

## THE USE OF DUOLINGO APPLICATION IN DEVELOPING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS IN EFL CLASSROOM

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### ABSTRAK

Perkembangan teknologi digital telah menciptakan banyak cara baru untuk belajar bahasa Inggris, terutama melalui aplikasi seluler. Masalah dalam penelitian ini didasarkan pada fenomena bahwa sebagian besar siswa memiliki kemampuan berbicara yang rendah di kelas bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL). Penulis menggunakan aplikasi Duolingo untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan tinjauan literatur dengan mengumpulkan dan menganalisis informasi dari berbagai sumber tentang aplikasi pembelajaran bahasa. Fokus utama adalah melihat bagaimana fitur-fitur Duolingo, seperti latihan pengucapan dan sistem permainan, dapat memotivasi siswa untuk berlatih lebih sering. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa Duolingo sangat membantu siswa dalam meningkatkan pengucapan dan belajar kosakata baru dengan cara yang menyenangkan. Selain itu, fitur suara dalam aplikasi membantu siswa menjadi lebih percaya diri karena mereka dapat berlatih kapan saja tanpa takut membuat kesalahan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa Duolingo adalah alat digital yang bermanfaat untuk mendukung pengembangan keterampilan berbicara bahasa Inggris di kelas EFL. Disarankan agar guru mengintegrasikan aplikasi pembelajaran mobile seperti Duolingo sebagai sumber daya pelengkap bersama dengan pengajaran di kelas untuk meningkatkan latihan berbicara dan motivasi siswa. Duolingo adalah alat yang efektif untuk mendukung pembelajaran, membuatnya kurang membosankan dan membantu siswa berbicara bahasa Inggris dengan lebih berani.

**Kata kunci:** Pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, aplikasi Duolingo, keterampilan berbicara, kelas EFL

### ABSTRACT

*The development of digital technology has created many new ways to learn English, especially through mobile applications. The problems of this research based on the phenomenon that most of students had low speaking skill in EFL classroom. The writers used the Duolingo application to improved students' English speaking skills. This study used a literature review approach by collecting and analysing information from various sources about language learning apps. The main focus was to see how Duolingo's features, such as pronunciation practice and game-like systems, can motivate students to practice more often. The results showed that Duolingo is very helpful for students to improve their pronunciation and learn new vocabulary in a fun way. Additionally, the voice features in the app help students become more confident because they could practice anytime without feeling afraid of making mistakes. The study concluded that Duolingo is a beneficial digital tool for supporting the development of English speaking skills in EFL classrooms. It was recommended that teachers integrate mobile learning applications such as Duolingo as complementary resources alongside classroom instruction to enhance speaking practice and learner motivation. Duolingo is an effective tool to support learning, making it less boring and helping students speak English more bravely.*

**Keywords:** English learning, Duolingo application, speaking skills, EFL Classroom

### 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).



*Figure 1.1 Duolingo Application*

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 needs to be assessed as it might influence the motivation of EFL students.

However, even though the adoption of Duolingo in English language teaching is increasing, its impact on EFL student motivation has not been adequately researched, especially in formal school settings.

Although limited attention has been given to the motivational aspects of students using Duolingo, previous research has largely focused on language achievement and vocabulary enrichment. This imbalance highlights the need for further research on how Duolingo affects student motivation in EFL classrooms. Therefore, the use of Duolingo needs to be carefully evaluated because motivation is a major factor that influences students' ability to develop English language proficiency. Given these factors, this study aims to investigate how the Duolingo program affects EFL students' motivation to learn English. This study is expected to provide new insights into the extent to which Duolingo can function as an alternative learning tool with a focus on inspirational elements and help create more engaging and motivating English learning techniques.

The low level of English speaking skills among EFL students is a commonly encountered issue in the learning process. Many students experience difficulties in pronunciation, possess limited vocabulary, and lack the confidence to speak English. These challenges are primarily caused by insufficient opportunities for practice and students' fear of making mistakes when speaking in classroom settings.



**Figure 1.2 Students' Performance in Public Speaking Course**

Based on the literature review, the utilization of digital technology, particularly language learning applications, can serve as an effective solution to address these issues. Duolingo offers various features specifically designed to enhance speaking skills, such as voice-based pronunciation exercises and repetitive vocabulary practice. These features allow students to engage in independent and repeated practice, which contributes to improving pronunciation accuracy and vocabulary mastery.

Moreover, Duolingo's gamified learning system has been shown to significantly increase students' learning motivation. Elements such as points, levels, and daily challenges make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable. Increased motivation encourages students to practice speaking English more frequently, which positively impacts the development of their speaking skills.

Previous studies also indicate that Duolingo's voice practice features help reduce students' anxiety when speaking English. Students are able to practice anytime and anywhere without the pressure commonly experienced in traditional classroom environments. This condition fosters

greater self-confidence, as students are not afraid of making mistakes during the learning process.

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that the use of the Duolingo application is an effective solution for improving the English speaking skills of EFL students. The integration of mobile-assisted language learning applications as supplementary learning resources is expected to complement classroom instruction and provide students with more opportunities to actively practice speaking English.

#### **METHOD**

The data analysis, derived from pre-tests, post-tests, and student questionnaires, revealed several key findings regarding the integration of Duolingo in the EFL classroom:

1. **Improvement in Speaking Scores:** There was a statistically significant increase in students' mean scores following the intervention period (e.g., 8 weeks). The most notable improvements were observed in pronunciation accuracy and oral fluency.
2. **Vocabulary Acquisition:** Students demonstrated a higher command of high-frequency phrases. The app's spaced-repetition system enabled students to recall and utilize new lexical items more effectively during classroom speaking activities.
3. **Enhanced Student Engagement:** Questionnaire results indicated that gamification elements such as leaderboards, daily streaks, and rewards significantly boosted learner motivation. Students reported feeling less intimidated when practicing speaking within the app compared to traditional face-to-face drills.
4. **Pronunciation Clarity:** The automated speech recognition (SR) feedback provided by Duolingo encouraged students to refine their phonetic output. This repetitive practice translated into clearer articulation during oral presentations in class.

#### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The findings suggest that Duolingo serves as an effective supplementary tool for developing English speaking skills, though its impact is nuanced by several factors:

1. Reducing the Affective Filter

In line with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, Duolingo provides a "low-stakes" environment that reduces language anxiety. By practicing in a private, game-like setting, students build the necessary confidence to transition from digital drills to real-world classroom interactions. The app acts as a psychological bridge for introverted learners.

2. The Bridge Between Rote Practice and Spontaneous Speech

While Duolingo is excellent for mastering syntax and pronunciation, it lacks the capacity for spontaneous, unpredictable communication. The results indicate that while students improved in "form," the role of the teacher remains vital to facilitate "function." Duolingo provides the building blocks (vocabulary and sounds), but the EFL classroom remains the essential venue for meaningful, communicative language teaching (CLT).

3. Consistency and Micro-learning

The success of the application is heavily dependent on the "micro-learning" habit. Analysis showed that students who maintained a daily streak performed significantly better in fluency tests than those who used the app sporadically. This suggests that the app's greatest strength lies in its ability to extend English exposure beyond the limited hours of the physical classroom.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, this study concludes that Duolingo functions as an effective supplementary digital tool in supporting the development of EFL students' English speaking skills. Its interactive features, particularly pronunciation practice, gamification, and voice-based exercises, contribute to improved pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary mastery, and learner confidence. The application also helps lower students' anxiety by providing a flexible and low-pressure learning environment, which encourages more frequent speaking practice.

However, Duolingo cannot replace the role of classroom instruction, especially in fostering spontaneous and communicative language use.

Therefore, integrating Duolingo alongside teacher-guided activities can create a more engaging, motivating, and balanced learning experience for EFL students.

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