

Learning English Vocabulary Through the Duolingo Application to Help Young Learners' Reading Skill

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Abstract

This study aims at finding out whether the Duolingo application can be used in learning vocabulary to help young learners in their reading skills. Mastery of English is something that is important nowadays. To be able to master English, it is necessary to master the components in it, one of the components is vocabulary, and vocabulary is also very helpful in English skills, including reading skills. In learning English vocabulary, it will be easier if it is done from an early age, or in a critical period. In this modern world, there are many ways that young learners can use to learn vocabulary, one of which is using the Duolingo application. Dulingo is an interesting app that makes it suitable for young learners. At the end, the results of this research will be seen.

Keywords: Duolingo Application; Vocabulary; English; Young Learner.

INTRODUCTION

Seeing the progress of today's world, mastery of English is an important thing, where English is an international language that can help people from various countries to communicate (Kandati & Tatipang, 2021). However, many difficulties are experienced when they want to learn English. Problems in learning English are more often encountered by students who are not native English speakers, and these difficulties are experienced in various aspects, both in speaking, listening, writing and reading (Maru et al, 2022). These problems are not only experienced by young learners but also those who have pursued higher education. This is in line with Chen's statement (2017) that even graduate students experience various levels of difficulty in reading English Journal Articles, and one of them is having a limited vocabulary.

If adult learners have difficulty in English due to lack of vocabulary mastery, of course it is also experienced by young learners. Therefore, learning English needs to be done from an early age, at a critical period so that it can get good results. According to Oktaviani & Fauzan (2017) that if young learners learn English from an early age, their mastery of English will be better. In connection with this, Adra & Doyran (2017) also state that most young students have more enthusiasm and

motivation for learning English. Based on that, of course learning English vocabulary needs to be done from an early age.

In the modern world, many ways are available to learn vocabulary (Gereuw, Muntuuntu & Sanger, 2022), especially those that can be used by young learners, one of which is using the Duolingo application. Duolingo is a free learning app available in Web, Android, iOS, and Windows versions. On its official website, Duolingo claims that “Learning with Duolingo is fun and proven to be effective based on research!” According to them, this is based on the features they have made as attractive as possible and able to teach various things in the language, including vocabulary in English.

Based on this background, a question arises that leads to the research, Can Duolingo be used in learn English vocabulary to help young learners’ reading skill? The purpose of this research is to find out whether Duolingo can be used in learn English vocabulary to help young learners’ reading skill.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Importance of Learning Vocabulary

To master English, of course, you must master the elements in it, and one of the elements in English is vocabulary (Lengkoan et al, 2022). This is supported by Redjeki & Muhajir (2020) that learning a language will be maximized if it is supported by these language components, the language components referred to by Redjeki & Muhajir are such as vocabulary, grammar or structure, pronunciation and spelling. So it is true that vocabulary mastery is very important in language, this opinion is supported by Dakhi & Fitria (2019) which states that it makes sense that vocabulary plays an important role in language use because it is the heart of language skills.

This is also supported by Delatu et al. (2020) which states that in learning a foreign language, vocabulary is one of the most important aspects. Furthermore, Dakhi & Fitria (2019) mention that vocabulary seems to function as a basis for communication, a reflection of social reality, a driver of emotion, and a predictor of academic ability. Supporting statements about the importance of learning vocabulary and mastery of vocabulary, Bai (2018) states that:

“Vocabulary learning does not only refer to mastering a certain number of words or phrases, but also includes the ability to use vocabulary correctly (Liando et al, 2022). Vocabulary is the key to language learning. If the vocabulary is limited, the scope of the learner's thinking will be narrow and they will face many difficulties in communicating.”

Through it, it can be seen that vocabulary is important in learning languages, especially English. Vocabulary must be learned and mastered to be able to master English (Rorintulus et al, 2021).

METHOD

To find the results of research, the researcher used the library research method, which is what George (2008) meant that library research is "Involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/expert opinion on a research question; necessary component of every other research method at some point." The data of the research obtained from books and scientific journals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Use of Duolingo in Learning English Vocabulary

Seeing the importance of vocabulary in learning English, it is very necessary to learn it. To learn vocabulary, of course, it needs to be done using the right ways. One way that can be used to learn vocabulary considering the progress in today's world is through technology as stated by Ajisoko (2020) that in the industrial revolution 4.0, learning English needs to be combined with technology. In the technology in question, there is an English learning application. English learning applications can help in learning vocabulary, this is also in line with Guaqueta & Castro-Garces (2018) stating that using English learning applications helps students develop vocabulary and can even motivate students to read more in English. According to Guaqueta & Castro-Garces, this can happen because using the English Learning Application is a way of learning that is much more dynamic and fun. Using Application helps in learning vocabulary. This is also supported by Bustillo, et al. (2017) that there is an increase in vocabulary mastery when learning to use technology, in this case the Language Learning Application. One application that can be used for learning English is Duolingo.

The research was conducted to see if Duolingo as an English Learning application can help to learn vocabulary. Duolingo provides 117 courses in 38 languages and 14 of them are still under development. Duolingo uses animations and is designed as attractive as possible. Duolingo incorporates game elements into its learning and there are targets for users to achieve. In its official website, Duolingo states that language learning using Duolingo is effective and fun. Duolingo provides private learning and learning is provided for free.

In this study, researchers will only focus on the use of Duolingo in learning English, especially vocabulary. Previous studies on the use of Duolingo have been carried out by several researchers in different ways. Currently the research is conducted by examining the use of Duolingo in learning English vocabulary based on various research results that have been carried out by previous researchers. According to Ali & Deris (2019) Duolingo is an ideal application to use in learning and teaching vocabulary. Of course, this opinion is not entirely strong because every researcher has a different way of doing research and different conclusions will be drawn from this. According to Nushi & Egbali (2017) Duolingo is a useful language

application, according to them this is because Duolingo can provide practical and systematic steps that can be used by learners in learning a new language personally. Nushi & Eqbali also added that the Duolingo can be used by students of all ages and cultures.

To find accurate results, the researcher looked at other studies made previously and found that several researchers after conducting research stated that using the Duolingo application to learn language, especially vocabulary, was an effective way, this was confirmed by Ajisoko (2020); Jaelani & Sutari (2020); Matra (2020) that Duolingo is an effective medium in teaching and learning vocabulary; Irawan, et al. (2020) effective and varied. The reasons that Duolingo is considered effective in teaching vocabulary certainly vary. Ajisoko(2020) and Jaelani & Sutari (2020) agree that what makes Duolingo effective is that it is interesting and easy to understand the material in it, especially vocabulary. Ajisoko added that students get a fair turn in practicing the material, can eliminate boredom in learning and encourage students to learn something new. Jaelani & Sutari also added that using Duolingo is effective because it can be used anywhere and anytime, providing opportunities to be more active in learning vocabulary, as well as growing enthusiasm and motivation in learning vocabulary.

It can be seen that Duolingo can help in learning vocabulary, so Duolingo can be used as an alternative in learning English vocabulary. This is corroborated by Irawan, et al. (2020) that Dulingo may be an alternative learning media which of course can be used by English language learners to help improve their ability to speak English and of course their vocabulary mastery. The same thing was also mentioned by Matra (2020) that Duolingo could be used as an alternative to learning vocabulary, more specifically Matra said it could also be used for early age students.

Based on the opinions of these researchers according to the research they have done, it can be said that Duolingo is useful for learning English and can be used to assist in learning English vocabulary. This is also supported by Redjeki & Muhajir (2020) that Duoling can help in developing users' English skills, including in learning vocabulary. However, as good as an application is, of course there are also weaknesses and shortcomings, and Duolingo also has weaknesses and shortcomings. According to Nushi & Eqbali (2017) there are several shortcomings in the Duoling Application. These shortcomings include the fact that Dulingo uses direct translation which will sometimes be different from what students get in class with a real teacher, and Nushi & Eqbali added that sometimes students are introduced to new words but only by looking at the letters and word forms, and according to them it is incomplete. If you don't hear how the word is pronounced, it can allow for exceptions and variations in pronunciation for each learner (Tatipang et al, 2021). What Nushi & Eqbali said can certainly be taken into account in using Duolingo to learn English vocabulary. However, it is also necessary to conduct in-depth research and consider how Duolingo application developers develop applications from year to year. Another weakness is also stated by Jaelani & Sutari

(2020) that there is one drawback that causes negative effects in their research, the shortcoming is the difficulty of using Duolingo if there is no internet connection. This can indeed be considered because until now Duolingo cannot be used offline and must use an internet connection. Based on the things above, the researcher found that Duolingo can help in learning English vocabulary effectively, even though it has to consider its deficiency and weaknesses.

Learning Vocabulary to Help Young Learners' Reading Skills

In reading skill, vocabulary is one of the important elements (Liando et al, 2022). Vocabulary cannot be separated from reading skills and is very much needed in reading comprehension. This is evidenced through research conducted by Gu (2017) which states that the correlation between vocabulary knowledge and English reading comprehension is positive. His research also stated that teachers and students need to raise awareness of the importance of vocabulary knowledge, especially the depth of vocabulary knowledge, and other factors that influence reading comprehension. Through his research it can be seen that learning vocabulary can help in reading skills of people and of course including young learners.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research of various references that have been written by the previous researchers after they made the research, the researcher concluded that learning vocabulary is important to fluent in using English. Duolingo can be used as an effective alternative media to learn vocabulary in English. The current findings also show that even though Duolingo can be used to learn English vocabulary, there are shortcomings and weaknesses, which can lead to pronunciation variations because sometimes Duolingo does not provide examples of pronunciation and weaknesses in its use in places where there is no internet connection. In this study it was also found that learning vocabulary can help young learners in their reading skills. However, the results of this study are not strong enough because there is still a lack of sources that can strengthen the use of Duolingo in learning vocabulary. In the future, more in-depth research is needed, and field research is needed to prove the effectiveness of using Duolingo as a medium for learning English vocabulary.

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