**Enhancing Seventh Grade Students' Speaking Skills through Duolingo Application Integration: A Case Study at** **SMP Negeri 9 Medan**

**Dyan Wulan Sari HS1\*, Mikael Sinaga2**

**1,2 Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas**

[sinagamichael37@gmail.com](mailto:sinagamichael37@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

This research was mainly conducted in order to prove that Duolingo application could improve speaking skill of the seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Medan in the Academic Year of 2022/2023 and to describe their responses towards the implementation of Duolingo application in the processes of learning speaking skill. The quantitative data analysis showed the mean score increase from 55,29 in Pre-test with 13% of the students got score ≥ 70, in Formative-test 69,54 with 52% of the students got score ≥ 70, and 78,09 in Post-test with 84% of the students got score ≥ 70. This is Classroom Action Research (CAR). The research findings showed that teaching speaking skill by using Duolingo application to the seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Medan could improve their speaking skill. It is advisable that English teachers try applying Duolingo application in teaching speaking skill.

**Keywords:** *Speaking skill, Duolingo application, Classroom Action Research*

**Introduction**

Speaking is one of the language skills which is used to communicate and interact in daily life. Fulcher (2003:23) states that to communicate with others we need the verbal use of language. It is clear that speaking occurs between a speaker and a listener. That means there must be at least two people in speaking. Based on that statement, speaking can build relationship between individual and another and share what they want in their lives.

One of the most visible phenomena amid Indonesian students is when they are asked to speak up, they feel nervous and cannot continue what they want to say despite the fact that they have a great many of vocabularies. Sari, Sembiring, and Wau (2022:16468) state, “Vocabulary is not a syllabus but a list of words that teachers prepare for their learners to memorize and learn by heart”. However, Indonesian students do not take English seriously when they are learning it. Memorizing may be good and useful as a temporary technique for tests, but not for learning a foreign language. Wallace (1978:98) states that oral speaking becomes significant when the students focus on the one thing what they are saying. Along these lines, the students can learn better on the most proficient method to require the capacity to talk or to communicate their thoughts smoothly with exact vocabularies and good or acceptable pronunciation and by speaking students can say all that they have to them. In this globalization era most of the schools utilize technology to guide in teaching. The effect of technology has become huge in teaching and learning the language in addition to the instructor's role. Wahyuningsih and Putra (2020:97) state, “As a global communication media, the Internet allows it to be used in language teaching and learning, for example, learning English”. The Internet provides various addresses and web pages that can be used as a place of learning. As we know using technology is able to increase our speaking and make the students practice easier.

Tamhane, et al. (2015:1-4) state, “Mobile technology is changing the way we live and it is beginning to change the way we learn”. To ease the process of learning English language, and supported by a very advanced technology currently, the students who want to enhance their speaking skill in English with practical and fun applications might use Duolingo to practice English. The students can download the application on the phone or on the computer so that they can practice anytime and anywhere.

In relation to the background of the study, the writer formulated the problems of the study as follows:

1) Is the use of Duolingo application able to improve the speaking skill of the seventh- grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Medan in the Academic Year of 2022/2023?

2) What are the students’ responses towards the learning teaching processes of speaking skill through the use of Duolingo application?

In connection with the problems of the study above, the objectives of the study are:

1) to prove that the use of Duolingo application is able to improve the speaking skill of the seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Medan

2) to describe the students' responses towards the use of Duolingo application in the learning teaching processes of speaking skill.

**Literature Review**

**Speaking Skill**

Speaking skill is not separated from listening skill because the activity of speaking is done by two or more persons. Someone who does not have knowledge about the language, or who does not have communicative competence in language, will not be able to take part in speaking activities. Brown (2001:267-269) elaborates that there are five components which are generally recognized in analyzing the speech process. They are:

1. Fluency: This can be defined as the ability to speak fluently. Fluency in speaking is the aim of many language learners. This fluency must be supported by grammatical knowledge of the language.
2. Accuracy: It is needed by students to arrange a correct sentence in a conversation, or the students’ ability to produce correct sentence by using correct grammar and vocabulary. The sentence is not only grammatically correct, but it should also be meaningfully acceptable. Example: My brother is pregnant. This sentence is grammatically correct but meaningfully unacceptable because “brother” is male, and is never pregnant according to his nature.
3. Vocabulary: Someone cannot communicate effectively or express his ideas both orally and in written forms if he does not have sufficient vocabulary, vocabulary means the appropriate diction which is used in communication.
4. Grammar: Grammar is the set of structural rules governing the composition of clause, phrases, and words in any given natural language. For example: He went to school yesterday.
5. Pronunciation: Pronunciation is the way for students to produce clearer language when they speak. It deals with the phonological process that determines how sounds vary and pattern in language. This aspect needs practicing a lot because of sound difference between English and Indonesian pronunciation.

**Teaching Speaking**

The use of technology takes an important role in teaching and learning process. According to Lowerison, et al. (2006:465), learner may be more active in his learning by technology and technology has potential to change from passive to active learner. In teaching speaking skill there has many ways to improve speaking skill, as we know also in this globalization era most of people are utilize technology as a bridge to improve speaking skill anytime and anywhere. Peng, Jager, and Lowie, (2020:278) state, “Mobile technologies helps learners to practice and enhance the receptive skills (listening and reading) also their productive ones (speaking and writing)”. According to Ur (1996:120), the successful speaking activity has the characteristics as follows:

1. The language learners talk so much.
2. All the participants of speaking activity get the opportunity to speak.
3. The language learners are highly motivated and have interest in the speaking activity.
4. The language produced is at the acceptable level.

**Duolingo Application**

Duolingo is one of the applications used to learn languages. It can be used as a learning medium because it includes four components of language skills, such as listening, speaking reading, and writing. The use of media in learning objectives is to facilitate and help students understand teaching material. According to Tiara, Rahman, and Handrianto (2021:692), Duolingo is one of the applications used for technology that can be used for the students to play and a language-learning platform for cell phones or computers created by Luis Von Ahn and Severin Hacker in 2012. Duolingo application is the answer for the teacher who looks for an alternative way to enhance students’ speaking skill. This application connects lessons with games that may build interest in learning. Jašková (2014:15) states, “Duolingo is seen as a feature in learning languages and in global communication”. By using this application, the teacher can help the students improve their speaking skill as long as they learn English language with Duolingo application.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

This was Classroom Action Research (henceforth, CAR). Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2014:18) state, “CAR as a term of cycle from the step of change is conducted to put plans into action observing what happens and reformulate the plan of what has happened”. It means that to begin the CAR, the teacher must be focuses on the thing that happen in the classroom. Winter and Giddings (2001:8) state, “Action research is the study of a social situation carried out by those involved in that situation in order to improve both their practice and the quality of their understanding”. It means that in teaching learning, they need socialization each other to develop their knowledge through practice.

**The Source of Data**

In this study, the instruments of collecting data were test, observation sheet, fields note, and questionnaire. The test referred to quantitative data and obtained from students’ pre-test, formative-test, and post-test.

**The Technique of Analyzing Data**

To analyze the result of the test, the writer used formula that is:

**100**

To know the mean score of the student’s score of each cycle, the writer applied the following formula which is formulized by Best and Khan (2002:280) as follow:

**M =**  x **100%**

Explanation:

M = the mean of the students’ score

Σx = the total score

N = the total number of students who do the best

Then, to find the class percentage of students’ score who passed the criterion minimum of completeness or Kriteria Kelulusan Maksimum (KKM), the writer applied the following formula which is also proposed by Best and Khan (2002):

**P**

Explanation:

P = the percentage of students who get the point ≥ 70

R = the number of students who get the point above ≤ 70

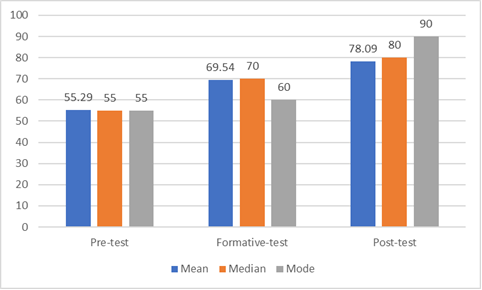
T = the total number of students who do the test

**Findings**

**Data Analysis**

There are two types of data which were analyzed to find out the research findings, they are quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were taken from the test result of pre-test, formative-test, and post-test. The complete result of the students’ score in each test can be seen from the following table and the histogram of score interval and frequency:

**Chart 4.4 The Histogram of Quantitative Data**]



From the result of the test students’ scores, it was concluded that the students mean score increases. It could be seen from the mean score pre-test, formative-test, and post-test. In pre-test, the students’ mean score is 55,29 while the students’ mean score in formative-test is 69,54 and in post-test is 78,09. Then the mode and median of the students’ score in post-test is higher than pre-test and formative-test. It means that there is an improvement of the students’ speaking skill through Duolingo application. The percentage of the students’ achievement in speaking test is presented as follows:

**Table 4.5 Percentage of students’ achievement who got score ≥ 70**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Test** | **Students who got score ≥ 70** | **Percentage** |
| Pre-test | 4 | 12,90% |
| Formative-test | 16 | 51,61% |
| Post-test | 26 | 83,87% |

To find out the percentage of the students who passed the Mastery Minimum Criteria (*Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum*) in the best, the writer applied the following formula:

P

From the formula above, the result of the students’ percentage score can be seen as follows:

* In the pre-test, the total number of the students who pass the *KKM* is:

P = 12,90%

* In the formative-test, the total number of the students who pass the *KKM* is:

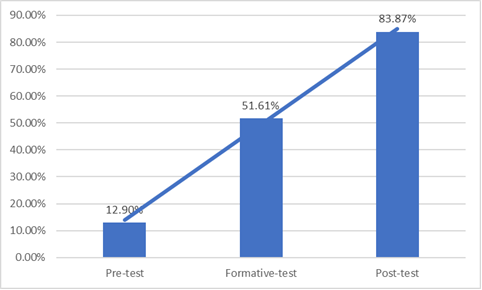
P = 51,61%

* In the post-test, the total number of the students who pass the *KKM* is:

P = 83,87%

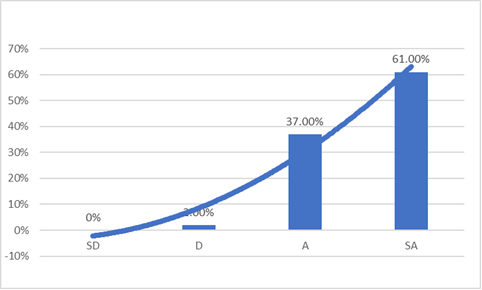
From the percentage of students’ achievement, the writer presented the data in histogram.

**Chart 4.5 The histogram of percentage of students’ achievement who got score ≥ 70**



The qualitative data were taken from observation sheet, fields notes, and questionnaires.

**Chart 4.6 The Histogram of the Responses of Questionnaire**

****

Based on the result of questionnaire, it was concluded that the students’ responses towards learning teaching process of speaking skill by using Duolingo application are good, and their speaking skill also improved by using Duolingo application.

**Discussion**

The use Duolingo application was applied to improve the students’ speaking skill to the seventh-grade students SMP Negeri 9 Medan. As the collaborator the English teacher and the writer collaboratively discussed the result of the study. They concluded that the use of Duolingo application could be the effective way to help students in speaking. It was shown in histogram and table 4.4. In which the mean score of each test improved. The mean score of pre-tests was 55,29, formative-test 69,54, and the post-test 78,09. Those scores showed that the second cycle was better that the first cycle. Besides that, the improvement can be seen from the observation sheet, field notes and questionnaire. Most of students are more active and enthusiastic during the process of teaching and learning.

In the implementation of Duolingo application, the writer faced some problems. Some problems faced by the writer, for example when the writer tried to approach some students, other students made noise. However, there are so many students in that class. Thus, the writer faced difficulty in managing them. The next problem is the background of their knowledge. Although every student has different background of knowledge, but almost all of the students in that class are not so clever. But nevertheless, the writer could apply this media very well because the students had willingness to study, they were also active in asking some question to the writer. The writer often motivates the students to study English however this language plays an important role in the global world. It is understandable that they have no good motivation in learning since they are still not mature enough.

**Conclusion**

After conducting the research, presenting the data, analyzing the data, and discussing the result, the writer is going to present conclusion and suggestion, Duolingo application able to improve the students’ speaking skill. It was found that the students’ achievement in speaking skill improved from pre-test, formative-test, and post-test after the writer was applied Duolingo application. The improvement of the students’ total mean score pre-test was 55,29, formative-test 69,54, and the post-test was 78,09. Meanwhile, the students’ score percentage who passed Mastery Minimum Criteria (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum) from pre-test was 12,90%, formative-test 51,61%, and the post-test was 83,87%, the students’ score percentage continuously improve in each test. Therefore, it is concluded that Duolingo application able to improve students’ speaking skill successfully. Based on the analysis of qualitative data, it was found that the students’ responses towards the use of Duolingo application to improve their speaking skill are very positive. Besides that, questionnaire show the students strongly agree that Duolingo application is interesting and suitable to improve their speaking skill.

**References**

Brown, D.H. 2001. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.

Fulcher, G. 2003. *Testing Second Language Speaking.* New York: Pearson Longman.

Jašková, V. 2014. *Duolingo As A New Language Learning Website and Its Contribution to E-learning Education.* Czechia: Masaryk University.

Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., and Nixon, R. 2014. *The Action Research Planner*. Victoria: Deakin University.

Lowerison, G., et al. 2006. Student Perceived Effectiveness of Computer Technology Use in Post-Secondary Classrooms. *Computer and Education*, *47*(4), 465-489.

Peng, H., Jager, S., and Lowie, W. 2020. Narrative Review and Meta-Analysis of MALL Research on L2 Skills. *Journal of Humanities of Social science, 33*(3), 278-295.

Sari, A.S.P., Sembiring, N., and Wau, K. 2022. Improving Students’ Vocabulary Mastery on Synonyms through the Application of Think Pair Share (TPS) Technique. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal),5*(2),16466-16475.

Tamhane, K.D., et al. 2015. Mobile Learning Application. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 5*(3), 1-4.

Tiara, A.D., Rahman, M.A., and Handrianto, C. 2021. The Students’ Perception About Use of Duolingo Application for Improving English Vocabulary. *International Journal of Education, Information Technology and Others (IJEIT)*, *4*(4), 690-701.

Ur, P. 1996. *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wahyuningsih, S., and Putra, I. 2020. The Implementation of Technology-Based Media in Improving English Speaking Skill of Hospitality Students in Mataram Tourism College. *Jo-ELT Journal of English Language Teaching*, *7*(2), 96-104.

Wallace, M.J. 1978. *Action Research for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Winter, R., and Giddings, C. 2001. *A Handbook for Action Research in Health and Social Care*. New York: Routledge.