

TECHNOLOGY AND LANGUAGE LEARNING With Duolingo

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Abstract: Mobile devices and applications, which have become a significant part of our everyday lives in the digital age, are utilized for many different purposes, including education. As a result, they have a big influence on the idea of gamification, which is being employed more and more in digital formats. Duolingo, a widely used language-learning software based on game strategies, is an illustration of this strategy.

Key words: Duolingo, Language, Learning, Gamification, Technology, App.

Introduction

Technology is used to improve learning methods in one of the best ways possible through the use of smartphone apps. There are many online applications that can be downloaded on smartphones to help with language learning, and the most popular of them is Duolingo.

Through mobile applications and the Internet, people can learn a variety of languages with the help of the free online language learning tool Duolingo (Garcia, 2013). In November 2011, Severin Hacker and Louis von Ahn created and developed this program. Users find the learning process more appealing because of its engaging and easy-to-use UI. This application's fundamental idea is game learning. Purvanto and Syafryadin (2023) report that 80% of Duolingo's tasks involve interpreting, pronouncing, and transcribing words and phrases. Numerous earlier research have also verified the app's efficacy.

Duolingo is a web-based learning application that gives everyone the chance to finish accessible language instruction, which includes communicating in a foreign language (White, 2017). Additionally, kids can feel at ease using this program to study foreign languages because of the engaging game concept. According to Tahir and Wang (2017), games that are relevant to the instructional objectives can enhance the effectiveness of the learning process by making it more engaging, entertaining, and student-centered. Among the various elements that Duolingo provides is the use of sounds and graphics to make learning more engaging and novel. It's also important to note that one of the application's primary benefits is its clean and straightforward UI.

Literature review

Modern technologies make the learning process accessible at any time and in any place. Now there is no need to attend courses, as we can learn languages online using our devices. There are many language learning apps online, and one of the most popular is Duolingo. Duolingo is a language learning program that can be accessed for free using computers, mobile gadgets, and other devices. It offers courses in more than 23 languages and has about 200 million users (Yashkova, 2014). This application functions as a gaming platform aimed at learning different languages.

Krashen (2014) describes Duolingo as a web application that helps students complete various translation-related tasks. This application is available for use on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, as well as on computers. Duolingo is compatible with Android, iOS, and Windows operating systems, and is also available online, making it very user-friendly. In Duolingo, users can develop English language skills, including listening, speaking, reading and writing (Fibula, 2020). When registering for Duolingo, students can take a preliminary test that helps them choose the appropriate level of study (Eqbali, 2017).

The convenience of Duolingo is that it can be accessed anywhere and anytime, both outdoors and indoors (Astarilla, 2018). In addition, the app can be used without registration, so anyone can immediately start learning lessons by simply clicking the "Start" button (Nushi & Eqbali, 2017).

Duolingo offers several types of exercises for students, which are mentioned by Nushi and Eqbali (2017). The first type is a translation exercise, where students translate words and phrases into and out of the target language. The second exercise is mapping, where the application provides a picture, and students must match it with the corresponding word or phrase.

The third type is a pairing exercise where students work with the same number of words in two languages, helping them to match them correctly. The fourth type of exercise is listening practice: the application reproduces a short phrase in the language being studied, and students must enter this phrase correctly.

The fifth exercise is related to spoken language: students listen to phrases in the language they are learning and then repeat them. In addition to all these exercises, Duolingo allows users to return to any level of the lesson, even if they have successfully completed previous tasks (Nushi & Eqbali, 2017).

It is worth noting that, as Nushi and Eqbali (2017) explain, grammar is not the main part of the Duolingo application. It focuses on training skills through vocabulary exercises. However, the application still provides information about the correctness of the students' answers, helps them understand whether their answer is correct or not.

Method

The descriptive-qualitative method was used in this study. Qualitative research focuses on interpretation and a naturalistic approach to language learning (Aspers, 2019). The participants in this study were students from different universities in Uzbekistan who use Duolingo as a teaching aid. A total of 10 students filled out questionnaires to participate in the study. A questionnaire was used to collect data on students' perceptions of using Duolingo. This questionnaire has been adapted from other studies that relate to this topic.

The questionnaire consists of questions divided into four categories:

1. Effective methods of using Duolingo
2. Language proficiency
3. Disadvantages of Duolingo
4. Advantages of Duolingo

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The questionnaire contains 12 questions, for each of which participants can choose one of four possible answers: "totally agree", "agree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree".

If the participant believes that the opinion expressed in the question corresponds to his views, he can choose the option "I completely agree". If the participant does not agree with the opinion, he chooses "disagree".

The questionnaire questions are divided into 4 categories, which will help determine how students perceive the Duolingo app. Perception can be either positive or negative. The survey results will be presented in the table below.

Table 1. Efficient method in using Duolingo

Efficient method in using Duolingo	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. Set daily goals to stay motivated and consistent.	10	80%	20%	0%	0%	100%
2. Practice speaking exercises regularly to improve pronunciation.	10	80%	10%	0%	10%	100%
3. Utilize the "Tips" section for grammar rules and cultural insights.	10	80%	50%	2%	8%	100%

In the first table, the researchers found that the majority of participants positively assessed the proposed methods of effective use of Duolingo. According to the data obtained, 80% of respondents fully agree that setting daily goals helps to increase motivation and consistency in learning. Also, 80% of respondents believe that regular conversational exercises improve pronunciation; 10% agree with this statement, while 10% do not. In addition, 80% of the participants fully support the opinion about the usefulness of the "Tips" section for studying grammar and culture. At the same time, 50% of respondents agree with this, 2% disagree, and 8% are strongly opposed.

Table 2. Language skills practice

Language Skills Practice.	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. Duolingo makes language learning engaging and fun.	10	70%	20%	0%	0%	100%
2. The key features of Duolingo help improve vocabulary.	10	70%	30%	0	0%	100%
3. Gamification plays a beneficial role in Duolingo's courses	10	70%	20%	0%	0%	100%

The second table shows the results, which show that Duolingo is generally perceived as an attractive and effective tool for developing language skills. 70% of respondents fully agree that this service helps in learning, and 20% noted that Duolingo makes the learning process more exciting. Also, 70% of the participants fully agree with the statement that the key features of the platform really contribute to improving vocabulary. Moreover, 70% of participants believe that gamification elements play an important and useful role in Duolingo courses, making learning more interesting and more exciting.

Table 3. Student's responses about Duolingo

Duolingo Responses About Duolingo	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1. Duolingo is not as effective for classroom learning.	10	10%	20%	50%	20%	100%
2. The app's activities lack engagement.	10	10%	10%	50%	20%	100%
3. Studying English through Duolingo is dull.	10	10%	0%	40%	40%	100%

In the third table, the researchers found that a significant number of participants disagree with negative statements about Duolingo. For example, 50% of respondents disagree with the opinion that Duolingo is ineffective for classroom teaching, while 20% of them were categorically against such a statement. Also, 50% of respondents disagree with the statement that there is a lack of engagement in Duolingo's activities, and 20% also strongly disagree with this point of view. This indicates that the app is indeed perceived as an attractive learning tool. In addition, 40% of participants disagree with the statement that learning English through Duolingo is ineffective, and another 40% of respondents strongly disagree with this idea, emphasizing that students find this application useful for language learning.

Table 4 Duolingo's benefit

Duolingo's benefit	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
1. Duolingo helps me learn a new language at my own pace.	10	60%	40%	0%	0%	100%
2. Duolingo's accessibility allows me to practice anytime and	10	60%	40%	10%	0%	100%

anywhere.						
3. The app provides a variety of exercises that enhance my language skills.	10	50%	40%	0%	0%	100%

The fourth table shows the positive results of using Duolingo. 60% of respondents fully agree that the application is effective, and 40% noted that it allows you to learn the language at a convenient pace.

60% of the participants also believe that the availability of Duolingo makes it possible to practice at any time, but 10% disagree. Finally, 50% of respondents strongly agree that Duolingo offers a variety of exercises to improve language skills, while 40% support this opinion.

Discussion

Based on these results, we can say that Duolingo is indeed a useful tool for students learning English. In general, students speak positively about the use of Duolingo, noting its effectiveness, improvement of language skills and general usefulness.

Duolingo is a modern application with many advantages that offers opportunities for learning English (Habibie, 2020). It demonstrates high efficiency as a means of learning English due to its ease of use and accessibility — students can study anytime and anywhere. In addition, the app promotes the development of English sentence writing skills, which is an important part of language learning.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to understand how students perceive the use of the Duolingo application in the process of learning English. This study concludes that Duolingo is an effective learning tool, as its functions provide users with comfortable learning anytime, anywhere.

The ease of use of the app helps students easily develop the four basic English language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. In addition, they can significantly expand their vocabulary. It is also important to note that the interesting and fascinating features of Duolingo play a significant role in how students choose this app as a learning tool.

Technology is developing very quickly, and Duolingo is considered one of the innovative platforms that are effective in learning languages, responding to the needs of modern learners.

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