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The Impact of Combining Duolingo and Discord on Students' Learning Engagement and Motivation

Achmad Danny Prasetyo¹, Ima Isnaini Taufiqur Rohmah², Ayu Fitriyaningsih³
^{1,2,3}Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni, IKIP PGRI
Bojonegoro

21120045@ikippgribojonegoro.ac.id¹, isnainiima@ikippgribojonegoro.ac.id²,
ayu_fitrianingsih@ikippgribojonegoro.ac.id³

Abstract—This study explores the impact of integrating Duolingo and Discord on students' learning engagement and motivation in the English Education Study Program at IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. A quasi-experimental method was employed involving two classes: Class A as the experimental group and Class B as the control group. Through pre-test and post-test measurements, alongside surveys and interviews, this research provides data-driven evidence on how these platforms foster improved participation, collaboration, and intrinsic motivation. The results suggest that the combined use of gamified language learning applications and social interaction platforms can significantly enhance students' speaking skills and classroom engagement.

Keywords— Duolingo, Discord, student engagement, learning motivation, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), gamification, collaborative learning

Abstrak—Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dampak dari pengintegrasian Duolingo dan Discord terhadap keterlibatan dan motivasi belajar siswa di Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Metode kuasi-eksperimen digunakan dengan melibatkan dua kelas: Kelas A sebagai kelompok eksperimen dan Kelas B sebagai kelompok kontrol. Melalui pengukuran pre-test dan post-test, bersama dengan survei dan wawancara, penelitian ini memberikan bukti berbasis data tentang bagaimana platform ini mendorong peningkatan partisipasi, kolaborasi, dan motivasi intrinsik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan gabungan dari aplikasi pembelajaran bahasa yang di-gamifikasi dan platform interaksi sosial dapat secara signifikan meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara dan keterlibatan siswa di kelas.

Kata kunci— Duolingo, Discord, keterlibatan siswa, motivasi belajar, pembelajaran bahasa dengan bantuan ponsel (MALL), gamifikasi, pembelajaran kolaboratif

INTRODUCTION

The 21st-century classroom increasingly relies on technology to support student engagement, particularly in language learning. Mobile applications and communication platforms have become central to pedagogical innovation. Duolingo, a gamified language learning app, and Discord, a collaborative communication tool originally used by gamers, are now being adopted in education to promote immersive and interactive learning experiences. These technologies align with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that motivation is enhanced when learners experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Sailer & Homner, 2019).

At IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, previous research has emphasized how digital tools can transform passive classrooms into student-centered learning environments. Rohmah (2022) demonstrated that interactive technology in EFL classes builds student language confidence. Fitrianingsih (2023) noted the empowering role of visual digital media in fostering learner autonomy. These local findings support the rationale for combining Duolingo and Discord to enhance motivation and learning engagement.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized a quantitative quasi-experimental design. The participants were fourth-semester students of the English Education Department at IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Two intact classes were selected purposively: Class A (experimental) and Class B (control). The experimental group used Duolingo for structured language exercises and Discord for collaborative discussions. The control group followed traditional classroom instruction.

Instruments:

- Pre- and post-speaking assessments
- Engagement and motivation questionnaires
- Interviews with students from both groups

Validation and Reliability:

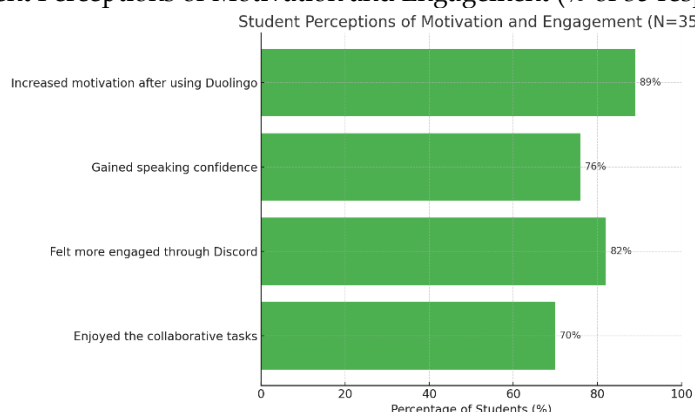
- Instruments were validated through expert review and a pilot test.
- Cronbach's alpha for the motivation scale = 0.84; engagement scale = 0.81.
- Triangulation ensured data credibility.

Duration: One month of implementation and evaluation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Pre- and Post-Test Results of Speaking Fluency (Experimental Group)

Indicator	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Gain
Fluency	2.6	3.9	+1.3
Pronunciation	2.4	3.7	+1.3
Vocabulary	2.7	4.1	+1.4
Grammar	2.5	3.8	+1.3

Figure 1. Student Perceptions of Motivation and Engagement (% of 35 respondents)

- 89% increased motivation after using Duolingo
- 76% gained speaking confidence
- 82% felt more engaged through Discord
- 70% enjoyed the collaborative tasks

Student Reflections (qualitative excerpt):

"Duolingo is fun and keeps me practicing every day. Discord makes me feel like I'm not learning alone." (Egania Arliza Putri/2B NIM 23120007)

"We made a study group on Discord and had voice calls to practice pronunciation. It helped my speaking confidence a lot." (Kukuh Arri Fauzi/2A NIM 23120053)

Cross-Referencing Institutional Research:

- Rohmah (2022) found that interactive technology in EFL improved students' willingness to communicate
- Junarti (2021) emphasized digital media's role in increasing vocabulary retention
- Hasanudin (2022) highlighted how multimedia reduced presentation anxiety
- Fitrianiingsih (2023) reported that structured digital content helped autonomous learning
- Nisa (2023) advocated for Discord as a peer collaboration tool in writing tasks

These findings affirm that both platforms contribute uniquely: Duolingo supports repetition and gamified progress, while Discord enables authentic social interactions – both crucial for language learning success.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that combining Duolingo and Discord significantly improves students' engagement and motivation in English language learning. Duolingo fosters daily practice through gamification, while Discord supports peer interaction and collaborative learning. The synergy of these platforms addresses both individual and social aspects of language acquisition. Based on these results, it is recommended that language educators integrate both tools into regular instruction to create immersive, autonomous, and collaborative learning environments.

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