

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTION IN LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH DUOLINGO

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi persepsi mahasiswa dalam mempelajari kosakata melalui Duolingo. Peneliti menerapkan deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan kuesioner dan wawancara dalam pengumpulan data. Subjek penelitian ini terdiri dari 10 orang mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Tadulako angkatan 2021 yang sedang atau pernah menggunakan Duolingo. Terdapat 10 pertanyaan dalam kuesioner dan enam pertanyaan dalam wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa persepsi siswa dalam belajar kosakata melalui Duolingo dominan positif dengan skor rata-rata 89,76%. Hasil penelitian membuktikan bahwa Duolingo sangat membantu dalam pembelajaran kosakata karena aplikasi ini mudah digunakan, menarik, menyenangkan, dan gratis tanpa iklan. Namun, Duolingo membutuhkan koneksi internet untuk mengakses materinya.

Kata Kunci: Persepsi, Kosakata Bahasa Inggris, Duolingo

ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to identify university students' perception in learning vocabulary through Duolingo. The researchers applied qualitative descriptive by using questionnaire and interview questions in collecting data. The subjects were 10 students of English Education Study Program of Tadulako University batch 2021 who were currently using or have ever used Duolingo. There were 10 questions in the questionnaire and six questions in the interview questions. The results indicate that students' perception in learning vocabulary through Duolingo is dominantly positive with the average score of 89.76%. The results of the research proved that Duolingo is very helpful in learning vocabulary since the application is easy to be used, interesting, fun, and free without ads. However, Duolingo requires an internet connection to access the material.

Keywords: Perception, English Vocabulary, Duolingo

INTRODUCTION

Duolingo is an online language learning app created by Ahn and Hacker (2011). The mission of the company is to develop the best education in the world and make it universally available. Jaskova (2014:15) states, "Duolingo is seen as a future in learning languages and in global communication." Duolingo is one of the language learning applications that can support students in independent learning. In addition, Ahmed (2016) claims that Duolingo has a very motivating learning system. It uses gamification strategy to create incentives to keep the users learning. This application is designed very much like

a computer game. The user can complete various types of exercises including written translation, reading and speaking comprehension, and short stories. This application is designed to help the users learn foreign languages, especially English.

Learning English is very essential because it plays an important role in almost all the sectors in the globalized world such as business organizations, tourism, politics, scientific research, education and others. Therefore, students are expected to be able to speak English. However, learning English as a foreign language has several challenges, one of them is the difficulty in learning vocabulary. This problem also appears at the university level. Sometimes, students have to deal with unfamiliar words that cause them difficulty in learning the language. Richards & Renandya (2002) state that vocabulary is an important part of language competence since it determines how effectively learners speak, listen, read, and write.

Based on the researchers' observation in English Education Study Program of Tadulako University, as a result, the students still faced a lot of problems in learning English because the students have limited vocabulary. This caused them to have difficulty expressing their ideas both in written and oral during the learning process. It triggered them to be reluctant to use English in their daily lives and tended to make them become passive students. In addition, students were also less motivated to learn vocabulary because the learning medium was boring and less attractive. Therefore, the students were looking for a way to motivate them to become more independent of how they practice English outside the classroom. From the observation, the researchers found that some students used Duolingo as a medium for learning vocabulary independently. Munday (2015) argues that Duolingo is a very modern-looking gaming application. For some students, the use of gamification in learning vocabulary can be very helpful for them to be easier in memorizing vocabulary. It also motivates and engages the learners.

Referring to the explanation above, the researchers are interested in finding out the university students' perception in learning vocabulary through Duolingo. The subjects of this research were the students of English Education Study Program batch 2021 of Tadulako University. This research is expected to be beneficial for the students in learning vocabulary independently by using Duolingo application. Based on the statement above, the researchers formulate a research question as follows: "What are the university students' perceptions in learning vocabulary through Duolingo?"

METHOD

In this research, the researchers applied qualitative descriptive research design by using questionnaire and interview in collecting data. The participants were 10 students of English Education Study Program of Tadulako University batch 2021 who were currently using or have ever used Duolingo. The instruments used for collecting the data were questionnaire and interview questions. The questionnaire was in closed-ended item questions which consisted of ten questions, while the interview was semi-structured interview which consisted of seven questions.

The data from the questionnaire was analyzed in the form of percentage and short description based on the results from Google Form. The answer from the questionnaire determined whether the students' perception is positive or negative. In analyzing the data from the questionnaire, the researchers applied the formula developed by Arikunto (2010) to calculate the percentage from questionnaire and the formula developed by Gay, Mills, & Airasian (2012) to calculate the average score. The data from the interview was analyzed by using Miles and Huberman techniques. Miles & Huberman (1994) state that qualitative data analysis consists of three procedures namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results of the Questionnaire

There are ten questions in questionnaire in the form of yes-no questions. Students can choose 'yes' if they agree and 'no' if they don't agree with the questions. There are also two categories to identify student answers namely positive and negative. The results can be positive if students choose the 'yes' option more than the 'no' option. Meanwhile, the results can be negative if students choose the 'no' option more than the 'yes' option. The results from questionnaire can be seen as follow:

Table 1 Percentage of students' answers on the questionnaire from Google Form

No.	Statements	Percentage of the Answer		Category
		Yes	No	
Vocabulary learning through Duolingo				
1.	Is Duolingo easy to use in learning vocabulary?	100%	0%	Positive

2.	Are Duolingo features interesting and useful in learning vocabulary, especially noun and verb?	90%	10%	Positive
3.	Are English vocabulary tasks in Duolingo easy to understand?	90%	10%	Positive
4.	Are English vocabulary tasks in Duolingo helpful in learning vocabulary, especially noun and verb?	100%	0%	Positive
5.	Do English vocabulary tasks in Duolingo help you enlarge your vocabulary, especially noun and verb?	100%	0%	Positive
6.	Does Duolingo help you to understand the meaning of English vocabulary, especially noun and verb, properly?	90%	10%	Positive
7.	Is Duolingo accessible anytime and anywhere?	80%	20%	Positive
Students' Interest in Learning Vocabulary through Duolingo				
8.	Do you enjoy learning vocabulary through Duolingo?	90%	10%	Positive
9.	Do you feel motivated in learning English vocabulary through Duolingo?	90%	10%	Positive
10.	Does Duolingo make you more enthusiastic in memorizing English vocabulary, especially noun and verb?	80%	20%	Positive

Table 2 Percentage of the students' perception in learning vocabulary through Duolingo

No.	Indicators	Percentage	
		Yes	No
1.	Vocabulary learning through Duolingo	92.85%	7.15%
2.	Students' Interest in Learning Vocabulary through Duolingo	86.66%	13.34%
Average Score		89.76%	10.24%

2. Results of the Interview Questions

To identify the results of the interview, the researchers selected and simplified the data that appeared in transcription by determining the main point for each statement from the informants. The results of the interview can be seen as follows:

Table 3 Results of the interview questions

Main Point	Category
Very helpful in increasing students' vocabulary	Positive perception
Using flashcards and technique of spaced repetition	
Can help students to be more active in	

learning process

Can be applied in daily conversation

Applicable for independent learning

Students feel excited and motivated

Students feel enthusiastic since Duolingo is like a video game.

Arrange the words incorrectly

Negative perception

Requires an internet connection

DISCUSSION

The results of the questionnaire and interview show that university students' perceptions in learning vocabulary through Duolingo are dominantly positive. The questionnaire was divided into two indicators namely vocabulary learning through Duolingo and students' interest in learning vocabulary through Duolingo. The average score obtained from the first indicator about vocabulary learning through Duolingo is 92,85% that is categorized as positive and 7,15% that is categorized as negative. While the result from the second indicator about students' interest in learning vocabulary through Duolingo is 86,66% which is categorized as positive and 13,34% which is categorized as negative.

The results of the interview indicate that students have a positive perception in learning vocabulary through Duolingo since the application can help them in learning vocabulary. The students admitted that English tasks in Duolingo are easy to understand since those tasks are presented by using flashcards so it can help the students increase their vocabulary. Duolingo also uses the technique of spaced repetition that aims to help the students in memorizing vocabulary, so Duolingo always repeats the words. They agree that Duolingo is interesting and the tasks are very easy to understand even for beginners.

The result also notifies that vocabulary content in Duolingo is easy since it is based on daily conversation. The results also indicate that this application is very helpful because it provides a lot of vocabulary to memorize, especially noun and verb. Students also feel motivated and excited to learn by using Duolingo because the application is very much like a game and it provides a lot of features, therefore, it can make the students feel enjoyable and relaxed. It is in line with the research that has been conducted by Jaelani & Sutari (2021), the results show that Duolingo makes students more excited in memorizing English

vocabulary. However, students also faced some difficulties in learning vocabulary through Duolingo. They have difficulty in arranging sentences and accessing Duolingo if there is no internet connection.

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CONCLUSION

University students' perception in learning vocabulary through Duolingo is positive. Duolingo is very helpful in learning vocabulary since the application provides a lot of features that can help students increase their vocabulary. Some tasks in Duolingo are presented by using flashcards and technique of spaced repetition to help the students memorize vocabulary. After using Duolingo, students can apply their English skills in daily conversation so the application can help them to be more active in learning process. Students also feel motivated and excited while learning vocabulary by using Duolingo because it is like a video game. Duolingo can be accessed anywhere and anytime, without having to visit a certain place at a certain time as long as they have an internet connection. However, students cannot access Duolingo if there is no internet connection.

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