments quickly, communicate effectively with others, develop ideas, and make effective learning. Because the use of technology differs from classroom action, the teacher plans the learning activities and ensures that the learning process exposes students to new experiences. In Indonesia, the use of technology in English classrooms is not limited because technology may be used for a variety of functions. As a result, the lesson will no longer be uninteresting. Furthermore, technology may make studying easier for students, especially when it comes to learning English.

Meanwhile, a variety of factors can be used to explain Indonesia's restricted usage of technology in English lessons. The main thing that will happen is the internet connection because, as Warschauer, Shetzer, and Meloni (2002) suggest that the Internet can bring Authenticity (an opportunity to teach languages in authentic, meaningful contexts), Literacy (the ability to read, write, communicate, research, and publish), Interaction (a means of language acquisition and fluency), Vitality (a way of increasing awareness among students' interest due to the multimodal and real-life characteristics of the Internet), and Empowerment (improving the personal power of teachers and students) in language classrooms. Some teachers and students

may not be able to fully utilize of ICT. All of this is may restrict Indonesia's use of technology. A good internet connection is not available in all places. Furthermore, several parts of Indonesia lack access to signals, electricity, and other power plants. As a result, access to technology in the Indonesian educational system is still limited. Because there is a lack of preparation for instructors in using technology, some teachers are confused whether to use e-learning.

Teachers will need to keep up with advancements in this way by enrolling in ICT-focused special courses or development programs. According to national rules in Indonesia (Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia, 2012; Nuh, 2013), teachers in Indonesia cannot always rely on the usage of blackboards in their classrooms to help them teach and learn. As a result, the correct viewpoint is that the use of technology in Indonesian English classrooms is not limited because it encourages and enhances teachers' confidence in using educational technology to complement their teaching practices and assist students in achieving their learning objectives in English classes.

The researcher believes that by conducting this study, technology can help people learn a foreign language more effectively. It has been recognized by governments, educational institutions, prior researchers, school administrators, teachers, and parents throughout the world. Covid-19 has conquered the globe, including Indonesia, and the learning method must be implemented at home. Online learning is being used as one of the most effective ways to control physical and social distance in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Baloran 2020; Bayham & Fenichel, 2020; Blankenberger & Williams, 2020; Murphy, 2020). As a result, Indonesia's educational system is fully reliant on the usage of ICT. Many applications currently exist to support technology-based learning methods. Because of its ubiquitous character, English is commonly utilized in applications, computers, laptops, and gadgets. Students can identify these applications based on their distinctions. Students can collect their assignments through blogging by creating a personal blogger account that can be read by anyone at all, according to the application of Blogging. Meanwhile, students can email assignments with attachments. It is suggested that learning can be more intense with the multimedia + audio presentation system because it can be done through the WhatsApp group application with the teacher's control. Students who learn from tools that effectively blend words and visuals have better outcomes than students who study from resources that just utilize words, according to research on multimedia learning (Mayer, 2008). YouTube and Zoom meetings software can be used for presentations and virtual meetings. Learning applications such as Duolingo, Kahoot, Google Classroom, Schoology, and others can be used for quizzes and assignments. Students can utilize all of these applications at the discretion of their teachers.

The Duolingo app is a free online educational program that can be downloaded from the Google Play Store. Furthermore, the Duolingo program can be used directly from the website without having to download it. The Duolingo application has a lot of useful features for students who are having trouble learning English. Furthermore, because it is equipped with several features and many practice exams, the Duolingo application can make it easier for students to learn in a fun way. The Duolingo application is the world's largest online language learning platform, according to the school manual (2016). Because it's free and uses science and adaptive learning approaches to make language learning more entertaining and successful. The Duolingo application was ranked the top of iPhone app in 2013 and the best Google Play app in 2013 and 2014.

In this case, although many studies have been carried out with the theme of this research. several studies is a quantitative and qualitative approach. In most of the previous research, it is clearly

understood that a few attempts of research concerned with the perception in research by collecting data using a Narrative inquiry and case study. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the gaps found in previous studies. Thus, this study focuses to find out and describe how students' perceptions of the use Duolingo app in learning vocabulary with their experiences.

METHOD

The qualitative descriptive method is used in this study. The qualitative descriptive approach has become a fairly frequent procedure for doing research in a variety of fields, including education. The goal of descriptive research is to characterize a phenomena or its features. According to Creswell and Nassaji (2015), qualitative descriptive data should be analyzed as a whole to uncover key themes and ideas, and then converted to numerical data for comparison and evaluation. The questionnaire analysis in Google Forms, a free online questionnaire, was utilized to collect data for the researchers. This study was conducted with students from Karawang Junior High School. The collected data was analyzed in order to investigate their attitudes, behaviors, and experiences as they progressed through the teaching program (Dawson, 2009, cited in Apsari and Yana, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

A questionnaire was used to collect data for this study in order to determine students' perceptions of using the Duolingo application as an online learning media. This section discusses the data analysis findings; the data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed to answer the research question "what are the students' perceptions of using the Duolingo application as online english learning media?" The researchers discussed the results of the closed-ended questionnaire in which students rated each statement on a four-point scale by placing a check mark in the appropriate column: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. To make it easier for participants to understand the questions and statements, questionnaires are presented in Indonesian. The researchers classified seven questions and six statements. The mean and percentages of the participants' responses, as well as their discussion, are presented below.
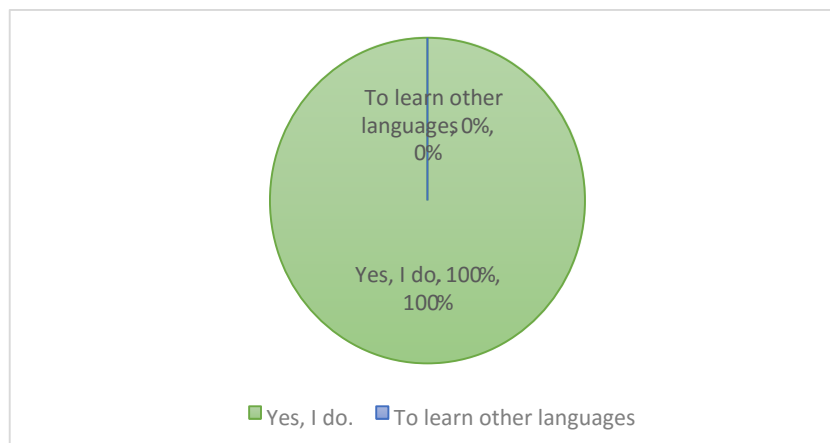
Table 1
"When did you first begin using the Duolingo app?"

Participants	Descriptions
P.1	Since the first grade in middle school
P.2	6 months ago
P.3	Since 2019
P.4	I have been using the Duolingo app since grade 8, but not for a long time.
P.5	At junior high school, 1st grade

Based on the responses of the participants in table 1, we can conclude that the students have been using the Duolingo application for a long time, although not for a long period of time.

Table 2.
"Do you use the Duolingo application to learn English or other languages?"

"

Based on table 2, we can see that all students who were participants in this study used the Duolingo application, mostly to learn English (100%) rather than to learn other foreign languages (0%).

Table 3
"How much time do you spend on using the Duolingo app?"

Participants	Descriptions
P.1	30 minutes
P.2	Just a few minutes
P.3	A half-hour
P.4	Up to two weeks
P.5	30 minutes

According to the description for table 3, students commonly use the Duolingo application to learn English, taking up to 30 minutes, only a few minutes, and some regularly for up to 2 weeks.

Table 4
"How often do you use the Duolingo app in a week?"

Participants	Descriptions
P.1	Once a week
P.2	8 times for a week
P.3	3 times for a week
P.4	5-10 times for a week
P.5	6 times for a week

Table 4 shows that the majority of the participants engage in English-learning activities three to ten times per week in order to review the materials being studied. Students should do this at least once for a week.

Table 5
"Why do you want to use the Duolingo app to learn English? Explain!"

Participants	Descriptions
P.1	Because it is complete and reliable.
P.2	The application is interesting and there is also a measurementof our level of skill.
P.3	Because the application is simple and teaches froom basic, it is easy to understand.
P.4	I started using the application just for fun because I like to learn English, but it proved to be useful and fun.
P.5	Because it is visually appealing, it is not boring, and suitable for beginners.

In table 5, the participants have the same opinion that the interface presented in the Duolingo application is very interesting and fun. Thus, it can be useful for beginners who want to learn English from the basics.

Table 6
"What are your thoughts on the Duolingo application?"

Participants	Descriptions
P.1	The application is complete and easy to understand.
P.2	It is enjoyable and not monotouns for students especially for me.
P.3	Such a great option for beginners who want to learn any language.
P.4	The application is very useful for students to learning English because there are different levels of material that can be selected based on our abilities: even beginners can learn here.
P.5	It is very innovative because there are stages for people who want to learn English from the ground up and it is very interesting.

According to the student descriptions in table 6, they are very happy and interested in using the Duolingo application as an online learning medium because it does not appear monotonous and students can choose to start from basic, intermediate, or high depending on their abilities before beginning to learn.

Table 7
"In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvatages of the Duolingo application? Explain!"

Participants	Descriptions
P.1	The advantages: the application is easy to understand and not complicated.

	The disvantages: the display is too monotonous.	
P.2	The advantages: interesting and there is a measurement of our current skills.	
	The disvantages: we must collect a heart on a mission.	
P.3	The advantages: simple	
	The disvantages: the problem design is monotonous and overly easy for those who have previously studied English.	
P.4	To use this application, users must have an internet connection. As a result, if users don't have enough internet quota for junior high school students, it can be difficult to learn.	
P.5	The advantages: there is daily progress available.	
	The disvantages: if we always fail to fill out the questions, we will lose heart reserves as a condition to be able to fill out questions and must be done online.	

Based on table 7, we can conclude that the advantages of using the Duolingo application from the students' perception are that it is simple, interesting, and there is daily progress that can serve as a reminder of how active Duolingo users are in learning. Concerning the flaws in using the Duolingo application, we must ensure that we do not lose the "heart" as an opportunity to fill in the question, because if we do, we will be unable to fill in the next question until the "heart" is filled again.

Table 8
Description of students' perceptions of using the Duolingo application

No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1.	The Duolingo app is a very innovative for learning English.	20%	80%	0%	0%	100%
2.	Duolingo app is very affective for learning English.	40%	60%	0%	0%	100%
3.	When I use the Duolingo application, I am motivated and excited to learn English.	60%	40%	0%	0%	100%
4.	When used in the classroom, the Duolingo application is useless.	0%	0%	40%	60%	100%
5.	More practical to use in everywhere and at anytime.	60%	40%	0%	0%	100%
6.	It can be used by anyone from children to the elderly.	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Discussion

There are several positive and negative questions based on the research of the questions above. The positive questions are, the Duolingo app is very innovative for learning English, and many students choose to agree based on this question. The use of the Duolingo application is very effective for learning English, and many students chose to agree in response to this question. Students are motivated and excited to learn English when they use the Duolingo app; many students chose to strongly agree in response to this question. Many students strongly agree that using the Duolingo application is more practical to use anywhere and at any time. Many students chose to strongly agree that the Duolingo application can be used by children to parents as a language learning medium. The negative question is that learning to use the Duolingo application in the classroom is not useful; many students strongly disagree with this statement.

These results indicate that students are excited about using the Duolingo application as well as appreciate the flexibility and practicality it provides. These results concur previous research on positive responses to mobile language learning. The current results are consistent with a number of previous studies on mobile-assisted language learning in which students were involved (Alkhezzi & Al-Dousari, 2016; Muhammed, 2014; Okumura & Bronson, 2016; Yudhiantara, 2017).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine students' perceptions of the Duolingo application as an online English learning medium at Junior high school students in Karawang. After gathering data, the researcher found that the students were aware that learning English through online media was very practical and useful in addition to classroom learning. According to the data, students should learn English on a regularly in order to utilize on the opportunities gained in previous lessons. Students believe that learning English through the Duolingo application can assess their English learning ability because they will gain more advantages and knowledge to use when communicating in English. According to the results of this study, students were interested in learning English using the Duolingo application. Thus, they believe that the learning system is easy to understanding and that they can effectively follow the learning process.

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