THE UTILIZATION OF DUOLINGO TO BOOST STUDENTS' GRAMMAR MASTERY IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Diterima: 1*Dian Fadhilawati, ²Moh Mansur, ³Suyitno 09 Agustus 2023 1-3 Balitar Islamic University, ²MAN Kota Blitar

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Abstract— This classroom action research utilized Duolingo to enhance the grammar mastery of 31 senior high school students in Reported Speech. The research procedures cover; planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The researchers collected data through tests. The results demonstrated a significant improvement in students' grammar of Reported Speech mastery, with test average scores increasing from 56.77 to 85.16. Regarding the result, teachers are suggested to integrate technology-based learning tools like Duolingo to create engaging and interactive learning environments and enhance students' mastery. However, it is important to note that individual student progress varied, and some students showed more substantial improvements compared to others. Further analysis and consideration of factors such as individual learning styles, frequency of Duolingo usage, and additional instructional support may help understand the variations in student performance.

Keywords—Duolingo, Grammar, Reported Speech

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Correspondence Author:

Dian Fadhilawati, English Education Department, Balitar Islamic University Email: dianfadhilawati@yahoo.com

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I. INTRODUCTION

Instruction of English as a foreign language (EFL) at every level of education in Indonesia required students to master four skills, they are skills for communicating using English with others in oral form, Skills for comprehending the English text or passage, skills for expressing their thought, and ideas in English writing as well as skills of conveying the message from English monologue or dialogue that they listen to [1]. Besides it also encompasses various linguistic aspects, in which grammar plays a crucial role in achieving proficiency [2]. Learning grammar is of paramount importance in the context of mastering writing, speaking, reading, and listening skills for example; Grammar serves as the foundation of language structure, enabling effective communication and comprehension across all language modalities [3]. Grammar is a pivotal aspect of writing [4]. A solid understanding of grammar ensures clarity and coherence, properly structured sentences, accurate verb tenses, appropriate word order, and the correct use of punctuation to facilitate effective written communication. Without a strong grasp of grammar, written messages may be confusing, ambiguous, or fail to convey the intended meaning. Grammar provides the necessary tools to express ideas, thoughts, and arguments coherently, allowing the writer to engage the reader effectively.

Similarly, in speaking, grammar plays a vital role in conveying meaning accurately [5]. Grammatical structures enable speakers to construct meaningful and intelligible sentences, ensuring effective communication. By understanding and applying grammar rules, speakers can express themselves with precision, coherence, and fluency. In addition, having a strong mastery of grammar allows speakers to convey their thoughts and ideas in a way that listeners can understand easily. Even in oral communication, having a basic understanding of grammar is essential to ensure an effective understanding between the speaker and the listener. While a lack of grammatical proficiency may not necessarily hinder communication completely, having a shared knowledge of grammar rules helps to establish a common language code. It allows both the speaker and the listener to convey their thoughts and ideas more accurately, reducing the chances of misinterpretation or confusion. Grammar provides a framework for organizing words, phrases, and sentences, enabling clear and coherent communication between individuals [4].

Moreover, grammar is essential for students in mastering reading comprehension [6]. When reading texts, a solid understanding of grammar helps students interpret and understand the author's intended message in the text they read. Grammar guides students in identifying sentence structure, verb agreements, word usage, and other grammatical cues that shape the meaning of the text. Further, understanding grammar enhances reading comprehension by allowing students to navigate complex sentence structures, identify relationships between words and phrases, and extract the intended information from written materials. Additionally, grammar is integral to effective listening skills. [7] When listening to spoken language, knowledge of grammar aids in understanding the structure, meaning, and nuances of the spoken message. Recognizing grammatical patterns and cues assists listeners in following conversations, comprehending information, and extracting key details. Without a grasp of grammar, students may struggle to decipher the intended meaning, resulting in misinterpretation or incomplete understanding.

Despite the importance of grammar in supporting the mastery of students' four English skills, learning grammar poses significant challenges for many EFL students [[8];[9]]. The complex rules, exceptions, and nuances inherent in grammar structures make it a daunting task. Grammar instruction is often deemed difficult due to its intricate nature. Students encounter difficulties in understanding and applying grammar rules due to factors such as the abstract nature of grammatical concepts, the presence of numerous exceptions, and the need for precise usage in context.

One of the Grammar materials that students learn in class XII is Reported speech. Reported speech is a grammatical aspect requiring students to transform direct speech into indirect speech, which presents a particular challenge for language learners. It is a commonly used technique to convey the thoughts, words, and beliefs of others without directly quoting them verbatim, it allows for the reporting of the essence and content of what was said or thought, rather than providing an exact replication of the original statement Further, there are two primary methods of reporting: direct speech, where the exact words are quoted, and reported speech, which paraphrases the original statement. Reported speech is frequently employed in various forms of communication such as newspaper reports, fictional narratives, and both spoken and written conversations, enabling individuals to convey the ideas and information expressed by others in their own words [10]. Referring to the block test outcome under the topic of reported speech, the

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student's mastery related to reported speech was not good (57.77). The student's mastery of reported speech was under the minimum standard required (75.00) The students' complexities in mastering reported speech covered; understanding the changes required in verb tenses, pronouns, adverbs of time, and the word order among other elements. Students were struggle with accurately applying these transformations, resulting in errors and a lack of confidence in using Reported Speech. Those students' challenges of learning reported speech in XII Social 3 in MAN Kota Blitar are exemplified in the following table;

Table 1. The Challenges of Students in Learning Reported Speech

No	Direct	Students Answers	Correct Answers	Explanation
	Speech			
1	Dina: said,	Dina said that she	Dina said that she	In case, students need
	"I love	loves writing.	loved writing.	to understand the
	writing."			change in verb tense
				from "love" to
				"loved" when
				reporting the
				statement in Reported
				Speech.
2	"He said, 'I	He said that he will	He said that he	Here, students need
	will study for	study for the exam.	would study for	to grasp the shift in
	the exam.'"		the exam	verb tense from
				"will" to "would"
				when reporting a
				future action in
				Reported Speech.
3	"They said,	They said we are	They said that they	Here, students need
	'We are going	going to the theater	were going to the	to understand the
	to the		theater	alteration of the
	theater.'"			Subject; ,"We" to

				,"They" and the
				verb phrase "are
				going" to "we're
				going" to match the
				past context in
				Reported Speech.
4	"He asked,	He asked if I had	He asked if I had	In this example,
	'Did you finish	finished your task.	finished my task	students need to
	your task ?'"			comprehend the
				transformation of the
				question form "Did
				you finish your task."
				to the reported
				question "If I had
				finished my task." in
				Reported Speech
5	Mrs. Rina	Mrs. Rina said that	Mrs. Rina Said	In this example, the
	said, "I have	I have finished my	that She has	pronouns "I" and
	finished my	book, and you can	finished her book	"you" should be
	book, and you	start yours"	and I could start	changed to "she" and
	can start		mine	"I" and the possessive
	yours ."			pronoun "my"
				become "her" and
				"yours" become
				"mine" respectively
				to match the subject
				and possessive form
				and possessive form in the reported

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6	John Said, "I	He said that "He	He said that he	In this case, the time
	will meet you	would meet you	would meet me the	expression
	tomorrow."	tomorrow."	next day.	"tomorrow" indirect
				speech is changed to
	•			"the next day" in a
				reported speech to
				maintain temporal
				accuracy and reflect
				the perspective of the
				original speaker.

Those examples of sentence errors highlighted students' challenges at XII Social 3 when they learned Reported Speech covered. Those Challenges covered: 1) Verb Tense Changes: Reported speech often requires shifting verb tenses to reflect the perspective of the original speaker and the time of the reported statement. This can be challenging for students who struggle with understanding and applying different verb tenses accurately, 2) Pronoun and Word Order Changes: In reported speech, pronouns and the word orders may need to be adjusted to match the perspective of the original speaker. This can be confusing for students, particularly when there are multiple pronouns involved or when the word orders change significantly from direct speech, 3) Reporting Verbs and Introducing Phrases: Students may find it challenging to choose appropriate reporting verbs and introduce phrases to accurately convey the reported speech. Selecting the right reporting verb and phrase can affect the meaning and clarity of the reported statement, 4) Understanding Indirect Questions and Commands: Reporting indirect questions and commands can be complex. Students may struggle with transforming direct questions or commands into reported speech while maintaining the intended meaning and politeness, and 5) Time transformation. In this case, time transformation in reported speech is challenging because it involves altering verb tenses, adjusting time adverbs, and modifying modal verbs and auxiliary verbs to accurately convey when the reported speech occurred relative to the reporting speech. Additionally, handling conditional statements, reported questions and pronoun changes adds complexity.

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To address these challenges, English teachers who teach grammar must utilize appropriate media and resources to engage students' engagement in learning the materials, overcoming the students' difficulties, and improving their mastery of reported speech. One of the digital media that can be applied to overcome students' problems is Duolingo. It is a widely recognized language-learning media, that provides an interactive and gamification approach to language instruction. It provides a range of exercises, quizzes, and interactive lessons that can be customized to target specific grammar structures. By incorporating Duolingo into the classroom, teachers can leverage its advantages, such as interactive exercises, immediate feedback, and engaging content, to enhance students' grammar mastery. In addition, Duolingo is a widely accessible platform that can be used on various devices, including smartphones, tablets, and computers. This allows students to conveniently access the platform anytime and anywhere, making it highly flexible for their learning needs [11]. Further, Duolingo has a premium version that offers free advertisements for the users, ease the users to download lessons for offline use, unlimited feedback for mistakes, unlimited skill test-outs even without an internet connection, monthly streak repair to maintain uninterrupted progress, and a progress/mastery quiz for self-assessment. These features enhance the language learning experience by providing convenience, flexibility, and personalized feedback to dedicated language learners [11].

Prior research had consistently demonstrated the positive impact of integrating Duolingo into language education, highlighting its potential to enhance students' motivation, engagement, and language learning outcomes. For instance, [12] found that the utilization of Duolingo effectively enhanced the eighth-grade students' vocabulary mastery at MTSN 13 Jakarta. In addition,[13] reported that both teachers and students perceived Duolingo as an effective tool for learning English, noting improved motivation, completion of English assignments, and enhanced language skills at Methodist Schools. Moreover, [14] revealed that Duolingo enhances students; motivation in learning English. While [15] highlighted how Duolingo facilitated vocabulary enhancement and highlighted that Duolingo facilitated students enhance their vocabulary. [16] found that Duolingo enhanced listening skills among junior high school students. Further, [17] reported that Duolingo effectively improved students' speaking abilities in SMP.

Referring to the identified challenges encountered in learning reported speech, the positive findings from previous studies regarding the efficacy of Duolingo in language

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learning, and it is noteworthy that there is a scarcity of research specifically exploring the

utilization of Duolingo for improving grammar mastery, the researchers embarked on a

study entitled "Utilizing Duolingo to Boost Students' Grammar Mastery in Senior High

School." The particular focus of this research was to know the students' grammar mastery

improvement of reported speech in Class XII Social 3 at MAN Kota Blitar after the

implementation of Duolingo in grammar instruction.

II. METHOD

This research applied classroom action research to improve 31 students' grammar

mastery of reported speech in class XII Social at MAN Kota Blitar by Utilizing Duolingo

in Grammar Instruction. The Procedures cycle of this research followed 4 steps by

Kemmis and Taggart that covered 1) Planning the Action, 2) Implementing the Action,

3) Observing the Action, and 4) Reflecting on the Action Taggart [18]. Those steps are

elaborated as follows:

Planning the Action

During the planning phase, the researchers meticulously organized the research

timeline and the sequence of activities [19]. They developed a comprehensive lesson plan

that integrated the use of Duolingo, specifying reported Speech, instructional strategies

to be employed, and the assessment methods to measure students' progress. Additionally,

the researchers ensured that the necessary resources, such as computers or mobile devices

with internet access, were readily available for the students to effectively utilize Duolingo.

Furthermore, they prepared a post-test as part of the assessment process and set specific

success criteria for research. In this study, the success of students in learning reported

speech was determined by individual scores, where a minimum score of 75.00 indicated

successful intervention, and the class average also needed to reach 75.00 for overall

achievement.

Implementing the Action

The implementation phase involved putting the planned activities into action [20].

The researchers introduced Duolingo as a supplementary tool in grammar instruction,

integrating it into regular classroom sessions. The researchers guided the students in

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accessing and using the Duolingo platform, explaining its features and functionalities.

The students were given individual accounts on Duolingo to track their progress and

provide personalized learning experiences. During the implementation, the researchers

facilitated interactive and engaging activities that focused on reported speech, utilizing

Duolingo as a supportive tool. They also organized group discussions, exercises, and

interactive tasks to reinforce the student's understanding and application of reported

speech concepts. The researchers closely monitored the students' engagement with

Duolingo and provided guidance and support whenever needed.

Observing the Action

The observation phase focused on close monitoring and assessing the student's

mastery of reported speech after utilizing Duolingo. To evaluate their achievement, the

researchers administered a grammar test consisting of 50 multiple-choice items. The

students were given 90 minutes to complete the test. Each item was scored 2 points,

resulting in a total possible score of 100. To calculate the students' achievement, the

researchers utilized the mean score formula. This involves summing up the individual

scores of all students and dividing them by the total number of students. By applying this

formula, the researchers obtained an average score that provided insights into the overall

performance and mastery of reported speech among the students.

Reflecting the Action

During the reflection phase, the researchers critically examined the learning

outcomes of the students regarding reported speech, taking into consideration the success

criteria established during the planning phase. According to these criteria, if the individual

scores of the students reached a minimum of 75.00 and the class's mean score surpassed

75.00, the researchers would stop the study in the first cycle. However, if the

predetermined success criteria were not met, the researchers would proceed to the second

cycle, aiming to enhance the areas that were identified as lacking during the initial cycle.

This iterative approach allowed the researchers to adapt and refine their instructional

strategies to ensure continuous improvement and optimal learning outcomes.

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III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This part highlights the outcomes of the students' grammar mastery of reported speech both before and after the incorporation of Duolingo in Grammar instruction. The researchers present these findings and subsequently engage in a thorough discussion, comparing them with previous studies in the field. By doing so, the researchers aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of utilizing Duolingo on students' grammar proficiency in reported speech, drawing upon existing research to contextualize and further understand the observed outcomes

The Results of Students' Grammar Mastery of Reported Speech Before and After the Utilization of Duolingo in Teaching-Learning Grammar of Reported Speech

The outcomes of reported speech before and after the utilization of Duolingo in learning Grammar are presented in Table 2 as follows:

Table2. The Students' Outcomes of Grammar in Reported Speech Before and after the utilization of Duolingo in Teaching-Learning of Reported Speech

Students' Initial	Pre-action Test	Post-Action Test
	Result	Result
AUMIS	56	84
AAF	72	90
AFAP	60	88
AAH	48	78
BN	74	94
CNR	66	90
DL	56	86
DBAS	54	82
FAR	60	88
HES	48	80
ISA	50	84
ID	48	80
KKZAF	54	82

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Mean Score	57.77	85.16
ZAB	64	90
YW	58	84
YZS	48	80
VUF	62	88
SEAR	44	78
SAR	64	88
SAAK	54	84
NM	52	82
NF	62	90
NAJ	46	76
NK	60	88
NSA	48	78
MH	72	92
MHM	65	90
MSA	78	94
MAF	60	86
MDY	50	80
L	58	86

The table presents the 31 students' learning outcomes in the area of reported speech before and after utilizing Duolingo as a tool for grammar instruction. The initial or pre-action test results indicate the students' scores before intervention, while the post-action test results represent their scores after the implementation of Duolingo Application. Looking at individual student scores, it can be observed that in cycle 1, there was an improvement in the majority of the student's performance from the pre-action test to the post-action test. The overall average score of the students enhanced from 57.77 in the pre-action test to 85.16 in the post-action test. This result indicates that the utilization of Duolingo in grammar instruction had a positive impact on the students' grammar mastery of reported speech. That result reflected that the student's mastery of reported speech has achieved the criterion of success of research. Therefore, the researchers did not need to continue to the next cycle.

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Discussion

The research finding which showed that Duolingo utilization boosted the students' grammar mastery of reported speech from 57.77 to 85.16 aligns with [16] and [17] findings indicating that integrating interactive and engaging platforms like Duolingo can enhance the students' language proficiency either skills or sub-skills. The significant improvements observed in the students' scores highlight the potential of utilizing such tools to reinforce grammar concepts and facilitate more effective learning outcomes through regular exercises of the materials that must be mastered. Furthermore, the condition in which the students were taught by using Duolingo that employed gamification techniques, such as leveling up, earning points, and competing with friends, make their learning experience engaging and enjoyable, because they felt a situation of joyful learning it might affect to the increasing of their learning outcomes. This gamified approach can motivate students to actively participate and continue their learning journey [14].

Besides, by learning Grammar through Duolingo the students can learn the lessons in bite-sized formats, breaking down grammar concepts into manageable chunks. This approach allows students to learn at their own pace and provides them with a sense of progress as they complete each lesson, further, the Duolingo platform utilizes adaptive algorithms that track students' progress and tailor subsequent lessons based on their performance. This personalized approach ensures that students receive targeted practice and feedback, focusing on areas where they need improvement. Duolingo provides a variety of interactive exercises, including fill-in-the-blanks, translation, and listening comprehension activities. These exercises provided by researchers allow students to practice applying grammar rules in a practical context, enhancing their understanding and retention of the material.

In addition, Duolingo offers immediate feedback on students' responses, highlighting correct answers and providing explanations for incorrect ones. This prompt feedback helps students identify and correct grammar mistakes, reinforcing their learning and facilitating self-correcting, and allows students to track their progress and monitor their achievements. They can see their completed lessons, earned badges, and overall skill development, providing a sense of accomplishment and motivation to continue learning. It is agreed with [11] who argued that Duolingo offers an ad-free experience, the ability

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to download lessons for offline use, unlimited hearts for mistake-free learning, unlimited skill test-outs even without an internet connection, monthly streak repair to maintain uninterrupted progress, a progress/mastery quiz for self-assessment. These features enhance the language learning experience by providing convenience, flexibility, and personalized feedback to dedicated language learners

Moreover, it is important to note that individual student progress varied, and some students showed more substantial improvements compared to others. Further analysis and consideration of factors such as individual learning styles, frequency of Duolingo usage, and additional instructional support may help understand the variations in student performance. Overall, the results demonstrate the positive impact of incorporating Duolingo as a tool in grammar instruction, as evidenced by the increased scores and improved mastery of reported speech among the students. These findings contribute to the existing body of research on effective language learning strategies and emphasize the potential benefits of technology-enhanced language instruction.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, the utilization of Duolingo could enhance the students' Grammar mastery of reported speech at social three of class 12 in MAN Kota Blitar. The finding revealed a significant improvement in students' mastery of Reported Speech, as evidenced by the increase in scores from the pre-action test to the post-action test. The study underscores the importance of employing appropriate and innovative media in teaching grammar, such as Duolingo, to enhance students' learning outcomes. Based on the findings and the challenges identified during the research, several suggestions can be made for future researchers and teachers. Firstly, it is recommended English Teachers continue exploring and integrating technology-based platforms like Duolingo in grammar instruction to further enhance students' engagement and mastery. Additionally, teachers should provide explicit instruction on reported speech, focusing on verb tense changes, pronoun adjustments, and adapting time expressions. Offering ample practice opportunities and providing targeted feedback will help students consolidate their understanding and application of reported speech. Furthermore, future research can investigate the long-term effects of utilizing Duolingo or similar platforms in grammar

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instruction and explore its potential benefits for other language skills, such as writing and speaking. By continuously exploring innovative teaching methods and utilizing appropriate media, educators can create a dynamic learning environment that promotes effective grammar acquisition and overall language proficiency.

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