

ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DUOLINGO APPLICATION IN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION LEARNING

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Article Submission:
18 June 2025

Article Revised:
22 June 2025

Article Accepted:
23 June 2025

Article Published:
24 June 2025

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to analyze the effectiveness of using the Duolingo application in learning English pronunciation. This was descriptive qualitative research. The participants consisted of 24 undergraduate students at Institut Az Zuhra. Interviews and observations were conducted to collect data. They were chosen due to lacking at pronouncing the words. It was because they did not get activity about pronunciation when they were in school. After conducting the research, it was found that the Duolingo application used in pronunciation class was effective to be applied. It was fun, enjoyable, interesting, and motivating for the students. It improved their confidence and reduced their pronunciation anxiety. Additionally, there are some limitations of using the Duolingo application, such as annoying advertisements, and it cannot be accessed offline.

Keywords: Duolingo Application, English Pronunciation Learning

INTRODUCTION

English is used as a foreign language in Indonesia. It is taught from elementary school through university level. Many people take English courses not only to help with their schoolwork, but also to meet the demands of their profession. This phenomenon shows the importance of learning English. It is a helpful and even essential language to understand. People all throughout the world choose to study English as a second language because they believe it to be vital (Ilyosovna, 2020).

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills are acquired by students when they learn English. Among these skills, speaking is an activity that most students wish to master. English is used to communicate with people who live in other states, countries, continents, and regions of the world because it is widely spoken and regarded as an international language (RAO, 2019). However, speaking involves articulating words to convey, assert, and vocalize thoughts and emotions to others verbally. It is used to express people's ideas and opinions. This mode

of communication is the most natural way for humans to interact (Rahayu, 2024). Additionally, sharing information and ideas is one way for people to connect with each other. Simply put, speech is a fundamental method of communication in daily human life. Moreover, effective communication is essential to prevent misunderstandings and help listeners grasp the speaker's perspective. A person will perform well if they continue to study and practice speaking English regularly.

Moreover, pronunciation is a key component of speaking English. Clear pronunciation reduces the number of mistakes made when conveying information during the oral speaking process. The quality of speech is also enhanced by the clarity of pronunciation. Pronunciation has received significant attention in the last three decades, influencing language teaching research and theoretical ideas about language learning and communication in a globalized society (Pennington, 2021). The issues about pronouncing some words have been found at every level of learning. Mistakes and errors are found when they pronounce some words. Even at university level, some students are unable to pronounce the words properly. This could lead to a big problem when they lack in pronouncing some words. They should therefore focus on improving their English as university students to prepare for their future careers. Sadly, despite having studied English since elementary school, the majority of university students in Pekanbaru, Riau, still struggle with it (Astrilla, 2018). In line in Institut Az Zuhra, the researchers found that some students lack in pronouncing words. It was found that when they were still in school, most of them only learned English once a week, and they seldom practiced their English outside the classroom. They did not even get a pronunciation activity. They were asked to do the exercise in their textbook. Due to the lack of opportunities to speak and practice English, these circumstances negatively affect students' speaking abilities. Furthermore, these issues could affect the student's desire to learn English. Their desire to study English is lacking.

Learning pronunciation is not easy. It necessitates comprehension, consistent practice, and the will to learn and solve the issue. The difficulty with pronunciation that second language learners face is the necessity to modify a conceptual pattern that was absorbed during childhood and is suitable for their first language (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2021). Learners need help in categorizing or conceptualizing sounds in a way appropriate to English. Therefore, it is crucial to create instructional strategies and offer exercises that will inspire our students to learn English, particularly in the area of pronunciation. Activity for learning pronunciation can be done by using a smartphone. Based on the observation, students use smartphones in their daily lives. Thus, using technology could assist the lecturer and students in doing the activity in learning pronunciation.

Technology has been employed as a tool to enhance instruction and learning strategies. Learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom have expanded due to the quick development of mobile technology. Utilizing a mobile phone application is one method (Inayah et al, 2020). The objective of using technology to study English has the potential to improve language proficiency and accelerate the learning process (Van et al, 2021). In other words, using technology in a learning process is effective, which has a positive impact on acquiring the language.

Technology that can be applied in learning English, especially in pronunciation, is the use of the Duolingo application. It is an app that allows students to play games while simultaneously learning a language. The most important thing is that it can encourage them to use their leisure time to get better at English outside of the classroom. Rahayu (2024) mentions that Luis Von Ahn and Severin Hacker developed the freemium language-learning app Duolingo for desktops and smartphones in 2012. It provides 28 languages and 68 distinct language courses. It has more than 300 million registered users worldwide, according to its website. It is among the most well-regarded language-learning apps available. Additionally, it has received multiple awards for best educational start-up, play, and learning applications. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are the four English language skills that Duolingo teaches. Duolingo's learning exercises incorporate the four abilities through questions and short texts that may be heard and transcribed. To evaluate their speaking skills, the students must also record their pronunciation.

Due to its very compelling learning system, Duolingo has a great learning technique. It creates an incentive to keep students learning through the use of game mechanics. It is constructed like a computer game, where players must complete specific stages. A student completes the language's tree level. Once a student has mastered the prior content, they can unlock the next lessons. Students can perform a variety of exercises, such as writing, speaking into a microphone, translating some words, and taking multiple-choice questions. The lessons on Duolingo mostly consist of drills and repetitive exercises. Duolingo intentionally introduced the concept of "play and learn" to make it more accessible and user-friendly for people from diverse backgrounds. Students have all been exhausted from going about our daily lives, and studying a foreign language allows us to unwind for a bit, especially when we use the Duolingo application.

According to the research by Inayat et al. (2020), students found Duolingo to be a useful and helpful application as well as a motivational tool for learning English. Similarly, Irzawati et al. (2023) discovered that using Duolingo for EFL learning was simple, entertaining,

interesting, and inspiring for students. In summary, students had favorable attitudes and opinions about using Duolingo for EFL instruction. Meanwhile, Tiara et al., 2021) conducted the research about using Duolingo application to improve English vocabulary, the found that it can enhance students' comfort, happiness, and English proficiency, which is one of its many advantages in supporting students during their learning process, that beneficial for improving their English vocabulary.

However, the researcher decided to use the Duolingo application for the students in learning pronunciation. This research is intended to analyze the effectiveness of the use of the Duolingo application in pronunciation. This application is expected to give benefits to students' pronunciation. To achieve this, students were engaged in pronunciation learning activities using the application. They were instructed to complete specific tasks provided in Duolingo, allowing the researcher to observe and evaluate their potential benefits. This brief overview also introduces the methodological approach taken in the research.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, aimed at detailing the findings related to the analysis of the effectiveness of using Duolingo in pronunciation activities. The Duolingo application was chosen because Duolingo is a highly stimulating learning approach, making it an effective learning strategy. It creates a motivation to keep students learning through the use of game mechanics. The element's purpose is crucial in increasing students' motivation for their studies (Nurul Inayah, 2020).

Qualitative descriptive studies aim to provide a thorough, everyday summary of specific occurrences that individuals or groups have experienced (Lambert et al, 2012). In other words, the experiences of students using this application and its benefits are also assessed. The subjects of this research were 24 undergraduate students of Institut Az Zuhra. For this study, the researcher investigated the effectiveness of using Duolingo for learning pronunciation by conducting semi-structured interviews consisting of five questions. These interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and were recorded and transcribed into written form. This research also included classroom observations, taking notes while working on the Duolingo exercises, and monitoring their behavior and activity. The results of these observations will be explained in the findings of this research.

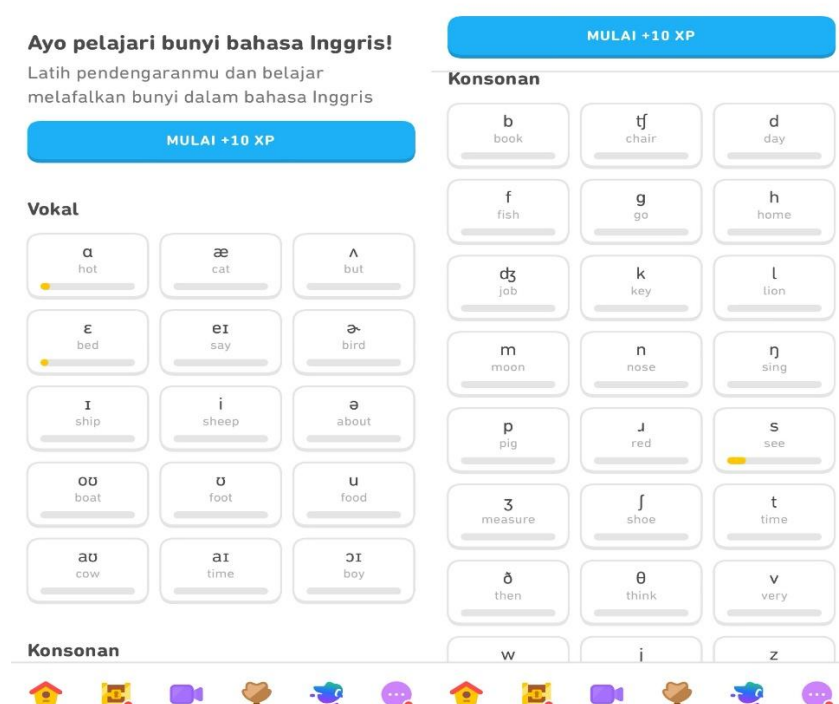
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research found that the Duolingo app contributes positively to pronunciation activity. The application offers numerous features that help students enhance their skills in areas such

as translation, dictation, and pronunciation. It is also easy to access, even though the premium features are not purchased.

In pronunciation class, students were asked to download and install the Duolingo application. Then, they were asked to complete the registration. After that, they were asked to do the exercise on unit 1. In this unit, the practice was about listening, translating, and pronouncing words. All the students were excited about doing the tasks. They focused on their phone while doing the tasks. In the next meeting, after completing unit 1, they were asked to move to the “*Bunyi*” section. In this section, there are vowel and consonant sounds. The researcher asked them to tap one by one of the sounds, starting from vowel to consonant sounds.

Image 1. Vowel and Consonant Sounds



This feature provides vowel and consonant sounds. Examples of nouns that represent the sound are also available. Hence, students listened to the sound and repeated it. The students were asked to do it repeatedly. It was intended that it could improve their comprehension of the sounds. An efficient and engaging way to improve phonemic awareness in English language learning is through Duolingo's Voice Training capabilities (Fahlevi, 2025). After that, the students were asked to do the exercise.

The first exercise was about listening. The application played the sound, and students chose the words they heard. Also, there was an exercise where the students were asked to say the words. These activities were conducted in the pronunciation class. Besides, the researcher asked them to practice outside the classroom, and at the next meeting, students were asked

about their progress. Based on the observation, students focused on their phone doing the practice. They enjoyed doing the task on Duolingo application. Even though the class was quite noisy because of the sound from the application and they had to repeat it, it was not a big problem unless they got the positive impact of it.

After learning pronunciation by using Duolingo application, the researcher interviewed the students. They were asked five questions related to the use of Duolingo application in learning pronunciation. The first question was asked: *“Does the Duolingo app assist those who struggle with word recognition?”*. All students said that Duolingo application helped them in pronouncing the words properly.

It helped me a lot, especially in pronunciation. The exercise started from easy to hard. It was very helpful. I know how to pronounce those words now. [S1]

I didn't learn about pronunciation when I was in high school, so I didn't know how to pronounce the words correctly. After learning pronunciation with this app, I am very happy because it helps me correct my pronunciation. [S2]

I love being able to learn using this app, especially since I can learn and practice anywhere. it's very helpful. [S3]

However, it can be said that the Duolingo application is very helpful. They could practice and improve their pronunciation. A helpful language-learning program, Duolingo may give users step-by-step instructions on how to acquire a new language independently (Nushi et al, 2017).

The second question was *“Does this app increase your motivation to learn English?”*. Some students said that they are more motivated to learn English because of using the Duolingo application. it is because there is an increase in level every time they complete the exercise. with the level that continues to rise and a good score, they become very motivated to learn English.

"I don't want to lose to my friends, so I do the exercises there as much as possible, so that I don't fall behind with other friends.”[S4]

This is in line with the result of the research conducted by Skerstonaitė (2024) that Duolingo application increases students' motivation while also providing them with more chances to practice different communication skills, such as understanding and speaking a language aloud.

Besides improving their pronunciation, the Duolingo application could improve their vocabulary. In repeating the sound of some words, the students also discovered new vocabulary, which is beneficial for them. Furthermore, using Duolingo in pronunciation learning was interesting for the students. Some students said that it was interesting because the

application provided games, videos, and fun texts, which made them engage in the learning process. Students can autonomously track their progress, set personalized learning objectives, and investigate topics of interest, all of which foster critical thinking and decision-making abilities (Tuong & Dan, 2024).

Based on the result of class observation, the use of this application in learning pronunciation showed positive impacts. The students can improve their pronunciation skills, which influences their speaking ability. Most of the students showed that they could overcome their pronunciation anxiety and confidently speak and read English text in front of the class.

Unfortunately, there are limitations in using the Duolingo application in the learning process. The advertisements that appear each time users complete a task are bothersome. Additionally, this application has a "life," which will be reduced or possibly run out if the user makes a mistake. The user must wait a few hours until the "life" is replenished if this one runs out. In addition, students said that doing these exercises was quite boring because the same words often appeared repeatedly. Three students felt bored because the tasks were too easy.

The results of this research show that Duolingo is effective to be applied in pronunciation learning activities. The comprehensive data provided by these research investigations may help to optimize the benefits of Duolingo as a very user-friendly language learning platform and an optimal learning tool. To get better results, it is crucial to prepare for any potential difficulties when utilizing this system.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research indicated the effectiveness of using the Duolingo application in learning English pronunciation. They became more confident, reduced pronunciation anxiety, found new vocabulary, and improved their pronunciation. All these positive impacts can affect their ability to read English text, especially in speaking English. Since pronunciation is widely recognized as a necessary skill for English language speakers, one should keep in mind that learning proper pronunciation will impact speaking fluency (Prodanovska-Poposka, 2017). Because the students thought that learning English using Duolingo was simple, enjoyable, interesting, and inspiring, it had a favorable effect on them. These findings demonstrated that Duolingo had a positive effect on students' English learning process and proficiency. Therefore, it is strongly advised that language teachers incorporate Duolingo into EFL instruction due to its many advantages. To get the best outcomes, it is crucial to prepare for any potential difficulties while utilizing this language platform in EFL instruction.

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