

# Duolingo: An Alternative Application for Learning English Grammar and Vocabulary

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**Abstract:** This article explores about the using an already existing language learning app, Duolingo, as an alternative application for learning English grammar and vocabulary. Duolingo is a platform that provide a language-learning website and app. The app and the website are free, so everyone can use it without giving any extra fee. The aim of this application is to teach vocabulary and grammar, which some exercise series that can be chosen by the user. In this study, writer discuss about the using of Duolingo in mobile version. The writer consider that almost student in this era are using mobile phone. Hopefully by using this application, will motivate student in learning English, especially grammar and vocabulary.

**Keywords:** *Duolingo, Mobile Assisted Language Learning*

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, smartphone become prime needs after food, clothing and shelter. It is proven by the percentage of smartphone users which is increasing every year. Based on the report from Teknologi.id, there are 2.1 billion smartphone users in 2016 and it increased become 2.5 billion in 2019. Meanwhile, there are more than 36 percent of the population who are using smartphone in 2018. It is increasing about 10 percent in 2011. Based on the data above, it can be concluded that it will bring serious effect on education. Therefore, as a teacher we have to find the innovation that can be implied in language learning activity especially in vocabulary and grammar.

One of the innovations is the teacher can use mobile assisted language learning as an approach. According to Valarmathi (2011) mobile assisted language learning is an approach in learning language that assisted by the usage of a mobile device. There are several mobile devices that can be used in MALL such as; cell phone (including the smartphone, iPhone or iPad), MP3 or MP4 players, and Personal Digital Assistants, but in this study will be focus on the using of smartphone as a media in mobile assisted language learning approach.

When using smartphone, students are able to access language learning materials or even communicate with others and doing exercise at anytime, anywhere. Not to speak of, there are also an increasing number of applications that focuses on learning foreign language that can make learning process become more interesting. Examples of these apps are; Hello Talk, Memrise, Lingualy, or Duolingo - the app that will be examine in this article (Munday, 2015).

Duolingo is a platform that provide a language-learning website and app. The app and the website are free, so everyone can use it without giving any extra fee. The aim of this application is to teach vocabulary and grammar, which some exercise series that can be chosen by the user. One of the features of Duolingo is the use of spaced repetition, which help the learner in remembering the new vocabulary. Spaced repetition has proven as a very effective way for acquiring vocabulary, as repetition is important in achieving new skills. In addition, there are some activities that presented in Duolingo's lessons. Starts from basic skills, vocabularies (animals, foods, color, etc.), grammar and structure. Duolingo also give some rewards to the user if they can achieve the target. The user can get point which is call as "Lingot". They can exchange it for getting power up. As the result, the user will enjoy Duolingo as they play a game.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher believe that Duolingo can help the student in learning English. Consequently, by this research, the researcher will elaborate Duolingo.

## Duolingo

Duolingo is a free app that created in November 2011 by Louis Von Ahn and Severin Hacker. The motto is "Free World Language Learning." It has more than 30 million registered users, according to its website. This combines English speakers with several languages as well as others for non-English speakers.

In mobile version Duolingo does not have as many as in web version. It's limited to the tree and the Lingot Shop, though you can still see the leaderboard with information on the people you are following. The app also tells people about your run. You will set daily goals (minimum 10 XP per day) and the software will give you updates and alerts if your aim has not been reached that day.

In this study, writer only used the tree area with the skills and lessons. The following description applies to this area exclusively: students can do various types of activities on Duolingo. After you click on a skill, you will be given a number of lessons available for a particular skill. Each lesson includes words (up to eight) to be reviewed. In addition to lessons, each skill can be reviewed in general, after you have completed all the lessons or tested it. It is called "practice" or "strengthening skills" in the application to distinguish it from regular lessons. You can choose general practice to review areas that the program considers not yet practiced, not just one particular skill. Or you can choose to practice in one skill after you have completed all lessons. There is a symbol in each lesson that shows the "strength" of the skill with a maximum "value" of 5. After you reach five, the symbol for the skill becomes gold.

The following is a list of the most common activities in each lesson (maybe not comprehensive, because the application keeps changing):

- a) Write the vocabulary words after seeing the picture that represents them.
- b) Translate sentences into your native language. When words are first presented, the user can hover over the word to see the meaning.

- c) Translate sentences into the language being studied.
- d) Dictation: write the sentence you hear. There are two speeds, normal and slow, that you can click to hear the sentence more clearly.
- e) Say the sentence. Through voice recognition software, the application can detect whether your pronunciation is correct.
- f) Match pairs of words.
- g) Put a series of random words.
- h) Choose from three sentences in the target language to see which matches the sentences in the original language.

The activities are presented sequentially, and the lesson "extends" itself if you get the wrong answer, as indicated by the strength bar at the top of the lesson. If there are no errors, it takes seventeen short activities as described above to complete the lesson. This usually takes five to ten minutes. However, this time can vary, because new activities are added if you make a mistake.

Duolingo combines several elements of gamification to motivate and involve students. Some examples are Lingot as an award given when you complete a skill; inclusion of a weekly leaderboard, where you can "compete" against friends to see who has the highest XP; the flame symbol next to your name with the number of days of your line on the site; the power bar mentioned above, which appears when the user completes a lesson, to show how close they are to the completion, etc. These elements make the application more enjoyable, even though the exercise itself is quite traditional, as we have seen (Munday, 2015)

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the explanation in the previous chapter, it was shown that Duolingo can be an alternative application to help students in learning grammar and vocabulary. By using this kind of application learning English will be more interesting than before. It can be proven with the fact that show students are motivated while using the application.

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