

Optimizing Duolingo Application Usage to Improve Language Skills Among University Students

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ABSTRAK

Pelaksanaan pengabdian masyarakat ini mengeksplorasi optimalisasi penggunaan aplikasi Duolingo untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbahasa di kalangan mahasiswa universitas. Studi ini menyelidiki efektivitas penanaman Duolingo dalam kurikulum pembelajaran bahasa dan dampaknya terhadap kemampuan mendengar, berbicara, membaca, dan menulis mahasiswa. Pengabdian ini bertujuan untuk menilai peran aplikasi dalam menciptakan pengalaman pembelajaran bahasa yang lebih menarik dan interaktif. Studi ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi keterampilan bahasa spesifik yang mengalami peningkatan, serta mengukur kepuasan dan motivasi keseluruhan mahasiswa dalam menggunakan Duolingo. Dalam pelaksanaan pengabdian ini menggunakan metode daring melalui pertemuan Zoom untuk memberikan fleksibilitas dalam hal ruang dan waktu, sehingga lebih memungkinkan partisipasi mahasiswa. Temuan ini bertujuan memberikan wawasan tentang potensi pemanfaatan teknologi, khususnya aplikasi Duolingo, sebagai alat tambahan untuk pendidikan bahasa di lingkungan universitas. Kesimpulan ini menjadi kontribusi dalam perdebatan berkelanjutan mengenai metode pengajaran bahasa inovatif dan dampaknya terhadap kinerja akademis dan kemahiran berbahasa mahasiswa universitas.

Kata Kunci: *Keterampilan Berbahasa, Aplikasi Duolingo, Inovasi*

ABSTRACT

This community service implementation explores the optimization of Duolingo application usage to enhance language skills among university students. The study investigates the effectiveness of incorporating Duolingo into the language learning curriculum and its impact on students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. The community service on aims to assess the application's role in fostering a more engaging and interactive language learning experience. The study anticipates identifying the specific language skills that show improvement and gauging the overall satisfaction and motivation of students in utilizing Duolingo. In the implementation of this community service, utilized online methods through Zoom meetings to provide flexibility in terms of space and time, allowing greater accessibility for participating students. The findings aim to provide insights into the potential of leveraging technology, particularly the Duolingo application, as a supplementary tool for language education in a university setting. The conclusion a contribution to the ongoing discourse on innovative language teaching methods and their impact on the academic performance and language proficiency of university students.

Keywords: *Language Skills, Duolingo Application, Innovation*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology has significantly enhanced the quality of human life across various domains. In education, particularly, technology has become indispensable, with electronic-based learning now commonplace among students. As graduates enter a globalized world, their readiness to compete in today's job market, shaped by industry 4.0 and the Asian Economic Community, becomes crucial (Yusri et al., 2014). Therefore, the ability to swiftly adapt to technological advancements in education is paramount. To effectively enhance language skills, it is imperative to consider diverse strategies and resources supported by research. Studies, such as those conducted by Isbell et al. (2017), underscore the potential of mobile applications like Duolingo as cost-effective and engaging tools for language learning. These findings emphasize the benefits of integrating Duolingo into language instruction to bolster grammar, vocabulary, writing, and speaking skills.

Furthermore, research by Gafni et al. (2017) highlights Duolingo's positive impact on vocabulary acquisition, speaking proficiency, and student motivation. These studies demonstrate its effectiveness as a supplementary tool, particularly in areas such as vocabulary mastery and speaking practice. Additionally, insights from research on the gamification features of Duolingo underscore how they can enhance student motivation and engagement in language learning, making it interactive and enjoyable.

Students who are able to speak foreign languages have an advantage in finding international jobs or in companies that operate globally. Many companies require employees who can communicate effectively in a foreign language. Understanding a foreign language also opens the door to understanding the culture associated with that language. Students can take part in cultural exchanges, attend international events, and broaden their horizons about the world. Foreign language skills facilitate communication across borders. This becomes important in situations such as international conferences, student exchanges, or international collaborations in the academic and professional world.

Moreover, studies by and discuss the impact of language skills on students' employability and career prospects. In today's globalized job market, proficiency in multiple languages is highly valued by employers and can significantly enhance students' competitiveness and marketability. Strong language skills open up a wide range of career opportunities in fields such as translation, interpretation, international business, diplomacy, and academia. Additionally, Savvani (2019) underscores the importance of language skills in promoting cultural understanding and diversity. Proficiency in a second language enables students to engage with diverse cultures, perspectives, and ideas, fostering intercultural communication and collaboration. Language skills play a vital role in promoting tolerance, empathy, and global citizenship among university students. Ajisoko (2020) and Faradisa et al. (2022) indicates that Duolingo can effectively improve vocabulary mastery and speaking skills. Yana (2021) also highlights that students perceive Duolingo positively, finding it interesting, motivating, and confidence-boosting. Moreover, Habibie (2020) suggests that Duolingo can enhance students' motivation in writing, while Amin (2021) discusses how gamification in Duolingo can increase students' motivation for language learning.

Learning English requires consistent and practical practice. Students may struggle to find opportunities to use English actively outside the classroom. This devotion helps provide a solution in the form of Individual motivation to learn English can vary. Some students may have high intrinsic motivation, while others may be less motivated, especially if English is not the main focus of their studies. With the socialisation of this application, it can provide assistance Students may have difficulty applying English in real-life or workplace contexts. This may reduce the English skills that can actually be applied in a future career. Students may face a gap between their level of comprehension of English in the classroom and that outside the classroom, especially if they lack interaction with environments where English is actively spoken. Limited use of technology and learning applications may hinder the development of students' English language skills. In conclusion, improving language skills among university students is essential for academic success, career advancement, cognitive development, employability, and cultural understanding. By enhancing their language proficiency, students can broaden their academic and professional horizons, engage effectively in a globalized world, and contribute positively to society.

In conclusion, enhancing language skills among university students is indispensable for academic success, career advancement, and cultural understanding. By leveraging tools like Duolingo and embracing technological advancements in education, students can broaden their horizons, engage effectively in a globalized world, and contribute positively to society.

2. METHOD

This social service aims to introduce a method of implementing interactive learning projects in English that is easy, fast, and efficient. The goal is to improve foreign language literacy, especially English, through the Duolingo application. The main focus of this service is to improve proficiency in English through the help of an easily accessible application, especially in this digital era where foreign language skills are needed.

2.1 Stages of Implementation

- a. Providing the first material with the title Foreign Language Skills Working Opportunities
- b. Providing the second material, Mastery of English as an Increase in Scientific Thinking
- c. Third material, Tutorial on the Use of Duolingo Application
- d. All material provision is carried out virtually to make it easier for all students to follow without space limitations, so that through the zoom application media it makes it easier to carry out this service to deliver material.

2.2 Outputs

The students are expected to participate in this community service by introducing the Duolingo application, to ensure that the learning process is not only passive but also involves direct bilingual discussions. In the implementation of this community service, it is highly expected that students are aware of preparing additional soft skills to facilitate easier job opportunities after university. Furthermore, the desired outcome is the mastery of using this application to be sustainable as an interactive medium, such as listening tests, writing exercises, and quiz games, making the process of learning a foreign language easier and motivating students to actively participate in improving English vocabulary. Duolingo's instant feedback allows students to understand mistakes and enhance vocabulary comprehension directly. This feature is invaluable in providing a personalized and adaptive learning experience according to each student's ability level. It is hoped that the implementation of this method brings sustainable benefits and encourages positive changes in students' understanding of digital literacy and its application.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teaching students the Duolingo app has a number of important reasons based on research and academic literature. The study by Ajisoko (2020) showed that the use of Duolingo app can improve students' English vocabulary acquisition at the University of Borneo Tarakan. In addition, research by Erfiani and Miski Erfiani & Miski (2022) highlighted that Duolingo can help improve students' vocabulary acquisition during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research by Faradisa et al. (2022) showed that the use of Duolingo can help students in enriching their English vocabulary. The study by Fadilah (2022) also highlighted that many people like using the Duolingo app to learn languages, especially English, as it is free of charge.

Research by Amin (2021) discusses how gamification in Duolingo can increase students' English learning motivation. By utilising the interactive and engaging features in Duolingo, students can feel more motivated and engaged in the language learning process. Thus, teaching students the Duolingo app can help improve their vocabulary acquisition, speaking skills, learning motivation, and engagement in the language learning process. By utilising Duolingo's features that support interactive and fun learning, universities can enrich students' language learning experience and improve their language skills effectively.

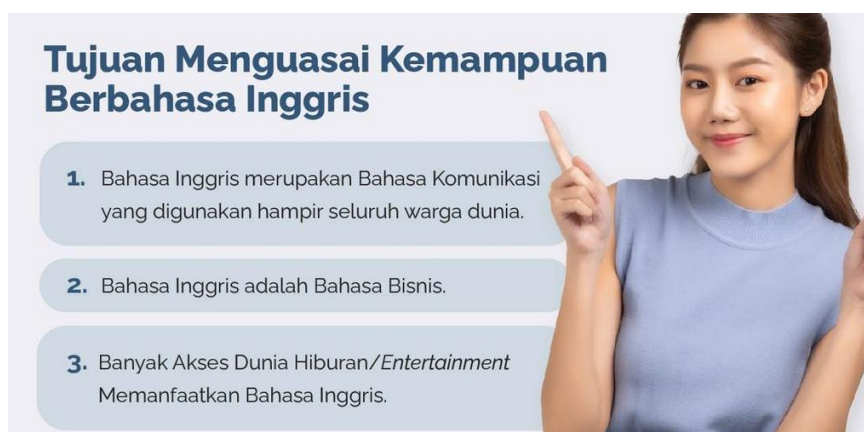


Figure 1. Materials Foreign Language Skill Working Opportunities

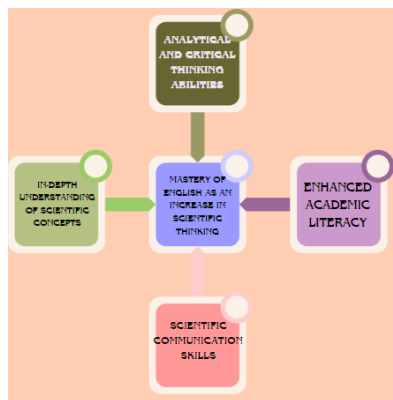


Figure 2. Mastery of English as an Increase in Scientific Thinking

GENERAL TIPS		
TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES	WRITING TIPS	SPEAKING TIPS
Never leave blank answer	Use proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization	Speak loudly, clearly, and at an understandable pace
Write more than 50 words or speak longer than 30 seconds	American and British spelling is acceptable	Do not submit your recording until after you have finished your entire response
Keep your eyes focused on the screen	Practice 10 fingers typing https://10fastfingers.com/typing-test/english	Do not use any predictive text method
Not to look at the timer too often	Vary your sentence structure and use more diverse, sophisticated vocabulary as much as possible Jupiter is the biggest planet of them all	

Figure 3. Tutorial on the Use of Duolingo Application

Today's students must acquire foreign language skills for various reasons substantiated by research and academic literature. Research conducted by Risadi et al. (2022) underscores that motivation to learn a foreign language, stemming from both intrinsic and extrinsic sources, plays a pivotal role in one's success in foreign language acquisition. Proficiency in foreign languages can enhance students' competitiveness and open up career opportunities, particularly in sectors such as tourism, international business, diplomacy, and academia.

In addition, a study by Medvedeva & Rubtsova (2021) emphasises that the modern world needs engineering specialists with excellent hard skills as well as soft skills that contribute to better communication, creativity and self-development. Foreign language skills help students develop communication, creativity and problem-solving skills that are essential in a multicultural work environment. Thus, having foreign language skills not only opens up career opportunities and cross-cultural collaboration, but also helps students develop the communication, creativity and problem-solving skills required in an increasingly globalised and diverse world of work. In this service activity, material was also presented about the purpose of using the duolingo application so that students who were afraid to learn English would be motivated by knowing this application, as for the objectives - the objectives are described in the following figure

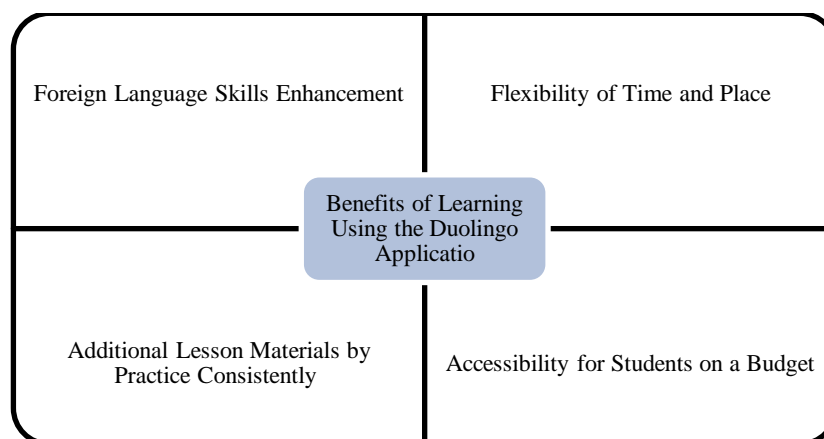


Figure 4. Benefits of Learning Using the Duolingo Application

The figure illustrates that the community service project focuses on benefits of learning using Duolingo. Through Duolingo, foreign language proficiency is enhanced. This application is specifically designed to aid users in acquiring and enhancing their proficiency in foreign languages, encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. One of the notable advantages of Duolingo is its flexibility regarding time and place. Accessible online through various devices, students can engage in language learning at their convenience, thus providing them with the flexibility to accommodate their schedules. Furthermore, Duolingo offers daily exercises and reminders, fostering consistent practice among students to maintain and refine their language skills over time. Additionally, the affordability and accessibility of Duolingo make it an attractive option, particularly for students with limited budgets, as it is either free or available at a nominal subscription cost. This combination of features positions Duolingo as a valuable tool for students seeking to improve their foreign language proficiency effectively and affordably.

Optimizing the utilization of the Duolingo application to enhance language skills among university students is imperative for several compelling reasons supported by extensive research. Studies conducted by Govender & Arnedo-Moreno (2021) and Castillo (2022) underscore the effectiveness of employing Duolingo as a means to bolster language learning. These studies highlight the gameful approaches and innovative features integrated into Duolingo, which contribute significantly to enhancing various language skills, including grammar, writing, translation, listening, and pronunciation. Furthermore, research conducted by Saad & Rahim (2022) and Bustillo et al. (2017) emphasizes the positive impact of mobile applications like Duolingo on language development, particularly in key areas such as vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and speaking proficiency. These findings affirm Duolingo's efficacy as a valuable tool for students to actively practice and enhance their language proficiency in an engaging and interactive manner.

Moreover, studies conducted by Habibie (2020) and Niah & Pahmi (2019) delve into how Duolingo can effectively boost students' motivation in writing while also improving their speaking and listening abilities. By providing a user-friendly platform with gamified elements, Duolingo effectively captivates students' interest and encourages consistent practice, thereby facilitating substantial improvements in language skills over time.

De Castro (2016) states that technology can be applied as a tool to assist students in the learning process. Games and digital learning applications serve as effective means to help students understand a foreign language in an enjoyable manner. Additionally, these media can also aid teachers in carrying out teaching tasks. Therefore, this community service aims to present a solution by encouraging students to actively use digital media to express their ideas. This effort is expected to enhance students' speaking abilities when using Duolingo as a learning medium. From an overall perspective, Duolingo is not just a language learning application, but also a significant digital pedagogical tool that plays a crucial role in developing vocabulary for all students. With its innovative approach and flexibility, Duolingo takes English language learning to a higher level, providing support for continuous mastery of foreign languages.

In conclusion, harnessing the features and advantages offered by the Duolingo application can significantly contribute to the enhancement of language skills among university students. By integrating Duolingo into language learning programs and fostering regular usage, universities can furnish students with a practical and engaging tool to refine their grammar, expand their vocabulary, enhance their writing proficiency, sharpen their

listening comprehension, and polish their speaking skills effectively. At the conclusion of this community service implementation, an evaluation in the form of a questionnaire was presented, and the following are the results of the evaluation.

Table 1. Results of Training Participant Questionnaire

No	Questionnaire	Mean
1.	Does after participating in this activity, you realize the importance of mastering a foreign language, especially English, in the digital era?	6,21
2.	Is the use of Duolingo easy to understand?	4,22
3.	Are you afraid to learn English using the Duolingo application?	2,20
4.	Are you confident that it will be easy to acquire new vocabulary after using the Duolingo application?	6,12
5.	Are you confident that you would encourage people around you to learn English using the Duolingo application?	3,26

4. CONCLUSION

Some universities may experience limitations in resources to provide adequate textbooks, teaching materials, or competent instructors for English courses. Duolingo is designed to assist users in acquiring and improving language skills. Teaching this application can help students enhance their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities in a foreign language. Limited use of technology and learning applications can hinder the development of students' English language skills. The application is designed with a self-directed learning approach, allowing students to set their own learning pace. This helps improve self-directed learning and responsibility for personal development. Duolingo provides progress monitoring tools that allow users, including students, to see how much their skills have developed. It offers direct feedback and helps students establish clear learning goals. Using Duolingo enables the teaching of language skills with an innovative and enjoyable approach. Creative learning methods can enhance students' interest in language learning. Harnessing the features and advantages offered by the Duolingo application can significantly contribute to the enhancement of language skills among university students. By integrating Duolingo into language learning programs and fostering regular usage, universities can furnish students with a practical and engaging tool to refine their grammar, expand their vocabulary, enhance their writing proficiency, sharpen their listening comprehension, and polish their speaking skills effectively.

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