

**The Impact of Duolingo's Gamification on Users'
Vocabulary Learning
A THESIS**



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The Impact of Duolingo's Gamification on Users' Vocabulary Learning

A THESIS

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Sarjana Pendidikan in English Language Education



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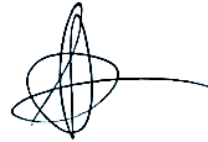
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I declare that this thesis is my own writing and its true and correct that I did not take any scholarly ideas or work from other dishonesty. All the cited works were quoted in accordance with the ethical code of academic writing I will take all the consequences if plagiarism is discovered within this thesis.

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Surabaya, 9 July, 2026



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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary acquisition is an essential component of language learning, yet traditional vocabulary learning methods are often repetitive and fail to sustain learners' motivation. As a result, gamification has been increasingly adopted in digital language-learning applications such as Duolingo to enhance learner engagement and encourage consistent practice. This study aimed to investigate the influence of Duolingo's gamification features on vocabulary acquisition, identify the gamification elements perceived as most effective for vocabulary retention, and explore users' perceptions of Duolingo's effectiveness as a vocabulary learning tool. A mixed-method approach with a qualitative emphasis and an explanatory sequential design was employed. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires administered to 18 Duolingo users, followed by semi-structured interviews with five selected participants. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis and integrated with the questionnaire findings. The results indicated that Duolingo's gamification features positively influenced vocabulary acquisition by increasing learners' motivation, engagement, and consistency in learning. The streak feature was perceived as the most effective element for encouraging regular practice and supporting vocabulary retention through repeated exposure. Participants also viewed Duolingo as an effective supplementary tool for vocabulary learning; however, they emphasized that it should complement rather than replace other language-learning activities. Overall, the findings demonstrate the positive role of gamification in supporting vocabulary acquisition in digital learning environments.

Keywords: gamification, Duolingo, vocabulary acquisition, learner engagement, digital learning

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