

DUOLINGO'S STUDY ON "VOCABULARY" LEARNING

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Abstract:

Duolingo is a modern application that facilitates acquiring a second language. This research aims to why this application is suitable for use in Vocabulary I learning and how it is implemented in Vocabulary I learning. This study used a mixed-method to explore and describe the phenomenon. Data collection techniques in this study were an exploration of the website and application Duolingo by giving the task in the Duolingo's school for students and using the application in the learning Vocabulary class in Synonym and Antonym topic. The result shows that Duolingo is very useful and suitable for learning tools or media. The students seemed they were excited when this media was used in the learning process better than the learning only using PowerPoint.

Keywords: *Duolingo Application, Vocabulary Learning*

INTRODUCTION

The use of technology as a medium for language learning and teaching in the current era of advanced technology is not an extraordinary thing to do (Habibie, 2020). Young teachers who are, on average, the millennial generation, are very familiar with learning technology in their daily teaching and learning activities, so it becomes strange if they still use the conservative teaching method that commonly uses book media and is carried out teacher-centred (instructional learning). According to Naismith (2017), the use of this technology is very helpful for teachers to prepare materials, deliver materials, and evaluate their language teaching process in terms of ease and time efficiency so that it becomes a very important part of using technology as a medium of language teaching today (Matra, 2020).

Technologies that can be used as language teaching media today are very diverse (Inayah et al., 2020), ranging from applications that can be installed on Android-based or iOS-based smartphones, as well as websites for personal computers from paid to free ones. Not all of these foreign language learning applications and websites are of good quality in terms of materials and exercises (Loewen et al. 2019), so as a teacher, you must be able to choose materials and exercises that are appropriate to the level of language skills of their students as well as teaching materials that are following the curriculum, lesson plans, and the final learning outcomes that will be given to students who are studying a foreign language.

Learning vocabulary is a component of language. At the undergraduate level at the Faculty of English Education, the lessons are given in the first semester to debrief language skills for students. The core of this ability, when linked to the level of English proficiency at CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), is at levels B1, B2, & C1

(Intermediate, Upper intermediate, Advanced) (CEFR, Council of Europe. 2001) can be categorized based on the following table:

Tabel 1. Vocabulary Range

Level	Vocabulary Range
C1	<p>Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions, little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies.</p> <p>Can select from several vocabulary options in almost all situations by exploiting synonyms or even words/ signs less commonly encountered.</p> <p>Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs well.</p> <p>Can understand and use appropriately the range of technical vocabulary and idiomatic expressions common to their area of specialisation.</p>
B2	<p>Can understand and use the main technical terminology of their field when discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists.</p> <p>Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics?</p> <p>Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution.</p> <p>Can produce appropriate collocations of many words/signs in most contexts systematically.</p> <p>Can understand and use much of the specialist vocabulary of their field but has problems with specialist terminology outside it.</p>
B1	<p>Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations?</p> <p>Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events.</p>

Based on the categories above, it can be concluded that the vocabulary mastery skills that must be achieved by the first semester students based on the CEFR, vocabulary mastery skills are very closely related to the students' daily use. Moreover, to help master this, lecturers must provide appropriate teaching materials so that students' mastery of vocabulary can be achieved following the CEFR standards. Lecturers can provide teaching materials with a variety of methods and teaching tools. With many applications and web learning English to improve the existing student vocabulary bank, it is very easy for teachers to create learning plans integrated with existing media. One suitable vocabulary teaching medium for first-semester students is the Duolingo application. The Duolingo application can be installed on an Android phone or accessed easily from www.duolingo.com.

From some literature that has been read by reviewers, among others, by Matra in 2020 with her research title "Duolingo Applications as Vocabulary Learning Tools" illustrates that Duolingo applications can be implemented in teaching English in terms of vocabulary mastery by Seeing the students' test results, there was a significant difference between before and after they received the exercises from the Duolingo application, namely P-value <0.05 , which means that there was a significant effect on test results between before and after using the Duolingo application as a teaching medium.

Then research conducted by Shawn Loewen and his friends from Michigan State University, America, in 2019 with the title "Mobile-assisted language learning: A Duolingo case study" produced positive results for the use of Duolingo on the participants studied, namely Second language learners (L2). The participants' results showed an increase in the L2 measure at the end of the study. The results showed a positive to moderate correlation between the time spent on Duolingo and learning mastery. In terms of perceptions of their experience, participants generally view Duolingo's flexibility and gamification aspects positively, namely the balance in mastering new vocabulary by completing the material based on games/games giving a good impact. However, sometimes it causes frustration if one cannot finish the word game/learning well at an advanced level.

From the two studies on the use of Duolingo in vocabulary learning for foreign language/L2 students above, the researcher is interested in exploring deeper the use of the Duolingo application in higher education students, namely first semester students in Vocabulary I course with the study formulation;

1. Why is this application suitable for use in Vocabulary 1 learning?
2. How is it implemented in Vocabulary 1 learning?

METHOD

This study uses qualitative study methods. The reviewer explains why the Duolingo application is appropriate when used as a Vocabulary 1 teaching medium and how the application can be used as a Vocabulary 1 teaching medium for first semester students.

In this study, to get answers to questions from the formulation of the problem, the reviewer studied Duolingo from the website and applications installed on the Duolingo mobile phone and website. The theme used is about the community in Duolingo's theme exercise on Vocabulary teaching, Synonyms and Antonyms. For its use in class, the reviewers have taught vocabulary I at B1 level, namely teaching vocabulary that focuses on mastering material related to family, hobbies, preferences, the surrounding environment (according to the CEFR table; Vocabulary Range B1).

DISCUSSION

In this discussion, we will first examine Duolingo itself. The second is the teaching process of Vocabulary 1 using Duolingo as a teaching aid.

Duolingo is a free language learning application based on Website, iOS, and Android founded by Luis von Ahn and Severin Hacker on November 30, 2011 (www.duolingo.com). Duolingo has a vision and mission to provide a new experience in learning foreign languages by



playing fun games. The target users of this application are everyone who wants to learn a foreign language personally by using technology. They are not just playing the practices but also learning the material of language that an international curriculum has standardized. The material has been proven to be able to provide long-term memory after getting material from this application. From this application, learners play games based on the order of abilities from beginner to advanced by completing the existing stages based on the themes already available in the application. The game is in practice questions covering the four language skills: listening, writing, speaking, and reading.




In Duolingo, there is also a feature for teachers or instructors to understand the material and increase students' vocabulary in the school features. In this feature, teachers can create classes and invite students to join through google classroom. Using this feature, the teacher can monitor the level of students' vocabulary mastery through reports on the work of game exercises with an adjustable duration of time and the level of difficulty and game themes that students must complete.

Duolingo is the most popular language-learning platform and the most downloaded educational app in the world today, with more than 300 million users. The company's mission is to make education free, fun, and accessible to everyone. Duolingo is designed to feel like a game and has been scientifically proven effective. In addition to its core platform, the company offers the Duolingo English Test, an easy and affordable language certification option, and is accepted at more than 2,000 universities.

Duolingo on the website and the application have significant differences in some features, meaning that some features are only found on the website. Thus, providing a different experience in using both from the website or applications installed on smartphones. These differences have advantages and disadvantages of each, to provide an easy explanation will be explained using the following table:

Table 2. Differences in the features found on the website and application

No.	Features & Logos	WEBSITE	APP	INFORMATION (Photos in Appendixes)
1		Available	Available	It is a place to play games by learning language from listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.
2		Available	Not Available	It is a Duolingo language forum. Users can interact with other users

				through posts such as timelines on Twitter and comment and follow each other.
3		Available	Available	A feature where users can add logos (Dulingo's currency by buying online to unlock learning/game checkpoints)
4		Available	Not Available	Additional features on the website to see the formula and the number of new words that the user has obtained
5	 Crystal, Profil	Available	Available	Crown; indicates the level of achievement of the game. Live coals; indicates the scheduled and completed daily training schedule. Crystal: the amount of currency the user owns. Heart symbol: only found in the app, signifies life to complete the game.

There are some differences between the Duolingo app and the web from the table above. The application is only intended to focus on learning by playing the game, by completing each stage of the themes that have been provided by Duolingo, which is also based on the international curriculum, if the user has completed the learning game at level one, the next level will be opened with a sign live or colored in the game theme circle represented by an avatar according to the theme and level of the game. Because it focuses on completing learning in games, the Duolingo application is suitable for students' daily activities because it is very light and attractive. Students can do the exercises anytime, anywhere.

While on the Duolingo website, the features are more complete with many additions and information that supports learning, so it is very suitable to be used by teachers to monitor vocabulary mastery/student learning from classes available on the School Feature. From this

feature, the teacher can create assignments for students by inviting students to a class that has been created by sending an invitation via email to students as well as creating assignments to complete learning games with a theme that has been chosen by the teacher, from here it will be seen which students have worked and which have not. It can also be seen or made targets for students' vocabulary mastery at the end of the semester (image is in the attachment).

In addition to the differences in Duolingo features on the website and applications on mobile phones, here are some of the advantages and disadvantages of Duolingo, which will be described in the following table:

Table 3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Duolingo

NO.	Advantages	Disadvantages
1	This lightweight application can be played whenever and wherever students/learners want to increase their level/ability by using a mobile phone that can be taken anywhere.	Because it requires an internet connection, sometimes there are problems if it is not stable.
2	Belajar dan juga sekaligus bermain game interaktif yang menyenangkan, membuat materi mudah diingat oleh siswa.	Learning as well as playing fun interactive games at the same time makes the material easy for students to remember.
3	Students can interact with other users by following each other, especially using the website version of Duolingo.	When used in the classroom, problems are the stability of the internet connection and other infrastructures such as projectors and other techniques.

Learning Vocabulary by using Duolingo is very interesting. Because of the existing features, the teacher can set the class and determine the appropriate material (Duolingo's material and International based on curriculum) based on Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced skills. How to use this application in the learning activities in the class will be described in the discussion below.

Teaching Vocabulary I with Duolingo

In this Vocabulary teaching, the teacher first prepares a learning Lesson Plan, as follows;



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Dosen Pengampu : Dr. Fransisca Maria Ivone
Nama/NIM : Awab Abdulloh-100212856007

Lesson Topic : Vocabulary (Synonym & Antonym)	Teacher : Awab Abdulloh
Grade Level : Semester I	Date : 27/05/2021
English Level : B1 (CEFR-Vocabulary Range) <i>Has a sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to his everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.</i>	Time : 15 Minutes
<p>📌 Visuals/Materials/Resources:</p> <p>1) Using Duolingo (https://schools.duolingo.com) 2) PPT Material about Synonym & Antonym</p>	
<p>Lesson Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recall the terms synonym and antonym 2. Acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly 3. Write in complete sentences, replacing given words with synonyms & antonyms 	<p>Assessment/Exit Tickets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do in group write 5 words of Synonym & Antonym that they get from Duolingo. ➤ Make 2 sentences of synonym and antonym.
<p>Introduction : - 3 minutes (Presentation and Q&A) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Speaking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To begin the lesson, I will review the terms synonym and antonym with the students. I will put a few words on the PPT, and the student will be asked to orally give examples of synonyms and antonyms for those words. I will discuss the type of activity they will be performing (Using Duolingo). A set of directions will be given, and checking Duolingo class for the assignment. 	
<p>Development : - 8 minutes (Practice) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Listening <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Speaking</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I will ask students to check their Duolingo class. 2) Students will find the word with the theme of society from the assignment they did as the new vocabulary in the Duolingo class. 3) After everyone has found the words, then they must find the synonyms and the antonym of the words. 4) They will do the practice by group consist of three students in each to find 5 synonyms and antonyms word. 5) In pairs still, student will read their words, tell their 5 synonyms and antonyms, and read theirs aloud. 6) Make 2 sentences of synonym and antonym. 	
<p>Evaluation: - 2 minutes (Produce) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Speaking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Checking students' work from the task they did and giving the feedback. 	
<p>Exit Tickets:- 2 minutes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ At the end of the class I will ask the students to write down their own definitions of the word synonym and antonym. I will then ask them to write down three concepts they learned and three concepts they found confusing. 	

In practice, students have been introduced to the Duolingo application at the beginning of the lecture. Provided an installation tutorial and how to use it. In the previous week, students were asked to join the Duolingo class provided by the teacher. The students can accept invitations via email for each student. In this class, students complete assignments, namely completing learning games with community themes, according to the proficiency level of first semester students who are on average intermediate. This theme corresponds to the CEFR B1 table. It has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations, and it has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.

Learning activities such as providing material on Synonyms and Antonyms in English learning are given using power points with questions and answers and discussion (PPT material attached). Then, in the development of the material, a combination of teaching is given using Duolingo as the teaching medium. Here the teacher checks the Duolingo study assignment from

the class that has been created for students. Anyone who has worked on it will be seen, and so will those who have not, with the community theme.

Students are divided into two groups to work on assignments with the teacher's themes. Synonyms and Antonyms related to the Duolingo application are; when doing the exercises in Duolingo, students are given the task of finding five words that they find/get from studying at Duolingo to find their equivalents and opposites by recording them in the table provided by the teacher. Thus, students are expected to be more careful in doing the exercises in Duolingo, because from the experience of the reviewers, when completing the exercises, sometimes they like to hurry because they think they are correct. Students will be more careful because they are told to look for words that can be matched and matched.

To increase understanding of the use of synonyms and antonyms, students with their groups are then given exercises to make sentences from the words that have been obtained. Using Duolingo in learning will stimulate students to be active and enthusiastic in doing exercises according to themes that have been provided and adjusted by the teacher. This can be seen from the observations made by the reviewers and teachers during the teaching activities. When the PPT material was given, the students were less enthusiastic about paying attention to the subject matter. Still, during the practice using Duolingo, the students were very enthusiastic about doing the exercises together.

According to Pramono et al. (2019), the enthusiasm of these students is due to the interaction with the game media. This study is a game on Duolingo. Students will be motivated to complete the game in an exercise on Duolingo. Motivation arises because of the fun and stimulation of Duolingo's colourful display with an avatar that can move and show emotions when the learner completes the challenge, angry or happy. Elements in the media such as animation, video, text, and sound in the Duolingo game serve as tutors, stimulators, and motivators to students who lead to the learning process through English vocabulary as the beginning of understanding the meaning of the entire English text. Students' interactions with Duolingo's games, such as understanding dialogue, reading instructions, and information, are strong reasons for the emergence of motivation to learn. These interactions create language learning strategies by looking for meaning in the dictionary, asking friends, and guessing from the context of sentences in the text (Pramono et al., 2019)

At the end of the teaching activity, students are given a re-understanding of the material. They are also given assignments to do exercises in Duolingo for those who have not and are reminded of the target number of vocabularies that must be obtained at the end of the semester in the student Duolingo application. It is given so that students continue to practice with Duolingo independently to improve language skills and new vocabulary.

Independence in learning by practising questions on Duolingo is also in line with the government's program on Freedom of Learning. Independent learning aims to make students more active in getting references or learning support materials. However, the role of the teacher must also be active in providing a reference for learning resources so that the learning materials and media remain following the learning objectives, for example, the Duolingo application, which is very suitable to use in Vocabulary I.

CONCLUSIONS

From the Vocabulary learning with Duolingo above, it can be concluded that Duolingo, as a part of technological advances used in Vocabulary learning activities, can function as an educational application that can support and facilitate the process of teaching and learning English in the classroom. This application technology can also serve as an option for language teachers in providing more enjoyable lessons. Besides that, it can encourage interaction between teachers and students, increase student knowledge, and increase student motivation.

The evaluation results from the study of using Duolingo in the classroom show that students have successfully used the Duolingo application as a Vocabulary learning medium properly and correctly. It can be seen from the enthusiasm to do practice questions together on the Duolingo application and complete the target practice correctly. Thus, it can be concluded that using the Duolingo application in Vocabulary learning is very well used to increase students' vocabulary and practice facilities.

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