

Improving students' ability in mastering simple present tense by using Duolingo App

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to investigate the significant improvement in students' ability in mastering simple present tense after being taught by using Duolingo app. This research was quantitative and used a one-group pretest-posttest design as the research design for this study. This research involved the students of VIII 1 class at SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana which consists of 30 students. In collecting the data, the pre-test and post-test were administered. The data were analyzed by using Paired Sample T-Test (SPSS 25.0 for windows) to test the hypothesis in which the significance was determined by $\alpha < 0.05$. The result of data computation of the value of 2-tailed significance was $0.00 < 0.05$ which is lower than 0.05. Based on that result it is indicated that there is a significant improvement in students' ability in mastering simple present tense after being taught by using Duolingo app.

Keywords: *simple present tense, duolingo application*

I. INTRODUCTION

Grammar plays a crucial part in learning English for EFL (English as Foreign Language) students in Indonesia. According to Mammadova (2020), grammar roles as the foundation of the language. The ability of mastering English grammar is very important since grammar considered as the aspect that contributes in understanding a language. Grammar plays as the backbone of any language since without the existence of the grammar those people cannot convey the messages, meaning and ideas (Taamneh (2020). Thus, people need to learn English grammar in order to fulfill their target in communications better both orally and in writing. In fact, there are four skills that should be mastered by the students in learning English, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, grammar is one of the main components in English language, which is crucial for being master among all those skills.

One of the important elements of English grammar which needed to learn is tenses. In the context of language grammar, tenses is the form of verb which shows the time of action or state that occur in the present, past or in the future situation (Oxford, 2008). In Indonesia syllabus, there are so many tenses that must be taught to the students, such as simple present tense, simple past tense, simple future tense, and etc. However, since there are so many tenses that taught to the students in Indonesia, the researcher more interested in a field of simple present tense.

In the case of study conducted by Komara & Tiarsiwi (2021) on 500 respondents from three different levels of education; lower secondary school learners, upper secondary school learners and university learners in Indonesia across the country by using online closes-ended and open-ended questionnaires, it was found a fact that EFL learners are Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) that English grammar was still difficult to learn but crucial to learn and master. In this case of study, most of students at SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana still find difficult in mastering tenses

especially in simple present tense. Based on the information obtained from English teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana, it was found that there were many students in SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana had a lack of grammar mastery especially in field of simple present tense such as they still find difficult how to express their habitual action in English. In the teaching process, the teacher of SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana only used text book as a media for teaching grammar. It is indicated that the students used a limited media in learning grammar.

Based on the problem above, it can be concluded that learning English grammar in field of simple present tense is relatively not easy for most of students in Indonesia including for the students at SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana. One of the aspects that caused that happens because they still have a limitation media for learning grammar in which it gives an impact in field of grammar mastery. Therefore, based on this problem the teacher needs any other kinds of media to add more experience for students in learning grammar of simple present tense.

In this era, technology has become something that cannot be separated from our lives. Yudhiantara & Saehu (2017) defines mobile assisted language learning (MALL) as the technology based on mobile phone that used to support language learning. One of the applications that use in MALL is Duolingo app. Duolingo is type of application for language learning that has been already available for many years in our society. According to Yurko & Vorobel (2020), Duolingo has several aspects of language-learning exercises in which there are sentence-building exercises that makes the learners gradually demonstrate grammar rules, rather than memorizing the rules. Additionally, this kind of application also can engage students' motivation in learn English. According to Habibie (2020), it was found that the use of Duolingo app in learning English is quite effective to enhance students' motivation.

The writer chose duolingo app as a teaching media for the students of SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana because, this application gives an alternative way for the students in mastering grammar of simple present tense since this application using two languages in practically. Furthermore, it was also informed by one of the English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana that this school never use Duolingo app as a media for teaching grammar especially in simple present tense. By using this app as a media for teaching simple present tense at students of SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana, the students would enjoy the process of mastering simple present tense. As a result, their ability improved. In this research, the researcher chose the seconds grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana as the object of the research because the topic of simple present tense is taught in the syllabus of that semester. Furthermore, there was no any research that conducted in this school regarding to this title. Therefore, further research is needed regarding whether the Duolingo application is proven or not to improve students' ability in mastering the simple present tense at SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana.

II. METHODS

The researcher used *one-group pretest-post- test design* as the research design for this study. One-group was only in one class, while the pretest and post-test used to measure the success of this study. In this research the students got the pretest before being taught with the treatment. The researcher gave the pre-test for the students in order to know students' ability in simple present tense before the treatment. The post-test used to find out the statistically improvement of students' ability after using Duolingo app. The population of this research was the second-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana and for the sample of this research was the students of VIII 1 class which consist of 30 number of students. The researcher used *simple random sampling technique* in determining the sample. The researcher got the data from the grammar test as the instrument of the test, in order to measure their ability of mastering simple present tense. The tests were measured by using scoring system of grammar. Then, the data were analyzed by using Paired Sample T-test in SPSS 25.0 for windows.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

The pre-test and the post-test then were conducted in VIII 1 Class of SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana in order to analyzed how the significant improvement in students' ability of mastering simple present after being taught by using Duolingo app. The frequency distribution of the pre-test and the post-test can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Frequency of Pre-test and Post-test

Statistics					
		Pre-test	Post-test		
N	Valid	30	30		
	Missing	0	0		

Pre-test					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	50.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	53.33	1	3.3	3.3	6.7
	56.67	8	26.7	26.7	33.3
	60.00	7	23.3	23.3	56.7
	63.33	5	16.7	16.7	73.3
	66.67	3	10.0	10.0	83.3
	73.33	3	10.0	10.0	93.3
	76.67	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Post-test					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	66.67	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
	70.00	8	26.7	26.7	33.3
	73.33	7	23.3	23.3	56.7
	76.67	7	23.3	23.3	80.0
	80.00	3	10.0	10.0	90.0
	86.67	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

In order to answer the research question, the researcher conducted the pre-test and post-test on students of VIII 1 class of SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana. Based on the data computation, it was found that there was an improvement of students' pre-test and post-test score which the result of pre-test and post-test were described as follows:

Table 2. Improvement of students' Mastery on Simple Present Tense

Mean Score of Pre-test	Mean Score of Post-test	Gain Score
62.22	74.78	12.56

Based on to the data table above, it shows that the students' ability of mastering simple present tense was increased after being taught by using Duolingo app. The mean score of pre-test which 62.22 and the mean score of post-test which 74.78, indicated there was improvement between students' mean score of pre-test and post-test after being taught by using Duolingo app.

To test the hypotheses, the researcher used Paired sample t-test and the result can be seen as follows:

Table 3. Paired Sample Statistic Result

Paired Samples Statistics						
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Pair 1	Pre-test	62.2227	30	6.85502	1.25155	
	Post-test	74.7783	30	5.44539	.99419	

Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre-test & Post-test	30	.753	.000

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			n	Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	-12.55567	4.52059	.82534	-14.24368	-10.86765	-15.213	29	.000

Based on the data above, it revealed that the result of the computation was significant ($\alpha=0.00$). Therefore, since $0.00 < 0.05$, it indicated that H_0 was rejected and H_1 was accepted. In relation to that result, it can be concluded that there is a significant improvement on students' ability of mastering simple present tense after being taught by using Duolingo app, since the hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

This part was discussed related to the research finding, which intended to answer the research question. Based on the result, this research indicated that the hypothesis proposed was accepted, which means it has proven that using the Duolingo app has significantly improved students' ability to master simple present tense.

As the result of statistical analysis of research findings, it can be seen that there is a significant improvement in students' ability in mastering simple present tense after being taught by using

Duolingo app in the VIII 1 class of SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana. The existing gain scores in the pre-test and post-test results indicated that this media was effective enough to improve students' ability to master a simple present tense. The students' mean score on the pre-test was 62.22, and the mean score on the post-test was 74.78, and as a result, the gain score was 12.56. Meanwhile, the result in the data computation of the value of 2-tailed significance was $0.00 < 0.05$, which means that H1 was accepted.

In line with the previous research by Wijaya, R., Yufrizal, H., & Kadaryanto, B. (2016), in which they conducted research entitled "Improving Vocabulary Through Duolingo Application in Call at the Seventh Grade of SMP." They investigated whether the implementation of the Duolingo app can improve English vocabulary achievement for students SMP Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung in the seventh grade of junior high school. In this research, the researcher used a pre-experimental design in one group pretest-posttest. As the result of this research, the researcher found that the Duolingo application can apply to improve English vocabulary since the result showed that the mean scores enhanced from 61.15 to 77.25. Building upon that previous research, the research confirmed that the Duolingo application is a kind of media that effectively helps students improve their English skills. However, compared to that previous research, this study only focused on improving their grammar skills, especially in forming simple present tense sentences.

The other previous research related to this research was by Rosyada (2016). She conducted quasi-experimental research entitled "Improving Students' Simple Present Tense in Writing Descriptive Text Using Grammar Checker Application in the Tenth Grade Students of SMK IPT Karangpanas in the Academic year of 2015/2016". The objective of this research is to find out whether there is any difference before and after the students use the grammar checker application. As a result, that previous research showed that the mean score was improved from 64,6 to 80,27 for the experimental group and 64,73 to 77,67 for the control group. The writer concludes that there is a significant difference in teaching Simple Present Tense in writing descriptive text between students after being taught by using grammarly grammar checker application. Previous research has proven that using media/ online applications could be an alternative way to improve students' English skills, especially in mastering simple present tense. Afterward, compared with the previous research, this research was focused on improving students' ability to master the simple present tense by using media called Duolingo app.

In correlation with the previous research conducted by Fatah, C. A. (2019) entitle "The Effect of Using Duolingo Application to Develop Students' Vocabulary Knowledge". This research used a quasi-experimental research design in which the sample consisted of twenty students. Based on the results of this research, the statistical calculations with a significant level of 5% show that the $t_{th} = 2.881$ is higher than $t_t = 1.672$. The use of the Duolingo application has had a positive influence on the seventh grade of SMP Islam Taman Quraniyah South Jakarta in the 2018/2019 academic year since the use of Duolingo allows them to develop their English skills of vocabulary knowledge. However, that previous research only focused on developing students' English vocabulary instead of developing English skills in another field. In conclusion, based on the findings of all the previous research, it proved that online applications/ kinds of digital media successfully improve students' English skills, such as grammar, vocabulary, or any other field of English skill.

Additionally, in line with the concept of gamification application by Huotari & Hamari (2017), gamification application such as Duolingo created a similar experience and motivation as same as playing games. Obtained from the research, positive response from the students indicated that this application also engaged students' motivation. Based on the observation by the researcher during the research, one of student at class VIII 1 in SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana (student 3) explained that learning simple present tense through Duolingo app is really easy and fun for her

since she could learn English anytime and anywhere. She also explained that using Duolingo application is even more interesting for her since she was able to study English by phone at home and doesn't always have to be formal learning in class. From the student response before, it concluded that Duolingo application can be a great start for beginner students to learn English as it motivates them on making progress in their English skills.

In addition, in line with the study by Novitasari & Purnamaningsih (2022), it is explained that learning application such as Duolingo, Kahoot, and etc. can be used for quizzes and assignment. However, rather than other application, Duolingo has a lot of useful features rather than other application, since this application is equipped with several features and many practice exam. Furthermore, Duolingo app is the largest online language learning platform. In line with that statement, during conducting this research the researcher realized that this application is quite effective since this application can be used anywhere and anytime.

In general, based on the research findings, Duolingo is a kind of application/ digital media that has been proven effective to improve students' ability to master English skills, especially in mastering simple present tense. Considering the indicator of the research in which the ability to comprehend the formula of the simple present tense, this research found that there is a significant improvement in students' ability to master simple present tense after being taught by using Duolingo app in VIII 1 class of SMP Negeri 1 Sukadana. The researcher claimed that the improvement of students' ability in mastering simple present tense is because of the use of Duolingo app, which makes it easier for the students to master the formula in conducting simple present tense.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

According to the result of the data analysis and discussion, the researcher concluded that there is a significant improvement in students' ability in mastering simple present tenses after being taught by Duolingo app. It can be seen from the test result which is spotted that the mean score of the pre-test was 62.22, then increased in the post-test section to 74.78. In addition, the hypothesis testing result on paired sample T-test showed that the significant value was 0.000, which means that the result was lower than 0.05. In other words, it indicates that the hypothesis of this research is accepted.

As the conclusion of this research, it assumed that using the Duolingo application successfully improved students' ability in master simple present tense since the students could comprehend the form of conducting a simple present tense sentence. Furthermore, the researcher of this research claimed that the Duolingo application could be an alternative medium for teaching simple present tense since this media is effective and useful for helping students to improve their ability in mastering simple present tense.

Suggestions

1. English teachers: The researcher suggested English teachers to apply the application of Duolingo as a medium for teaching simple present tense to improve students' ability in mastering this subject. The use of a Duolingo application is supposed to help students in mastering the simple present tense by correcting students' mistakes in writing the English structure of a simple present tense sentence. Providing the base material of simple present tense, such as formulas, etc., by the teacher, then proceeding with the automatic corrections carried out by the application, has an impact on students' understanding regarding the

forming of the sentences of simple present tense. In addition, Duolingo app is necessary to make the student more understand and attract their attention to the teaching-learning process. As a result, they will feel motivated while learning this subject. With the optimizing technology of Duolingo app, the students will realize that they can learn English flexibly by using this kind of media.

2. Other researchers: the researcher suggested to the other researchers to continue any further research related to the use of Duolingo app as a medium to improve students' ability to master any other English skill, such as vocabulary and etc. In addition, the future researcher also suggested maximizing the time allocation by applying Duolingo app as a medium for teaching English in the classroom. Furthermore, since the researcher does not really have time to do further analysis on whether or not the students' achievements are consistent, the future researchers attain to analyze further whether or not the students mastered the grammatical feature by testing their consistency in terms of achieving the score towards this skill. The further researchers also can conduct some direct interviews with the students, regarding to the students' perceptions towards the use of Duolingo application as a media for learning English.

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