



## Students' Perception on Using Duolingo for Learning English Vocabulary

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### Abstract

The rise of technology has expanded a variety of interesting and new online-based learning aids for English. Duolingo app, which makes learning languages, especially English, easy, accessible, and effective. The objective of this study is to describe and observe the students' perceptions of using Duolingo software for vocabulary at Madrasah Tsanawiyah 01 Darussalam Kepahiang. This study applied qualitative analysis techniques and conducted tests, questionnaires, and interviews as well as interviews to collect data. In this study, the writer used a non-probability sampling method in which 25 students from class VIII E were selected as a sample. This study found that the majority of students were encouraged to learn English vocabulary through this Duolingo application. Students can use the Duolingo app to learn English vocabulary which is easy to understand and students are more interested and excited about learning new words. Duolingo can also keep students from getting bored while learning and help them come up with new ways to learn. According to the findings of the research, it is possible to assume that students' perception of using Duolingo is positive and extremely helpful for enhancing vocabulary during learning English.

### Keywords:

*Duolingo, students perception, vocabulary*

## INTRODUCTION

The use of media in learning is an endeavor to provide quality and help the learning process. For students to enjoy engaging in educational activities. It aids in the dissemination of knowledge, simplifies the teaching process, and allows instructors to use the concepts of illustrated teaching and learning objects (Matra, 2020). Media is one means of information transmission between sources and receivers (Indrasari, Novita, & Megawati, 2018). According to Clarke et al. (2001), the online world has grown at an incredible rate over the past decade. Moreover, according to Naismith and Corlett (2017), the availability of technology, management, and connection are essential success criteria for incorporating movable studying into enrollments.

Teachers' use of new technology has enhanced learning settings and teaching methodologies (Ahmed, 2016). When teaching vocabulary to English students, every instructor should use technology to aid their learning. Utilizing the software is an integral component of interactive learning that is acceptable to students. Significant numbers of them are conversant with a range of modern technologies, such as tablets, software, and social networking sites; hence, they are likely to embrace their use for instructional purposes (Handrianto, Rasool, Rahman, Musta'in, and Ilhami, 2021).

Teachers should find a good way to get students interested in learning new words and phrases. Larsen and Freeman (2002) say that a teacher needs to use the right instructional strategy, media, and curriculum design when they want teach learners to be capable of using grammatical structures in conversation, they need to teach their students how grammatical structures in conversation. The fast growth of technology is being linked to the way people learn at this time. As technology gets better, it's used in the classroom more and has a big impact on how well students do in school (Jaelani, 2020). The huge percentage of the students either study English in class once every week or occasionally while in class. Besides from it, they lack sufficient English proficiency. Because of this, some people fear using English in their daily life. On the other hand, vocab is an essential component of language acquisition. It serves as a connection between speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Encouraging students develop their reading, listening, communicating, and producing abilities is crucial, according to Murcia (2001), since vocabulary is an integral aspect of the language. The educator had to be able to instruct vocabulary development in English so that students may acquire a lot of words and all 4 English skills. But if the educator does not have an effective instructional methods, the students will not learn. The learner have trouble remembering and memorizing language. According to the previous understanding, many educational games use technology that can be used to help teach and learn English. Ewa (2016) says that the games have benefits like making it easier to talk to people and getting people to use language in creative and natural ways. Also, Saputra et al. (2021) said that it is enough to increase motivation and support learner-centered approaches to help students improve their English outside of class.

Duolingo is a great way to learn a second language. Every way of teaching should come up with a set of methodological parts that make sure students learn well. Some of these things are keeping track of progress, motivation, feedback, and vocabulary. Garcia (2013) said that Duolingo is a free online language-learning service that helps people

learn languages and use the Web and apps to do their learning activities. Duolingo has several cutting-edge ways to learn a language. This can help students understand what they are learning, get interested in it, and enjoy studying. Duolingo lets language learners choose from some languages. Duolingo also tells you things like how many points you've earned, what patterns you've seen, and how much time you've spent.

According to Munday (2016), Duolingo is a thoroughly modern game. 80 percent of the application's operations are dependent on translations, transcription, and pronunciation of words. It also includes gamification aspects to inspire and support students. Various researchers had recognized Duolingo's effectiveness in English teaching activities. According to Krashen (2014), Duolingo is an app identity language learning tool that guides users through a series of tasks, the bulk of which are English version. Moreover, according to White (2017), Duolingo is a web-based learning software that enables anyone to attend affordable language training since they communicate. In comparison, Madrasah Tsanawiyah 01 Darussalam Kepahiang has a relatively small number of Duolingo users. This is because few students and teachers are acquainted with the Duolingo program. In which all Madrasah Tsanawiyah 01 Darussalam students resided in boarding. The perspectives of the students must be examined in order to determine whether this application may be recommended to other students who wish to learn confidently, as well as for alternate offline and online teaching methods at school.

Based on the perspective, the topic of this study is: What do students' perception about using Duolingo in learning vocabulary?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Vocabulary***

Learning a new language starts with its vocabulary. The definition of a term may be stated in several ways. Vocabulary is defined differently by various linguists. Vocabulary may be thought of as the words one must know to express oneself effectively. Vocabulary may be thought of in two ways: the words we use when we talk (expressive vocabulary) and the words we take in when we listen (receptive vocabulary) (Neuman&Dwyer, 2009, p. 385). It implies that pupils will be unable to effectively communicate if they do not have a sufficient vocabulary. Aisyah (2017) is correct in saying that vocabulary is the connecting tissue between the other four skills necessary to become fluent in a foreign language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In context, this suggests that expanding one's vocabulary is an important step toward being a fluent English speaker. Similarly, Coady and Huckin (1998) emphasized the value of expanding one's vocabulary. It is essential for each language learner since it is where the language begins and where it continues to develop.

On the other hand, it is well-known that students find word to be the most challenging component of second-language acquisition (Meara, 1980). This comment may be seen as evidence that language learners perceive the expansiveness of a vocabulary system as a source of difficulty. In contrast to phonology and syntax, word may not offer rules that students may follow to acquire new material and increase their understanding. In other words, it is unclear which rules apply to the acquisition of

vocabulary in a second language or which words should be examined first. In addition, Oxford (1990) states that an individual's comprehension is "far the largest and most complicated component in the process of learning any language, if it is language that is not one's native tongue or not, due to tens of thousands of distinct meanings." The fact that "vocabulary has historically constituted one of the grammatical structures examined in linguistic assessments" implies that even when language learners struggle with L2 vocabulary, they are nevertheless formalized with it while taking exams (Schmitt, 1999, 189). In addition, many students see the process of second-language acquisition (SLA) as essentially consisting of vocabulary expansion.

### ***Duolingo***

The students may play games and study English at the same time using one of the programs called Duolingo, which is utilized for technology. Severin Hacker and Luis Von Ahn launched Duolingo in (2012) as a commercial platform for learning languages on mobile devices and personal computers. It provides 68 distinct language courses across 28 different languages. According to the information provided on the Duolingo website, the application for Duolingo makes it simpler for instructors to instruct students in four skills. The four abilities are integrated into the learning activities in Duolingo in the form of questions, short texts to listen to, and transcribed material. To evaluate the student's capacity to communicate verbally, they are also required to record their pronunciation. Duolingo has many tools that can help its users learn a new language quickly and efficiently. These features include a list of words for each day, the ability to have discussions with other users so that users can share information, a store for purchasing Duolingo, and immersion for more advanced users. In addition, White (2014) states that Duolingo is a web - based learning tool that allows everyone to engage in fee languages sessions since users communicate for each other. According to Jaskova (2014), Duolingo is a free application (used on various devices, such as desktops, gadgets, and etc) that gives lessons in more 23 different languages and has around 200 million users. Duolingo is available on many different platforms.

The objective of Duolingo is for learners to comprehend and communicate a language. The users will be able to determine whether Duolingo emphasizes vocabulary mastery in the learning aspect of its platform. Based on this, Duolingo may serve as a means for pupils to enhance their vocabulary, and instructors have utilized it to assist students in memorizing vocabulary. Duolingo may help in gaining in mastering a new language via games so that they are not bored while studying. Various researchers that use Duolingo for teaching and studying English have provided some comparable performances. (Krashen, 2014) describes Duolingo as a web-based application that guides students through a variety of primarily translation-based challenges. Transcription, predictive text, and spellings are the three primary functions that the application provides for its users. Additionally, it incorporates aspects of gamification to excite and motivate students (Handrianto & Rahman, 2018; Munday, 2016).

In addition, Duolingo may construct assignments so that, alongside classroom learning, Duolingo can also help students improve their vocabulary using Duolingo at home. According to a study conducted by Munday (2016, p.93-94), 84.8% of A1 students

feel that homework using Duolingo is superior to other forms of homework. Moreover, since Duolingo is accessible everywhere and everywhere, it is simple for instructors to utilize it in both indoor and outdoor settings (Astarilla, 2018). It is also a media-learning language, allowing learners to study anywhere they have internet access and anytime they like. The research conducted by Munday (2016), titled "The Case for Using Duolingo as Part of The Language Classroom Experience," assessed the efficacy of Duolingo's incorporation with the conventional teaching approach, and it was used in university-level Spanish classes. The objective of the research was not to force students to learn Spanish in a short period but to facilitate their learning process by not imposing a time constraint. In conclusion, it was shown that Spanish learners appreciated the media and exceeded the requisite proficiency levels. In contrast to first-level students, who improved fast during the course, advanced students did not demonstrate sufficient growth. He advised that Duolingo be included in schools since students prefer it over homework.

## **METHOD**

This research adopted Quantitative research, according to Sugiyono (2015), is a study that examines a specific population or sample and typically employs a purposeful sampling approach. In this study, questionnaires were distributed to individuals who had used Duolingo to learn English in order to determine their opinions.

### **Participants**

Madrasah Tsanawiyah 01 Darussalam Kepahiang was the subject of this study. This study involved 82 second-grade students, 38 of whom were male and 44 of whom were female. Using a method of purposive sampling, 25 individuals from class VIII E were selected as a sample.

### **Instruments**

The writer used a non-probability sampling method. Quasi-sampling refers to a sampling strategy that does not offer each component or individual in the sample with a chance of acceptance as a sampling component (Sugiyono, 2018). This research uses a purposive sample with the following criteria in mind: (1) students who have chosen to learn English using the Duolingo program, and (2) users who are at least in junior high school at Madrasah Tsanawiyah, 01 Darussalam Kepahiang. The information obtained from the questionnaire was triangulated with the information obtained from the interviews.

### **Procedure**

The questions are designed to determine how students feel regarding using the duolingo apps to study vocab. The results were collected using a survey including five different Likert Scale questions. *Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neutral*, *Agree*, and *Strongly Agree* were the five alternatives. The questionnaire is composed of 17 questionnaire items: 1-5 are about the most efficient method for vocabulary acquisition, 6-9 are about Duolingo's drawbacks, 10-11 are about students' engagement, 12-15 are about Duolingo's benefits, and 16-17 are about students' ambition. In addition, the purpose

of the interview is to get more information from the students on their perceptions of using the Duolingo program as a tool for teaching and learning vocabulary.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section will provide an explanation of the findings of the research. There are five key aspects of students' interpretations when using the Duolingo technology as a media in vocabulary acquisition. These areas include appropriate method for vocabulary acquisition, students' enthusiasm on duolingo app in vocabulary, students' ambition on vocabulary learning, the strengths of Duolingo, and the negatives of Duolingo, as described below.

Table 1. *Efficient Method For Vocabulary Acquisition*

No	Statement	Total Score (S)	Maxs Score (N)	Percentage
1	Duolingo is easy to use in learning English.	103	125	82,4%
2	Duolingo is easy to use for learning English vocabulary.	111	125	88,8%
3	Duolingo can be accessed anywhere and anytime to learn English.	83	125	66,4%
4	Duolingo English vocabulary questions are interesting.	98	125	78,4%
5	Duolingo English vocabulary questions Easy to understand.	97	125	77,6%

On the basis of the following facts, the participants agreed that Duolingo is an effective way to learn English vocabulary. 82.4 percent of respondents agreed with the first statement that Duolingo was easy to use for learning English, according to the survey results. In response to the second question, 88.8% of respondents felt that it was easy to use Duolingo to acquire English vocabulary. In response to the third question, 66.4% of students agreed that Duolingo may be used to study English wherever and at any time. Fourthly, 78.4% of participants agreed that duolingo's English vocabulary tests were interesting. In addition, point 5 found that 77.6% of respondents thought Duolingo's English vocabulary exams were simple to understand. It shows that the students held favorable views.

The aforementioned questionnaire finding was also corroborated by interview results:

*“Yes, because the material in this application is delivered in an easy, interesting and not boring way and really helps me to learn English” (Respondent 1), “Of course, because the vocabulary given is not too difficult to remember and easy to understand for me to learn more English” (Respondent 3), and “Yes, because duolingo is easy to use to learn vocabulary in everyday life” (Respondent 5)*

According to the findings of the interviews, students believe that Duolingo is an useful tool for conveying vocabulary when learning English. Furthermore, five out of five participants feel that Duolingo improved them in understanding English vocabulary content.

Table 2. *Duolingo's Disadvantages*

No	Statement	Total Score (S)	Maxs Score (N)	Percentage
6	Duolingo in learning English is boring.	51	125	40,8%
7	Duolingo is less useful for learning in the classroom.	57	125	45,6%
8	Duolingo is difficult to use if there is no internet connection.	96	125	76,8%
9	Duolingo makes it difficult for me to learn English vocabulary.	45	125	36%

According to the table 2 that can be seen above, the participants did not agree with the most of the points that were made regarding the weaknesses of Duolingo; however, the respondents did agree with one statement. According to the results of the questionnaire, which revealed that 40.8% of the participants disagreed with the statement number 6 that Duolingo made learning English monotonous, it was clear that users did not feel that way. This indicates that the Dulingo software was not difficult to use. In response to the seventh statement, 45.6 percent of those surveyed did not think that Duolingo was less helpful for learning in the classroom. It indicates that the information learned in class may have been better retained with the aid of this software. The eighth statement differed a bit from the previous statement in that 76.8 percent of participants definitely agreed with the statement that it was difficult to utilize Duolingo if there was no internet connection. If there was no internet connection, it indicates that the students would have a tough time learning using Duolingo and would not be able to do so. 36% of the students disagreed with the assertion number 9, which claimed that using Duolingo made it more difficult for them to learn English vocabulary. It indicates that they did not find Duolingo to be challenging in their pursuit of English vocabulary knowledge. The conclusion from all of the assertions was that the students had positive opinions regarding some of the statements, but had negative opinions regarding one of the statements.

The results of the questionnaire were confirmed by arguments from the results of the interviews as follows:

*“No, because this application is very useful for students for learning in the classroom, especially in vocabulary but it must connect to internet” (Respondent 2), “No, because this application is very beneficial for learning English using this application, especially in vocabulary that I don't know” (Respondent 3), and “No, duolingo is useful for me because this app helps me to find out my mistakes when studying vocabulary” (Respondent 4)*

According to the findings above, the students believe that the disadvantages of Duolingo have both a negative and a positive impact on their ability to learn English

vocabulary. In fact, the findings indicate that all off the respondents disagreed with the notion that Duolingo was confusing to use and not beneficial for classroom learning while the remaining participant agreed with the statement.

Table 3. *Duolingo's benefits in learning*

No	Statement	Total Score (S)	Maxs Score (N)	Percentage
10	I am interested in learning to use Duolingo, because it makes it easier for me to understand the meaning of English vocabulary properly.	105	125	84%
11	Learning using Duolingo gives me the oportunity to be more active in learning	99	125	79,2%

The learners concluded, as can be shown in the following table 3, that utilizing the software Duolingo to learn English was interesting. The findings of the questionnaire survey number 10, which asked participants to indicate whether or not they agreed with the statement that they were excited to learn while using Duolingo because found it simple and easy for them to comprehend the meanings of English vocabulary well, also shown that 84% of respondents did agree with the statement. Additional statement is number 11, which indicates that 79.2% of participants believed that learning using Duolingo provides them with the ability to be more active in the learning process. It indicates that the pupils' attitudes and viewpoints were favorable.

The findings from the questionnaire were validated by arguments from the results of the interviews as follows:

*“Yes, because duolingo is very interesting to use in learning English for alpha generations like us to be more active”* (Respondent 2), *“ Of course, because I was given the convenience of using English and the vocabulary I got increased”* (Respondent 3), *“Yes, because this application helps me to add my English vocabulary little by little and makes me more active in speaking”* (Respondent 4)

According to the findings above, the students believe that using Duolingo may help them become more motivated to study English. Furthermore, five out of five participants felt that after using the Duolingo app, they got more enthused and driven to acquire English vocabulary.

Based on the results of the questionnaire survey number 12, which reveal that 84% of respondents agreed, the students came to the conclusion that utilizing the software Duolingo to learn English was a very simple process. This can be shown in table 4, which can be found below. The realization that using Duolingo to learn a language inspires me to commit new vocabulary to memory was brought up in statement number 13. It was showed that 78.4% of respondents agree with the statement that using Duolingo to enhance language abilities has helped them absorb new material at a deeper level. Eighty-eight point eight percent of learners believed that the program might provide a simple approach to recall a new term. Statement number 15 is an additional statement that says



that 76.8% of participants stated that learning English using Duolingo has offered the learners the opportunity to put their English skills to use in real-world circumstances.

Table 4. *Students' Engagement Using Duolingo*

No	Statement	Total Score (S)	Maxs Score (N)	Percentage
12	With Duolingo I can easily learn English vocabulary at home.	105	125	84%
13	Learning using Duolingo makes me memorize new vocabulary.	101	125	80,8%
14	Learning to use Duolingo makes me understand the learning material more deeply.	98	125	78,4%
15	Learning to use Duolingo allows me to apply my English skills in everyday life.	96	125	76,8%

The results of the questionnaire, as were shown above, were validated by arguments derived from the outcomes of the interviews, which can be summarized as follows:

*“Yes, because all the vocabulary on the Duolingo application is very easy to memorize and use to communicate in everyday life “ (Respondent 2), “Yes, because to be fluent in English must always be applied in daily life and with this application it really helps me in learning vocabulary” (Respondent 1), “Yes, because by learning to use sophisticated technology-based applications I can apply my English skills in speaking with my friends” (Respondent 5)*

According to the results shown above, the students believe that using Duolingo to learn English is beneficial, and five out of five participants agreed with the statement that using Duolingo to learn English enabled them to use their English ability in their day-to-day lives.

Table 5. *Students' Ambition while Using Duolingo*

No	Statement	Total Score (S)	Maxs Score (N)	Percentage
16	I feel more motivated to learn using Duolingo.	91	125	72,8%
17	Duolingo makes me more passionate about memorizing English vocabulary.	93	125	74,4%

The students all agreed, as can be seen in the table above, that Duolingo has the potential to motivate them to improve their English skills. The findings of the survey referred to in item number 16 indicated that 72.8% of strongly agree that using Duolingo inspires them to feel more enthusiastic to learn. The findings of question number 17 revealed that 74.4 percent of students concurred with the assertion that using Duolingo

made them more interested about learning English vocabulary. It indicates that the views held by the participants were acceptable.

The responses to the questionnaire were supported by assumptions from the interviews conducted as follows:

*“Yes, because it gives me new lessons in learning English using technological sophistication”* (Respondent 1), 5. *“Yes, because with the Duolingo application we can find out more about vocabulary that I didn't know before in English and inspire me to learn foreign languages”* (Respondent 2), and *“Yes, because the learning style in Duolingo is shown to be very interesting and can arouse my desire to go deeper into learning English vocabulary”* (Respondent 3).

According to the findings shown above, the students felt that learning English using the software Duolingo was interesting, and five out of five participants thought that studying through Duolingo provided them the chance to be more involved in their learning.

## **Discussion**

Based on the data, the researcher identified various perspectives about the effectiveness of Duolingo in teaching English vocabulary. All participants believed that Duolingo was easy to use and accessible anywhere for learning English, especially vocabulary. The teacher and student both have convenient access through laptop or mobile device. They consider Duolingo to be an event. According to Richards & Renandya (2002), vocabulary is a crucial part of language competence and provides a solid basis for how students speak, listen, read, and write. Students may build their own phrases using the vocabulary from the chapter they are studying. Acquiring vocabulary requires not just learning new words or vocabulary, but also their proper use. This viewpoint was reinforced by Muddin (2018), who said that instructors may easily deploy Duolingo in both indoor and outdoor settings since it is accessible everywhere.

In the other hand, the participants were interested in learning with Duolingo since it was simple to use and gave them the chance to be more active in learning English vocabulary. This perspective was reinforced by Wijaya, Yufriзал, and Kadaryanto (2015), who found that after using Duolingo, students felt greater enjoyment and interest with the game and were more engaged than before. Numerous pupils responded more positively than negatively to the application Duolingo. They concur that it is a technique to push them to learn English, as this application is a suitable method for learning a new context, and Duolingo's features are engaging and addictive. According to the research conducted by Astarila (2018), Duolingo provides engaging characteristics that can stimulate and engage students to learn English. The students agree that Duolingo makes it simple to practice and apply English in everyday situations.

The application of Duolingo inspired and motivated them during the learning process. Then, students' enthusiasm for learning vocabulary increased. Duolingo's incorporation of a gamification element into its learning process may serve to inspire and involve students in their studies (Munday, 2015, p.88). It is possible that the material learned through games is difficult to forget since the learners love the process. Several academics have investigated the cause of development while using Duolingo. Stringer

(2016) noted that Duolingo was an effective language-learning program due to its variety of assignment kinds, which drove students to achieve their goals and compete with their peers. Also, Chen (2016) noted that Duolingo, as a mobile gamification application that integrates game features in nearly every aspect of the app, engages learners in learning new vocabulary and gives fast feedback for learners by correcting their inaccurate responses. It demonstrates that the game-like element containing a variety of activities inspires students to study and enhance their language ability.

Duolingo is a language-learning software based on games. Students work on words and phrases by listening to, transcribing, speaking, and translating in a simple interface. The Duolingo application is also interactive and offers numerous training options, including listening, vocabulary, and pronunciation. This perspective was supported by Muddin (2018), who suggested that the software may be used to produce homework. However using Duolingo comes with a few disadvantages as well. When there is a connection to the internet, Duolingo will function properly. Regarding mobile technologies, the term "connectivity" refers to the various ways in which mobile devices are able to connect to one another wirelessly through the utilization of cellular and wireless access technologies. In addition, the Duolingo application will not be of any use to us when we are living in a rural place that does not have access to the internet. During the listening exercise, we are required to pay attention to what is being said and write it down. In addition, when students learn something new, they require additional explanation in order to comprehend it. Nonetheless, there are no grammatical explanations provided; hence, it is up to us to deduce how the rules of grammar work on our own. It seems like there ought to be a method to mix it together with vocabulary. This perception was corroborated by Muddin (2018), who noted that because Duolingo is an online media learning platform, it is difficult to apply in classrooms that do not have access to the internet. Whenever there is access to the internet or a wifi connection, Duolingo can be used, as stated by Koole (2009).

## CONCLUSION

This study sought to describe the students' perceptions of utilizing the duolingo software as a vocabulary-learning medium. According to the results and discussions above, Duolingo is one of the most effective vocabulary-learning tools. Students have a favorable opinion of this medium, indicating that it is highly engaging for them. Duolingo is simple to use and can be accessed anywhere and at any time, allowing users to simply comprehend and acquire English vocabulary. Duolingo piques their interest in learning because it is simple to use and allows students to become more involved in acquiring English language. Duolingo excites and motivates them during the learning process. They may quickly learn English vocabulary at home using the application, which improves their comprehension of the topic. On the other hand, this program still has a drawback, as the majority of users believe Duolingo is harder to use when they don't have an internet connection, as revealed by the unfavorable perceptions. Students' vocabulary will expand as a result of their direct practice with peers on the Duolingo forum. With a larger vocabulary, the effectiveness of learning will naturally grow. Inadvertently, your writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills have increased significantly as a result of your

practice with this application. The following are some proposals for future research on this topic this research centered on the study of foreign language in eighth grade junior high school. It is suggested that this study be replicated at other educational levels, such as junior high school, senior high school, and college, and with diverse English-learning skills.

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