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Submitted and Defended by:

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**Investigating the Role of the Duolingo Application in Enhancing EFL
Students' Speaking Skills: The Case Study of First-year EFL Students at
Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare under oath that all information in this master's thesis has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. This master's thesis is the product of my own independent work. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work. This thesis has neither been submitted to another committee, nor has it been published before.

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DEDICATION

I, Boudaa Maroua, wholeheartedly dedicate this pinnacle of achievement to:

My dearest mother, thank you for being my guiding light, my cheerleader, and my rock. Your love, dedication, and support have shaped me into the person I am today. I am forever grateful for everything you have done for me and proud to be a daughter of such a superwoman. You played the role of a mom and dad in a great way. As I embark on new endeavours, I carry your love in my heart, and I promise to make you proud.

My father (may Allah have mercy on him), though my heart aches with the knowledge that he cannot be here to witness this pivotal moment, I am comforted by the knowledge that he would be immensely proud of my accomplishments. His spirit lives on within me, reminding me to strive for excellence, persevere in the face of challenges, and never lose sight of my dreams.

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ABSTRACT

In tertiary education, EFL students assume some learning responsibilities. Improving the speaking of a foreign language is one of these responsibilities. However, some obstacles may prevent students from achieving speaking proficiency. This study examined how EFL students view the Duolingo Application in improving their speaking. It also attempted to study the effectiveness of this application in enhancing students' verbal repertoire. To test the validity of the hypotheses, this study opted for a mixed-methods approach through a questionnaire and an interview for the chosen sample of this study to explore their perceptions of the topic under investigation. After analysing the student's responses using the SPSS software for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data, the results showed that students perceived the Duolingo Application as an effective language learning tool that may help them achieve speaking proficiency. Additionally, the results demonstrated that students are familiar with using mobile applications in language learning. This study's largest implication emphasizes the importance of using technology-based tools for satisfactory learning outcomes through practice and commitment.

Keywords: The speaking skill, the Duolingo Application, mobile applications, verbal repertoire, SPSS software, technology-based tools

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	24
Figure 2	24
Figure 3	26
Figure 4	28
Figure 5	45
Figure 6	46
Figure 7	47
Figure 8	49
Figure 9	50
Figure 10.....	51
Figure 11.....	52
Figure 12.....	54
Figure 13.....	55
Figure 14.....	56
Figure 15.....	57
Figure 16.....	59
Figure 17.....	60
Figure 18.....	61
Figure 19.....	62
Figure 20.....	64
Figure 21.....	65
Figure 22.....	66
Figure 23.....	67

LIST OF Tables

Table 1	45
Table 2	46
Table 3	47
Table 4	48
Table 5	49
Table 6	51
Table 7	52
Table 8	53
Table 9	54
Table 10	56
Table 11	57
Table 12	58
Table 13	60
Table 14	61
Table 15	62
Table 16	63
Table 17	65
Table 18	66
Table 19	67

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

L1: Mother/ First Language

L2: Second/ Foreign Language

LMD: Licence Master Doctorate

MALL: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	I
DEDICATION	II
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	IV
ABSTRACT	V
1. Statement of the Problem	I
2. Research Questions	II
3. Research Hypotheses	II
4. Research Aims	III
6. Research Methodology	III
6. Limitations of the Study	III
7. Structure of the Study	IV
Chapter One: The Speaking Skill	IV
Chapter Two: The Duolingo Application	V
Chapter Three: Research Fieldwork	V
CHAPTER ONE : THE SPAKING SKILLS	
Introduction	7
1.1 Definition of the Speaking Skill	7
1.2 Elements of Communication	8
1.3 The Importance of the Speaking Skill in Language Learning	8
1.4 Components of the Speaking Skill.....	9
1.4.1 Pronunciation.....	10
1.4.2 Fluency.....	10

1.4.3 Accuracy.....	11
1.4.4 Comprehension	11
1.4.5 Grammar.....	12
1.4.6 Vocabulary	12
1.5 Types of the Speaking Skill	13
1.5.1 Imitative Speaking.....	13
1.5.2 Intensive Speaking	13
1.5.3 Responsive Speaking.....	13
1.5.4 Interactive Speaking	14
1.5.5 Extensive Speaking	14
1.6 Speaking Difficulties Faced by EFL Learners.....	14
1.6.1 Inhibition.....	15
1.6.2 Low Chances of Participation	15
1.6.3 Nothing to Say.....	15
1.6.4 Use of the Mother Tongue.....	15
1.7 Characteristics of a Good Speaker.....	17
1.7.1 Planning and Preparing	17
1.7.2 Hooking.....	18
1.7.3 Clarity	18
1.8 Principles for Designing Speaking Activities	18
1.8.1 Maintaining Collaborative Learning.....	19
1.8.2 Using Easy Language	19
1.8.3 Selecting Appropriate Topics	19
1.8.4 Raising Awareness Towards the Activity.....	19
1.9 The Speaking Skill Related to the Other Language Skills	21
Conclusion	21
CHAPTER TWO : DUOLINGO APPLICATION	
Introduction	23
2.1 Definition of the Duolingo Application.....	23

2.2 Duolingo Use	25
2.3 Features of Duolingo.....	26
2.3.1 <i>The Student’s Version</i>	27
2.3.2 <i>The Teacher’s Version</i>	27
2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Duolingo	29
2.4.1 <i>Advantages</i>	29
2.4.2 <i>Disadvantages</i>	29
2.5 Evaluation of the Duolingo Application	30
2.6 The Objectives of Duolingo.....	31
2.7 Duolingo’s Approach: Gamification in Language Learning	32
2.7.1 <i>Engagement and Motivation</i>	32
2.7.2 <i>Skill Development</i>	32
2.7.3 <i>Personalized Learning Experience</i>	33
2.8 Duolingo’s Challenges and Limitations	33
2.9 The Use of Duolingo in the EFL Classroom.....	34
2.9.1 <i>Integration of Duolingo in Language Instruction</i>	34
2.9.2 <i>Blended Learning Approach</i>	34
2.9.3 <i>Monitoring and Assessment</i>	34
2.9.4 <i>Teacher-Student Interaction and Support</i>	35
2.9.5 <i>Integrating Duolingo with Classroom Activities</i>	35
2.10 The Role of Duolingo in Enhancing EFL Students’ Speaking Skills	36
2.10.1 <i>Pronunciation</i>	37
2.10.2 <i>Vocabulary and Sentence Structure Development</i>	37
2.10.3 <i>Authentic Speaking Practice</i>	37
Conclusion	38
 CHAPTR THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORD	
Introduction	40
3.1 Overview of the Research Methodology	40

3.1.1 Research Design	40
3.1.2 Population and Sampling.....	41
3.1.3 Data Collection Methods.....	42
3.1.4 Methods of Analysis	43
3.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation.....	44
3.2.1 Students Questionnaire Analysis.....	44
3.2.2 Summary of the Questionnaire's Findings.....	69
3.2.3 Students' Interview Analysis.....	70
3.2.4 Summary of the Interview's Findings.....	75
Conclusion	76
GENERAL CONCLUSION.....	77
RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATION.....	81.
REFERENCES.....	
APPENDICES.....	

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of a foreign language involves developing four essential skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are interconnected, with proficiency in each being necessary for effective communication. Speaking is particularly crucial in language learning as it allows learners to use the language actively and convey meaning. Technology has played a significant role in language education, with mobile applications like Duolingo gaining popularity for their ability to enhance language acquisition. Duolingo, known for its wide availability and support for multiple languages, has been recognized for its effectiveness in improving language skills.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has emerged as a prominent approach in language education, leveraging the widespread ownership of smartphones. The portability of mobile devices offers advantages in language learning, enabling learners to practice anytime, anywhere. The role of mobile learning tools, such as Duolingo, has been examined in various studies. Research has shown that the use of Duolingo contributes to the improvement of language skills, particularly in learning Spanish. However, it has also been noted that the Direct-Translation Method employed by Duolingo may pose challenges for higher proficiency levels.

Based on this finding, the present study aims to explore the role of the Duolingo application in enhancing the speaking skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, with the goal of maximizing its benefits for language learning.

1. Statement of the Problem

The speaking skill is one of the essential skills in the English language. It is one of the productive skills that help achieve language mastery. Most students acknowledge the importance of speaking, yet they still find it difficult. Many factors hamper foreign

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

language learning and make the speaking skills hard to achieve. These difficulties can be related to a need for grammar, fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Also, the lack of learning tools and the inadequate use of technology may hinder the improvement of students' speaking skills.

Taking forward the case of learning English as a foreign language and the obstacles EFL learners face to communicate in the target language, many first-year EFL students at the University of Mohamed Kheider -Biskra, the Department of Language and English Literature showed some interest in learning through mobile applications. On this basis, the researcher wanted to investigate their perceptions of the role of the Duolingo Application in improving their speaking skills, and whether this tool has a notable effect on their speaking performance not.

2. Research Questions

This thesis relies on the following questions:

1. Would the use of the Duolingo Application improve EFL students' speaking skills?
2. What are first-year EFL students' perceptions of the use of the Duolingo Application in enhancing their speaking skills?

3. Research Hypotheses

The present research is based on three main hypotheses that shall be tested and verified.

1. We hypothesize that the Duolingo Application, as a language learning tool, may promote the learners' speaking skills.
2. We hypothesize that the learners' speaking outcomes may become satisfactory if Duolingo is implemented.

4. Research Aims

This research aims to investigate the role of the Duolingo Application in improving EFL the students' speaking skills. More importantly, it aims to:

1. Explore EFL students' attitudes towards the role of the Duolingo Application in the speaking skill improvement.
2. Determine the effectiveness of Duolingo in enhancing students 'verbal repertoire.
3. Provide recommendations for enhancing the speaking skill through the use of technology-based tools, including the Duolingo Application.

6. Research Methodology

The researcher used a mixed-methods approach to gather data for this research work. Additionally, the researcher planned to explore new areas within his/her field of interest. Therefore, he/she opted for an exploratory study to cater to both theoretical and applied research. The students' questionnaire and interview results are included in the thesis.

6. Limitations of the Study

This study was bound to face several shortcomings that hampered the process of the research. They are mentioned as follows:

First, due to its recent emergence as a language learning concept, there have been limited research endeavours conducted on Duolingo. The scarcity of studies pertaining to this platform can be attributed to its relative novelty in the field. As a result, the existing body of research concerning Duolingo remains somewhat sparse. Nevertheless, the increasing popularity and widespread adoption of Duolingo as an

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

innovative language learning tool have prompted a growing interest in investigating its efficacy and impact. Consequently, it is anticipated that more research will be conducted in the future to explore the various dimensions and implications of this novel learning approach.

Second, the issue of time constraints, the period granted, is not sufficient to present the research fully, in addition to the inability to delve deeper into the subject more.

Additionally, the research was constrained to a representative subset (53 students) and did not encompass the entire cohort of first-year LMD students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra.

There was also a problem with the negative response of some of the respondents, by not answering the questions and delaying or not returning the forms.

Finally, The plan was to choose FGD and not Teachers interview but duo to some reasons we opted for Teachers interview in the last days and this made many changes.

7. Structure of the Study

The present study is divided into three main chapters. They are presented as follows:

Chapter One: The Speaking Skill

This chapter summarizes, compares, and criticizes critical concepts, theories, and previous studies about the speaking skill and its role in foreign language teaching and learning as one of the most appreciated language skills, endlessly studied by distinguished scholars like Nunan, Carter, Brown, Oxford, and many more. It discusses

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

related studies and sheds light on the aspects of the speaking skill and what makes it enjoys greater prestige in the field of foreign/ second language acquisition/ learning.

Chapter Two: The Duolingo Application

The second chapter delves into the topic of the Duolingo application, serving as the second variable under investigation. It aims to offer a comprehensive elucidation of the gamification approach employed by Duolingo, encompassing its exercises, utilization methods, as well as its impact on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students.

Chapter Three: Research Fieldwork

The third chapter focuses on the fieldwork phase, which presents an overview of the method used in this research. It also delves into the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the findings. Finally, a comprehensive conclusion that summarizes the results of the data gathered in this research is granted a closer look.

CHPATER ONE: THE SPEAKING SKILL

Introduction

The acquisition of the speaking skill in a foreign language is a primary focus for language learners. It represents a fundamental aspect of human communication and remains a key objective throughout the learning process. Many students struggle with speaking, so practicing in real-life situations is necessary. This chapter examines the procedures and skills necessary for developing proficiency in the speaking skill. It also explores the significance and nature of speaking in the context of acquiring a foreign language and its role in enhancing the teaching and learning process. It emphasizes the theoretical definitions, importance, types, characteristics, and difficulties faced during the learning process.

1.1 Definition of the Speaking Skill

In approaching the definition of the speaking skill, Boonkit (2010) stated that the speaking skill is one of four important skills in English, especially when the speakers are not from a native English country. This skill was further described as the capability to use language in actual situations, report acts with imprecise words, and express or converse ideas fluently. Speaking is also one of the productive skills of language, yet spoken language production is often considered one of the most challenging aspects of language learning (Brown & Yule, 1983). Accordingly, many language learners struggle to express their ideas and reflect their thoughts orally in the target language.

In the view of El-Koumy (2002), two definitions exist for the speaking skill. From the point of view of skill-building, speaking encompasses various micro-skills, for instance, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. From a macro point of view, speaking is represented as an oral way of constructing and expressing language significance. On the one hand, Chaney (1998) described speaking as “the process of

CHPATER ONE: THE SPEAKING SKILL

building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts” (p.13). In this vein, speaking is considered one of the significant skills that shape the contours of any learnt language.

Moreover, Lesakova (2008) presented a similar definition when he said that speaking is the ability to develop and share meaning using verbal or non-verbal symbols. Speaking is a productive skill that people mainly use to interact with one another orally. It is produced and processed in real-life situations in which the speaker conveys a message directly to the listener. Therefore, speaking is a crucial part of second/ foreign language learning. Rebecca (2006) further pointed out that verbal communication is the primary way in which children gain language skills, which is embedded in the everyday language activities of most people, and is the primary motivator of language evolution.

At this point, the speaking skill is a skill that depends on the complexity of the information to be communicated and the need for much accuracy and fluency to achieve purposeful communicative competence.

1.2 Elements of Communication

Gutierrez (2009) outlined five elements of communication. The initial element is the communicator, who is responsible for expressing and conveying a message. The second element is the message, which consists of information conveyed in a language that both the speaker and the listener can comprehend. The third element is the listener, who receives the message sent by the speaker. The fourth element is the channel, which is the method or the way through which the speaker conveys the message. The final element is the feedback, which is the response given by the listener.

1.3 The Importance of the Speaking Skill in Language Learning

CHAPTER ONE: THE SPEAKING SKILL

Generally speaking, language is considered the tool for communication, and perfect communication is likely only possible for people with a language. For instance, students can only achieve their objectives by using formal language. In this context, Bueno et al. (2006) asserted that speaking is one of the toughest skills language learners have to face. Speaking seems complicated because the speakers have to produce sentences on the spur of the moment. It is more straightforward for foreign or second language learners to produce sentences by learning the grammatical structures and properly knowing adequate vocabulary. Therefore, the English language learners of EFL/ESL face many problems in producing flawless sentences. Therefore, mastering grammar and vocabulary help learners become more competent in speaking and refine their communicative competencies (Parupalli, 2019).

In their attempt to portray how significant speaking is, Baker and Westrup (2003) perceived speaking as a neglected skill as they believed that educators and teachers worldwide put immense focus on teaching grammar and vocabulary, which learners are mostly tested on in examinations. Speaking is highly valued due to the need for clear communication in international markets. Besides, speaking the language well aids students in obtaining recent information in various fields such as science and technology. Improving speaking skills can help learners further their education and improve their communicative skills.

1.4 Components of the Speaking Skill

Each skill has specific components that should be granted a closer look in order to know how to master it. For most people, speaking a language is similar to understanding it because speaking is fundamental for human interaction. In this regard,

CHPATER ONE: THE SPEAKING SKILL

researchers outlined some components that distinguish the speaking skill from the other language skills, as shown below:

1.4.1 Pronunciation

Pronunciation is thought of as a significant aspect of language acquisition since it affects the person's capability and performance. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), pronunciation is the manner of speaking a language or a particular word. Pronunciation has an important role in an individual's overall communication. Given the essentiality of pronunciation in developing the speaking capability, Elder (2004) suggested that pupils should be supplied with a model-based technique to acquire detailed commentary on their errors and how to rectify them, particularly when compared with native speakers' expressions.

1.4.2 Fluency

In approaching the definition of fluency, Richards and Schmidt (2010) provided one of the most influential definitions for this term. They stated that:

Fluency refers to the features that give the speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, speaking rate, and interjections and interruptions. If speech disorders cause a breakdown in ordinary speech, the resulting speech may be an example of dysfluency. (p.223)

More precisely, the scholars pointed out the importance of fluency in achieving speaking mastery by reaching the following:

- a. The ability to express oneself through written and/or spoken language.

- b. The ability to communicate with a proficient but not necessarily impeccable command of pitch, lexis, and syntax.
- c. The ability to convey ideas effectively.
- d. The ability to deliver a lengthy speech without creating obstacles to comprehension or a lapse in communication (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Fluency requires learners to mobilize their system to communicate meaning in real time, prioritize meaning over form, and exercise strategies to solve problems quickly (Ellis, 2003). It is a key element for achieving mastery as long as the speaker seeks it or tries in the attempt.

1.4.3 Accuracy

Unlike fluency, accuracy refers to “the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but may not include the ability to speak or write fluently” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p.223). Accuracy is less important than fluency when establishing a strong speaking background. However, it is considered paramount in building the blocks of the produced language concerning the rule system and how well the learner can handle whatever level of interlanguage complexity he/she may achieve (Ellis, 2003). Therefore, fluency and accuracy are two different components of the speaking skill, with much centrality given to fluency.

1.4.4 Comprehension

Comprehension is among the most significant components of the speaking skill, which helps produce correct and accurate speech through listening and perceiving. In this context, Richards and Schmidt (2010) claimed that: “comprehension is the identification of the intended meaning of written or spoken communication” (p.108). According to recent theories, comprehension requires considerable accentuation as an

CHAPTER ONE: THE SPEAKING SKILL

active process that uses both the information included in the message (bottom-up processing) and basic knowledge, data from the setting and the listener's and speaker's aims or intentions (top-down processing) (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Furthermore, Krashen affirmed that the level of comprehension one achieves depends largely on how one absorbs the language as comprehensible input, even if some words and constructions remain unknown. Krashen's language acquisition model dictated that comprehensible input is required for second language acquisition (Krashen, as cited in Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

1.4.5 Grammar

According to Harmer (2001), grammar can change its words into different forms and then be arranged into sentences. As a result, it can be demonstrated as the arrangement of the correct meaning of sentences. Furthermore, it can be used to avoid mistakes in each communicator. It is included in the function of grammar. Grammar helps learners create accurate sentences.

1.4.6 Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the most crucial component of any language skill; without it, nothing can be acquired or conveyed. According to Edger (1999), the acquisition of the speaking skill may only be attained through lessons and activities if the students are well-versed in the text's lexicon. Thus, before initiating speaking activities, instructors should contemplate words that students are already familiar with and those they are likely to come across and need to be made aware of. The teacher's role here is to emphasize teaching unfamiliar words to help students get the main ideas in class activities.

CHPATER ONE: THE SPEAKING SKILL

To sum up, one should have a good command of the elements of speaking to speak purposefully and effectively and provide expressive speeches.

1.5 Types of the Speaking Skill

Brown (2004) distinguished five categories of speaking based on the speaker's aims: imitative speaking, intensive speaking, responsive speaking, interactive speaking, and extensive speaking. They are illustrated as follows:

1.5.1 Imitative Speaking

Imitative speaking is the talent to repeat another person's verbalization as a word, phrase, or sentence. This repetition could include distinct language properties, including grammar and lexis, to articulate a concept or even take part in a discussion by giving attention to elocution to help learners to be more intelligible.

1.5.2 Intensive Speaking

Intensive speaking is the articulation of small portions of a conversation in which the speaker showcases proficiency in a limited field of grammatical ties such as intonation, emphasis, and cadence. It also includes assessment tasks, such as reading aloud and completing sentence dialogues.

1.5.3 Responsive Speaking

In order to preserve spoken language authenticity, this type of speech requires brief interchanges such as casual conversations, small talk, and straightforward requests with only one or two follow-up queries or replies.

1.5.4 Interactive Speaking

Interactive speaking is distinct from responsive speaking due to its length and complexity of dialogue. It depends mainly on different forms of languages through exchanging specific information or maintaining social relationships. For instance, interactive speaking involves assessment activities like interviews, role-playing, and discussion.

1.5.5 Extensive Speaking

Extensive speaking or monologue includes speeches, oral presentations, and story-telling, but the language style used in this type of speaking is more deliberate and formal for extensive tasks because some informal monologues, such as a casually delivered speech, cannot be ruled out (Brown, 2004).

In short, the speaking skill can be presented in five major types under which speaking become attainable and more managed by speakers.

1.6 Speaking Difficulties Faced by EFL Learners

Speaking skill is essential in the process of teaching-learning a foreign language. Hughes (2000) strongly upheld that the spoken mode is the primary source of language acquisition that fosters and facilitates it as a central activity in a foreign language classroom. Nevertheless, the first step in making a successful speaking experience inside the classroom is to identify the difficulties that EFL students frequently face. In this regard, researchers such as Ur (2012) indicated four difficulties learners face in foreign language speaking classes. They are mentioned as follows:

1.6.1 Inhibition

It refers to shyness or reluctance. As the author explains, learners are shy or reluctant to speak a foreign language in class because they are afraid of making mistakes and being criticized in front of their classmates or simply because they dislike being the centre of attention (Ur, 2012).

1.6.2 Low Chances of Participation

At this point, the author explained that students' time for speaking is significantly reduced if the classroom is crowded. In addition, certain students tend to participate dominantly, minimizing others' speaking chances (Ur, 2012).

1.6.3 Nothing to Say

For some learners who do not have shyness problems, it may be that they have nothing positive to add. As pointed out by Ur (2012), “students need to feel that they have something relevant and original to contribute to the discussion so that it is worth attempting to speak” (p.118). This statement means that, for some learners, making an effort to speak should only occur if the contribution is pertinent to the subject.

1.6.4 Use of the Mother Tongue

Ur (2012) indicated that some language learners habitually rely significantly on their mother language because it is more instinctive, effortless, and straightforward to voice in the native tongue. Even if it is overused, this will diminish their opportunity to refine the speaking skill in the foreign language.

Following this point, Goh and Burns (2012) argued that one of the key factors behind students avoiding speaking in the classroom is being anxious and unmotivated

CHPATER ONE: THE SPEAKING SKILL

because other affective factors, such as anxiety, lack of motivation, lack of confidence, and poor verbal repertoire, influence them. They are illustrated as follows:

A) Foreign Language Anxiety

During foreign language acquisition, most learners experience different apprehension levels. Pertaub et al. (2001) claimed that many factors hinder foreign language learners' oral performance, including language anxiety or xenoglossophobia. It is considered as the most common psycholinguistic barrier to language development. Language anxiety may prevent students' oral performance, especially during presentations, leading to negative results. That is why overcoming speaking anxiety would help achieve effective oral performance.

B) Motivational Deficit

According to Driscoll (2000), lack of motivation is the underlying reason behind students' avoidance of class work, refusal to become fully engaged in a learning task, failure to complete work they could easily do, or willingness to complete a task only for some tangible reward it may bring. Therefore, teachers are asked to involve their learners in engaging and motivational activities such as role plays, dialogues, Q& A intervals, or brainstorming activities.

C) Poor Verbal Repertoire

Students' fear of making mistakes within and outside the classroom prevents them from speaking and communicating in the target language. According to Harmer (2001), comprehension of the different word categories enables speakers to construct utterances. Selecting the correct vocabulary when communicating is vital for correctness in terms of language. Students often find it difficult to express their ideas,

CHPATER ONE: THE SPEAKING SKILL

they need more suitable vocabulary, and they sometimes use incorrect words like in case of synonyms which do not carry the same meaning in all contexts. Lack of vocabulary is considered one of the students' most controversial difficulties.

D) Lack of Confidence

Students' absence of self-confidence often appears when they recognize their conversation companions need to comprehend them or when they do not apprehend other speakers. Nunan (1999) found that those with limited self-confidence are more likely to be unsuccessful communicators. This demonstrates that teachers play a pivotal role in constructing students' self-confidence. Put another way, students' confidence is likely to be boosted through a combination of theoretical and practical experiences.

1.7 Characteristics of a Good Speaker

Good speakers mainly possess certain qualities and personality traits, distinguishing them from mediocre or weak ones. Connolly (2018) highlighted three essential features that characterize a good language speaker. They are as follows:

1.7.1 Planning and Preparing

In order to give a good performance in a way that engages your audience relies heavily on understanding the mechanisms of an effective speech. Connolly (2018) argued that following a selected, well-organized script makes the overall performance spontaneous. Therefore, transporting a frame of written knowledge into a small talk that offers the audience what they are searching for to recognize is challenging but precise in making the speech more powerful because of early preparation and planning.

1.7.2 Hooking

Connolly (2018) stated that integrating an excellent hook that reflects the first concept of a speech is an essential establishment of the tone for what is coming. This hook may also take numerous shapes, which include asking an excellent and engaging question and being prepared to expect the audience's answer or quoting someone else's words. For example, a motivational speech is more likely to begin with a quote from great leaders like Winston Churchill or well-known poets like William Shakespeare. The latter enables the audience to participate in the details of one's speech and makes it more interesting.

1.7.3 Clarity

As the speech is a conversation between the speaker and the targeted audience, selecting the appropriate words is essential to making the speech as successful as it should be. For example, specific jargon usage may lead the audience to an ambiguous speech path; some will stop the speaker and ask for clarification. Thus, making the speech more understandable and precise is fundamental (Connolly, 2018).

All in all, engaging the audience from the very first word, delivering the message with greater clarity and impact, crafting a captivating speech, and many more are key elements to achieving an effective speech and overcoming the fear of the stage.

1.8 Principles for Designing Speaking Activities

In order to design activities that aim to enhance the students' overall speaking skills and overcome the difficulties mentioned above, certain principles should be

CHPATER ONE: THE SPEAKING SKILL

considered. Ur (2012) suggested following certain principles when designing speaking activities for EFL learners to maximize their chances of speaking. They are illustrated as follows:

1.8.1 Maintaining Collaborative Learning

Group or pair work is very beneficial as they increase the chances of speaking. In addition, they could help shy students overcome their speaking apprehension when confronted with an audience. Therefore, involving learners in collaborative activities that include two or more individuals working together is highly recommended.

1.8.2 Using Easy Language

The author explained that designing activities that include easy language could help maximize chances of speaking because students can remember the required grammar and vocabulary easily, leading to more participation.

1.8.3 Selecting Appropriate Topics

Another important aspect to consider when designing speaking activities is carefully selecting topics and tasks. The author stressed that the more fascinating the topic and the more apparent the purpose of the dialogue is, the more enthusiastic the learners will be.

1.8.4 Raising Awareness Towards the Activity

At this point, the author declared that it is vital for the teacher to make learners aware of the importance of speaking, giving chances for everyone to participate, and making it the learner's responsibility to use the target language at all times (Ur, 2012).

CHPATER ONE: THE SPEAKING SKILL

Following this brief explanation of the principles, Ur (2012) proposed some activities that may help improve the speaking skill, as mentioned below:

A) Finding Things in Common

In this activity, learners sit in pairs, preferably with someone they do not know very well, and attempt to pinpoint the common things they have with each other and share with the rest of the class.

B) Role Play

In this activity, participants are provided with characters and situations and attempt to create and act on a minor scene based on them. It can be done in pairs or groups of up to four or five individuals.

C) Problem-solving

Students work in groups in this activity, and the teacher suggests a certain problem. The group members must communicate with each other and suggest solutions for the problem, which they will share with the entire class.

D) Oral Presentations

This activity is helpful for students in advanced classes as it is often followed by questions from the teacher and classmates or a discussion of the topic presented (Ur, 2012).

Adopting well-designed activities is indispensable for building learners' communicative skills that help the learner achieve language mastery. Consequently, offering students with speaking activities that sharpen their proficiencies is significant.

1.9 The Speaking Skill Related to the Other Language Skills

Learning the speaking skill in EFL classrooms is challenging for many learners. In order to achieve this quest, scholars argued that language input and communicative output should be combined. The speaking skill is particularly related to the listening skill in a complementary relationship. According to Redmond and Vrchota (2007), “speakers are at the mercy of listeners” (p.120). For communication to occur, the speaker and the listener must participate by interacting and verbally negotiating. The speaker produces comprehensible output, and the listener pays attention and then tries to process these outputs effectively. Therefore, engaging students in listening activities has a remarkable effect on students' speaking skills.

Conclusion

The importance of English as a foreign language is increasing every day. This chapter presented an overview of the speaking skills nature and importance. Additionally, it tackled some characteristics of good speakers, types and elements of speaking, and examined the difficulties EFL learners face during the speaking process. The subsequent chapter reviews the literature about the Duolingo Application and explores its role in enhancing students' speaking skills.

**CHAPTER TWO: THE DUOLINGO
APPLICATION**

Introduction

Using technology-based materials in foreign language teaching and learning has gained momentum in recent years. The current chapter attempts to survey the existing literature on the Duolingo Application and its role in foreign language learning. It discusses key theories and concepts and defines key terms related to the scope of the study. It also synthesizes key findings from relevant studies about the Duolingo Application. The chapter is outlined under the following headings: definition, use, features, advantages and disadvantages, evaluation, approach, challenges and limitations, use in EFL instruction, and role in the speaking enhancement.

2.1 Definition of the Duolingo Application

Duolingo is a language learning application developed In November 2011 by Guatemalan engineer Luis Von Ahn and Swiss computer scientist Severin. According to its website, the organization's tagline is free language education for the world, with over 30 million registered users. It provides several languages for both English speakers and non-English speakers. Duolingo is a great language learning tool that allows the learner to pick up new words through the Duolingo application process, depending on their personal preferences (Munday, 2016). Edwards (2022) defined Duolingo as a web-based language learning experience that relies on game mechanics. It provides a digital way for students of all ages and capabilities to acquire several new languages.

Duolingo was also defined as “a versatile social platform designed especially for language learning. Duolingo can be downloaded on mobile phones. Furthermore, this application makes learning language fun because it depends on games and casual conversations. One of its primary uses is enabling students to call or interact with native English speakers” (Alfuhaid, 2021, p.9). This new learning tool has attracted the

CHAPTER TWO: THE DUOLINGO APPLICATION

attention of researchers and served as an alternative to traditional methods, such as textbooks.

Figure 1

Duolingo's Profile Image (Duolingo Official Website)

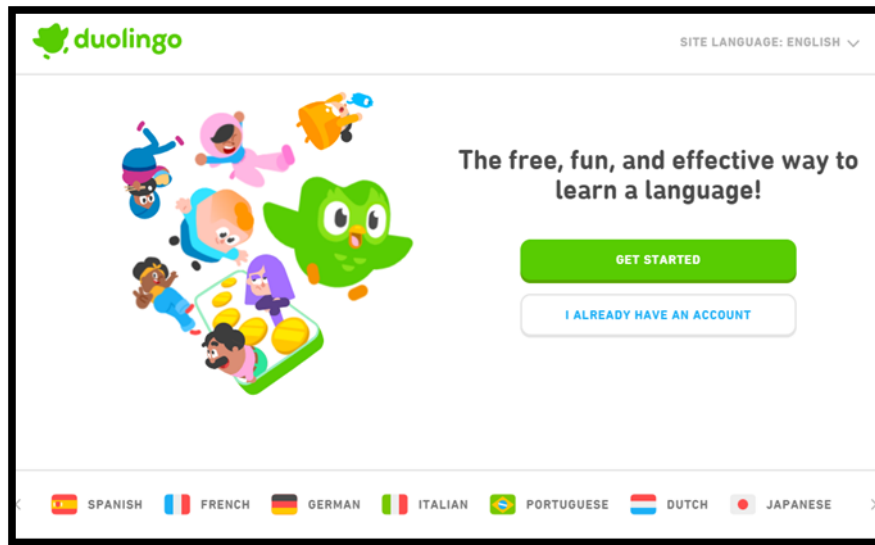


Figure 2

Duolingo Language Catalogue (Duolingo Official Website)



CHAPTER TWO: THE DUOLINGO APPLICATION

Furthermore, Duolingo provides vocabulary training and opportunities for students to check their understanding and determine the need for additional development. In other words, Duolingo is touted as an educational tool that can be integrated into classrooms to provide students with a new learning experience, focusing on feedback, material quality, and motivation. Students should utilize the Duolingo application to study languages to increase their motivation and make this application more enjoyable. Duolingo has received excellent feedback from students and teachers for its use in English language acquisition. Furthermore, the Duolingo app is beneficial and enjoyable for students who need to enhance their vocabulary (Guaqueta & Castro-Garces, 2018).

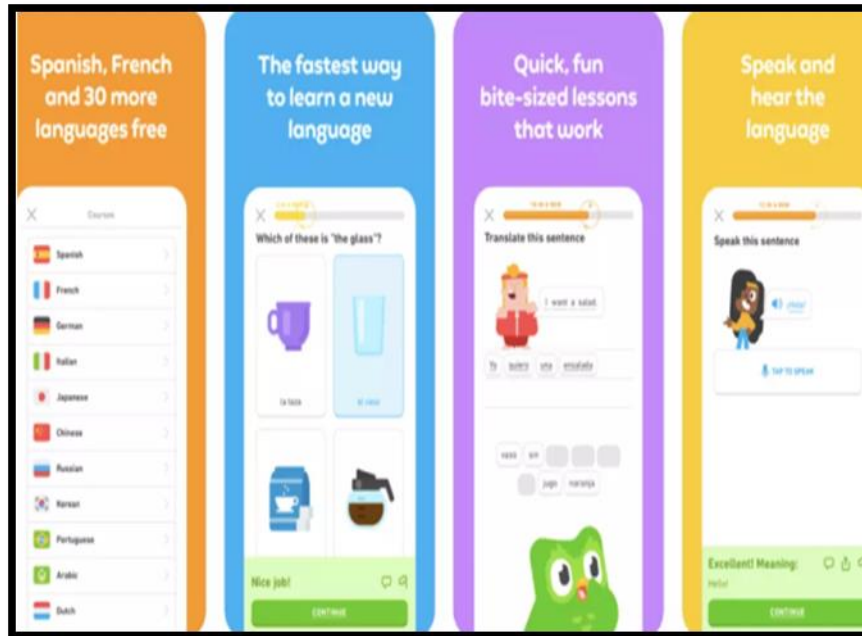
2.2 Duolingo Use

The Duolingo platform provides free access to users from all countries and with different languages. As displayed on the Duolingo official website, the user can sign up to get started directly to engage users in gamified learning while also learning and having fun. Gamification integrates game mechanics, aesthetics, and game thinking into non-game contexts to motivate people, drive action, facilitate learning, and address issues (Kapp, 2012).

For instance, first-time users of Duolingo are given an exam to determine their proficiency level because they are not required to start from scratch with the language's fundamentals if they already know it. This test includes several features that simplify language learning, like daily word lists, repetition, conversations with other users, reinforcement through reminder notifications, and translation (Munday, 2016). Duolingo is known for its levels, repetition, and grammar-translation activities.

Figure 3

Duolingo's Users Guide



Duolingo was created to provide users with a variety of languages to choose from, with over 36 alternatives. Introductory courses are available to get you started right away for complete novices. A placement test can be used to determine the appropriate beginning point for those who already have a level of understanding.

2.3 Features of Duolingo

At this point, it is necessary to mention that Duolingo has specific features that distinguish its service from the other learning tools. In this regard, Edwards (2022) declared that Duolingo has a very useful self-correcting learning technique that notifies pupils when they have made an error while also displaying the correct answer immediately. Hence, the platform is ideal for individual learning. Duolingo has two versions—one for teachers and one for students.

2.3.1 The Student's Version

The free version imposes switching back and forth between their native and target languages while reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students can practise additional conversational and situational skills in the stories area. Nevertheless, the paid version provides an intelligent modification that directs learning in accordance with mistakes made by the student and in areas that need enhancement (Edwards, 2022).

2.3.2 The Teacher's Version

The teacher's free version of Duolingo is designed to tailor the students' needs with the teacher's input. Here, the teacher has to manage the students and the language curriculum, creative assignments, monitor the classroom activities and online administering of tests, assessments, and feedback. Despite this, with the paid version, educators can view generated summaries that demonstrate quickly the XP received, time allocated, and advances toward the objectives of each student as well as an all-encompassing program display (Edwards, 2022).

Furthermore, Cecep (2015, cited in Huynh et al., 2018) distinguished five other characteristics of the Duolingo Application. They are summarized as follows:

a. Achievements. Users receive a Duolingo program feature after completing the lessons with their best effort.

b. Lingotsis. A little jewel indicates whether students have completed the tasks and levels to earn a bonus.

c. Crown Levels. These are brand-new features in the Duolingo app. A skill's "Crown Levels" are present. The user receives a crown for completing a skill.

CHAPTER TWO: THE DUOLINGO APPLICATION

d. Daily Goal. This feature shows gratitude to students who have achieved a daily objective.

e. Clubs User Networking. This feature allows people to share and talk about language learning (Cecep, 2015).

Furthermore, the Duolingo application offers the students many kinds of tasks within a lesson or unit, including:

a. Vocabulary: in which the users are shown an image and asked to select the appropriate response.

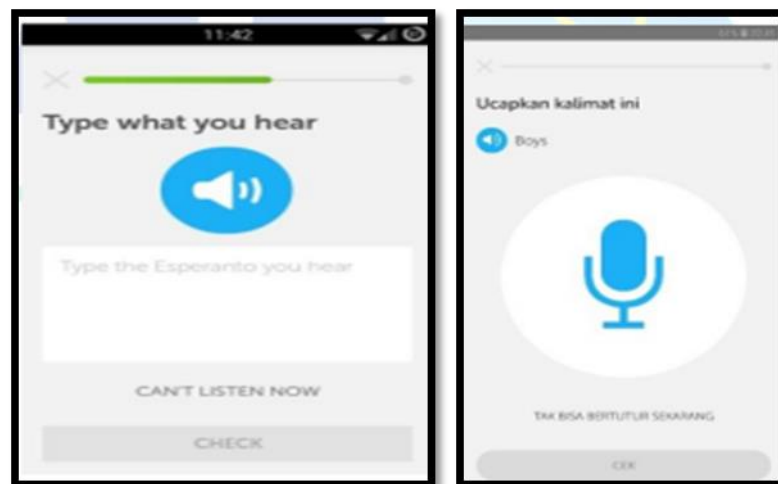
b. Pronunciation: where participants are required to repeat or pronounce sentences they hear.

c. Listening: Participants must enter the proper text after hearing an audio sample of a word or sentence.

d. Translation: where users must translate a word or a sentence into the language they wish to learn or become familiar with (Cecep, 2015).

Figure 4

Pronunciation and Listening Features of Duolingo



2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Duolingo

Duolingo has grown in popularity as a language-learning tool in recent years. However, some consider it a valuable learning tool, while others disagree. In this regard, researchers discriminated between the application's advantages and disadvantages. They are discussed as follows:

2.4.1 Advantages

White and Siracusa (2013) found that Duolingo provides users with plenty of enjoyment, rewards, and success, with powerful customization for each learner. This enables learners to create links between their L1 and the target language (TL) through translation. Duolingo offers a variety of activities, such as listening, transcribing, speaking, and translating, in a user-friendly interface. Likewise, Lionetti (2013) viewed Duolingo as a helpful learning tool because it enhances comprehension through interacting with users in various verbal, textual, and visual situations. Duolingo is an accessible language learning platform with an internet connection for studying anytime, anywhere (White & Siracusa, 2013; Lionetti, 2013, cited in Huynh et al., 2018).

2.4.2 Disadvantages

In contrast, Duolingo is thought to be worse for learning an entirely new language that one does not know because “using Duolingo is better for reviewing a language one has already started learning or for learning a language that is closely related to one that you already know, and one of the most common complaints is that many users could benefit from more explicit grammar explanations and practice” (White & Siracusa, 2013, p. 2). This implies that a person must have some prior understanding of the language they wish to learn. Duolingo's failure to provide

instructions for learning grammar is another drawback. In fact, students should also figure out a method to include it in their lessons.

2.5 Evaluation of the Duolingo Application

Free smartphone software Duolingo is statistically the most downloaded in the Education category on Google Play. According to studies, utilizing the app has statistically improved language skills. The app also boosted users' confidence in learning a new language. Duolingo boosts users' confidence in their language learning goals. Duolingo makes learners feel like they have accomplished something even with 5 to 10 minutes of daily practice, which keeps them motivated. Duolingo has proven successful in keeping learners motivated and less self-conscious about learning by "gamifying" the process (Vesselinov & Grego, 2012).

Despite these positive aspects of Duolingo, there are a few warnings for a closer look. Carreres (2006) outlined them as follows:

First, the sample sentences on Duolingo are artificial. These phrases, like "I am not you" and "their elephant drinks milk," can confuse learners in their initial lessons.

Second, the artificial voice the program utilizes is another strange feature; as long as students use this app as their sole source of instruction, they are never exposed to what a native speaker sounds like.

Third, Duolingo's use of one language to teach another is a significant drawback. For instance, if you want to learn English, you must first be fluent in a language that offers English classes. If the learner is illiterate in any language other than Persian, s/he cannot acquire any other languages. This will reduce the number of users for the app.

Additionally, when students acquire the target language through studying a second language, they are more likely to become dependent on it. They may never express themselves in just that language.

Finally, the app's absence of genuine communication and human engagement must also be noted. Learners must realize that the application's computerized listening and speaking tasks are less likely to reflect native speaker skills (Carreres, 2006).

2.6 The Objectives of Duolingo

Students needing help understand the language can use Duolingo to their advantage, as learning a foreign or a second language, especially English, can be challenging. According to Melitz (2016), English is the most widely spoken language in the world and has over 1.5 billion native speakers, making it the largest lingua franca. For anyone learning a language for the first time, but especially for someone studying a foreign language, mastering vocabulary is crucial (Siang et al., 2019).

According to contemporary research, Duolingo enjoys greater prestige among the other language learning tools because, with Duolingo, many languages can be learnt and assessed (Siang et al., 2019). Duolingo is a straightforward game that can be used for this goal. Duy (2018) suggested that Duolingo is a language learning platform that the capability of its students can strengthen. One of the crucial elements of Duolingo is the Badge. It is described as necessary to attain objectives, develop advancements, and produce outcomes in a learning setting. The primary goal of the badges is to increase students' motivation when learning English (Huynh et al., 2018).

2.7 Duolingo's Approach: Gamification in Language Learning

Generally speaking, gamification—the application of game features in non-gaming contexts—has attracted much attention. In language teaching, “game” refers to “an organized activity that usually has a particular task or objective, b a set of rules, competition between players, communication between players by spoken or written language. Games are often used as a fluency activity in communicative language teaching and humanistic methods (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 239). In computer-assisted language learning, “games are rule-based competitive activities usually involving a time limit and visual display features in which the player must acquire and manipulate knowledge to succeed (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 239). In this regard, Duolingo is thought to be the best example of gamification in language teaching and learning, which offers the following elements:

2.7.1 Engagement and Motivation

Research has shown the benefits of gamification for students. Gamified language learning platforms use rewards to keep students engaged. Researchers have found that improved learner motivation and satisfaction result in prolonged language learning efforts (Gómez-Beltrán et al., 2020; Hamzah et al., 2018).

2.7.2 Skill Development

The gamified methodology of Duolingo makes it easier to improve a variety of language skills. Studies have shown that Duolingo improves vocabulary learning, grammar comprehension, reading comprehension, and listening ability (Hou et al., 2021; Luján-Mora & Martnez-Monés, 2017). Duolingo allows students to practise and

enhance their language skills through interactive exercises, game-like challenges, and adaptive learning algorithms.

2.7.3 Personalized Learning Experience

Duolingo's gamification components are typically integrated with adaptive learning algorithms, which customize the learning experience for each user. Duolingo tailors each user's learning path through performance analysis, personalized feedback, and content recommendations. According to Zhang et al. (2018), this tailored technique improves learning outcomes and supports self-directed learning.

2.8 Duolingo's Challenges and Limitations

Although Duolingo's gamified method has shown promising results, it still needs improvement. Research suggests that gamified language learning systems focus on some skills, excluding speaking and writing. Concerns have also been expressed about the applicability of gamified language learning to everyday language use and the potential overuse of mechanical exercises. Duolingo serves as a notable example of gamification in language learning. Duolingo's gamified methodology improves the learner's engagement, motivation, and skill development. The platform's customized learning environment also supports individualized language learning. However, it is critical to be aware of the restrictions and difficulties posed by gamified language learning programs (Bektas & Johnson, 2020; Hulstijn, 2018).

To offer a well-rounded language learning experience, future research should resolve these drawbacks and investigate how gamification might be combined with other language learning strategies.

2.9 The Use of Duolingo in the EFL Classroom

Foreign language academics are increasingly investigating how to incorporate language learning applications like Duolingo into the classroom environment. In this regard, researchers suggested a set of approaches for using Duolingo in EFL classrooms, as presented below:

2.9.1 Integration of Duolingo in Language Instruction

Luján-Mora and Martnez-Monés (2017) suggested that Duolingo can be a helpful tool for language learning. Additionally, Bektas and Johnson (2020) observed that students had favourable opinions of Duolingo's gamified elements and were actively using them, indicating the app's potential as an inspiring teaching tool.

2.9.2 Blended Learning Approach

A possible approach for using Duolingo in the classroom is blended learning, which combines traditional classroom education with online resources. Studies showed the value of using Duolingo as a supplementary tool in a mixed learning environment in which students can practise their language abilities outside of the classroom by using Duolingo to support and enhance in-class courses (Wang & Lin, 2018; Guo et al., 2020).

2.9.3 Monitoring and Assessment

Duolingo makes data and analytics on students' learning progress available to teachers, providing them with useful information about each student's performance and

CHAPTER TWO: THE DUOLINGO APPLICATION

prospective areas for growth. Researchers have emphasized the importance of using Duolingo's monitoring and assessment tools to track student progress, identify learning gaps, and provide targeted feedback (Zhang et al., 2018; Luján-Mora & Martínez-Monés, 2017). This knowledge can assist teachers in providing tailored interventions and modifying curricula to meet the needs of specific students.

2.9.4 Teacher-Student Interaction and Support

Although the primary focus of Duolingo is self-paced learning, teachers can actively participate in establishing relationships and providing help in the classroom. Several studies have stressed the importance of teacher-student interactions while using Duolingo (Tavakoli & Foster, 2020; Amara et al., 2021). Teachers can utilize Duolingo as a jumping-off point for class discussions, answering questions, explaining concepts, and providing guidance to students. These interactions foster a healthy learning environment and help improve the educational process.

2.9.5 Integrating Duolingo with Classroom Activities

Teachers can consider integrating it with other in-class activities to get the most out of Duolingo. According to Luján-Mora and Martínez-Monés (2017), integrating Duolingo exercises with in-class speaking and writing projects can help students enhance their language skills in a balanced manner. Students can apply their knowledge and experience with actual language in real-world situations by participating in collaborative activities, projects, and discussions designed by professors.

Incorporating Duolingo into blended learning methodologies can boost student engagement and learning outcomes. Duolingo integration involves ongoing monitoring

of student progress and tailored guidance. Incorporating Duolingo exercises with other academic assignments and fostering teacher-student interaction further improves the learning experience. These tips can assist teachers in maximizing Duolingo's potential as a beneficial resource for language learning in the classroom.

2.10 The Role of Duolingo in Enhancing EFL Students' Speaking Skills

The Duolingo Application aims to allow users to understand and learn a foreign language for free while connected to the internet. Students can use this program to develop and perfect their English vocabulary. On this basis, researchers conducted several studies to investigate the role of the Duolingo Application in enhancing the speaking skill.

Lionetti (2013) listed a number of the Duolingo application's goals. The first one is to provide consumers with free language instruction. The second goal is to teach students how to comprehend and express a word or sentence in a foreign language. The third goal is their ability to write a phrase or sentence in their target language. The next one is the capacity to write the words correctly to the corresponding images. The last step involves teaching users how to translate words and phrases from their preferred language to English. Duolingo aims to improve all linguistic abilities, mainly speaking.

Moreover, voice recognition technology and interactive speaking activities are the key components of Duolingo's method for improving speaking abilities. Duolingo's speech recognition tool demonstrated the effectiveness of allowing learners to practise pronunciation and receive quick feedback (Li et al., 2019; Bektas & Johnson, 2020). The platform offers interactive speaking exercises to help learners develop their speaking abilities. According to researchers, Duolingo improves the speaking skill in terms of three main elements. They are discussed as follows:

2.10.1 Pronunciation

Using Duolingo to practise pronunciation has been found in studies to be beneficial. According to Li et al.'s (2019), Duolingo can help students improve their pronunciation accuracy and fluency. By obtaining real-time feedback, users can detect and correct pronunciation errors using the site's speech recognition technology. Learners might benefit from repeated practice and exercises focusing on specific sounds and phonetic patterns.

2.10.2 Vocabulary and Sentence Structure Development

The speaking exercises on Duolingo also help with vocabulary growth and sentence structure improvement. Here, learners practise words and phrases by talking and responding to questions. Duolingo's speaking tasks help learners improve their ability to speak clearly and properly (Amara et al., 2021; Luján-Mora & Martínez-Monés, 2017).

2.10.3 Authentic Speaking Practice

Authentic speaking experiences are incorporated into Duolingo's controlled practice speaking tasks. Researchers say Duolingo activities should be combined with communicative classroom assignments and in-person speaking activities (Tavakoli & Foster, 2020; Guo et al., 2020). Role-playing, pair work, and group discussions can combine controlled practice and real-world speaking scenarios in Duolingo.

Taking forward the case of studying the role of the Duolingo Application in enhancing the speaking skill, Alfuhaid (2021) investigated the effectiveness of using Duolingo in Saudi EFL classrooms to enhance students' speaking proficiencies. Experimental research was conducted on 28 students divided into two groups. The

CHAPTER TWO: THE DUOLINGO APPLICATION

experimental group used Duolingo for four months, while the control group did not. This experiment employed an independent samples t-test to make a valid comparison of the mean score between the two groups. The analysis of the results showed that Duolingo integration improved students' speaking proficiency and language skills. Additionally, the participants' positive attitude towards Duolingo was an intrinsic factor that helped alleviate their anxiety when speaking.

After reviewing existing literature on the use of the Duolingo Application in foreign language learning, the current study continues to play a role in highlighting the utility of Duolingo in foreign language learning by exploring students' perceptions of the role of Duolingo in improving the speaking skill. It also strengthens existing knowledge with new data and gap-filling.

Conclusion

This chapter summarized pertinent academic studies on using the Duolingo language-learning program to improve students' speaking abilities. It demonstrated the significance of talking applications in the study of EFL. With the availability of multiple mobile devices today, students can practice speaking by downloading apps like "Duolingo" to help refine their speaking skills and make their learning experience enjoyable. The subsequent chapter presents the research fieldwork.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH
FIELDWORK

Introduction

This chapter is the fieldwork of our study; it is devoted to describing the overall method of the research and the steps the researcher took to complete the study. It consists of three major parts. The first part overviews the research methodology under the following headings: research design, which involves the research approach and type, population and sampling techniques, data collection procedures, description of the research tools, and methods of analysis. On the other hand, part two presents the analysis of the questionnaire and interview and interprets the results—however, part three deals with the discussion of the overall findings.

3.1 Overview of the Research Methodology

This section aims to provide the reader with the method used in conducting this research and the reasons behind choosing the methods, approaches, and tools utilized in the study. Also, the research tools will be described, and analysis methods will be discussed in detail.

3.1.1 Research Design

The research design is an essential part of the study. It presents the global scheme of the research. In this regard, Creswell (2009) clarified that: “research designs are plans and the procedures for research that span the decision from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis” (p.4). The research design involves the research approach.

3.1.1.1 Research Approach

According to Dawson (2019), “neither qualitative nor quantitative research is better; they are just different, as both have strengths and weaknesses” (p.13). On this basis, this research follows a mixed methods approach. According to Creswell (2009), “a mixed methods approach is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms” (p.4). This method is also referred to as triangulation. In this context, Johnson and Christensen (2014) stated that triangulation is a validation approach based on the convergence of results obtained using multiple investigators, methods, data sources, and theoretical perspectives.

This research aims to explore the students’ attitudes towards the role of the Duolingo Application in enhancing EFL the speaking skill by addressing a bunch of related questions in an attempt to have their answers gathered in an organized way. Hence, the need to collect information by administering a questionnaire and an interview for the chosen population makes using a mixed methods approach important.

3.1.2 Population and Sampling

In an attempt to define the “population”, Bhandari (2020) stated that a population is an entire group you want to conclude about. Similarly, Johnson and Christensen (2014) described the population as the large group a researcher aspires to generalize the sample results. Likewise, the term “Sample” was referred to as “a set of elements or cases taken to form a larger population” (p.876). However, “sampling” refers to “the process of drawing a sample from a population” (p.877). Sampling is essential, as it is difficult to speak to everyone in the research population. Thus, sampling techniques must be used effectively to select the proper sample for the research.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

For this study, the population of interest is first-year LMD students at Mohamed Kheider University–Biskra, the Department of Language and English Literature. One-fifth (1/5) of the previously mentioned population, which represents 53 students, was randomly selected to be the sample for this study. The sample was selected using multiple non-probability convenience purposive sampling. For practical reasons, the researcher could not select the sample randomly, but the participants who hold characteristics of interest and who were available and accessible.

3.1.3 Data Collection Methods

In order to collect the needed data for this study, we opted for a questionnaire and an interview.

3.1.3.1 Students' Questionnaire

The student questionnaire was administered to 53 first-year EFL students at the University of Mohamed Kheider - Biskra, the Department of Language and English Literature. The questionnaire consists of three main sections. The first section involves four main questions (Q1-Q4) related to general information about the participants concerning gender, age, study choice, and level. This section helps to realize the characteristics of the participants.

Conversely, section two explores the students' attitudes toward the speaking skill and its importance in language learning. It consists of seven questions (Q1-Q7), all close-ended with yes/ no answers. The students are asked to tick the appropriate box, not justify.

Moreover, section three of this questionnaire highlights the relationship between the research variables and explores the students' attitudes toward the role of the

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

Duolingo Application in improving the speaking skill. It contains seven direct questions (Q1-Q7), all close-ended with yes and no answers. The questions were inserted into tables to facilitate the process and ensure the participants would answer quickly. Also, it was discovered that yes and no questions are the student's preferred type.

3.1.3.2 Students' Interview

The Interview is the second instrument used to collect data for this study. The researcher chose this tool as it is a suitable instrument to gain breadth and depth from the participants' responses and understand the issue from their perspective. The interview was conducted with nine students chosen from the before-mentioned population. The interview consists of seven open-ended questions that explore the role of the Duolingo Application in enhancing the students' speaking skills. Nine students took part in answering the interview, providing the most intuitive and prospective answers.

3.1.4 Methods of Analysis

After data collection, there is the process of data analysis. For the present study, one quantitative tool and a qualitative were used to collect data regarding the role of the Duolingo Application in enhancing EFL students' speaking skill. Therefore, the researcher opted for two analysis methods: statistical and content analysis.

3.1.4.1 Statistical Analysis

The student's questionnaire is analysed quantitatively using The SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software which offers advanced statistical analysis, a vast library of machine learning algorithms, text analysis, open-source extensibility, extensive data integration, and seamless application deployment. This

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

software is chosen because this analysis method is accessible to users of all levels and skills. The data from the students' questionnaires will be shaped in graphs and tables.

3.1.4.2 Thematic Analysis

To analyse the students' interview questions, the researcher opted for a thematic analysis as the best way to interpret qualitative data. Thematic analysis is an efficacious approach to scrutinizing qualitative data, such as interview transcripts, social media profiles, or survey responses, to ascertain something about people's perspectives, opinions, knowledge, experiences, or values. In this type of analysis, the researcher can analyse the teachers' responses and help explain emerging themes. Thematic analysis helps determine question categories and look for patterns of responses that stand out to the researcher and test the hypotheses (Caulfield, 2022).

3.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section analyses the data collected from the students' questionnaire and the focus group discussion in two ways, as shown below.

3.2.1 Students Questionnaire Analysis

This questionnaire aimed to explore students' attitudes towards the role of the Duolingo Application in the speaking skill enhancement. After collecting data, here is the analysis and interpretation of what has been collected.

Section One: Background Information

Item 1. Gender

A) Male

B) Female

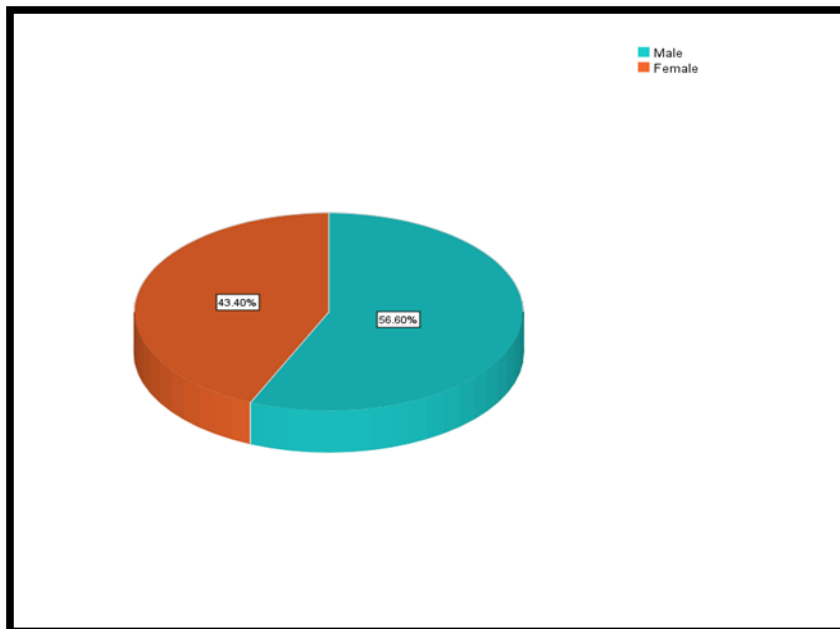
Table 1

Students' Gender Distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Male	30	56.6	56.6
	Female	23	43.4	43.4
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 5

Students' Gender Distribution



This question was asked to identify the most dominant gender of first-year EFL students. Table (1) and figure (5) show the over excess of male students; out of 53 (100%) participants, 30 (56.6%) were males, while 23 (43.4%) were females. This presentation reflects boys' motivation and interest towards studying English as an independent speciality at the university, as it reflects the opposite concerning girls.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

Item 2. Age

A) 19 to 25

B) 25 to 30

C) More than 30

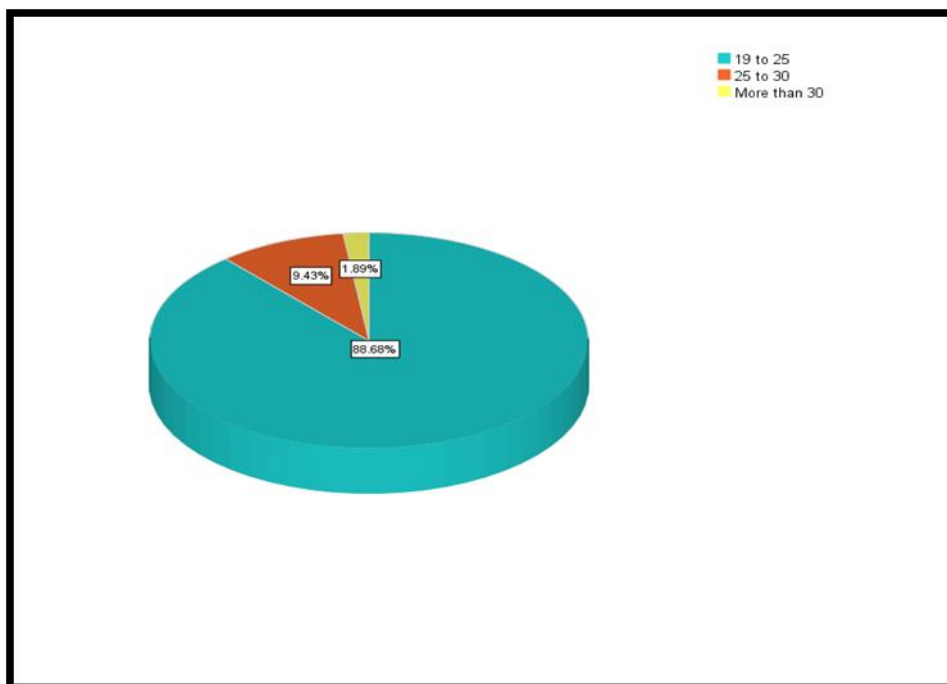
Table 2

Students' Age Partition

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	19 to 25	47	88.7	88.7
	25 to 30	5	9.4	9.4
	More than 30	1	1.9	1.9
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 6

Students' Age Partition



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

This question was asked to know the age rank of the participants. Table (2) and figure (6) show that 47 students (88.7%) range between 19 to 25. 5 students (9.4%) range between 25 to 30 and 1 student (1.9%) is more than 30. From the results obtained, most of our participants are relatively young learners.

Item 3. Have you chosen English as a specialty freely, or was it imposed on you?

A) Yes

B) No

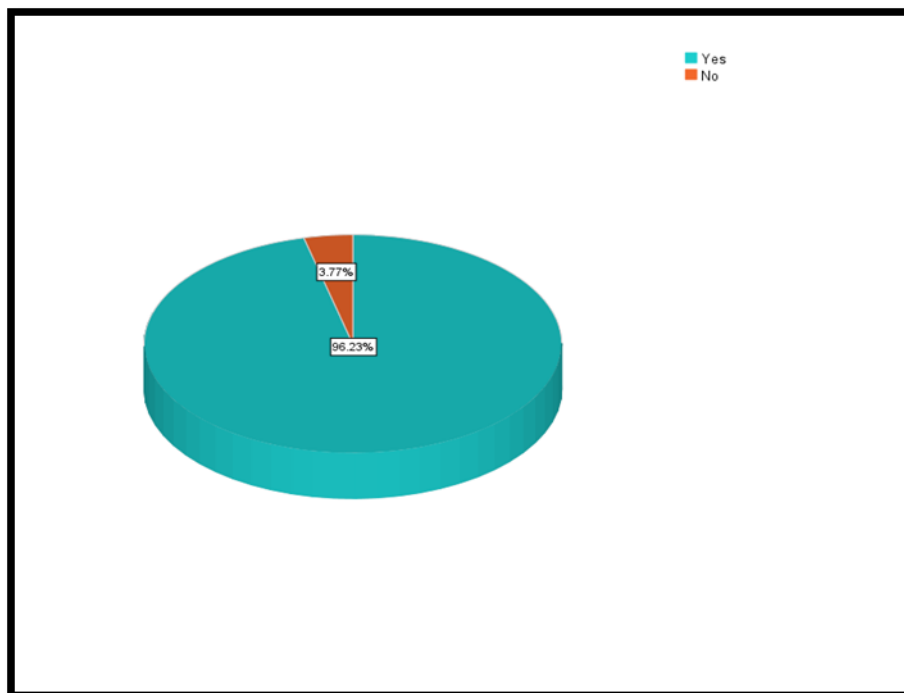
Table 3

Students' Study Choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	51	96.2	96.2
	No	2	3.8	3.8
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 7

Students' Study Choice



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

This question was asked to determine if the English language was the students' first choice at university; their answers may help us determine students' motivation and readiness to learn the English language. Table (3) and Figure (7) point out that 51 students (96.2%) chose English studies by themselves, whereas 2 students (3.8%) had their choice imposed on them or were obliged to do so due to their Baccalaureate average.

Item 4. How do you consider your level of English?

- A) Excellent
- B) Good
- C) Average
- D) Poor

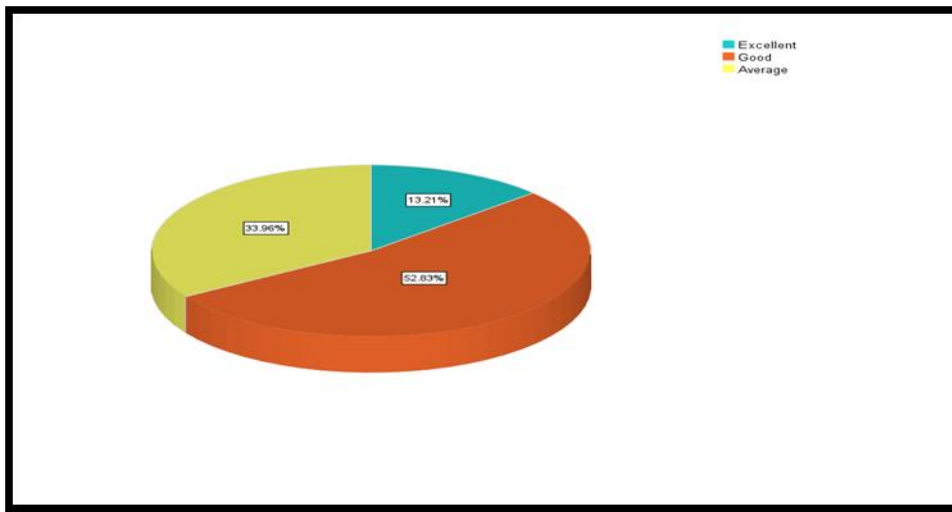
Table 4

Students' Evaluation of Their Levels of English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Excellent	7	13.2	13.2
	Good	28	52.8	52.8
	Average	18	34.0	34.0
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 8

Students' Evaluation of Their Levels of English



Here, table (4) and figure (8) reveal that 7 participants (13.2%) had an excellent level of English. 28 participants (52.8%) enjoyed a good level, while 18 (34%) were at an average level. The results indicate that most EFL students' level is beyond good and reflects their ability to promote academic achievement.

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

Item 1. The speaking skill is important for foreign language communication.

A) Yes

B) No

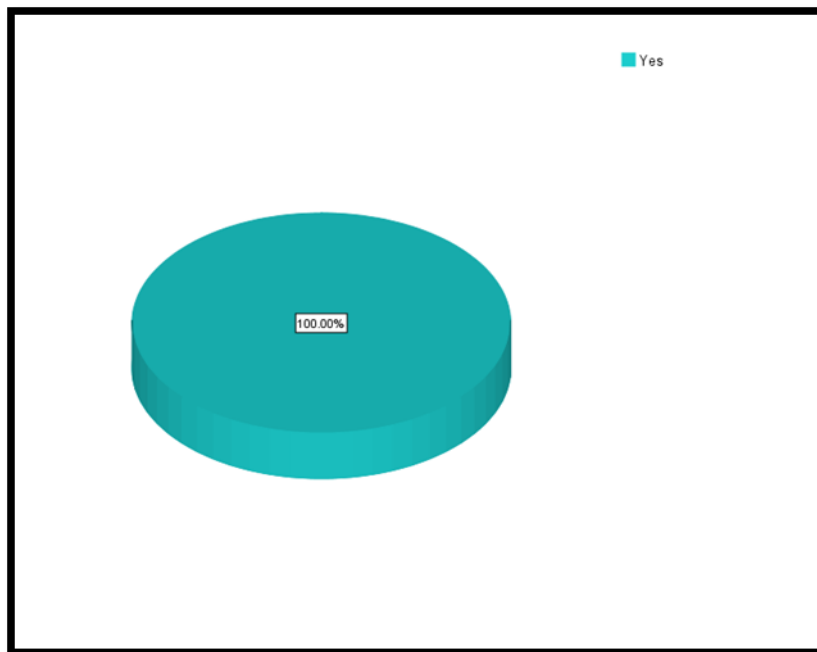
Table 5

Students' Attitudes Towards the Importance of the Speaking Skill for Foreign Language Communication.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 9

Students' Attitudes Towards the Importance of the Speaking Skill for Foreign Language Communication



This question aimed to discover students' attitudes toward the importance of the speaking skill in language communication. As presented in table (5) and figure (9), all

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

participants (100%) agreed that the speaking skill is crucial to foreign language communication which refers to the importance of improving this skill to ensure satisfactory learning outcomes.

Item 2. I understand what is communicated outside the classroom.

A) Yes

B) No

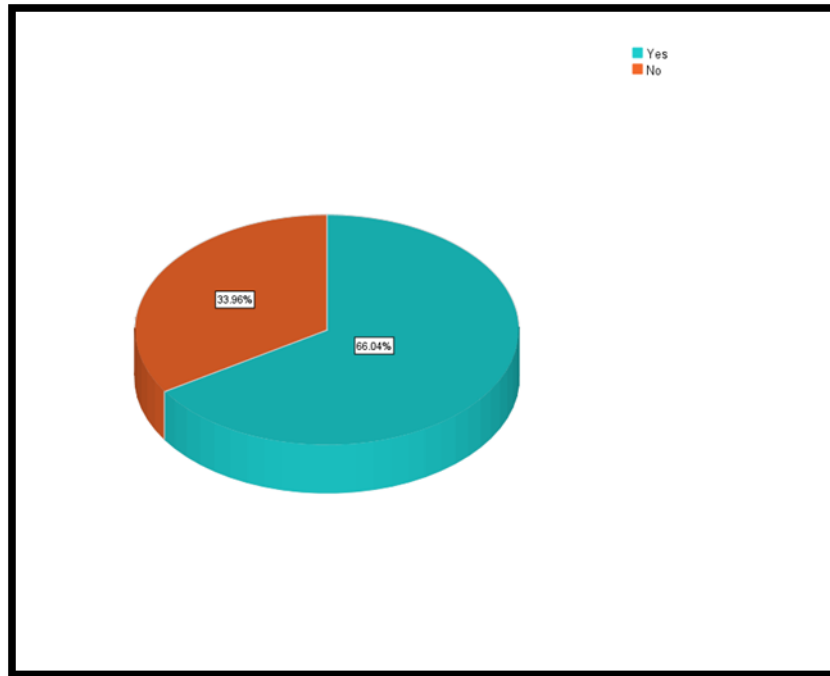
Table 6

Students' Language Understanding

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	35	66.0	66.0
	No	18	34.0	34.0
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 10

Students' Language Understanding



This question aimed to know whether students understand what is communicated outside the classroom or not. Table (6) and figure (10) reveal that 35 students (66%) could understand the language, while 18 of them (34%) were not able to understand what was communicated outside their classrooms. From the results obtained, we deduce that most students are likely to be good communicators outside the classroom, perhaps due to their good level of English.

Item 3. I will be a more confident speaker if I have a rich verbal repertoire.

A) Yes

B) No

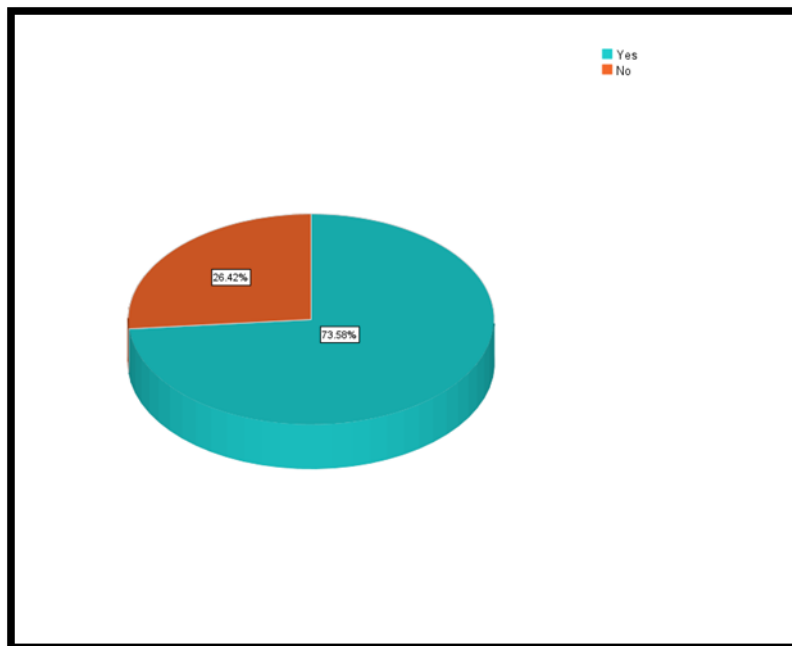
Table 7

Students' Attitudes Towards Achieving Confidence in Oral Performance through a Sufficient Vocabulary

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	39	73.6	73.6
	No	14	26.4	26.4
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 11

Students' Attitudes Towards Achieving Confidence in Oral Performance through a Sufficient Vocabulary



This question aimed to reveal the effectiveness of vocabulary on students' oral performance. As presented in Table (7) and Figure (11), 39 participants (73.6%) answered with yes while 14 students (26.4%) answered with no. From the analysis of these responses, students' confidence in oral performance is relatively based on the amount of vocabulary the learners have. In other words, students need to draw their attention towards developing their verbal repertoire to increase their confidence in

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

speaking at school or in daily life. This may help them express their ideas fluently and accurately.

Item 4. The speaking skill is a crucial element in achieving language mastery.

A) Yes

B) No

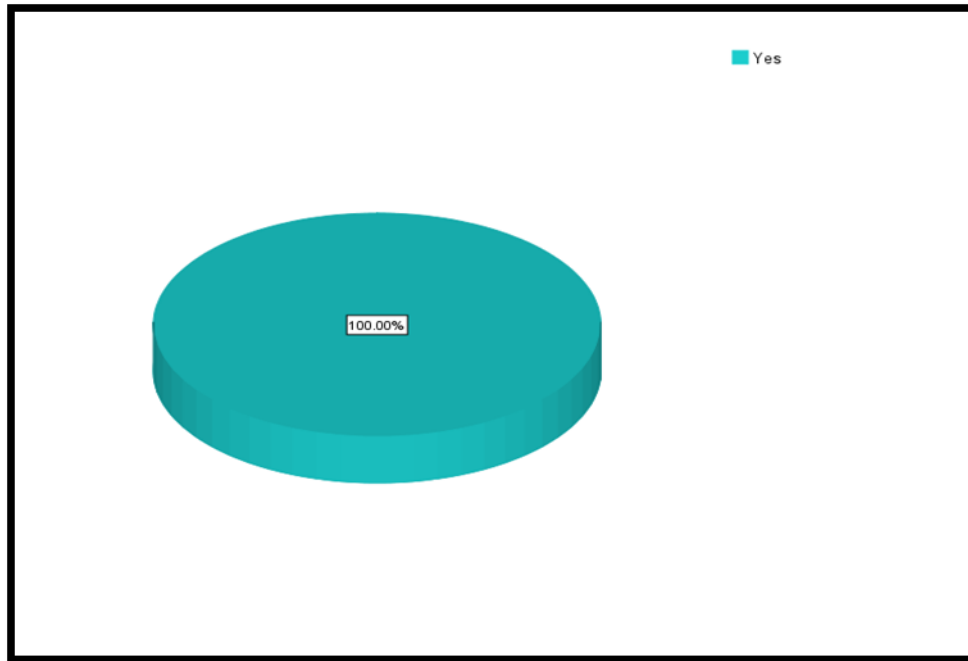
Table 8

Students' Attitudes Towards the Importance of the Speaking Skill in Language Mastery

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 12

Students' Attitudes Towards the Importance of the Speaking Skill in Language Mastery



This question aimed to know whether EFL students consider the speaking skill crucial for achieving language mastery. As shown in Table (8) and Figure (12), all students (100%) showed a strong disagreement with this claim. Accordingly, EFL students are aware of the role of the speaking skill in achieving language mastery, so their motivation for developing their speaking competencies will be increased.

Item 5. I usually need some help with speaking English.

A) Yes

B) No

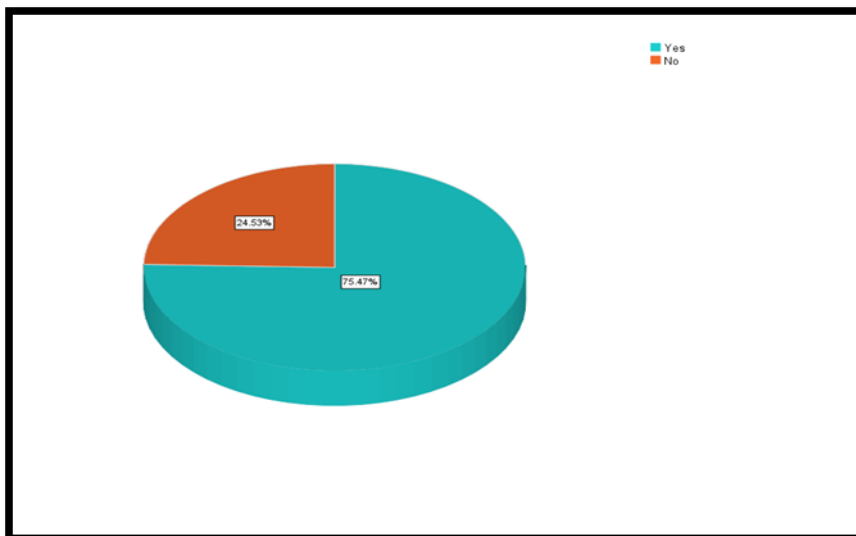
Table 9

Students' Attitudes Towards Speaking Difficulty

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	40	75.5	75.5
	No	13	24.5	24.5
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 13

Students' Attitudes Towards Speaking Difficulty



This question was asked to know if EFL students face any difficulties in speaking English. Table (9) and figure (13) show that 40 students (75.5%) answered with yes. In comparison, 13 students (24.5%) answered with no. From the results, most students need to speak English easily; they face obstacles in learning how to speak and communicate in the target context. However, the minority of them seem to be good enough to be either able to speak fluently or improve it in the attempt.

Item 6. Becoming fluent in speaking necessitates specific techniques.

A) Yes

B) No

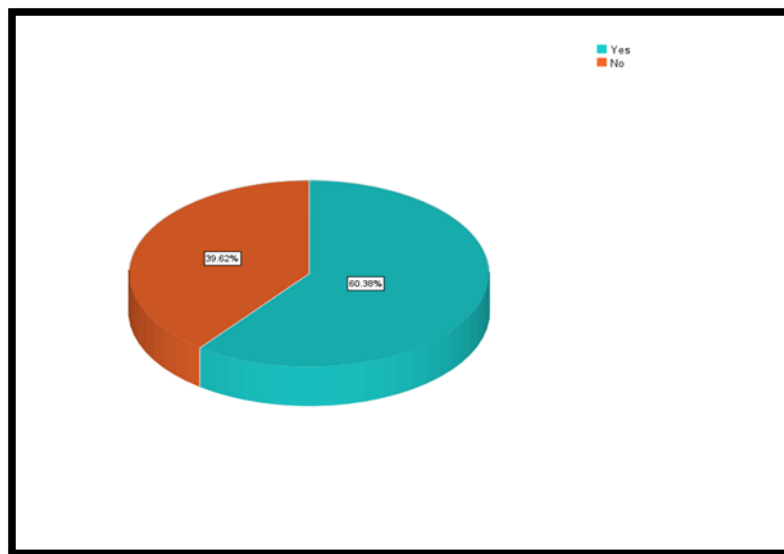
Table 10

Students' Requirements for Speaking Fluency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	32	60.4	60.4
	No	21	39.6	39.6
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 14

Students' Requirements for Speaking Fluency



This question was asked to determine if speaking English fluently requires particular techniques or is attainable for all learners. As revealed in Table (10) and Figure (14), the majority of students (60.4%) voted for yes, while 21 students (39.6%) voted for no. From the analysis of the results, learning to speak English in such a professional way is bound to face certain shortcomings unless specific techniques are implemented.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

Item7. The use of technology in foreign language learning is helpful and effective.

A) Yes

B) No

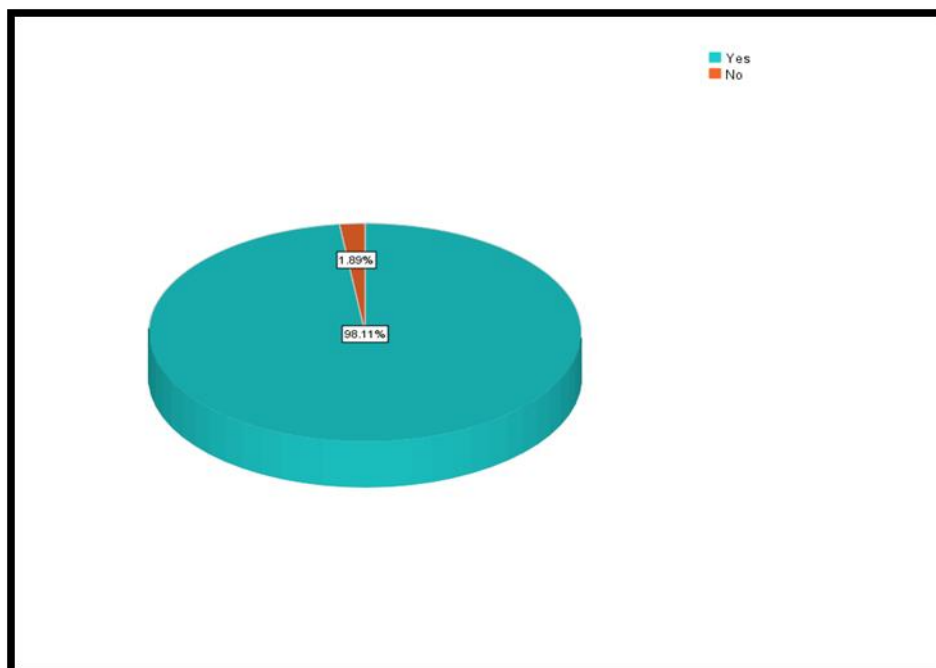
Table 11

Students' Attitudes Towards the Usefulness of Technology in Foreign Language Learning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	52	98.1	98.1
	No	1	1.9	1.9
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 15

Students' Attitudes Towards the Usefulness of Technology in Foreign Language Learning



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

This question aimed to investigate whether students find the technology useful for learning foreign languages or not. Table (11) and Figure (15) demonstrate that most of the students (98.1%) believed that technology is of great use to foreign language learning. However, only 1 participant believed that it was not. From the analysis above, technology integration in foreign language learning enjoys greater prestige among students, and they are highly influenced by its positive impact on their academic achievement.

Section Three: The Role of the Duolingo Application in Enhancing the Speaking Skill

Item1. I am familiar with the use of mobile applications in learning.

A) Yes

B) No

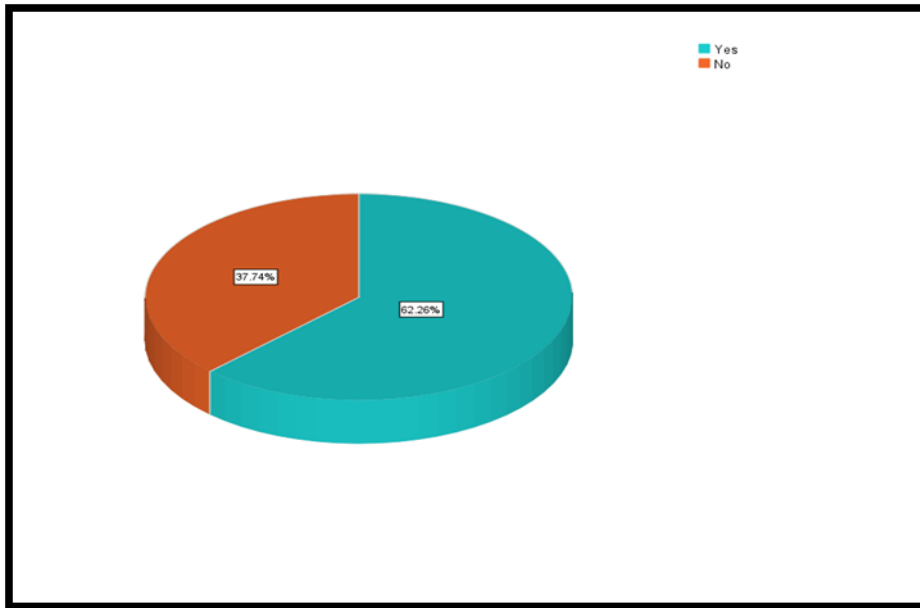
Table 12

Students' Familiarity with the Use of Mobile Applications in Learning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	33	62.3	62.3
	No	20	37.7	37.7
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 16

Students' Familiarity with the Use of Mobile Applications in Learning



This question sought to identify whether EFL students are familiar with the use of the Duolingo Application or not. As demonstrated in Table (12) and Figure (16), 33 students (62.3%) answered with yes, and 20 students (37.7%) answered with no. The analysis of this question displays a clear image that most of the students have enough knowledge of what the Duolingo application is probably used for, which gives positive signs for the answers to the remaining questions.

Item2. I use the Duolingo Application to learn English.

A) Yes

B) No

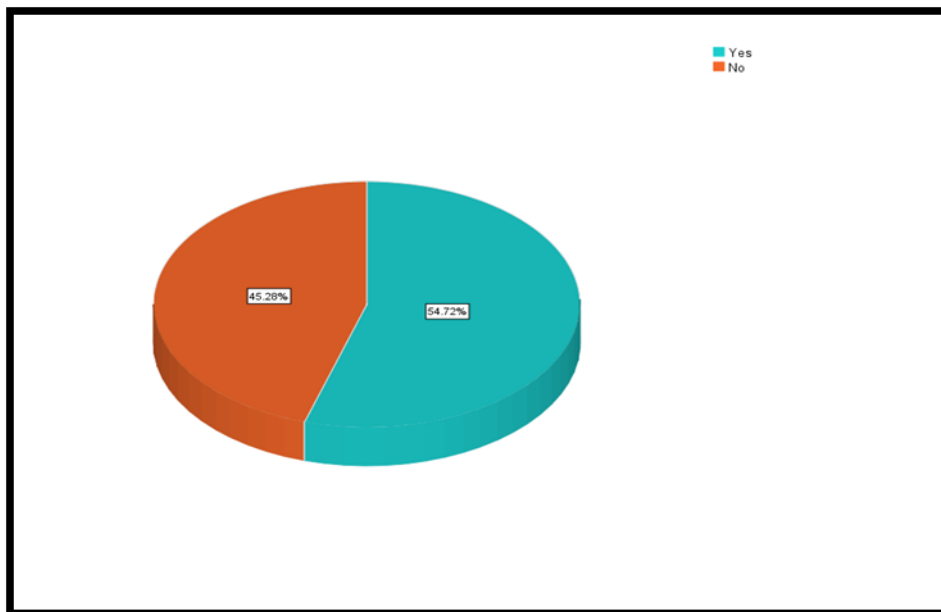
Table 13

Students' Use of the Duolingo Application in English Language Learning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	29	54.7	54.7
	No	24	45.3	45.3
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 17

Students' Use of the Duolingo Application in English Language Learning



This question aimed to determine whether the students use the Duolingo Application to learn English or not. Table (13) and figure (17) show that this statement was agreed by the majority of students, represented (54.7%), while 24 of them (45.3%) declined this claim by saying no to the statement. Accordingly, the purpose of using the Duolingo Application in English learning differs from one learner to the other. However, most of them find value in its contribution to language learning.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

Item3. I use the Duolingo Application to evaluate my speaking abilities.

A) Yes

B) No

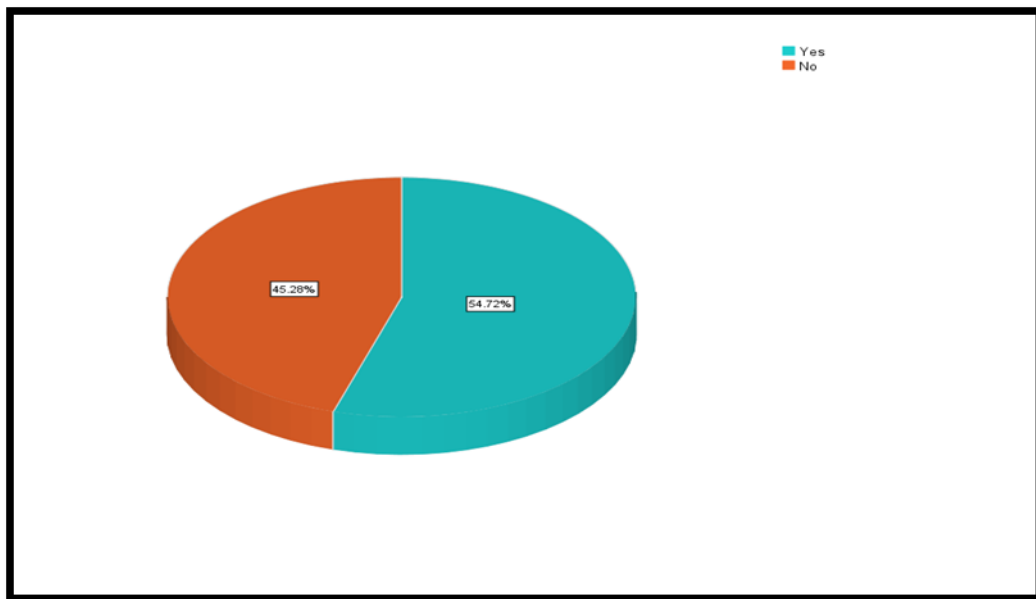
Table 14

Students' Use of Duolingo for Speaking Evaluation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	29	54.7	54.7
	No	24	45.3	45.3
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 18

Students' Use of Duolingo for Speaking Evaluation



This question aimed to identify if EFL students use the Duolingo Application for the sake of evaluating their speaking abilities. As shown in table (14) and figure (18), 29 students (54.7%) gave a positive answer, whereas the rest of them (45.3%) gave a negative one. From the analysis of this question, we can say that the Duolingo

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

Application serves as an assistant tool in evaluating the speaking skills, through which they can know their level in English.

Item4. The Duolingo Application helps me to enrich my verbal repertoire.

A) Yes

B) No

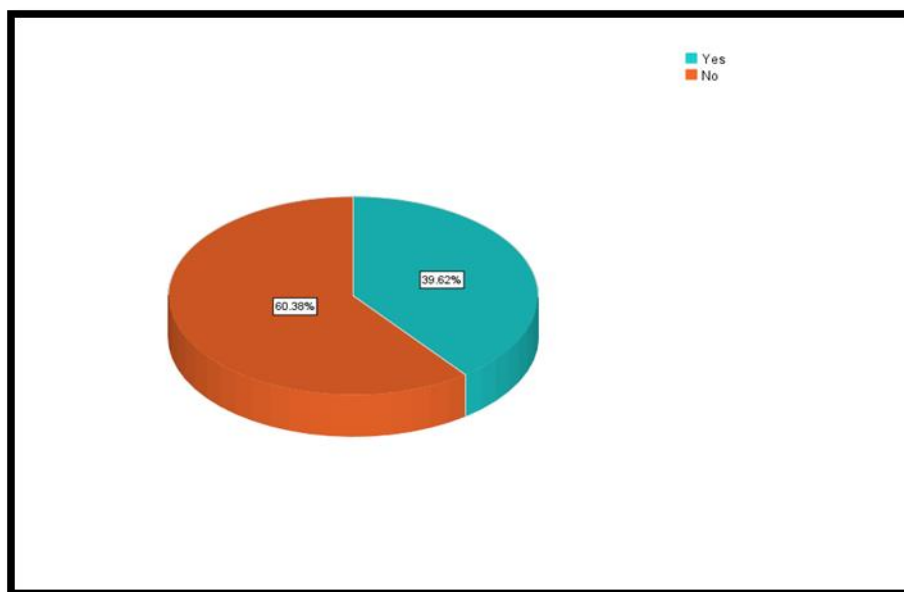
Table 15

Students' Attitudes Towards the Usefulness of the Duolingo Application in Enriching Their Verbal Repertoire

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	21	39.6	39.6
	No	32	60.4	60.4
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 19

Students' Attitudes Towards the Usefulness of the Duolingo Application in Enriching Their Verbal Repertoire



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

The purpose behind designing this question was to know whether the Duolingo Application helps students enrich their vocabulary or not. Table (15) and figure (19) show that 21 students (39.6%) said yes and 32 students (60.4%) said no. The analysis indicates that most learners acknowledge the usefulness of the Duolingo Application in enhancing foreign language vocabulary. Therefore, this is one effective way to build a strong verbal repertoire which helps develop language skills, including the speaking skill.

Item5. The Duolingo Application allows me to practice English outside the classroom.

A) Yes

B) No

Table 16

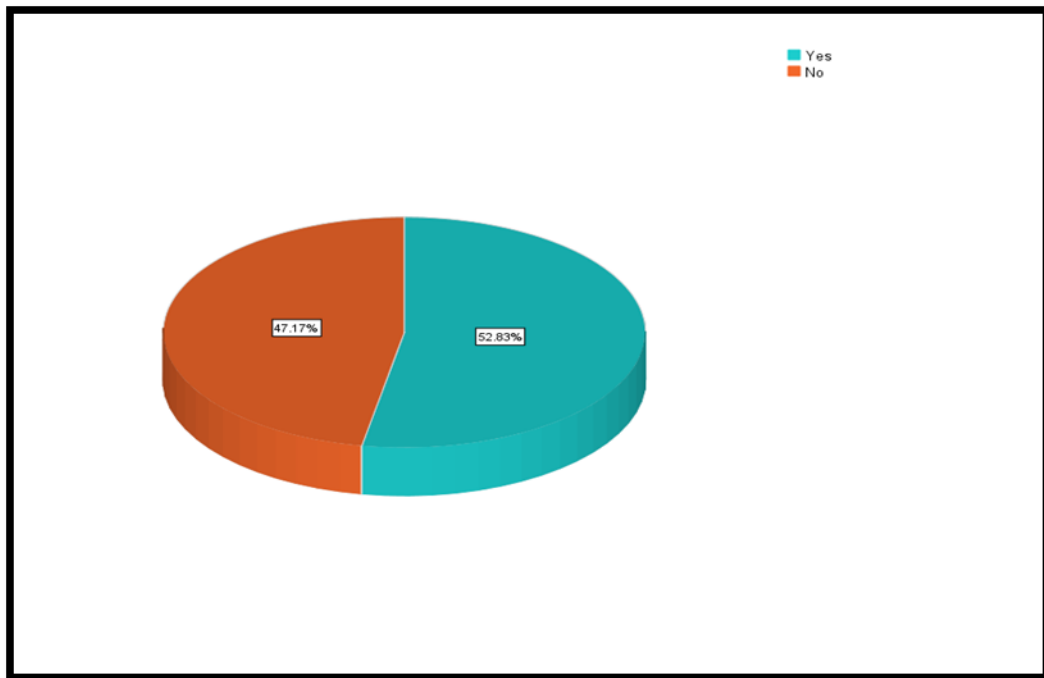
Students' Thoughts About the Feasibility of the Duolingo Application in English Speaking Practice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	28	52.8	52.8
	No	25	47.2	47.2
Total		53	100.0	100.0

Figure 20

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

Students' Thoughts About the Feasibility of the Duolingo Application in English Speaking Practice



The purpose of this question was to know whether the Duolingo Application allows the students to practice their English language outside the classroom or not. Table (16) and figure (20) reveal that the majority of them (52.8%) answered with yes while the rest of them (47.2%) answered with no. The results indicate the ease of the Duolingo Application use and its effective role in making communication achievable for most students outside the classroom.

Item6. The Duolingo Application's activities are motivational and engaging.

A) Yes

B) No

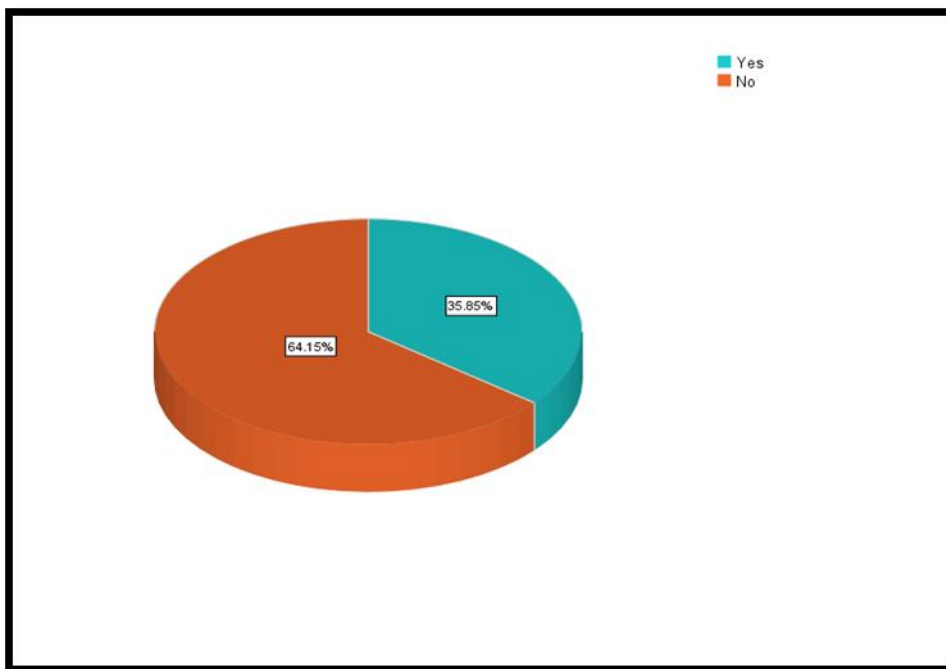
Table 17

Students' Thoughts About the Quality of the Duolingo Application Activities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	19	35.8	35.8
	No	34	64.2	64.2
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 21

Students' Thoughts About the Quality of the Duolingo Application Activities



This question was asked to explore students' thoughts on the quality of the Duolingo Application activities. As presented above in table (17) and figure (21), 19 students (35.8%) found these activities motivational and engaging, while most of them (64.2%) found the opposite. Here, Duolingo activities seem less likely to trigger students' motivation and get them involved in learning.

Item 7. The Duolingo Application makes me interested in speaking English purposefully and effectively.

A) Yes

B) No

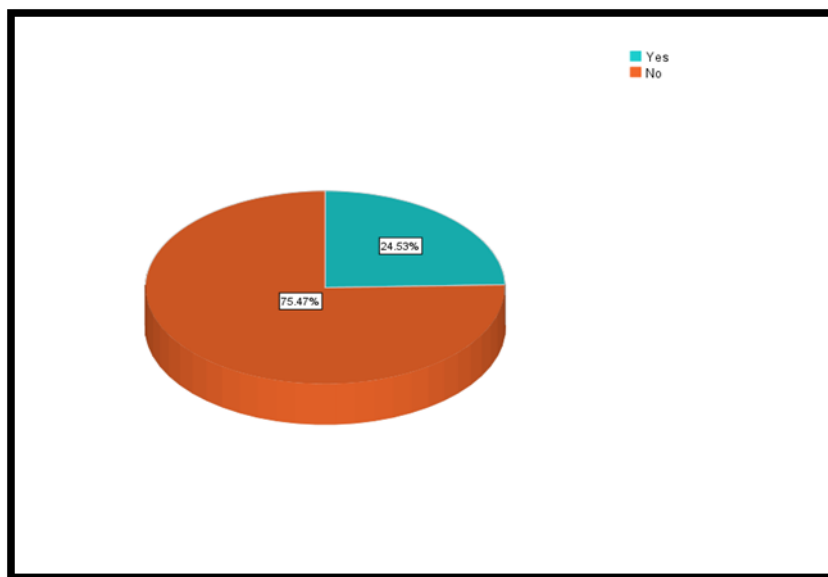
Table 18

Raising Students' Interest in Speaking Through the Use of the Duolingo Application

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	13	24.5	24.5
	No	40	75.5	75.5
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 22

Raising Students' Interest in Speaking Through the Use of the Duolingo Application



This question aimed to know if students' interest in speaking is raised through the Duolingo Application or not. Table (18) and figure (22) reveal that some students (24.5%) thought that Duolingo helped raise their interest in speaking while the majority of them thought (75.5%) the contrary. The results indicate that not all students find the Duolingo Application interesting when it comes to speaking English effectively.

Item 8. I recommend using the Duolingo Application to enhance the speaking skill.

A) Yes

B) No

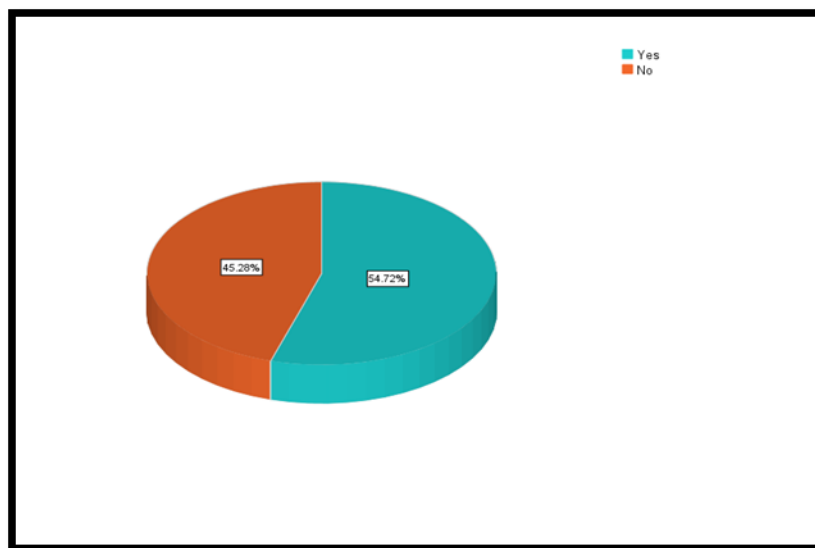
Table 19

Students' Recommendation for the Use of the Duolingo Application for the Speaking Skill Enhancement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	29	54.7	54.7
	No	24	45.3	45.3
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Figure 23

Students' Recommendation for the Use of the Duolingo Application for the Speaking Skill Enhancement



This question was asked to know whether EFL students recommend using the Duolingo Application to enhance the speaking skill. As shown in Table (19) and Figure (23), most of the students (54.7%) answered with yes while the other students (45.3%) answered with no. This means that students find this application helpful and they get the utmost benefit from it, as well as having their speaking level increased its use.

3.2.2 Summary of the Questionnaire's Findings

At the beginning of the research, it was hypothesized that Duolingo, as a language learning tool, may effectively promote the learners' speaking skills. Besides, learners' speaking outcomes may become satisfactory if Duolingo is implemented. In this regard, the students' questionnaire aimed to explore their attitudes towards the role of the Duolingo Application in enhancing the students' speaking skills.

The analysis of section one reveals that students' choice to study English was freely chosen by them, which points to their motivation and interest in studying English as an independent specialty and delving into its linguistic aspects. This was asserted when most of them claimed that their level of English is beyond good. In Section Two, the students were interrogated about their speaking skills and how they perceive it as one of the fundamental language skills.

The general result of this section reveals that every student recognizes the significance of the speaking skill for foreign language communication. Also, they declared that they are confident enough to communicate outside the classroom and related this to the importance of having a rich verbal repertoire. Furthermore, when it comes to the role of the speaking skill in achieving language mastery, all participants were on solid ground regarding this claim. This means that students need help in achieving this task, as admitted by the majority of them. In order to tailor the speaking skill to match the previous aim, students argued that this skill needs specific techniques, including the integration of technology, which is helpful and effective in this regard.

In section three, the students were asked to express their thoughts and perceptions on the Duolingo Application as a distinguished application used to learn foreign languages. The overall results of this section show that students are familiar

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

with the use of mobile applications in language learning, including the Duolingo Application, as most of them admitted to its use to learn new languages and assess their speaking abilities. Nevertheless, the Duolingo Application is less successful in constructing students' lexicons, which implies that learners' focus is on speaking the target language instead of acquiring it. They also disproved the assertion about the efficacy of Duolingo's activities in triggering learners' motivation and participation. Nevertheless, the majority needed more enthusiasm for this application. However, its use was highly recommended to improve one's speaking ability.

3.2.3 Students' Interview Analysis

This interview contained seven open-ended questions that were posed to nine students, with the following analysis and interpretation of the results:

Item 1. Of all the four language skills, which one do you struggle with the most?

This question was addressed to the students in order to identify the most challenging language skill. On this basis, nine students provided the following answers:

- The speaking skill (**6 responses**).
- The writing skill (**3 responses**).

From the analysis of this question, we notice that the speaking skill is the most challenging skill according to most students. However, some of them need help with their writing skill. No answer indicated difficulties with reading or listening skills.

Item 2. Based on your experience, what is the most efficient way to become competent in speaking English?

This question aimed to investigate the most efficient way to become competent in speaking English. The participants' answers were analysed as follows:

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

1. Grammar Practice (**1 response**).
2. Speaking with native speakers (**3 responses**).
3. Use of language learning applications (**2 responses**).
4. Listening to native speakers (**1 response**).
5. Reading a lot (**2 responses**).

By examining the students' feedback, we can conclude that pupils utilize various methods to attain fluency in English. Interacting with native speakers, using language learning applications, and reading are the most common methods.

Item 3. In your opinion, what influence has technology brought on foreign language learning?

This inquiry was posed to identify the influence of technology on foreign language acquisition. The students submitted a set of answers, interpreted and examined as follows:

- Developing language skills, such as the speaking skill, outside the classroom (**3 responses**).
- Saving time and effort (**1 response**).
- Improving the level of language on an ongoing and effective basis (**2 responses**).
- Allowing language learning through the use of mobile applications such as the Duolingo learning application (**3 responses**).

After analysing the students' responses, we conclude that technology positively influences foreign language learning as the students acknowledged its role in developing their skills, improving their level, and saving time and effort.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

Accordingly, it can be said that through technology, foreign language learning becomes accessible and attainable for all learners.

Item 4. What are your thoughts on the Duolingo Application?

In this question, the students were asked to reflect on their thoughts on the Duolingo application part of introducing the main topic of the interview. Their answers are quoted as follows:

1. "Duolingo has an interactive way to teach you any language of your choice, thanks to its dedicated line of topics that range from basic and elementary to intermediate and advanced."
2. "It is such an attractive and helpful application."
3. "It helps in improving students' level well and significantly."
4. "Duolingo can help you develop a foundation of knowledge for a variety of languages."
5. "It is a fun language game."
6. "Duolingo is a platform for learning foreign languages through games."
7. "It is really useful for learning many languages."
8. "It is a good application for beginners."
9. "It is an effective way to learn a language."

After analysing the participants' responses, we deduce that all students held positive perceptions of the Duolingo Application, and they consider it helpful, practical, and effective for learning foreign languages, enriching verbal repertoire, improving their level, and engaging them in funny, interactive, and enjoyable activities. Hence, Duolingo is considered one of the best applications for language learning.

5. What role may this application play in enhancing the speaking skill?

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

This question was designed to determine the role of the Duolingo Application in enhancing the learners' speaking skills. In this regard, nine students were interviewed to explore their perceptions. Their answers were analysed as follows:

- Duolingo facilitates the speaking process (**4 responses**).
- It provides feedback on users' pronunciation (**1 response**).
- It helps to practice the listening skill (**1 response**).
- It allows practising English (**2 responses**).
- It improves fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary (**1 response**).

The students' responses indicate that they know the advantages of using the Duolingo Application to enhance their speaking abilities, ranging from pronunciation to fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary. Thus, this application enables the student to reach a higher level of proficiency.

Item 6. What are the significant differences between learning to speak with and without the Duolingo Application? Name three differences.

This question was posed to identify the prime differences between learning to speak with and without the Duolingo Application. The interviewees provided the following answers, decoded and analysed into the following themes:

A. Learning with Duolingo:

1. Allow access to speaking lessons.
2. Promote autonomous learning and self-assessment.
3. Enhance the learning experience through exercises and quizzes.
4. Providing immediate feedback, rewards, and progress tracking makes the learning process more enjoyable and motivating.
5. Increases motivation and interest in English language learning.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

6. Facilitates learning English in real context with its native speakers.
7. Provides a structured curriculum with organized lessons and levels, guiding learners through a step-by-step language learning process.
8. Duolingo Gamification helps you recognize and remember new vocabulary at any time and any place.

B. Learning without Duolingo:

1. Involves traditional textbooks or online resources that lack interactive and game-like elements.
2. Discourages learning a language in real contexts.
3. Draws attention to self-created study plans, which can be less organized and systematic.

After analysing the students' responses regarding the differences between learning to speak with the use of Duolingo and without it, it appears that students have positive attitudes towards learning with Duolingo as acknowledged by them; Duolingo's use not only enhances the speaking skill but also what is structured around it, including pronunciation and vocabulary. In addition, Duolingo intensifies motivation and elicits interest in learning, besides allowing an entertaining, educational adventure. However, with it, learning may become more traditional, more organized, and systematic. From the results, students are more inclined towards learning with Duolingo.

Item 7. Is there anything else you want to add regarding the role of the Duolingo Application in developing the speaking skill?

Lastly, this question was added to allow more thoughts on the role of Duolingo in developing the speaking skill. Therefore, the participants were asked to add any

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

related suggestion, thought, or comment in this context. 4 participants provided the following suggestions, as presented below:

- Duolingo offers flexibility in terms of learning pace and scheduling.
- Through this self-paced approach, learners can dedicate as much time as needed to improve their speaking skills without feeling rushed or overwhelmed.
- The application includes listening exercises where learners can practise understanding spoken language. This helps them develop listening comprehension skills, which are crucial for effective communication.
- By exposing learners to different accents and speech patterns, Duolingo prepares them to understand and respond appropriately when speaking with native speakers.

To sum up, the Duolingo Application effectively builds the student's speaking skills. That is why it would be as beneficial as possible if learners used this application effectively.

3.2.4 Summary of the Interview's Findings

The students' interview was conducted to get a deeper insight into their attitudes towards using technology and application such as Duolingo to improve their speaking skills. To begin with, the participants stated that foreign language learning is quite difficult, especially when learning productive skills, mainly speaking and writing. Hence, they were asked about the most efficient way to overcome this difficulty and

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

take their speaking experience to the next level. The students stated that speaking with native speakers and using mobile learning applications may bring satisfactory results. Accordingly, technology positively affects foreign language learning, primarily through learning applications such as Duolingo, which is endlessly admired and appreciated by foreign language learners. According to them, Duolingo is not just a learning application but a facilitator, trigger, and opportunity provider for those seeking proficiency, fluency, and accuracy.

Additionally, learning how to speak with Duolingo is seen as helpful, enjoyable, and useful in promoting learner autonomy, improving pronunciation, providing corrective feedback, and for the most part, improving the speaking skill, yet, learning to speak without it seems boring and old-fashioned. At last, the students were asked to add any concept related to the role of the Duolingo Application in enhancing their speaking skill. Here, the students gave centrality to the importance of using this application flexibly and straightforwardly and getting involved in interactive activities, drills, and exchanges with native speakers, notwithstanding the importance of practising the listening skill as an important receptive skill that would, for certain, lead to effective communication.

In summary, delving into the meaning and relevance of the students' results helped interpret the research data and draw the results. Therefore, answering the research questions and validating its hypotheses.

Conclusion

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH FIELDWORK

This chapter overviewed the research methodology, presented the data analysis, and summarized the findings. It also displayed the students' questionnaire results in tables, pie charts, and statistical analysis. However, the teachers' interview was analysed qualitatively through thematic analysis. These results matter because it shows consistency with the research questions. Therefore, the hypotheses set at the beginning of the research are validated.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

GENERAL CONCLUSION

It is widely acknowledged that EFL students need to develop their foreign language speaking abilities to achieve language mastery. In this regard, mobile applications are considered promising tools for enhancing speaking, as learners commonly use them. This study investigated the perceptions of first-year English students at the University of Mohamed Khider-Biskra about the Duolingo Application and its role in the speaking skill enhancement. This study also sought to discover the student's opinions on making this tool more helpful in achieving speaking proficiency.

At the beginning of this research study, two significant hypotheses were suggested. The first hypothesis suggested that the Duolingo Application, as a language learning tool, would promote the learners' speaking skills. The second hypothesis stated that learners' speaking outcomes may become satisfactory if Duolingo is implemented. On this basis, two instruments were selected in order to collect the data necessary for this study and which are accordingly: a students' questionnaire and an interview.

The questionnaire results showed students liked technology-based learning tools, especially Duolingo. Also, they seemed familiar with this application's listening exercises that help develop language skills. As listening is the receptive skill that matches the speaking skill, Duolingo is considered a reliable tool in this regard. From these results, it is deduced that Duolingo enjoys greater prestige among mobile applications.

On the other hand, the interview's results reflected students' positive thoughts on the Duolingo Application. Integrating technology during the learning process is an intrinsic factor in improving EFL students' skills because they no longer appreciate traditional teaching methods. Therefore, students' lack of interest and motivation towards learning could be tackled by integrating technology and utilizing valuable

GENERAL CONCLUSION

applications, such as Duolingo to help them improve their overall language performance in various ways. Therefore, this study provides a good starting point for discussion and further research.

The results obtained from the questionnaire and the interview regarding the role of the Duolingo Application in promoting students' speaking skills emphasized the effectiveness of interactive activities in building communicative skills and making communication effective and attainable, which was reflected in the students' perceptions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE
IMPLICATIONS**

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study showed positive perceptions of the Duolingo Application in enhancing the speaking skill. Ultimately, some practical recommendations for EFL students and teachers on how to use the Duolingo Application to get the utmost benefit from its service are mentioned as follows:

***Recommendations for students**

1. Follow Duolingo's free guide to get started, offering guidance and advice.
2. Incorporate Duolingo into language learning and set objectives within the app.
3. Track your progress and stay motivated throughout the learning process.
4. Browse the application's catalogue and start with the basic modules that consists of lessons and various activities.
5. Focus on the language learning components in the app, such as vocabulary, grammar, listening, and speaking.
6. Do the exercises thoroughly, reading all explanations and examples.
7. Maintain consistency by practicing on a daily basis because regular exposure to the language may help enhance your learning experience and memorization of new concepts.
8. Use the extra features of the Duolingo App, such as flashcards, stories, and podcasts. By exploring these features, the learning experience becomes satisfying.
9. Engage with the Duolingo community through discussions, participation, challenges, exchanges, and native-like talks.
10. Trigger autonomous learning and rely on oneself in learning.
11. Recognize the significance of developing the speaking skill for language mastery.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

*Recommendations for Teachers

- 1. Introduce Duolingo as a Supplementary Tool:** teachers should present Duolingo as a valuable supplementary tool to support language learning. Emphasize its interactive and gamified nature, making it appealing to students.
- 2. Align Duolingo Activities with Lesson Objectives:** teachers should align the Duolingo activities with the specific objectives of their lessons. This ensures that students are working on relevant content and reinforcing what they are learning in class.
- 3. Assign Duolingo for Homework or Independent Study:** encourage students to use Duolingo for homework or independent study. Assign specific lessons or skill sets for them to complete and provide explicit instructions on how to utilize the application effectively.
- 4. Incorporate Duolingo in Classroom Activities:** integrate Duolingo activities into classroom routines, such as warm-up exercises or group challenges. Students can practise and reinforce their language skills together with this.
- 5. Combine Duolingo with Authentic Materials:** encourage students to use Duolingo with authentic materials, such as books, articles, or videos in the target language. This helps them apply their language skills in real-world contexts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire attempts to gather information needed to accomplish a Master's dissertation. It explores the role of the Duolingo Application in enhancing EFL students' speaking skill.

Your answers are crucial for the validity of this research being undertaken. Please answer the following questions by ticking in the appropriate box.

Thank you in advance.

Section One: General Information

1. Gender:

A) Male

B) Female

2. Age:

A) 19 to 25

B) 25 to 30

C) More than 30

3. Have you chosen English as a specialty freely or was it imposed on you?

A) Yes

B) No

4. How do you consider your level of English?

A) Excellent

B) Good

C) Average

D) Poor

5. Which language skill do you consider the most difficult?

A) Listening

B) Speaking

C) Reading

D) Writing

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

**Please answer the questions by ticking (✓) in the right box.*

	Item	Yes	No
1	The speaking skill is important for language communication.		
2	I understand what is communicated outside the classroom.		
3	I Will be a more confident speaker if I have a rich verbal repertoire.		

4	The speaking skill is a crucial element in achieving language mastery.		
5	I usually experience some difficulty when speaking English.		
6	Becoming fluent in speaking necessitates specific techniques.		
7	The use of technology in language learning is helpful and effective.		

Section Three: The Role of the Duolingo Application in Enhancing the Speaking Skill

I. Please answer the questions by ticking (✓) in the right box

	Item	Yes	No
1	I am familiar with the use of mobile applications in learning.		
2	I use the Duolingo Application to learn English.		
3	I use the Duolingo Application to evaluate my speaking abilities.		
4	The Duolingo Application helps me to enrich my verbal repertoire.		
5	The Duolingo Application allows me to practise English outside the classroom.		
6	The Duolingo Application's activities are motivational and engaging.		

7	The Duolingo Application raises my interest in speaking English purposefully and effectively.		
8	I recommend using the Duolingo Application to enhance the speaking skill.		

Appendix B

Students' Interview

This interview aims to explore students' thoughts on the Duolingo Application. More importantly, it attempts to discover the ways in which this application could be used for enhancing the students' speaking skills. Answering this brief interview takes from 5 to 10 minutes. Thus, you are mostly welcome to choose whether to answer the interview or not. Your most appreciated contribution is expected to be honest and straightforward.

1. Of all the four language skills, which one do you struggle with the most?
2. Based on your experience, what is the most efficient way to become competent in speaking English?
3. In your opinion, what influence has technology brought on foreign language learning?
4. What are your thoughts on the Duolingo Application?
5. What role may this application play in enhancing the speaking skill?

6. What are the major differences between learning to speak with and without the Duolingo Application? Name three differences?

7. Is there anything else you want to add regarding the role of the Duolingo Application in developing the speaking skill?

الملخص

يتطلب التعليم العالي من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تحمل مسؤوليات تعليمية معينة، بما في ذلك تحسين مهارات التحدث لديهم. ومع ذلك يمكن أن تعوق العديد من العقبات تقدم الطلاب في تحقيق الكفاءة في التحدث. يهدف هذا البحث إلى التحقيق في وجهات نظر طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول فعالية تطبيق Duolingo في تعزيز قدراتهم على التحدث وتوسيع ذخيرتهم اللفظية. من أجل التحقق من صحة الفرضيات، تم استخدام نهج متعدد الأساليب، باستخدام استبيان ومقابلات مع عينة مختارة من المشاركين 53 طالب سنة أولى في اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية. كان الغرض من هذه الأساليب هو استكشاف تصوراتهم عن الموضوع. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها باستخدام برنامج SPSS للبيانات الكمية، بينما تم إجراء تحليل المحتوى للبيانات النوعية. كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن الطلاب ينظرون إلى تطبيق Duolingo كأداة قيمة لتعلم اللغة، وخاصة لتحسين مهارات التحدث. علاوة على ذلك، أشارت النتائج إلى أن الطلاب كانوا على دراية باستخدام تطبيقات الهاتف المحمول لأغراض تعلم اللغة. يؤكد المعنى الضمني الكبير لهذه الدراسة على أهمية دمج الأدوات القائمة على التكنولوجيا، مثل تطبيق Duolingo، لتسهيل نتائج تعلم اللغة الفعالة من خلال الممارسة والتفاني.

الكلمات الرئيسية: مهارة التحدث، تطبيق Duolingo، تطبيقات الهاتف المحمول، مرجع لفظي، برنامج SPSS، أدوات قائمة على التكنولوجيا.