THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING APPS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DUOLINGO AND IBRAT ACADEMY (BASED ON SURVEY DATA)

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Abstract: *This article examines the role of digital language learning applications (Duolingo and Ibrat Academy) in improving users' speaking and listening skills, frequency of use, perceived useful features, and whether such apps can fully replace traditional classroom teaching. The theoretical framework from the thesis (Godwin-Jones, 2022; Lee & Dincer, 2021; Vygotsky, 1978) is tested against empirical data from a survey of 12 respondents. Results show that while apps are accessible and motivating, they are not seen as a full replacement for face-to-face instruction.*

Keywords: *language learning apps, Duolingo, Ibrat Academy, gamification, survey analysis, mobile-assisted language learning.*

Introduction

In today's globalized world, knowing multiple languages is no longer just a personal advantage; it has become a necessity for professional and academic success. To meet this growing demand, digital technology has stepped in, completely transforming how people approach education. Among these digital innovations, mobile language learning applications have

experienced explosive growth over the last decade. Platforms such as Duolingo and Ibrat Academy have quickly risen to prominence, attracting millions of active users by offering flexible, gamified, and highly accessible learning environments. However, despite the massive popularity of these applications, there is still a significant gap in the current scientific literature. Most existing studies look at the theoretical potential of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) rather than examining real-world data from actual students. Little empirical evidence exists regarding how regular users perceive the practical effectiveness of these digital tools in their daily routines. To bridge this gap, this study examines the real experiences of a dedicated cohort of language learners. Specifically, this paper aims to discover which language learning applications are most widely used among modern students and how often they engage with them on a weekly basis. Additionally, the research investigates which specific application features—such as flexibility, content variety, or gamification—are considered the most useful by learners. Finally, the study evaluates how much these digital tools actually improve vital communication skills, specifically listening and speaking, and explores whether mobile applications possess the potential to fully replace traditional classroom teaching in the foreseeable future.

Literature Review

When looking at Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), several key theories explain why these apps work so well. First, Godwin-Jones (2022) emphasizes the role of flexibility and accessibility. Traditional classrooms have strict schedules and location limits. Mobile apps change this completely. They open up opportunities for "anytime, anywhere" learning. Because of this convenience, students can easily practice vocabulary or grammar during short

breaks in their daily routines. This constant exposure helps build stronger self-regulated learning habits over time. Second, maintaining student motivation is always a challenge in digital education. To solve this, apps use gamification. Lee and Dincer (2021) point out that features like points, daily streaks, and digital badges act as great motivators. These game elements give learners immediate feedback. When a user sees their daily streak growing, they feel a psychological commitment to continue. This turns boring grammar drills into an engaging game, which greatly improves memory retention.Finally, language learning cannot happen in isolation. It is a deeply social process. This goes back to Vygotsky's (1978) Social Development Theory, which states that we learn languages best through interaction. Modern apps do not ignore this. By using public leaderboards and learning marathons, they create a digital community. Even if a student is studying alone at home, these features introduce a healthy sense of competition. They connect learners to a global network, keeping them accountable and engaged.However, a major problem in current research is the lack of primary data. Many papers simply review existing literature. This survey directly addresses that gap by collecting fresh data from 12 respondents.

Methodology

To collect practical insights for this study, a quantitative research design was used. The primary data was gathered using an online survey. Below is a detailed breakdown of the participants, instruments, and data analysis methods utilized in this research.

Participants (Sample Size)

The study involved a small but targeted sample of 12 respondents (\(N = 12\)) who are actively learning languages. Although the sample size is limited,

it provides a direct, real-world snapshot of how modern students interact with digital learning tools.

Research Instrument (Tool & Questions)

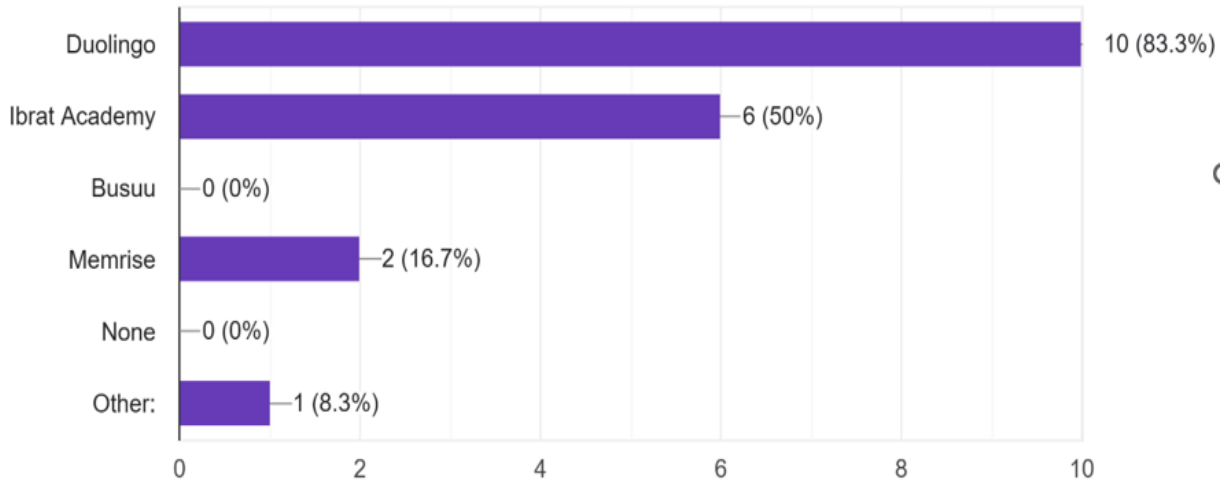
Data collection was carried out using Google Forms due to its accessibility and ease of use. The survey consisted of 5 carefully designed multiple-choice questions. Some of these questions allowed single answers, while others permitted multiple selections so respondents could choose all options that applied to their personal experiences (for example, selecting multiple apps that they currently use).

Data Analysis

Once the survey was completed, the responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Specifically, the data analysis focused on frequency counts and percentages generated from the survey results.

Results and discussion

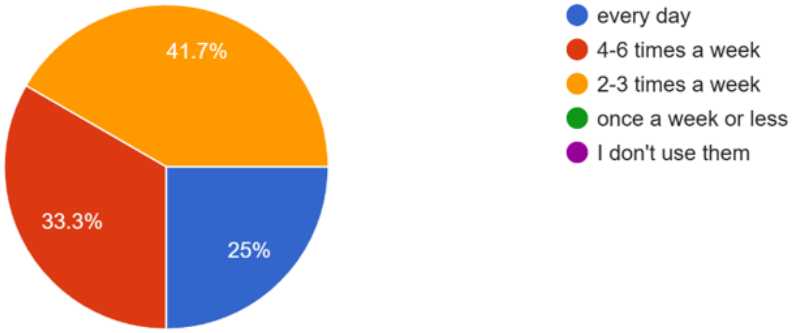
Question 1: Which language learning app(s) have you used or are currently using?



The first question aimed to map out the general landscape of language learning application usage among the participants. Because respondents could choose more than one application, a total of 24 selections were made. This indicates a high level of multi-platform usage, with an average of 2 different applications utilized per person.The empirical data demonstrates a clear and strong preference for two main platforms. Duolingo stands at the top of the list, with 83.3% (10 out of 12 respondents) actively using it. Closely following is Ibrat Academy, which captured 66.7% (8 respondents) of the total sample. The massive popularity of these two platforms confirms that they dominate the local market and serve as the primary digital tools for language learners in this cohort. Other international applications showed significantly lower adoption rates. Only 16.7% (2 respondents) reported using Memrise, while Busuu was selected by just a single participant (8.3%). Additionally, alternative tools like Anki and other unlisted applications were combined under the "Other" category, accounting for 25.0% (3 respondents) of the choices. No participant selected the "None" option, proving that 100% of the surveyed group relies on at least one digital application.

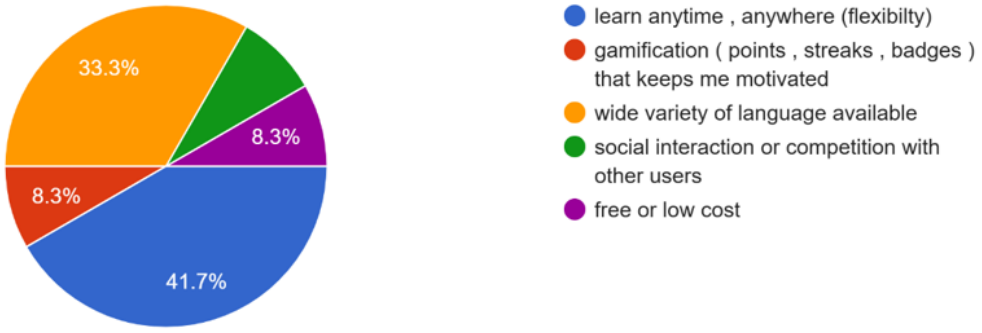
In summary, the interpretation of these findings clearly shows that Duolingo and Ibrat Academy dominate student usage. This strong trend justifies their selection as primary case studies for analyzing mobile-assisted language learning in the later sections of this paper.

Question 2: On average, how often do you use such apps per week?



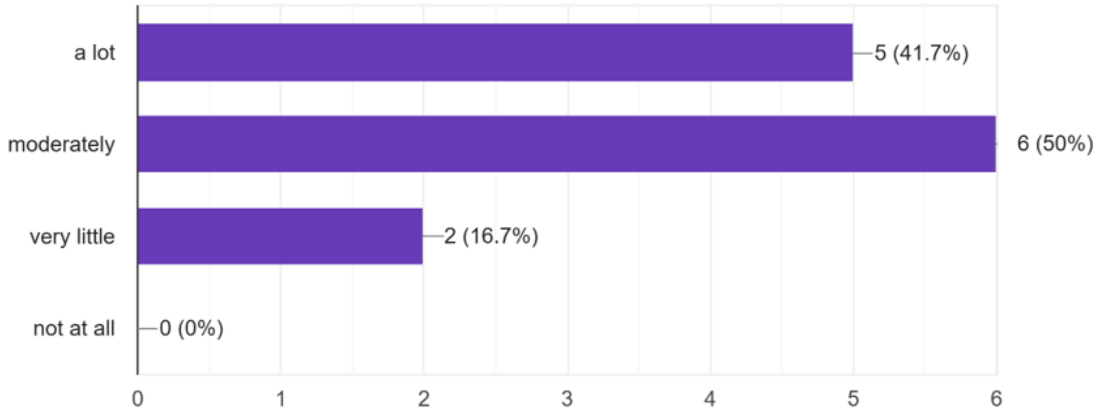
The second question investigated how frequently the participants interact with their chosen language learning applications per week. Understanding this usage frequency is essential to determine whether mobile learning has become a consistent habit or remains a sporadic activity for students. According to the gathered data, the largest portion of the sample, 41.7% (5 out of 12 respondents), uses these applications 2-3 times a week. The second largest group consists of 33.3% (4 respondents) who engage with the platforms 4-6 times a week. Additionally, exactly 25.0% (3 respondents) reported using their language learning applications every single day. Crucially, 0% of the participants selected "once a week or less" or "I don't use them." This means that 100% of the surveyed learners utilize language apps multiple times throughout the week. These statistics highlight a high level of consistency and engagement, proving that mobile learning has successfully integrated into the students' regular weekly routines and acts as a stable supporting tool for their education.

Question 3: What do you think is the most useful feature of language learning apps? (choose only one)



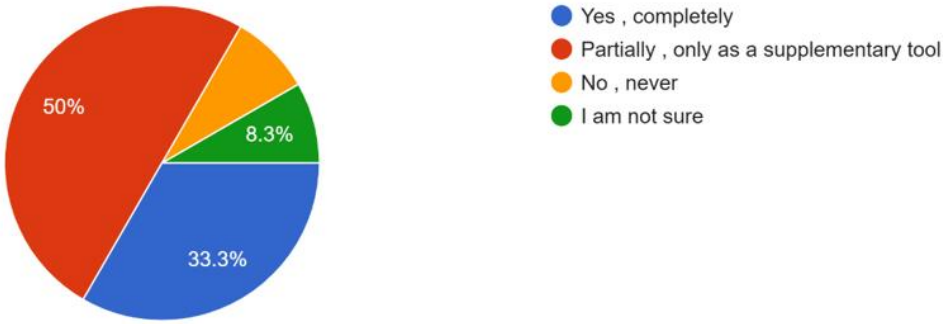
The third question aimed to identify the core features that drive the practical value of mobile applications from the learners' perspective. Since respondents were asked to select only their single highest priority, the data reflects what students appreciate most during their learning process. The empirical results show a clear leaning towards convenience. The largest share of the sample, 41.7% (5 out of 12 respondents), indicated that flexibility (the ability to learn anytime and anywhere) is the most useful feature. This is closely followed by 33.3% (4 respondents) who prioritized the wide variety of languages available on these platforms, suggesting that having access to diverse language options is highly attractive to modern users. Interestingly, interactive and behavioral features received lower rankings as primary choices. Both gamification (points, streaks, and badges) and social interaction (competition with other users) were selected by only 8.3% (1 respondent each) of the participants. The remaining small percentage was distributed among other practical options like course content or costs. In summary, while gamification and social tools are helpful for keeping users engaged, the ultimate value of language learning applications for the majority of these students still lies in their structural flexibility and content variety.

Question 4: How much have these apps improved your speaking or listening skills?



The fourth question examined the self-reported effectiveness of language learning applications regarding oral communication skills, specifically focusing on listening and speaking. This section is highly valuable as it shifts from usage habits to the actual educational outcomes experienced by the students. According to the collected data, the majority of the participants noticed a substantial positive impact on their language skills. Exactly 50.0% (6 out of 12 respondents) stated that these applications improved their speaking or listening skills moderately. Additionally, 41.7% (5 respondents) reported a very high level of progress, choosing the "a lot" option. In contrast, only a small fraction of the sample, 16.7% (2 respondents), felt that the apps provided very little improvement. Crucially, 0% of the participants selected "not at all." This means that 100% of the surveyed learners experienced some level of skill enhancement. These results strongly indicate that mobile language learning tools are highly effective in practice, with over 91% of users experiencing moderate to significant improvement in their active language skills.

Question 5: Do you believe language learning apps can fully replace traditional classroom teaching (with textbooks and teachers)?



The final question of the survey investigated students' opinions on the future of mobile learning compared to traditional education. This question is particularly important because it reveals whether learners see applications as complete replacements for classroom settings or just as supporting instruments. The feedback shows that a significant portion of the participants still values the traditional educational structure. Exactly 50.0% (6 out of 12 respondents) believe that language learning applications can only partially replace traditional teaching, viewing them strictly as supplementary tools. This indicates that for half of the students, human interaction, structured textbook guidance, and a classroom environment remain necessary.On the other hand, a substantial 33.3% (4 respondents) expressed absolute confidence in digital platforms, answering "Yes, completely." This shows a strong shift toward fully digital education among a third of the modern user base. Meanwhile, the remaining participants were split evenly: 8.3% (1 respondent) stated "No, never," rejecting the idea of full replacement entirely, and another 8.3% (1 respondent) remained unsure. In conclusion, these statistics suggest that while the belief in fully digital language learning is growing, the dominant perspective still favors a

blended learning approach, where applications work alongside traditional classroom methodologies rather than replacing them completely.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study provided valuable practical insights into how modern language learners interact with mobile applications. Based on the empirical evidence gathered from the survey, it is clear that Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has become an essential part of the students' educational routine. Applications like Duolingo and Ibrat Academy completely dominate the local market. This popularity is driven by the consistent habits of the learners, with the entire surveyed group utilizing these digital tools multiple times throughout the week.When analyzing what makes these applications so effective, students strongly prioritized structural flexibility—the ability to learn anytime and anywhere—alongside content variety. Furthermore, the practical value of these tools is confirmed by the users' self-reported progress, as over 91% of the respondents experienced moderate to significant improvements in their listening and speaking skills. However, despite these strong benefits, the study highlights that digital tools are not seen as absolute replacements for traditional education. Instead, the majority of learners still view applications as powerful supplementary resources that work best alongside human teachers and structured classroom interaction.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this research, several key recommendations can be made for developers, educators, and future researchers: For Application Developers: Since students highly value content variety and practical skill

improvement, developers should focus on expanding language catalogs and integrating more interactive, real-time speaking tools—such as AI-driven conversation partners—to help users practice active communication. For Educators: Language teachers should actively integrate these popular mobile applications into their curriculum as official supplementary homework tools. This approach can reinforce vocabulary and grammar concepts outside the classroom, leaving more in-class time for live dialogues and pronunciation correction. For Future Research: Due to the small sample size of this study (\(N = 12\)), future researchers should expand the survey to a much larger cohort (\(N > 100\)). Additionally, incorporating pre- and post-tests would allow for a more objective measurement of actual language proficiency gains rather than relying purely on self-reported feedback

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