

ABSTRACT

Fingki Akbar, 2026. "An Analysis of Students' Perceptions of Using Duolingo for Speaking Skills among Seventh-Semester Students of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu." Thesis, English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. Supervisor: Washlurachhim Safitri, M.Pd.

Speaking skill is an essential component of English language learning because it enables students to effectively communicate ideas, opinions, and information. However, students often encounter difficulties in speaking due to limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and limited opportunities to practice speaking orally. This study aimed to analyze students' perceptions of using Duolingo to improve their speaking skills and to identify its advantages and limitations. This study employed a descriptive qualitative design. The data were collected through a 40-item questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was administered to 15 seventh-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu and covered eight indicators: motivation, engagement, self-confidence, learning development, instructional design, learning environment, technological features, and accessibility. The findings showed that students generally had positive perceptions of using Duolingo for developing speaking skills. Duolingo was perceived as helpful in improving vocabulary, basic speaking fluency, self-confidence, motivation, and students' ability to learn and practice independently. However, Duolingo also has several limitations, including limited opportunities for authentic two-way communication, expressing personal opinions, receiving in-depth pronunciation feedback, and engaging in spontaneous communication. Therefore, Duolingo can be used as a supplementary tool for developing speaking skills; however, its use needs to be combined with direct communication activities to support the comprehensive development of students' speaking competence.

Keywords: Students' Perceptions, Duolingo, Speaking Skills, English Language Education, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning.



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Speaking skill is a crucial component in English language learning because it enables learners to communicate ideas, opinions, and information effectively in academic and social contexts. For students of the English Education Study Program, speaking competence is particularly important because it supports classroom interaction, teaching practice, and professional readiness as future English teachers. However, speaking is often considered one of the most difficult skills to master due to linguistic and psychological factors. Students commonly experience difficulties in speaking due to limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and insufficient opportunities for meaningful oral practice (Leong, 2019). Anxiety and low self-confidence also hinder students' speaking performance, especially in formal learning contexts.

In response to these challenges, the integration of technology in language learning becomes increasingly prominent, particularly through mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). Digital applications provide flexible access, interactive features, and learner autonomy that support language practice beyond the classroom. One widely used application in English learning is Duolingo, which offers pronunciation practice, vocabulary development, immediate feedback, and gamified learning activities. Mobile language learning applications such as Duolingo enhance students' motivation and engagement, which are essential factors in developing productive skills such as speaking (Polakova, 2020). Technology based language learning also encourages repeated practice and helps reduce learners' anxiety in speaking English.

Based on preliminary observations and informal interviews conducted with several seventh-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu, it was found that students had different perceptions of using Duolingo to improve their speaking skills. Some students stated that Duolingo helped them improve their pronunciation, increase their

vocabulary, and build confidence in speaking English. They also felt that the application allowed them to practice English more often because it could be accessed anytime and anywhere. However, other students argued that Duolingo mainly focuses on vocabulary and pronunciation exercises and provides limited opportunities for real communication practice. As a result, they felt that the application was less effective in helping them develop speaking skills in actual conversations. These different views indicate that students have different experiences and expectations regarding the use of Duolingo in learning speaking. Therefore, students' perceptions may influence how they use the application and how effective they perceive it to be in supporting their speaking skill development.

Students' perceptions play a vital role in the learning process because they influence motivation, learning behavior, and learning outcomes. Positive perceptions of learning media increase students' engagement and persistence, whereas negative perceptions lead to minimal use or resistance. Students' perceptions of learning activities and media are closely related to their motivation and willingness to participate actively in the learning process. In addition, perceptions of digital learning media determine the extent to which technology is effectively integrated into language learning, particularly in developing productive skills such as speaking.

Several previous studies investigate students' perceptions of using Duolingo in learning speaking skills. (Buriyanti, 2024) finds that students at State Junior High School 4 Langgam have positive perceptions of the use of Duolingo in speaking activities, especially in terms of motivation and pronunciation improvement. Similarly, (Kamsik, 2023) report that university students perceive Duolingo as an effective medium for developing English language skills because of its interactive and flexible features. Furthermore, (Fadhilah, 2025) reveal that students generally view Duolingo positively for improving speaking skills, although they note limitations related to the lack of real communicative interaction.

Considering the importance of speaking skills for English Education students and the increasing use of digital applications in language learning, it is

necessary to explore students' perceptions of using Duolingo for speaking skill development. This study focuses on seventh-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu because they have sufficient experience in learning speaking and using digital learning tools. Therefore, this study aims to analyze students' perceptions of using Duolingo for speaking skill in the seventh semester of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. The findings of this study provide insights for lecturers, students, and future researchers regarding the effective use of mobile applications in supporting speaking skill development.

1.2 Research Questions

The problems of the study were formulated as follows :

1. How is students' perception of using Duolingo for speaking skills in the seventh semester of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu?
2. What are the advantages and limitations of using Duolingo for speaking skills in the seventh semester of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu?

1.3 Objective of the Research

1. To analyze students' perceptions of using Duolingo for speaking skills in the seventh semester of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu.
2. To identify the advantages and limitations of using Duolingo for speaking skills in the seventh semester of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu.

1.4 Limitation of the Research

This study is limited to seventh-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu and focuses on analyzing students' perceptions of using Duolingo for speaking skills.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The expected benefits of this research are theoretical and practical.

1. Theoretically

This study contributes to the field of English language teaching by enriching the literature on students' perceptions of using mobile-assisted language learning applications, particularly Duolingo, for developing speaking skills.

2. Practically

a. For Lecturers

This research provides information about students' perceptions of using Duolingo for speaking skills, which may support lecturers in integrating digital applications into speaking instruction.

b. For Students

This research helps students understand the use of Duolingo as a supporting tool for developing speaking skills.

c. For Future Researchers

This research serves as a reference for future studies related to students' perceptions of using digital applications in speaking skill development.

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

a. Students' Perception

Students' perception refers to students' views, opinions, and responses toward the use of Duolingo in supporting their speaking skills

b. Duolingo

Duolingo is a mobile-assisted language learning application that provides interactive activities for practicing English, including pronunciation, vocabulary, and basic speaking exercises.

c. Speaking Skill

Speaking skill is the ability to express ideas, thoughts, and information orally in English with appropriate pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency.