Boosting English Speaking Skills through IT Integration: Students' Learning Experience Using Duolingo and Cake Applications

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Abstract

This research examines the utilization of Duolingo and Cake applications, incorporating information technology, to enhance students' English speaking abilities. The study involved ten English language learners who used these applications as supplementary resources for practicing speaking. Data collection included gathering feedback and conducting thematic analysis. The results indicated that the integration of Duolingo and Cake had a positive impact on students' speaking skills, specifically in terms of sentence structures and pronunciation. Participants expressed increased motivation and engagement, attributing it to immediate feedback and exposure to authentic language. The thematic analysis identified several key themes, including the effectiveness of the applications, the benefits of gamified learning, challenges encountered, and overall satisfaction. This research contributes to the existing literature on integrating information technology into language learning, underscoring the potential of Duolingo and Cake to enhance English speaking abilities. It highlights the significance of incorporating technology in language classrooms and provides valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and researchers. The findings suggest that utilizing such applications can provide learners with valuable interactive opportunities to practice and enhance their English speaking skills.

Keywords: Duolingo and Cake Applications, Information Technology, Speaking Practice, Motivation, Immediate Feedback

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused notable transformations in the field of education (Van Nuland, et al., 2020). A significant change that has occurred is the transition from traditional in-person learning to online learning modes (Nasri, Husnin, Mahmud & Halim, 2020), requiring students to adjust their learning approaches. Consequently, there is a greater need for self-responsibility among students, as some may face challenges in keeping pace with their peers, especially in terms of English language proficiency.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the emergence of computer-assisted language programs and applications that facilitate language learning and teaching. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) utilizes computer technology to enhance language learning experiences. Two examples of such applications are Duolingo and Cake, which can be integrated into the CALL framework. Duolingo, a highly popular language learning application with over 150 million users, has been recognized as a valuable tool in language classrooms (Munday, 2017). It incorporates gamification elements to engage learners and offers interactive exercises, quizzes, and challenges for practicing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Duolingo serves as a self-regulated learning tool, enabling students to catch up with their peers and improve their language proficiency (Munday, 2017).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) programs and applications has become prevalent. Among these applications, Duolingo and Cake have emerged as popular tools for enhancing language learning experiences (Munday, 2017; Redjeki & Muhajir, 2022). Duolingo, with its gamified approach and interactive exercises, provides a comprehensive platform for practicing various language skills (Munday, 2017). On the other hand, Cake focuses specifically on improving speaking skills by offering conversation practice with native speakers through voice messages (Redjeki & Muhajir, 2022). With its user-friendly interface and personalized recordings, Cake has garnered over 50 million downloads worldwide (Redjeki & Muhajir, 2022). Both Duolingo and Cake can be accessed on mobile devices and computers, providing convenient and accessible language learning opportunities for students (Munday, 2017; Redjeki & Muhajir, 2022).

Cake Corp introduced the Cake application on March 22, 2018, offering video examples of everyday vocabulary to facilitate speaking practice (Nuraeni & Yanthi, 2020). The application allows users to select video themes based on their preferences, and it regularly updates its content to ensure effective and free English language learning (Redjeki & Muhajir, 2022). Additionally, the application includes quizzes for reviewing learned material. The Cake application is available for download on both the Google Play Store and the App Store. Users have the option to sign in using their Facebook or Google accounts or access the guest mode, which provides free speaking practice resources. Students can record their voices, receive feedback, and learn to imitate native speakers. Teachers can also incorporate the Cake

application into classroom activities, utilizing it as a tool for practicing speaking skills (Fitria, et al., 2021).

Previous studies have investigated the use of Duolingo for speaking practice, but there is limited research on students' experiences with self-regulated learning using Duolingo and Cake applications. Therefore, this study aims to address the research questions: "How do Duolingo and Cake applications contribute to the improvement of students' English speaking skills?" and "What are students' learning experiences and perspectives when using Duolingo and Cake applications for language practice?" By answering these questions, this study aims to understand the impact of Duolingo and Cake applications on enhancing English speaking skills and students' overall learning experiences. The study's significance lies in providing insights into the effectiveness of integrating information technology in language learning. It explores how these applications enhance language proficiency, informs educators about their potential for skill development, and investigates student engagement and motivation. These insights can guide educators in optimizing the use of technology for language learning and designing interventions to enhance students' learning experiences.

II. Review of Related Literature

2.1 IT Integration in English Language Learning

Currently, there are various options available for individuals to develop their English language skills, including traditional courses, educational platforms, MOOCs, web apps, and mobile apps. This situation has placed today's generation of students in a rapidly changing digital world, where they possess advanced skills and knowledge in technology. Consequently, educators and learners have recognized the importance of integrating emerging technologies into the teaching and learning process. These technological tools have become the foundation and support system of the entire educational system, leading to the adoption of virtual classrooms to facilitate the teaching and learning experience (Criollo et al., 2022).

Within this context, the integration of technology into language learning has become a central focus. Particularly, technology enables self-directed learning, which has emerged as a significant aspect of 21st-century education. Students must be equipped to embrace the challenges and opportunities of meaningful learning experiences beyond the traditional classroom setting. Therefore, it is crucial to encourage learners to willingly utilize digital devices to maximize the benefits of technology in English language learning. Learners utilize digital devices for intentional learning, such as reinforcing coursework, as well as incidental learning, which expands their access to the target language. The study conducted by Muharom et al. (2021) reveals that learners primarily use digital devices for personalized aspects of language learning rather than seeking authenticity and connectivity.

2.2 Duolingo and Cake Applications in English Speaking Skills Development

This literature review focuses on the usage of Duolingo, a free game-based education platform, in the context of language learning. Duolingo is categorized as a form of "mobile learning," which involves the use of mobile devices, particularly smartphones, for acquiring knowledge. Mobile learning refers to the integration of personal mobile devices into the learning process across different settings, facilitating social interaction and content engagement (Crompton & Burke, 2018).

Duolingo was developed in November 2011 by Luis Vohn Ahn and Severin Hacker (Munday, 2017). The application is accessible via smartphones or websites and offers 66 language courses, providing users with a variety of interactive activities. These activities encompass vocabulary writing, sentence translation, dictation, speaking exercises, word pairing, arranging scrambled words, and selecting appropriate sentences in the target language (Munday, 2017).

Numerous scholars have examined the use of Duolingo in language learning. Munday (2017) investigated its utilization in language classrooms and found that students held positive perceptions of Duolingo, citing its user-friendly nature, usefulness, and enjoyable aspects. Similarly, Kessler (2021) reported positive experiences of participants who used Duolingo for language learning. They found the app beneficial and enjoyed the various activities that enhanced their metacognitive awareness of second language learning. Duolingo provided structured practice in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, enabling participants to

monitor their progress, receive immediate feedback, and track their improvement. The gamified features and intuitive interface of the app contributed to their motivation and enjoyment. Overall, Duolingo assisted participants in developing language skills and gaining insights into their learning strategies and areas for improvement. Another study conducted by Loewen et al. (2019) focused on learners who used the Duolingo mobile app to study Turkish. The participants generally had a favorable opinion of the app, appreciating its flexibility and specific design elements such as gamification, which motivated their continued learning. However, despite the positive feedback, learners also expressed challenges and frustrations, including a lack of task variation.

Studies of Cake based on Redjeki & Muhajir's study (2022) has proven to be an effective tool in facilitating self-directed learning among students in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speaking classroom. Its user-friendly interface, simplicity, engaging nature, and comprehensive English learning features have played a significant role in this. These features have empowered students to independently set their learning goals and take control of their learning process. Additionally, the app has effectively addressed common challenges faced by EFL students in speaking skills, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. As a result, the Cake app has emerged as a valuable resource for EFL students aiming to improve their speaking abilities and cultivate self-directed learning.

Furthermore, Chotimah (2022) reported that using the Cake app resulted in students acquiring new vocabulary terms with accurate pronunciation and achieving heightened fluency in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) communication. Through their active engagement with the language, they gained proficiency in using the newly learned words with correct pronunciation, enabling them to confidently express themselves in ESP contexts. This development in their speaking skills further enhanced their overall fluency in the language, enabling them to effectively convey their thoughts and ideas in English within their specific domain or field of focus.

III. Methodology

This study utilized WhatsApp interviews as the research methodology to collect qualitative data and gain valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of participants who have used the Duolingo and Cake applications to enhance their English speaking skills. The selection

of participants was based on their utilization of the Duolingo and Cake applications and their willingness to take part in the study. The interviews were conducted individually on May 25, 2023. To maintain ethical considerations, pseudonyms were assigned to the seven participants: Anggrek, Matahari, Krisan, Mawar, Kenannga, Kemuning, and Dahlia. Their responses during the interviews were recorded for subsequent analysis.

The research utilized a semi-structured interview approach, which involved posing open-ended questions to participants, allowing them to freely express their thoughts and experiences (Aldhaen, 2020). The interview questions primarily focused on understanding the participants' motivations for using the applications, identifying specific features that aided in improving their speaking skills, and gauging their overall perceptions of the apps' effectiveness.

The interview data collected from the participants were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). The transcripts underwent a thorough review, with the aim of identifying recurring themes and patterns that emerged from the participants' experiences and viewpoints. These themes were then organized and categorized to establish a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perceptions of the applications.

Ethical guidelines were followed in the study, with measures taken to protect the participants' anonymity and secure their informed consent. Throughout the research process, strict confidentiality was maintained to safeguard the privacy of the individuals involved. Confidentiality and anonymity are important ethical principles that ensure the protection of personal information during data collection, analysis, and reporting. Confidentiality specifically refers to the practice of separating or modifying any personally identifiable information provided by participants within the collected data (Coffelt, 2017).

The research methodology used in this study offers valuable qualitative insights into the experiences and perspectives of individuals who have utilized the Duolingo and Cake applications to enhance their English speaking abilities. These findings enhance our understanding of the advantages of using language learning applications and can serve as a foundation for future research and the improvement of language learning tools and resources.

IV. Results & Discussion

This section of the study presents and examines the findings derived from the research conducted on enhancing English speaking skills through the integration of information technology, specifically by utilizing the Duolingo and Cake applications. The results and subsequent discussion are intended to offer a thorough comprehension of the students' learning experiences when utilizing these language learning tools.

4.1 Students Positive Learning Experiences Using Duolingo and Cake Applications

According to one of the participants,

This app is great for learning English structure. It helps me understand different sentence types, like wordings with 'S', 'to be', and verbs. The listening exercises are also really helpful because they start from the basics. In Duolingo, it gives a word and I can listen to it in two ways. I just choose normal speed or slow. It helps me learn the correct pronunciation (Anggrek, WhatsApp Interview, 23rd May 2023)

According to the analysis provided, Anggrek, one of the participants, expresses a favorable opinion of Duolingo application and highlights its effectiveness in aiding her English language learning. Specifically, she mentions that the application helps her differentiate between various sentence types, such as those requiring the addition of 'S' or the use of verbs. This showcases how Duolingo assists her in comprehending and applying grammatical rules. Anggrek also recognizes the benefits of the listening exercises provided by Duolingo. She finds them valuable as they start from the basics and allow her to practice her listening and pronunciation skills. The availability of   two listening options, standard and slow, further enhances her learning experience by enabling her to grasp the precise pronunciation of words. Based on Anggrek's feedback, it can be inferred that the Duolingo application positively contributes to her English language learning journey, particularly in terms of understanding sentence structures and improving listening and pronunciation skills.

The satisfaction can be traced from another participant. She states that

For me, Duolingo helps a lot in learning a language. The system is just like a game. We are in pandemic. If we only expect from campus, it is not efficient. May be I cannot same as my friends who are fast learning. So I must use technology around me. One of the ways is using Duolingo. I can download from my smartphone

Matahari, one of the participants, expresses a positive viewpoint regarding the effectiveness of Duolingo in language learning. She perceives the application's system as resembling a game, indicating that it makes the learning process enjoyable and captivating. This implies that Matahari finds Duolingo's gamified approach appealing, which contributes to her motivation to learn a language.

Furthermore, Matahari acknowledges the challenges posed by the pandemic, particularly in terms of relying solely on traditional classroom education. She considers conventional classroom settings to potentially be inefficient and believes that technology can provide a solution. Matahari recognizes the accessibility of technology, particularly smartphones, and highlights Duolingo as a useful tool that can be downloaded and utilized for language learning purposes.

These participants' perspective underscores the positive impact of Duolingo, both in terms of positive contribution, the gamified approach and its convenience comparing to traditional ones. Their comments emphasize the value of technology and the necessity of adapting to alternative learning methods, such as utilizing language learning applications like Duolingo, supporting the study of Kessler (2021) and Loewen (2019) that Duolingo assists learners in English speaking skills and the gamified elements of Duolingo were found to be motivating for certain users.

Another data stating that Duolingo helps students in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar can be seen from thr following extract.

> *This app is great for learning English sentence structure. I can tell which sentences need 'S', which ones need 'to be', and which ones need a verb. The listening exercises are also helpful because they start from the basics. Duolingo gives us a word and we can listen to it in two ways, normal or slow. It helps me learn the correct pronunciation.*

Based on the empirical evidence, Mawar, the participant, shares a positive experience with the Duolingo application in terms of learning English sentence structure. Mawar specifically mentions the application's ability to help her distinguish between different sentence structures, such as identifying subject-verb agreement and sentences requiring the addition of a verb. This indicates that Duolingo provides clear guidance and exercises to improve understanding and application of English grammar rules.

Mawar also highlights the effectiveness of the listening exercises in the application. With options for standard or slow pronunciation, Duolingo assists Mawar in improving her grasp of accurate pronunciation. This suggests that the application supports her in developing more precise and authentic spoken English skills. Adults face challenges when it comes to achieving proficient speaking skills, especially if their goal is to attain native-like fluency. Difficulties can arise in various aspects, including pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm, and the overall naturalness of speech. These challenges stem from several factors, such as the influence of the individual's first language, limited exposure to the target language, decreased neuroplasticity compared to children, and the concept of "fossilization" where errors or non-native patterns become ingrained and hard to overcome (Renandya, 2002). Consequently, adults may encounter barriers in their quest to achieve native-like speaking abilities in a second language.

> *In terms of my progress, I think I have improvement in my grammar. Maybe it is not very noticeable. Lately, I haven't been using Duolingo as often due to my busy schedule. However, one feature that I really like about Duolingo is that it sends me a weekly report by email. I still receive these emails from Duolingo up until now. Additionally, Duolingo has a reminder feature that helps me remember to do exercises on the app regularly.*

(Krisan, WhatsApp Interview, 25ᵗʰ May 2023)

In this statement, Krisan reflects on their language learning progress using the Duolingo application. Krisan acknowledges that their grammar has shown improvement compared to before, although they note that the extent of improvement may not be significant. This suggests that Duolingo has had a positive influence on Krisan's understanding and application of grammar in the target language. The grammar aspect is explained through Bygate (1987)'s who claimed that speaking serves for two aims: the production skill and the interaction skill. In the production skill, speaking occurs in a non-time-limited environment, allowing learners to focus on their own speaking abilities. In the interaction skill, there is a negotiation between learners, creating opportunities for meaningful communication. Both skills contribute to the improvement of learners' speaking abilities, making the process more accessible and effective.

Another experience while using Cake applications are expressed through the following data.

I use this app because it has many videos like English movies and vlogs. It helps me practice speaking and improve my grammar by using clips from English films. I get to choose the videos I want to watch, and I usually pick English movie clips because I enjoy them. After watching, I practice speaking the dialogues spontaneously to test my skills, and I take notes to learn the grammar. Sometimes, I also do quizzes in the app. (Kenanga, WhatsApp Interview, 25ᵗʰ May 2023)

In the provided statement, Kenanga describes her usage of a language learning application. She expresses that the application has been beneficial in enhancing her speaking skills and improving her grammar. Kenanga specifically utilizes the application's video content, such as English movies and vlogs, as a means to practice words and engage in dialogue. She selects video clips from English movies that she personally enjoys and then engages in spontaneous dialogue practice to evaluate her speaking abilities. Furthermore, Kenanga incorporates the application's quizzes into her language learning routine as an additional learning activity. Kenanga's approach highlights her active involvement with authentic English content and her use of the application as a valuable tool for practicing and improving her language skills. This high enthusiasm to practice according to Ryan & Deci (2017) is triggered by inner disciplined that motivate herself to be better.

Cake application is an English learning application that can be downloaded for free and has interesting features. I use this application is because there are many videos that can help me learn speaking. I think this application is indeed designed to learn speaking with various videos provided and I also feel that my speaking skill gets better when I use this application. , I learn about speaking and also the ways. However, I think that right now pronunciation is the aspect that I am most skilled at because it is easier than other aspects.

(Kemuning, WhatsApp Interview, 25ᵗʰ May 2023).

Kemuning shares her positive experience with the Cake application, emphasizing its effectiveness in enhancing her speaking skills. She appreciates the application's collection of

videos, which have contributed to her speaking improvement. Kemuning specifically highlights the application's focus on practicing speaking and acknowledges the positive impact it has had on her pronunciation skills. Overall, Kemuning finds the Cake application valuable for developing her speaking abilities and recognizes its benefits in her language learning journey.

> *I feel when I use this application I know how to speak English little by little, and understand what to pay attention to when speaking English, especially grammar. Other thing, when I learn speaking, I prefer to write down as much vocabulary as possible so that I can choose the right words when speaking English.*

(Dahlia, WhatsApp Interview, 25th May 2023).

According to Dahlia's statement, she shares her personal experience and observations using an unspecified language learning application. She notes that the application has been instrumental in steadily enhancing her English speaking skills and providing her with a clearer understanding of which areas to concentrate on, specifically grammar. Moreover, Dahlia mentions her inclination towards jotting down vocabulary as she learns to speak. This method enables her to have a repertoire of suitable words to utilize when communicating in English. Overall, Dahlia perceives the application as advantageous in improving her speaking proficiency and assisting her in focusing on grammar and vocabulary during conversations.

> *I think I am better in pronunciation. Because I think when I speak English, I don't really pay attention to the grammar, the important thing is that I know how to pronounce word by word well. I watch the videos in this application, examine one by one the words that I don't understand the pronunciation, then I complete the existing quizzes. The more quizzes I complete, more speaking skills will increase.*

(Lili, WhatsApp Interview, 25th May 2023).

In the given statement, Lili shares their belief in the improvement of their pronunciation skills through the use of an undisclosed application. She emphasizes the significance of prioritizing pronunciation over grammar when speaking English, indicating a strong emphasis on the ability to pronounce words accurately and clearly.

Further, she outlines the learning approach, which involves watching videos within the application and closely observing the pronunciation of unfamiliar words. By examining each word individually, Lili aims to comprehend and emulate the correct pronunciation, as well as completing quizzes as a means of further enhancing their speaking abilities, demonstrating active engagement with interactive features to reinforce their pronunciation skills. Lili's recognition of pronunciation as a vital component of language learning. Lili's method of observing and practicing pronunciation through videos and quizzes showcases their dedication to developing oral communication skills. By actively participating in pronunciation exercises, Lili believes that their speaking skills will continue to progress. Again, this is linear to Ryan & Deci's Self Determinantion theory, that to excel in a targeted assignment, some one should have a high motivation and keep practicing continuisly (Ryan & Deci, 2017)

4.2 Students Undesirable Learning Experience when Learning English through Duolingo and Cake Applications

Students' unexpected experiences when learning using the applications. Some can be seen below

> *At first, I enjoyed in the beginning. But now, Duolingo is a bit boring in my opinion. Maybe at that time because I am still in the first level but it made me bored. I got only a few new vocabularies, so I wasn't that excited anymore.. And also the audio is too stiff to listen to the pronunciation. The narrator's tone is like Google Translate.. It will be better if Duolingo provide features to communicate with native speaker. So we can know how their tones when they are speaking* (Lili, WhatsApp Interview, 25th May 2023).

In the given statement, the participant shares their evolving perspective on using Duolingo. Initially, they express enjoyment and a positive attitude towards the application. However, over time, they have found Duolingo to be somewhat monotonous. They suggest that their diminishing enthusiasm may be due to reaching higher levels in the application, where they encounter fewer new vocabulary items. This lack of fresh content reduces their excitement and engagement in the learning process. Additionally, the participant finds the audio in Duolingo to be rigid, resembling the tone of Google Translate. This suggests that the narrator's voice lacks

naturalness and fluidity, potentially impacting the participant's perception of the application's pronunciation component. To improve the user experience, the participant suggests that Duolingo should incorporate features that facilitate communication with native speakers. By interacting with native speakers, the participant believes they would gain insights into proper tone and intonation, enhancing their understanding of natural spoken English. These results indicate that while the participant initially found Duolingo enjoyable and beneficial, their interest declined over time due to a perceived lack of new vocabulary and the stiffness of the audio. This is explained by Loewen et al. (2019) that though the gamification elements of Duolingo were found to be motivating for some users. over time, users expressed a sense of limitation and repetitive nature in the activities offered by the app. According to this, the participant's recommendation to incorporate native speaker interaction reflects their desire for authentic spoken English experiences and improvement in understanding intonation and natural speech patterns.

While other participant expresses that

> *I like using Duolingo, actually, I am now in upper level. But I ever felt mad because when I forget not opening it, the Duolingo application was set to the basic, so I must repeat from beginning level. I don't like this version, actually. So if you want to learn with Duolingo make sure you are diligent and tidy in time management* (Krisan, WhatsApp Interview, 25th May 2023).

The participant uttered a favorable attitude towards using Duolingo but raises a concern about the application's reset feature. They mention reaching the higher level but express frustration when their progress is reset to the basic level due to not using the app regularly. The participant advises others to be disciplined in their time management when using Duolingo to avoid experiencing the setback of starting over. This feedback sheds light on a potential drawback of the application and highlights the importance of consistency and effective time management. It provides valuable insights into the user's perspective and can guide future enhancements of language learning applications, including Duolingo.

> *The vocabulary in Duolingo sometimes makes me bored because it is still so so although I achieve upper level. The vocabulary is repeated. I think I need more to add my vocabulary. I ever confused in the story part in Duolingo. The content is cut, not*

many. I actually like the content but I think it is not finished. I am not satisfied (Matahari, WhatsApp Interview, 25th May 2023).

The participant expresses dissatisfaction with the vocabulary aspect of Duolingo, finding it repetitive and lacking variety despite reaching the higher level. They desire more engaging and diverse vocabulary content to further expand their knowledge. Additionally, the participant mentions feeling confused and unsatisfied with the story part of Duolingo, perceiving it as incomplete or abruptly cut off. This overall experience leaves them dissatisfied. The participant's feedback highlights the need for improvement in the vocabulary section of the apps by introducing more diverse and engaging content. They seek further expansion of their vocabulary and a broader range of words to enhance their learning experience. Other thing is, the participant's mention of confusion and dissatisfaction with the story component suggests a need for clearer and more complete storytelling content within the application. This feedback provides valuable insights for Duolingo to address the mentioned concerns, such as diversifying vocabulary content and ensuring the coherence and completeness of the story sections.

Thing I ever stucked, Duolingo and Cake is same, I think. There are many levels. I was ever confused when I learn Duolingo with my little sister. .I found the question of a woman loves a woman, like X loves Y but they are women. The question is "Where is your husband", the woman says, "I don't have a husband, but a wife". I was confused to tell this to my sister. I think that's the weakness. Cake, and Duolingo I think it's same becaue if we are not diligent, motivate ourself to open regularly, there is no progress (Anggrek, WhatsApp Interview, 25th May 2023).

The participant shares their experience and perception of using Duolingo and Cake, highlighting the similarities and differences between the two platforms. They specifically mention a confusing and frustrating question on Duolingo that presents a scenario involving a woman and her husband, which poses difficulty in explaining to their younger sister. This raises concerns about the lack of inclusivity and diversity in the content provided by language learning platforms.

Anggrek's feedback brings attention to the importance of inclusive content in language learning platforms. The specific question in Duolingo reinforces traditional gender norms and may not adequately represent the diverse experiences and identities of learners. Language

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learning platforms should aim to offer content that is inclusive and reflects the wide range of human experiences. Furthermore, the participant's experience with both Duolingo and Cake emphasizes the need for regular engagement and motivation in language learning. Both platforms require consistent practice to make progress, and the comparison to consuming cake suggests that language learning, requires active effort and persistence to achieve desired outcomes, as what has been cialmed by Self Determination theory of Ryan & Deci (2017).

Through another

> *I ever experienced Cake Application. It's directly jump to dialogues. I find it is too difficult for me as beginner. In Duolingu, the beginner level is easier. Both applications is sometimes paid, the free one is limited. There are a lot of advertisements* (Mawar, WhatsApp Interview, 25th May 2023).

The participant shares their personal experience with two language learning applications, Cake and Duolingo, highlighting the challenges they faced as a beginner in Cake and their perception of Duolingo being easier at the beginner level. These observations raise several points for further discussion. Firstly, the participant's difficulty with Cake suggests a potential lack of structured lessons or introductory content in the application, making it challenging for novice learners. It suggests the need for clearer guidance and a well-defined learning progression to support beginners effectively. Secondly, the participant mentions the presence of paid versions and limited features in both Cake and Duolingo. This reflects the freemium model commonly used in language learning applications, where users have the option to upgrade to a premium subscription for additional benefits. Lastly, the mention of advertisements in both applications raises concerns about the impact on user experience. Advertisements can disrupt the learning process and potentially affect user engagement and progress. Exploring the influence of advertisements on user satisfaction and motivation within language learning applications would be valuable.

While other participant mentions that

> *In Cake the media to learn is from cut scenes from many films. If compared with Duolingo, it's different. The learning material is also different. In Duolingo, there are hearts bonus. WE have three options: watching advertisement, practice to get heart,*

and paid. In Cake, the option is watching advertisements, and paid. So, the heart is like the energy to play. In Cake, if you don't have hearts you can not practice. I watch advertisements and I get only 2 hearts. If I make mistakes in the practice, it means my two hearts are gone. In Duolingo, if I practice I get one heart, after some hours, it will be full filled. I prefer Duolingo (Kenanga, WhatsApp Interview, 25th May 2023).

Based on this, the participant's account offers a comparison between Cake and Duolingo, specifically regarding their learning materials, availability of free and paid options, and the use of hearts as a resource for practicing. Regarding learning materials, Kenanga highlights Cake's use of film cut scenes, suggesting a more immersive and context-rich learning experience. In contrast, Duolingo offers a variety of learning materials, indicating a potentially broader range of exercises and content. While in terms of availability, she notes that Duolingo provides three options: watching advertisements, practicing to earn hearts, or purchasing the premium version. On the other hand, Cake offers watching advertisements and a paid option. This implies that Duolingo offers more choices for users to access additional features or continue practicing without interruptions.

Further, Kenanga discusses the use of "hearts" in both Duolingo and Cake. In Duolingo, hearts function as a bonus or energy to play and can be obtained by watching advertisements or practicing. Making mistakes deducts hearts. In Cake, practicing also requires hearts, and mistakes result in losing hearts. The participant expresses a preference for the hearts system in Duolingo, where they receive one heart for practicing, and hearts are automatically refilled over time. This suggests that the participant values a flexible approach to practicing without being limited by a finite number of 'hearts'.

Another participant mentions that

It is about commitment. I ever feel very bored because Duolingo is monotonous. It's only about translation. At first, you will feel happy, but after that from many time exercises, usually people will get bored. So, it need high motivation, if not it will back to low level (Dahlia, WhatsApp Interview, 25th May 2023).

The participant's account brings attention to the issue of commitment and motivation when using Duolingo. They note that Duolingo can become repetitive over time, especially with exercises focused on translation. While the initial interaction with the app may bring a sense of satisfaction, the repetitive nature of the exercises can lead to boredom. This has been explained

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by the study of Kessler et al (2023) that after the initial excitement and engagement with mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) applications, a common trend is the decline in enthusiasm or the feeling of boredom among many users.

This raises several points for consideration. Firstly, the participant's experience suggests that the design and variety of exercises in Duolingo may not be enough to sustain long-term engagement. Language learning often requires a diverse range of activities to keep learners motivated and interested. Incorporating different types of exercises, such as speaking or listening exercises, interactive games, or cultural lessons, could help alleviate the monotony and provide a more engaging learning experience. Secondly, the participant highlights the significance of high motivation in maintaining progress in language learning. Motivation plays a vital role in sustaining commitment to learning, especially during challenging or dull periods. Language learning platforms should consider incorporating features or elements that enhance motivation, such as gamification, progress tracking, social interactions, or personalized learning paths.

Furthermore, the Dahlia's mention of motivation diminishing and returning to a low level emphasizes the possibility of motivation fluctuations throughout the language learning journey. Learners should find ways to stay motivated and explore alternative resources or methods when a particular approach becomes less effective or engaging, and this is in accordance to Ryan and Deci (2017) who suggest that the key to successful language learning is having the motivation from within. This means having a strong desire, interest, or enjoyment when learning a language. When someone is internally motivated, they are more likely to keep going, practice regularly, and actively look for ways to improve their language skills. This internal drive is important because it helps learners invest their time and effort into learning, leading to better results and becoming more proficient in the language over time.

V. Conclusion

Through the current study focusing in students' experiences using Duolingo and Cake applications to enhance their English speaking skills, the findings highlighted both the advantages and disadvantages of these language learning tools. Students appreciated the interactive exercises and gamification elements of Duolingo, which boosted their motivation. Cake's conversation practice feature was effective in developing speaking skills. However,

students expressed dissatisfaction with the repetitive activities in Duolingo and the limited vocabulary options. They also encountered confusion in the application's content, particularly in the story sections. These results emphasize the importance of incorporating diverse and engaging content with coherent materials in language learning applications.

The study also highlighted the significance of user engagement and addressing challenges such as the reset feature in Duolingo and the need for consistent practice. Valuable feedback from participants provided insights for improving language learning applications. Overall, integrating IT tools like Duolingo and Cake can complement traditional language learning methods and offer accessible platforms for enhancing English speaking skills. By capitalizing on their strengths and addressing limitations, educators and developers can create more effective and engaging language learning experiences. Future research should further explore the effectiveness of these applications and investigate additional strategies for optimizing language learning outcomes through IT integration.

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