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Kurdish EFL Students' Perceptions of Duolingo App for English Language Acquisition: A Case Study of English Students at AUAS

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Abstract

The current study tries to investigate Kurdish EFL students' perceptions of using the Duolingo application for English language acquisition. Data were collected using a quantitative method. The instrument used for collecting data is a questionnaire. The participants were 70 Kurdish EFL students at Akre University for Applied Sciences. The study's primary objective is Kurdish EFL students' perceptions of using the Duolingo application for learning English language as well as its strengths and limitations. The results indicated that most of the participants have positive attitudes towards Duolingo app, particularly for improving vocabulary and reading skills. Nevertheless, the students reported some limitations, particularly in writing skills and explanation of grammar. In brief, the study concluded that Duolingo is an effective tool, but for better language development, it needs to be used with traditional teaching methods

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مجلة علمية فصلية محكمة، تصدر عن كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية / جامعة الموصل



تصورات الطلبة الأكراد الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه استخدام تطبيق دولينجو في تعلّم اللغة الإنجليزية: دراسة حالة لطلبة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة عقرة للعلوم التطبيقية

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ملخص	معلومات الارشفة
تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى استقصاء تصورات طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) الأكراد حول استخدام تطبيق دولينجو (Duolingo) في اكتساب اللغة الإنجليزية. تم جمع البيانات باستخدام المنهج الكمي، واعتمدت أداة الاستبانة لجمع البيانات. شملت عينة الدراسة 70 طالباً من طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة آكري للعلوم التطبيقية. يمثل الهدف الرئيس للدراسة في الكشف عن تصورات طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية الأكراد حول استخدام تطبيق دولينجو لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، إضافة إلى تحديد نقاط القوة والضعف فيه. أشارت النتائج إلى أن معظم المشاركين يمتلكون اتجاهات إيجابية نحو تطبيق دولينجو، ولا سيما في تحسين المفردات ومهارات القراءة. ومع ذلك، أشار الطلبة إلى بعض المحددات، خاصة فيما يتعلق بمهارات الكتابة وشرح القواعد النحوية. وخلاصةً، خلصت الدراسة إلى أن تطبيق دولينجو يُعد أداة فعالة، إلا أنه من أجل تطوير لغوي أفضل ينبغي استخدامه بالتكامل مع طرائق التدريس التقليدية	تاريخ الاستلام : 3/6/2026 تاريخ المراجعة : 18/7/2026 تاريخ القبول : 23/7/2026 تاريخ النشر : 1/9/2026 الكلمات المفتاحية : طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من الأكراد، التصورات، تطبيق دولينجو، اكتساب اللغة الإنجليزية معلومات الاتصال نيهاد ياسين neehad.azeez@epu.edu.iq

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The integration process among students, teachers and learning materials in a learning environment is a learning process. Gagné (1985) explained that effective learning requires well-designed external conditions that activate and maintain these internal processes, which are crucial for students to effectively engage with the material and develop their skills.

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four main skills in learning English that learner must possess (Banditvilai, 2016; Bozorgian, 2012; Khamkhien, 2010). Despite this, EFL learners find it particularly challenging to develop their speaking skills. Using learning media, especially technology such as mobile apps, can make language acquisition easier and even more enjoyable, according to most of the researchers. For mastering a language, many students face significant challenges, especially university students, and this difficulty is because of two main reasons. The first is the limited exposure to English outside the class, and the second is the dominance of traditional teaching approaches, which concentrate mainly on grammar and vocabulary memorization rather than communication.

Nowadays, technology has become widely used in EFL education. It has also created new opportunities to improve language learning and students' well-being (Chen, 2022; Liu et al., 2023). Platforms such as mobile apps and websites have become popular tools in today's globalised world, providing interactive lessons, exercises, and games that reflect the shift in EFL teaching from traditional methods to modern approaches aimed at improving overall language proficiency (Azizi et al., 2022; Elaish et al., 2019; Fathi et al., 2023; González-Lloret, 2019; Lin & Warschauer, 2015; Shafiee Rad et al). This transformative change had appeared, especially after COVID-19. Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) can be considered a significant development within online learning. This involves the use of portable digital devices such as smartphones and tablets to support language acquisition (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008; Sandberg et al., 2011). The accessibility of mobile technology offers many advantages, such as allowing students to study anytime and anywhere, reducing physical distance, and providing access to many learning resources. In common, MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) targets vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and reading through interactive practice, and it is also considered a supportive tool for modern language teaching methods.

The most popular and extensively used language learning program is Duolingo (Putri & Islamiati, 2018; Munday, 2015). It helps users learn new words and basic

language abilities by employing a game-like, user-centred approach. There are many excellent things about the Duolingo program that help you learn a language. For instance, it makes students more motivated, involved, and understanding, especially when they can play games and easily get to learning resources. It also uses points, badges, and leaderboards to keep learners interested and motivated (Bader et al., 2022; Zhang & Hasim, 2023). Overall, the app is seen as a useful extra tool that helps beginners learn a new language, gives learners more freedom, and has cognitive benefits while also supporting traditional teaching (Putri & Islamiati, 2018; Joy, 2021).

The increased availability of educational apps has prompted research on their effectiveness for language acquisition (Ansari & Tripathi, 2017; Burston & Giannakou, 2022; Godwin-Jones, 2011; Rosell-Aguilar, 2017). The research findings on Duolingo are divided into two primary parts. Some studies found improvements in reading, listening, vocabulary, and grammar skills (Lekkas et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2018); nevertheless, both studies showed no effect on speaking skills. These data show that we need to look into Duolingo's effectiveness more closely.

Due to Duolingo's design to support the four language skills through interactive activities that facilitate second language acquisition, this study aims to investigate Kurdish EFL students' perceptions of using the Duolingo application for English language acquisition at AUAS. Additionally, the study examines students' attitudes toward using the application as a supportive tool for learning English outside the classroom. Through this case study, the researchers attempt to understand whether Duolingo is considered a useful and motivating resource for English language development among Kurdish university students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite Duolingo's worldwide use, there is still limited study that investigates how Kurdish EFL students perceive the effectiveness of Duolingo in supporting their English language acquisition. It is not yet understood if AUAS students find Duolingo helpful for developing the four main language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing – or if they face difficulties while using it. There are numerous studies that examine the use of Duolingo applications in improving language acquisition (Lekkas et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2018; Smith, Jiang & Peters, R., 2024; Yuswandi, Haeruddin, & Zuhriah, 2025), but no research has been found about students' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences in the Kurdish educational context. So the problem that is addressed in this study is the absence of empirical data regarding Kurdish EFL students' perceptions of Duolingo and its contribution to English language learning at

AUAS; this is the issue this study attempts to solve. Without insight into students' opinions and experiences, it's difficult for them to make informed choices about using mobile apps in language learning. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring how English students at AUAS perceive the advantages, limitations, and overall use of the Duolingo app in improving their language abilities.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The main aim of this research is to investigate the perceptions of Kurdish EFL students of using the Duolingo application for learning English language. Specifically, its purpose is to comprehend how Kurdish EFL at AUAS perceives the effectiveness, usefulness, challenges and influence of Duolingo in enhancing their English language four skills. The study also aims to comprehend how students feel about incorporating mobile language learning apps into their education.

1.4 Research Questions

This study will address the following research questions based on the objectives:

1. What do Kurdish EFL students perceive the effectiveness of Duolingo in improving their English skills?
2. How do Kurdish EFL students perceive using Duolingo to learn English?
3. What difficulties do Kurdish EFL students have when they use Duolingo to study English?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Mobile Language Learning Applications

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is defined as “learning a second or foreign language through the use of one or more of various mobile devices including, but not restricted to, mobile phones (including smartphones), tablets, personal digital assistants (PDAs), MP3/MP4 players, electronic dictionaries, and gaming consoles” (Stockwell, 2022, pp. 8-10). It uses mobile applications and device features to facilitate language teaching and learning in various contexts (Burston & Giannakou, 2022). Mobile learning (m-learning), which developed from e-learning and emphasizes learning through portable technology without being restricted to a fixed place, is closely related to MALL (Kukulska-Hulme & Traxler, 2005). When studying a second language, mobile devices allow students to study anywhere and at any time, and they are not restricted to classroom settings (Miangah and Nezarat, 2012).

Mobile technology is incredibly helpful for modern education because it makes learning easier and more adaptable. Mobile devices help break down barriers like time and distance because they are portable and widely used. This makes both learning more fun and focused on the student. Technology has become an important element of students' daily life since it contains useful, easy-to-use, and stimulating tools, especially while learning a new language (Cakir, 2015).

Mobile apps are currently useful tools in language learning for students to improve their English. Their accessibility “anytime and anywhere” makes them suitable for supporting language learning (Kukulska-Hulme, 2006). They offer both fun and cooperative learning activities, including quizzes and games (Rossing et al., 2012; Gilgen, 2004). Research indicated that mobile apps help students do better in their studies, stay motivated, and have a better attitude when learning English as a foreign language (Böhm & Constantine, 2016; Zou & Li, 2015). Because of these factors, both inside and outside the classroom, MALL has become a significant way to help students learn English. It serves as a practical tool that supports both online and offline learning, enhancing the educational experience by providing interactive and engaging resources for language acquisition. El-Hussein and Cronje (2010) reported that teachers and students are using mobile apps for educational purposes. There are numerous free language learning apps, such as Duolingo, Memrise, Babbel, Busuu, LingQ, and more. This research focuses on Duolingo, one of the most accessible language learning apps.

2.2 Duolingo

Duolingo is one of the most well-known and widely used smartphone applications for learning a language. It was first founded by Professor Luis Von Ahn and his student Severin Hacker in late 2009, and then it was made available to the public in June 2012. The platform provides 68 language courses across 28 languages, including English, Arabic, Spanish, French, etc. (García-Botero et al., 2019). According to its website, it has over 300 million registered active users worldwide. It is a free application that is simple to use and can be used by learners of all ages and different proficiency levels. Its main aim is to learn a new language (Munday, 2015). The platform incorporates students' all four essential English language skills through interactive exercises such as translation tasks, multiple-choice questions, listening activities, and pronunciation practice. It also integrates audio, visual, and text-based exercises to support the development of grammar and vocabulary while increasing learner engagement. This combination of features not only helps students practice

languages but also fosters motivation and enjoyment in learning (Munday, 2015). Thus, it may have an impact on users' ability to speak English more fluently.

One of the most important things about Duolingo is that it makes learning a language fun. You can use it on the web and on iOS and Android devices. Duolingo gives students points, goals, streaks, and progress to help them keep track of their work and stay motivated (Krashen, 2014). Additionally, the program has discussion boards where students can interact with each other and exchange ideas (Gafni, 2017). We view these multimedia and interactive components as valuable technological tools that enhance language learning and boost learner engagement.

White and Siracusa (2013) were two researchers who explained both advantages and disadvantages of Duolingo. On one hand, in addition to learning a new language, they also supported the idea that Duolingo provides several opportunities for enjoyment, rewards, and a sense of accomplishment. On the other hand, they said that Duolingo had some disadvantages as follows: it would not be appropriate for a learner learning a new language who has never learnt that language before. In other words, Duolingo is more beneficial for learning a language that learners have already started studying or that is similar to their native language. Another drawback of Duolingo is that it does not clearly explain grammar rules. Instead, learners are expected to understand them by themselves through the exercises and lessons, which can lead to confusion and gaps in their understanding of the language structure.

2.3 Previous Studies

The increasing availability of educational applications has prompted more research to examine their efficacy. Among them, Duolingo, as a language learning tool, is one of the applications that have been the subject of numerous research studies, with varying outcomes. Considering this fact, many studies were conducted for learning different languages other than English, i.e. (Smith, Jiang & Peters, R., 2024; Yuswandi, Haeruddin, & Zuhriah, 2025). But below, the researchers will only explain studies that are about the English language, as follows:

Astarilla (2017) conducted a study to investigate how Indonesian university students felt about using Duolingo to study English. A mixed-method technique gathered data by distributing a questionnaire to 135 university students and interviewing 35 of them. The results showed that the students were happy to learn English.

A study was carried out by Novitasari & Purnamaningsih (2022) about the students' feelings about using Duolingo to study English subjects. The data was

described using qualitative descriptive methods. Five junior high school students in Karawang participated in the study. The findings highlighted the effectiveness of Duolingo in online learning.

Moreover, Permatasari & Aryani (2023) carried out a study on college students' attitudes towards using Duolingo for learning English in Indonesia. They used qualitative data by using a questionnaire of 50 students from different Indonesian universities. The researchers realized that the application was very helpful for enhancing the four language skills because it was easy to use at any time and place.

Olimat (2024) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness and practicality of using Duolingo for EFL learners in Jordan to enhance their English proficiency. The aim of the study was to reveal the reality and effects of using Duolingo to develop English skills for EFL learners in Jordan. The results showed that students perceived Duolingo as advantageous in improving all English skills.

There are two studies by Saudi Arabian Researchers that explored Saudi EFL students' perceptions of using the Duolingo application for learning English. One of them was by Malinda and Daulay (2024), and the other one was by Althiyab (2025). The findings of both studies revealed that students thought of the application as a useful and inspiring instrument that supports language practice outside the classroom.

Finally, Ghasemi and Mirzapour Kouhdasht (2024) investigated language learners' perceptions of Duolingo and focused on its perceived usefulness in language learning. The data was collected through a questionnaire. The results showed that most students thought Duolingo was a useful way to acquire new words, exercise language abilities, and stay motivated while studying.

After highlighting the goals and findings of significant earlier research, it is clear that the present study and the earlier research have one thing in common. The present study is the same with them as in its objectives as well as its tools. They all look at using Duolingo to improve EFL learning. However, the scope, sample, and location of this study are different from those of the earlier research. This study examines Kurdish EFL students' perceptions of the Duolingo app for English language acquisition. In other words, it includes all four major English language skills and is applied to a group of Kurdish EFL learners.

3. Research Design

3.1 Instrument

The researchers used quantitative research for this study. The quantitative research can be defined as a self-report instrument that is very useful to obtain data

economically and speedily from a large number of respondents (Brown, 2001). The researchers owe a significant debt to Schulz's (2001) investigation. A questionnaire is used for answering all three research questions. The questionnaire used in this study consists of two parts. The first part asks for the participants' basic personal information. The second part is based on the three parts. Each one of them is responsible for answering the three research questions. It includes 16 statements. The questionnaire of the first and second questions includes closed-ended statements. They use a Likert scale. The possible responses to each statement of the TBQ are assigned credibility as "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," and "strongly agree." Also, there is a tick table for the difficulties that students face while using the application, which includes common issues such as navigation challenges, technical glitches, and lack of user support.

3.2 Participants

The study involved 70 EFL morning and evening students of the English Language Department at the Colleges of Education at Akre University for Applied Sciences, of whom 46 were females and 24 were males. Most participants (45.7%) have used Duolingo for less than three months, indicating that many are new users. But a large number of them have been using the programme for a longer time (3–6 months and over one year at 21.4% apiece), which shows that they have different levels of understanding about it. They were between the ages of 18 and 25, which meant that there were people of different genders and academic backgrounds. All the participants are from different stages, from first to fourth; their diversity indicates different educational backgrounds. For learning English, the Kurdish language is not available in the Duolingo application. The Arabic language is the most popular language for the participants for learning English (since the Kurdish EFL students were from Iraqi Kurdistan). Conversely, lesser percentages use Persian, Turkish, and other languages. It is important to make clear that taking part in this research component was completely voluntary.

3.3 Validity

The items were developed following a thorough examination of the literature regarding digital language learning and language acquisition, alongside the research questions of the study, to ensure the questionnaire's validity. Content validity was established through expert review; two experienced EFL educators evaluated the

questionnaire items for their appropriateness, relevance, and clarity. Items which were ambiguous or unnecessary were revised to align more closely with the study's objectives. Construct validity was also addressed by aligning each statement with Duolingo's concepts of learner perspective, motivation, and effectiveness.

3.4 Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations on our study. First, the sample was restricted to EFL Kurdish students at AUAS, so the results may be less generalizable. Second, the only method used in the study was a quantitative questionnaire; that's why the study did not record detailed student experiences. Furthermore, the data may contain bias because they were self-reported. Moreover, the study was conducted over a brief period of time without looking at long-term benefits, and it concentrated on students' perceptions rather than actual language improvement.

3.5 Research Procedure

The current study was carried out at Akre University for Applied Sciences-College of Education- English Language Department. All data are collected in the 2025-2026 academic year. Based on the objective and relevant literature the questionnaire was created with the help of experts in English language teaching for confirming the study's clarity and validity. The qualitative type of research resource that was used for gathering the data to answer the research questions of the study was a questionnaire. First, the questionnaire was distributed through the use of Google Forms to morning and evening class representatives of different grades, who forwarded it to all students. The researchers collected responses from 70 students. Participants were made aware of the study's aim, guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of their answers, and given informed consent before completing the questionnaire.

Following the data collection process through the questionnaire, the analysis was carried out utilizing SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Descriptive statistics—including mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions—were coded, organized, and computed for each of the 16 statements using SPSS. This allowed the researchers to systematically interpret the participants' perceptions and present the

findings in an understandable manner. To enhance clarity and readability, the tables generated by SPSS were formatted according to APA guidelines.

4. Results and Discussion of the Questionnaire

4.1 Results and Discussion of First Research Question

For answering the first research question, “What do Kurdish EFL students perceive the effectiveness of Duolingo in improving their English skills?” descriptive statistical analysis, including mean, median, and standard deviation, was used to analyze the questionnaire data. Table (4.1) outlines questionnaire statements of first research questions. The questionnaire for this research question consists of six statements. Their statements have multiple choices with five options. The first statement, “Duolingo is an easy application to use for learning English” received the highest mean score ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.88$). This suggested that most of the students agreed that the app was simple to use. This result is consistent with previous studies that indicate that mobile learning apps are widely valued due to their accessibility and ease of use, enabling students to study whenever and wherever they want (Kukulska-Hulme, 2006; Miangah & Nezarat, 2012).

For the second statement, the same as the first one, students stated that they enjoy using Duolingo to learn English ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.94$). This suggests that language learning platforms using gamification enhance students' engagement and motivation. Duolingo integrates game-like elements such as points, rewards, and tracking progress to boost learners' motivation and involvement in language acquisition (Bader et al., 2022 & Zhang and Hasim, 2023). Consequently, the positive responses observed in this study may be attributed to these motivational characteristics. The fourth statement, “Duolingo is effective for improving my English” is with a mean score of 3.61 ($SD = 0.77$). It is indicating that the majority of the students believe the application helps them learn the language. This result is in line with earlier studies showing that using Duolingo as an additional learning tool improves a number of language skills (Lekkas et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2018).

Additionally, students agreed that Duolingo offers opportunities for practicing real-life communication ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.81$). According to Azizi et al. (2022) and González-Lloret (2019), mobile learning technologies offer interactive learning environments that encourage meaningful language practice. In contrast to other statements, the third statement “I prefer Duolingo to some traditional methods” ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.98$) and the sixth statement “The strengths of Duolingo outweigh its weaknesses” ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 0.78$) received relatively lower mean scores. The results

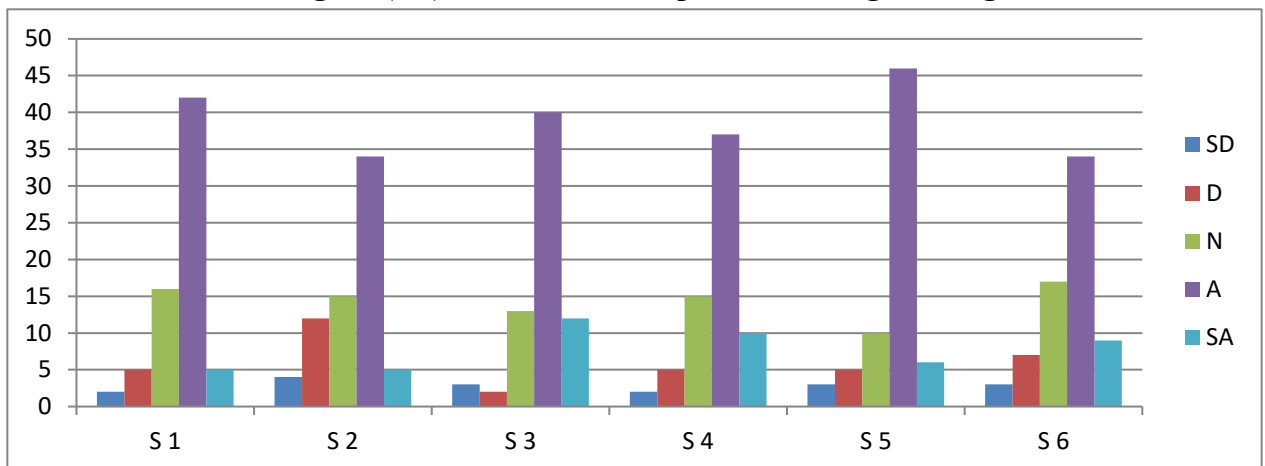
indicate that students may still value traditional classroom learning in addition to technological resources, even though they still tended to agree with these statements. This lends credence to the notion that mobile learning applications ought to serve as supplementary tools rather than a replacement for conventional teaching techniques (Putri and Islamiati, 2018; Joy, 2021).

In summary, the results from the first research question show that students generally view the Duolingo app in a positive light. All related statements received a median score of 4, and since most students chose "Agree," the high mean and median values suggest broad agreement that the app is user-friendly, engaging, and useful for improving English skills. This implies that mobile-based language learning can effectively boost student motivation and provide convenient practice options. However, the somewhat lower ratings on items comparing Duolingo to conventional learning methods suggest that students still value classroom instruction. So, Duolingo seems to be best used as an extra tool to help, not replace, existing ways of teaching languages.

Table (4.1): Students' Perceptions of Using Duolingo

N	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Median	Std. Dev
1	Duolingo is an easy application to use for learning English.	2	3	16	38	11	3.76	4	0.88
2	I enjoy learning English through Duolingo.	4	4	16	40	6	3.57	4	0.94
3	I prefer using Duolingo compared to some traditional learning methods.	4	7	21	31	6	3.36	4	0.98
4	Duolingo is an effective tool for improving my English.	1	4	21	39	5	3.61	4	0.77
5	Duolingo provides enough practice for real-life English communication.	1	3	23	34	9	3.67	4	0.81
6	Overall, strengths of Duolingo outweigh its weaknesses.	0	7	26	29	5	3.33	4	0.78

Figure (4.1): Students' Perceptions of Using Duolingo



4. 2 Results and Discussion of Second Research Question

The second research question, “How do Kurdish EFL students perceive using Duolingo to learn English?” was analyzed in the same way as the first one, but it includes nine questionnaire statements. The statements of the second research questions start with number seven as shown in Table (4.2). The majority of the statements in the table below were about the improvement of skills and aspects of English language proficiency (statements 7, 9, 10, and 11). Reading improvement had the highest mean score ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.91$). This result implies that students believe the app is useful, especially for improving their reading abilities; this is because it provides the students with regular practice with reading comprehension exercises, sentence patterns, and vocabulary. Similarly, the students reported improvement in pronunciation ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.90$), listening ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.91$), and vocabulary ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 0.84$). These results are in line with previous studies showing that Duolingo and multimedia activities use vocabulary acquisition and fundamental language skills through interactive exercises (Munday, 2015; García-Botero et al., 2019).

Moreover, the positive mean score for statement 14- focused on confidence improvement ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.92$) - suggests that the application helps learners feel more at ease when speaking English, a factor that plays an important role in achieving success in language learning.

Students also responded positively to statements 15 and 12, relating to using the app during class and practicing with it outside of class ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.85$). This

highlights the important role of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) in supporting self-directed study. By enabling learners to engage with the language beyond classroom hours, mobile tools foster continuous practice and greater exposure to the target language (Kukulska-Hulme and Shield, 2008). On the other hand, the statement eight which was about improving grammar, got a lower average score ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.03$). This study aligns with the conclusions of White and Siracusa (2013), who argued that learners are required to infer grammatical structures through activities, while Duolingo does not consistently provide clear explanations of grammar rules. Likewise, for statement 13, the moderate usefulness score for tests ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.02$) indicates that while the program facilitates language practice, it does not entirely conform to formal academic evaluation criteria.

In brief, the results from the second research question show that students see Duolingo as a valuable tool that promotes independent learning and improves various language skills, such as reading, pronunciation, listening, and vocabulary; however, it is most effective when paired with regular classroom instruction. From a research perspective, the positive average ratings imply that the app's interactive features support continuous practice and enhance learning in both academic and outside-of-school environments. The score for grammatical development, in contrast, is lower than average, while the score for testing utility is subpar. This indicates that Duolingo is effective for many language skills, but it may not sufficiently prepare students for standardized exams or provide comprehensive grammar instruction.

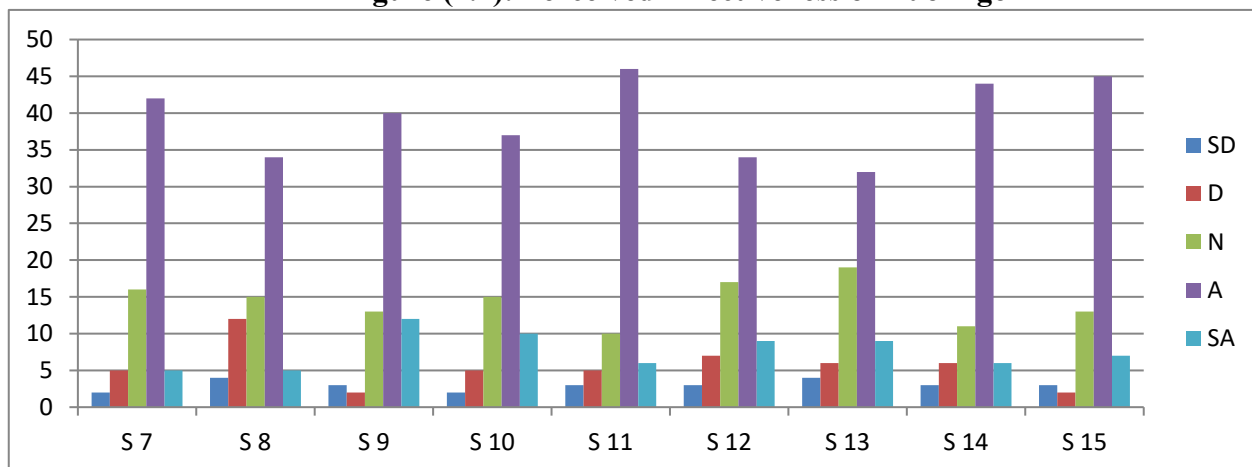
Table (4.2): Perceived Effectiveness of Duolingo

N	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Median	Std. Dev
7	Duolingo has helped me improve my English vocabulary.	2	5	16	42	5	3.61	4	0.84
8	My English grammar has improved as a result of using Duolingo.	4	12	15	34	5	3.34	4	1.03
9	Duolingo has helped me improve my reading skills in English.	3	2	13	40	12	3.8	4	0.91
10	Duolingo has helped me improve my listening skills in English.	2	5	15	37	10	3.64	4	0.91
11	Duolingo has helped me improve my pronunciation in English.	3	5	10	46	6	3.67	4	0.9
12	I can apply what I learn on Duolingo in my English classes.	3	7	17	34	9	3.56	4	0.99

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13	The skills I learn on Duolingo are useful for exams or academic tasks.	4	6	19	32	9	3.51	4	1.02
14	I feel more confident using English after practicing with Duolingo.	3	6	11	44	6	3.63	4	0.92
15	Duolingo is effective for practicing English outside the classroom.	3	2	13	45	7	3.73	4	0.85

Figure (4.2): Perceived Effectiveness of Duolingo



4.3 Results and Discussion of Third Research Question

The third question, “What difficulties do Kurdish EFL students have when they use Duolingo to study English?” is addressed through questionnaire statements that reflect the challenges faced by EFL students while using Duolingo. The questionnaire statements contain eight difficulties. The results in Table (4.3) show that, despite having generally positive perceptions, students encounter a number of difficulties when using Duolingo. The most common complaint was “lack of Kurdish language support” (n=15). The seventh-ranked issue, "The native language is not included on Duolingo" (n=14), strongly correlates with this problem. These results imply that Kurdish language students may perceive the platform as less accessible, as there are no Kurdish language options.

In addition, the results were equally correlated according to the “technical problems such as internet or device limitations” (n=7) and “difficulty in some exercises” (n=7). However, these problems are typical of technology-based learning environments, especially in situations where reliable internet access may not always be available.

However, only (5) students perceived “loss of motivation” and “repetitive exercises” (n=4) as a difficulty. These are indicating that extended usage of the application may sometimes be reduced. These findings support the findings of White and Siracusa (2013), who pointed out that while Duolingo provides enjoyable learning opportunities, repetitious activities could eventually lose their motivation.

Furthermore, the least two numbers of responses were to the difficulties related to writing skill (n=3) and grammar explanation (n=2). These findings support the view that the application places less emphasizes on productive skills such as writing and explicit grammar teaching (e.g., Lekkas et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2018).

Briefly, according to the finding, we can say that as many benefits as Duolingo have, there are also some difficulties that the students face when using it, and they should be considered.

Table (4.3): Students’ Difficulties When Using Duolingo

N	Statements	Participants	Percentages	Rank
1	Some Duolingo exercises are difficult to understand.	7	10.0%	5
2	Duolingo does not provide enough explanation of grammar rules.	3	4.3%	8
3	I sometimes lose motivation when using Duolingo.	5	7.1%	6
4	Technical problems (internet, device issues) affect my use of Duolingo.	7	10.0%	5
5	Duolingo alone is not enough to improve all English skills.	13	18.6%	3
6	The exercises in Duolingo sometimes feel repetitive.	4	5.7%	7
7	My native language isn’t included on Duolingo.	14	20.0%	2
8	Duolingo focuses more on vocabulary than on writing skills.	2	2.9%	9
9	Lack of Kurdish language on it for improving my English.	15	21.4%	1

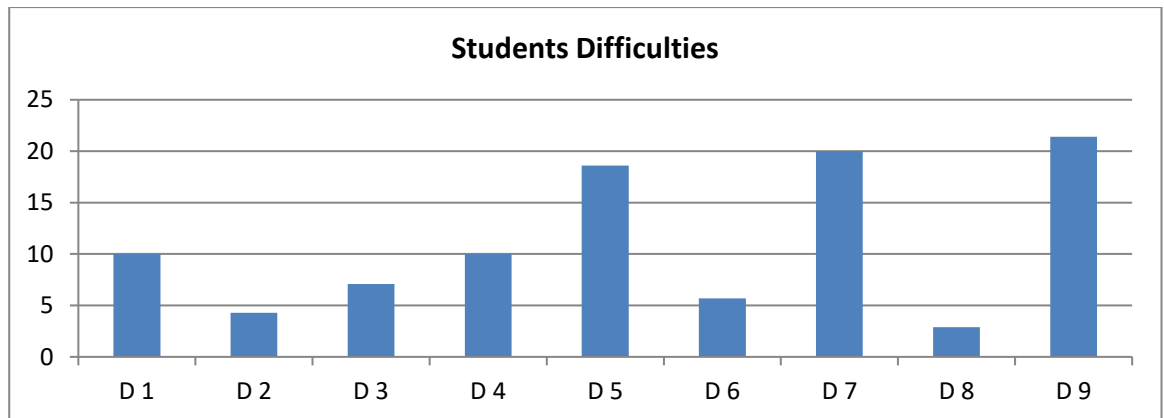


Figure (4.3): Students' Difficulties When Using Duolingo

5. Conclusion

This paper aimed to find out Kurdish EFL students' perceptions of using Duolingo for learning English. Duolingo is a popular language learning tool that learners can choose to learn different languages such as English, Arabic, Spanish, French, Dutch, and other languages (García-Botero, et al., 2019). The research employed a quantitative approach utilizing a questionnaire as the tool. The researchers examined the findings by addressing three research questions. The results revealed that students generally view Duolingo positively, particularly regarding its usability, enjoyment, and overall worth as a language learning resource. Secondly, the research indicated that Duolingo is considered helpful for improving various English language abilities, especially reading, vocabulary, listening, and pronunciation. It is also perceived to help learners gain more confidence and engage in self-directed learning. This study illustrates how mobile-assisted language learning can facilitate language acquisition in a flexible and independent manner (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). Nonetheless, it was discovered that the application possessed certain limitations, particularly in its ability to explain grammar in accordance with formal academic standards, which could hinder learners' comprehension of complex grammatical structures essential for academic writing. Thirdly, despite its benefits, students reported encountering various challenges, including insufficient support for the Kurdish language, technological issues, and a decrease in motivation due to the repetitive nature of the exercises.

Additionally, the study's findings align with a previous study demonstrating that Duolingo's gamified learning features improve learner motivation and engagement

(Bader et al., 2022; Zhang & Hasim, 2023). In this study the study's participants viewed the application as a useful and inspiring tool for learning English (Astarillam 2018; Permatasari and Aryani, 2023; and Olimat, 2024). Overall, the results indicate that although Duolingo is a useful and interesting tool for language acquisition, it works best when combined with regular classroom instruction rather than as a replacement. The study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into Kurdish EFL learners' experiences and highlighting advantages and disadvantages of MALL.

The research finds that Duolingo holds significant promise for assisting Kurdish university students in acquiring English. Mobile language learning applications can enhance student independence, involvement, and overall language progress when used alongside classroom teaching and additional learning resources. Ultimately, future research is anticipated to analyze a larger group of students, incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews, and delve deeper into specific language skills like writing and grammar. Studies like this may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how apps like Duolingo can be successfully integrated into language learning contexts.

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Dear Student

This questionnaire is intended to gather the necessary information for research about **“Kurdish EFL Students’ Perceptions of Duolingo App for English Language Acquisition: A Case Study of English Students at AUAS”**. The study’s primary objective is Kurdish EFL students ‘perceptions of using the Duolingo application for learning English language. We would like to know a bit about your views through this questionnaire. It is only your opinions that account here, and there are no right and wrong answers. All data collected by this questionnaire will be confidential and will only be used for analysis as part of our paper.

Appendix A: Part One: Personal Information

Tick the relevant choice of your own personal information:

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Years of using Duolingo: ☐ Less than 3 month ☐ 3-6 months ☐ 6-12 Months
☐ More than 1 year
3. Age: ☐ 18-19 ☐ 20-21 ☐ 21-22 ☐ more than 22
4. Grade: ☐ First ☐ Second ☐ Third
☐ Forth
5. Which language use to learn English?(Because Kurdish language is not included)
☐ Arabic ☐ Turkish ☐ Persian ☐ Other

.....

Appendix B. Part Two: Students' beliefs towards Duolingo's using

Read the items below and tick one of the boxes for each item to indicate that you Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), Neutral (N), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA).

Thanks for your participation!

	Students' beliefs toward using the use of Duolingo	SD	D	N	A	SA
One: Students' Perceptions of Using Duolingo						
1	Duolingo is an easy application to use for learning English.					
2	I enjoy learning English through Duolingo.					
3	I prefer using Duolingo compared to some traditional learning methods.					
4	Duolingo is an effective tool for improving my English.					
5	Duolingo provides enough practice for real-life English communication.					
6	Overall, strengths of Duolingo outweigh its weaknesses.					
Two: Perceived Effectiveness of Duolingo						
1	Duolingo has helped me improve my English vocabulary.					
2	My English grammar has improved as a result of using Duolingo.					
3	Duolingo has helped me improve my reading skills in English.					

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4	Duolingo has helped me improve my listening skills in English.					
5	Duolingo has helped me improve my pronunciation in English.					
6	I can apply what I learn on Duolingo in my English classes.					
7	The skills I learn on Duolingo are useful for exams or academic tasks.					
8	I feel more confident using English after practicing with Duolingo.					
9	Duolingo is effective for practicing English outside the classroom.					
Three: Difficulties while using Duolingo						
1	What difficulties or limitations have you experienced while using Duolingo? (Tick them)					
	Some Duolingo exercises are difficult to understand.					
	Duolingo does not provide enough explanation of grammar rules.					
	I sometimes lose motivation when using Duolingo.					
	Technical problems (internet, device issues) affect my use of Duolingo.					
	Duolingo alone is not enough to improve all English skills.					
	The exercises in Duolingo sometimes feel repetitive.					

	My native language isn't included on Duolingo.		
	Duolingo focuses more on vocabulary than on writing skills.		
	Lack of Kurdish language on it for improving my English.		

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.