

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF DUOLINGO AS A TOOL FOR TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi persepsi guru-guru sekolah menengah pertama tentang penggunaan Duolingo dalam pengajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dan diskusi kelompok terarah dengan tiga guru bahasa Inggris. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Duolingo menawarkan manfaat yang signifikan, termasuk fleksibilitas, keterlibatan siswa melalui gamifikasi, dan kemudahan akses. Namun, keterbatasan seperti ketergantungan pada konektivitas internet, latihan berbicara yang minim, dan kurangnya interaksi dengan penutur asli juga dicatat. Secara keseluruhan, para guru menganggap Duolingo sebagai alat pelengkap yang berharga yang dapat meningkatkan pembelajaran kosakata jika diintegrasikan dengan baik ke dalam pengajaran di kelas.

Kata kunci: Duolingo, Persepsi Guru, Pembelajaran Kosakata, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, MALL

ABSTRACT

This study explores junior high school teachers' perceptions of using Duolingo in English vocabulary instruction. Employing a qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews and focus group discussions with three English teachers. The findings indicate that Duolingo offers significant benefits, including flexibility, student engagement through gamification, and ease of access. However, limitations such as reliance on internet connectivity, minimal speaking practice, and lack of interaction with native speakers were also noted. Overall, teachers perceive Duolingo as a valuable supplementary tool that can enhance vocabulary learning when integrated thoughtfully into classroom instruction.

Keywords: Duolingo, Teachers' Perceptions, Vocabulary Learning, English Language Education, MALL.

INTRODUCTION

Education is process learning knowledge and skills. Education is the process of acquiring knowledge and information that leads to a successful future. The acquisition of vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of English language learning, serving as the bedrock for effective communication and comprehension (Nation, 2001). Technological advancements have transformed language education, making mobile applications like Duolingo increasingly popular. As vocabulary acquisition is foundational to English proficiency, this study investigates teachers' perceptions of Duolingo's effectiveness in junior high school settings. Teachers play a pivotal role in integrating such tools into curricula, making their insights critical.

This study, therefore, aims to investigate English language teachers' perceptions of using Duolingo as a tool for learning English vocabulary. By examining their beliefs, experiences, and concerns, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper

understanding of the potential and challenges of integrating mobile language learning applications into the English language classroom.

Vocabulary is the basic component that must be mastered by learners so as to develop other language proficiencies like listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To have good English proficiency, the learners must have ample vocabulary (Pangkuh, 2020). Richards, Willy A, & Renandya (2002) state that Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basic how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. Without an extensive vocabulary and strategies for acquiring new word, from making use language learning opportunities around them such as listening radio, listen to native speakers, using the language in different context, reading, or watching television. Vocabulary is one of the language aspects which should be learn. Learning vocabulary is important because people can speak, write, listen, moreover, people have to know vocabulary first. It means

that in learning vocabulary, people need to know and understand the meaning of vocabulary and how to use vocabulary in context (Jaelani & Sutari, 2020).

Duolingo is a free language-learning 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

Mobile Language Learning (MLL) also frequently referred to as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), can be defined as language learning that is assisted or enhanced through the use of a handheld mobile device. MALL is a subset of both Mobile Learning (m-learning) and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) (Stockwell, 2007). It leverages the unique affordances of mobile technologies to provide flexible, accessible, and often interactive language learning experiences anytime and anywhere.

METHOD

A qualitative descriptive approach was used. Three junior high school English teachers were selected as participants. Data were collected through structured interviews and focus group discussions conducted via WhatsApp. Analysis followed Creswell's qualitative procedures, including transcription, coding, and theme identification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Flexibility

All participants noted Duolingo's flexibility. It allows for individualized learning paces and reduces the need for continuous teacher supervision.

Engagement and Motivation

Teachers agreed that Duolingo's game-based learning increased student motivation and sustained interest, particularly through features like points and rewards.

Advantages

Benefits include user-friendly design, accessibility (free and mobile-based), and pedagogical features like repetition and instant feedback.

Disadvantages

Challenges include excessive ads, lack of offline access, limited speaking/writing

development, and content that may be too basic for advanced learners.

Teacher Motivation

Participants found Duolingo helpful in easing vocabulary instruction and enhancing classroom strategies, though not a replacement for interactive teaching methods.

CONCLUSION

Duolingo is perceived as a flexible, engaging, and supportive vocabulary learning tool. While not sufficient alone, it complements classroom teaching effectively. Strategic use—especially in blended learning models—maximizes its potential, particularly when integrated with communicative and contextual activities.

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