

# STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN ENGLISH USING MOBILE APPLICATIONS: THE CASE OF DUOLINGO AND HELLO ENGLISH

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**Abstract:** The development of language learning mobile application soft-wares (apps) for smart mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computer has risen amazingly in these recent days. These apps were continuously reported to be highly potential to support the students to learn the target language. This study introduced two free English learning apps to the students and investigated how they made use of the apps to support their English learning. More specifically, it examined how their English motivation in learning English is, how they used the apps, and whether their different level of motivation influenced the time they spent in accessing the apps. The study was conducted in a mixed method approach utilizing daily journal and questionnaire as the instruments to collect data. The finding pointed that the students were considerably active in using both of the apps. They could enjoy the practicality and flexibility of learning English by the apps despite some superficial engagement. In addition, although students' English learning motivation was found to have no influence on the amount of time spent in using the apps, their positive response toward using the apps was a potential indication to foster independent English learning outside the classroom. A further detailed finding was discussed along with important issues in the current trends of mobile language learning.

**Keywords:** English mobile applications, mobile language learning, L2 motivation.

Hidayati & Diana. (2019). Students' motivation to learn English using mobile applications: The case of Duolingo and Hello English.

## INTRODUCTION

The feasibility of encouraging language learning through mobile technology has long been reported in the literature of second and foreign language learning. It was highlighted for its mobility, practicality, and flexibility in providing rich learning resources and context authenticity with a wide access through internet connection. These great affordances have been proved to significantly assist the learners to acquire the target language by allowing for more resourceful, fun, and effective learning activities (Alkhezzi & Al-Dousari, 2016; Cavus & Ibrahim, 2009; Yudhiantara, 2017). In addition, it is also found that the multi-functionalities of today's smartphone could facilitate the four macro skills mastery in an integrated way. The learners can be given speaking tasks that involve listening, writing tasks that that require collaboration and sharing, reading tasks that take account on multicultural perspectives and other meaningful tasks as they are asked to write a post or make videos using the mobile applications available in their hands (Blake, 2016; Bray & Iswanti, 2013; Okumura & Bronson, 2016; Richards, 2014)

The popularity of mobile technology in language learning keeps increasing due to the massive development of language learning applications (apps) for mobile devices. These soft-wares were designed attractively taking account on important language learning principles. Among these apps, some are available for free and can be downloaded easily from apps stores such as Google Play or Apple Store (Gangaiamaran & Pasupathi, 2017). English language learning apps are among the most searched ones. These new products of mobile technology are considered reliable by a large number of foreign language learners in increasing their knowledge about the target language, and many of them rely solely on the apps as their resource (Rosell-Aguilar, 2018). In addition, the apps are also found to be a favorite choice among adults who want to learn a foreign language autonomously in their free time (Chick & Ho, 2017).

As has been indicated in these studies, the presence of new mobile features indeed opens a new way of learning English and

provides more opportunities for the English learners who are lacking of resources and exposure to authentic English practices. They can be the best alternative for English learners in EFL context, such as Indonesian English learners, who have very limited hours for English at school and low budget to afford for additional English course. In other words, being free of charge and equipped with interesting features, these English learning apps can be an essential support for the students to learn English independently outside the classroom with a minimum cost. This issue certainly requires a serious concern, yet it has not received a lot of attention.

Earlier studies on mobile language learning were mostly part of classroom learning (Barakawati, 2013; Bray & Iswanti, 2013; Yudhiantara, 2017; Yudhiantara & Nuryantini, 2018). The mobile technology or applications used were chosen by the teacher. Shortly, the mode of learning were teacher guided, and were not from the learners' own initiative. In addition, Indonesia students tend to use smartphones for communication and entertainment purposes rather than for academic purposes. Nevertheless, the advancement of today's mobile technology has been continuously reported to assist English language learners in Indonesia to improve their English language skill.

In this regard, the current study is aimed at investigating the potential of free mobile English learning apps to support students in their personal study time. We looked at two free mobile apps for English language learning namely Duolingo and Hello English. However, the authors were aware that despite the availability of learning resources, when the students have no interest to learn the language or have little motivation in learning English, it is highly unlikely that they will take advantage of the available learning resources. Thus, the current study particularly focuses on investigating students' motivation in learning English and their interest in using the applications to learn English independently outside the classroom. For this purpose, there are three research questions constructed: 1) How is students' motivation in learning English? 2) How do students use Duolingo & Hello English to learn on their own outside the classroom?

Hidayati & Diana. (2019). Students' motivation to learn English using mobile applications: The case of Duolingo and Hello English.

3) Are there differences among different motivation groups in their use of Duolingo & Hello English?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### L2 Motivation Theoretical Paradigm

In the development of L2 motivation concept, Gardners' social psychological approach was one of the most influential concept (Csizer & Dornyei, 2005; Dornyei, 1998; Dornyei, Csizer, & Nemeth, 2006). Within this concept, L2 motivation was viewed as the combination of three complex elements comprising motivational intensity, desire to learn the language, and attitude toward language learning activity. In addition, there was a differentiation made between orientation and motivation. While motivation was defined to include not only the amount of effort but also the emotional aspects of desire and attitude toward the learning activity, orientation was specifically referred to various reasons for learning L2 (Gardner, 1985). These various reasons were differentiated into integrative and instrumental orientation. The first category was referred to a group of reasons for learning L2 due to the interest and the intention to interact and get close to or even become a part of the L2 community. The other one was referred to class of reasons for learning L2 aiming at the practical advantages from the language rather than integrating to the L2 group. This classification was later popular as two different types of motivation in L2 and FL learning, in which integrative motivation was claimed to be stronger and more influential than instrumental orientation in relation to learners' language skill development and achievement (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

As globalization raises issue of language ownership and identity, the relevance of Gardners' social psychological approach on L2 motivation was eventually challenged, particularly in the context of English language learning. The special status of English as a global language and the presence of many accepted English varieties raised the question of to whom the English language belongs to. The answer

is it is hardly possible to claim that it belongs to a particular community (Bhatt, 2001; Graddol, 2000). In this regard, Dornyei (2009) pointed out that integrative concept has turned blur. It is unclear which English community can be set as the target of integration. He further added that globalization has also brought the concept of bicultural identity in which a part of individuals' identity is rooted in their local while another part is associated with the global identity serving as a world citizen. It was not fully reflected in the description of integrative motivation. On this account possible-selves theory which perceived individual to have ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they were afraid of becoming, was believed to better cover the interrelated motivational dimensions that build L2 motivation (Csizer & Dornyei, 2005; Dornyei et al., 2006). Rather than putting integrativeness as the identification with external group of the target language community, L2 motivational self-system links the concept of integration with the internal process of identification within the person self-concept (Ushioda, 2011).

In addition to L2 motivational self-system, self-determination theory was also perceived to offer a comprehensive framework to understand a diverse orientations and goals language learner may have in learning L2/FL. It proposed that extrinsic motivation can also significantly influence students' engagement in learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this framework, language learners can be classified into five different groups on the continuum ranging from intrinsically motivated to unmotivated (Alamer, 2015). Their motivated behavior varies in the extent of volitional control and determination they have in learning the language. In this regards, promoting learners' autonomy was believed to be highly important. Autonomous language learners are convinced as motivated learners because they tend to show responsibility for their learning. In other words, motivation and autonomy was believed to be interlinked (Noels, 2001; Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerant, 2000; Reinders & White, 2016).

Hidayati & Diana. (2019). Students' motivation to learn English using mobile applications: The case of Duolingo and Hello English.

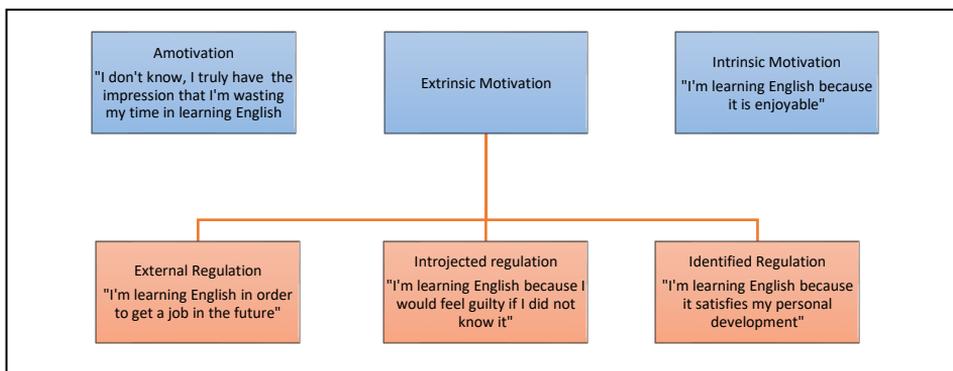


Figure 1. Students' motivational orientation in learning English in SDT framework

### Mobile language learning and L2 motivation

Mobile language learning is particularly highlighted for its potential to provide a more meaningful language learning. It is distinguished for the affordances to provide practicality, flexibility, authenticity, and personalized learning (Blake, 2016; Chun, Smith, & Kern, 2016). The integration of mobile technology in language learning can facilitate teachers to have authentic learning materials and to guide learners to interact with other language learners or even with the native speakers. Such interaction is critical for learners as they can have real experiences practicing the target language. Furthermore, the learners can also access rich learning resources by surfing the internet and get exposed to the target language in various popular culture such as communicating in social media, playing games, or enjoying songs and movies that may serve as important language inputs. The great affordances of mobile technology do not only open the possibility to offer seamless learning that bridges classroom and outside classroom learning, but also offer the chance to create innovative pedagogies (Kukulska-Hulme, 2012; Richards, 2014).

In addition to supporting innovative pedagogies for meaningful language learning, the multi-functionalities of mobile technology were also reported potentially motivating. Ciampa (2014) pointed that attractive interface and interactive features of mobile

applications enable learners to be challenged, to feel curious, to have control, to get recognition, and to compete as well as to cooperate among others which fit the six elements of motivation from Malone & Lepper (1987). The use of mobile applications in a situated vocabulary learning also indicates a significant difference in term of students attention and satisfaction compared with the learning without the use of mobile applications (Huang, Yang, Chiang, & Su, 2016). This evidence was also apparent in a study to promote motivation by empowering learner self-system using digital visualization. The use of imagery visualization, particularly 3D animation or avatar, was found to help the learners to have real visualization of their ability in L2. Although it was still at the initial state, the author convinced that digital visualization of L2 self is promising to increase learners' motivation (Adolphs et al., 2018).

Despite the fact that mobile technology offers inherent powerful motivational potential through its sophisticated features, language learners possibly have different perspectives concerning the use of mobile technology for learning L2/FL. Stockwell (2013) argued that learners' motivation can basically be differentiated into two categories. First, the learners are particularly interested in technology, thus they turn it as a medium to learn English. Second, the learners are interested in learning English and find technology can be one of the helps to support them to learn English. Regardless of the difference, the most important matter is how learners' motivation concerning the use of technology is properly supported and facilitated. According to Ushioda (2011), to nurture language learner motivation in the use of mobile technology, it is important to pay attention to choice and autonomy and to take account on the issue of a meaningful personal casual learning. Expecting deep engagement may be difficult for the limitations of mobile interface, however, frequent engagement can be highly valuable because such exposures tend to give positive feeling on the learners. To ensure significant influence from the motivational elements of mobile technology, its integration cannot be taken for granted. When taking mobile technology into the classroom it is very

Hidayati & Diana. (2019). Students' motivation to learn English using mobile applications: The case of Duolingo and Hello English.

critical to take account on students' personal motivation in using the technology.

### **Mobile applications for English language learning**

Mobile language learning applications are increasingly raising in these recent days. Just a simple search for the key word of 'learning English' on an application store can yield about hundreds of applications, either free or paid. Some applications specifically focus on a certain language skill whereas some others offer a combination of several skills. Furthermore, there are applications that are designated for a particular category of learners such as primary, secondary, and adult learners (Gangaiamaran & Pasupathi, 2017). While paid applications offer more comprehensive features, the free ones can also serve as pretty valuable learning tools especially when selected best on the criteria that lead to meaningful language learning such as easy to use, engaging, culturally appropriate, relevant to students' need, enable sharing and collaboration, provide feedback, and develop thinking skill (Eppard, Nasser, & Reddy, 2016). In fact, they can be the best alternative in the context where the cost to afford for learning media and resources is low.

The current study specifically worked with two free English learning mobile applications namely Duolingo and Hello English. Duolingo is classified as an educative game presenting language learning by focusing on enriching vocabulary. It presents the lesson on different modules such as basic, food, animal, common phrases, plurals, clothing, and the likes. The users are firstly introduced to several words or phrases related to each topic in the modules using images, then followed by a series of exercises in various formats. The exercises range from translating Indonesian to English or vice versa, matching words, listening to the words, pronouncing the words, and selecting missing words in multiple choice options. everytime the users make a mistake, direct feedback is given in the form of the correct answer. Questions answered incorrectly are repeated several times until the users get them correctly. The more mistakes the user makes

the longer the session lasts. The users can only unlock the next modules or go to the next level once they have completed the previous one.

Another important highlight from *Dualingo* is its attractive interface. Each module is circled by a reminder bar which remind users that memory fades as time passes by. The bar is filled by the time the users complete a module. It decreases after some period which mean that users need to repeat the module to check that they remember what they have learned. In addition to repetition reminder, there is also a slow button to listen for slower pronunciation in listening exercises. It allows users to listen clearer and make listening practices less burdening.

Different from Duolingo that offers language learning for more than 20 languages, Hello English is a specific English learning application. It offers a comprehensive English learning covering all macro skills of reading, listening, speaking, vocabulary and grammar through games and interesting scenes. Users will be given a customized lesson based on the learning purposes they specify when setting the account. Each lesson is given on a particular modules containing conversational English with audio, vocabulary, and grammar explanation. Each module is followed by a game exercise testing users on the topic they have just learned. In this game, the users have a relatively short time to complete the tasks and are awarded coins when they can accomplish each task. The coins earned will contribute to users' rank within their city. Users can see their rank among others, so it is potentially motivating for those who like to compete.

In addition to interactive lessons, other great free features of Hello English are a weekly and a daily basis language input features named helpline, word of the day, and tips of the day. Through helpline feature, the users can post a question to the teacher. Furthermore, it also resumes the important vocabulary in the news of the week and gives pronunciation lesson on a particular topic each week. While helpline presents new topic weekly, except when users post a specific question, word of the day and tips of the day have a more frequent

Hidayati & Diana. (2019). Students' motivation to learn English using mobile applications: The case of Duolingo and Hello English.

posts. Through 'word of the day', the users are given a targeted word along with a short text on current issues. The users need to read the text and try to find the closest meaning of the targeted word in the options given. Lastly, 'tips of the day' is just like what it is named. It provides various ways to express something such as ways to bargain, to thank, and to congratulate someone. It also presents different terms associated with a particular topic such as words related to housing, car, technology, negative feeling, and numerous others. These language input features get the users exposed to English frequently and can truly enrich their vocabulary if they seriously learned all the topics given.

## **METHOD**

The study surveyed the use of Duolingo & Hello English by 25 non-English majors students who were currently taking English language subject in their respective program of study. The participant's recruitment was performed through a survey questionnaire spread to the first- and second-year students of two universities in Aceh. The questionnaire collected information concerning their experience on accessing the internet and using smartphone apps to support their study. Of the 200 total questionnaires collected, 25 students were purposely chosen to participate in the study. They were quite familiar with the use of smartphone for learning purposes such as using Google to browse for learning materials or using Google Translate to find the meaning of English words they need, yet they had not had any experience to use a particular English language learning app. They were later introduced to Duolingo and Hello English apps and were instructed to use them daily to support their English learning outside the classroom during 21 days of the research project.

The study was conducted in a mixed method approach in which both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Hence, data collection was performed utilizing daily journal and questionnaire. Daily journal was intended to record and monitor students' use of the two apps on a daily basis during the 21 days of the research project. In addition, it was also meant to see how much effort the students were

willing to put in using the apps and in making use of the features of the apps to support their English language learning. It recorded details such as the apps the students use for the day, the length of time, and the place they were used. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was used to indentify students' motivation in learning English. It was a five option self-rated statement in which students were asked to choose the one that best reflects themselves in learning English. It was given after the students use the apps for 21 consecutive days of the research project.

To analyze data, all information from students' daily journal and questionnaire were tabulated in the spreadsheet. The next step were descriptive and inferential statistics calculation. Descriptive statistics was intended to see the general tendency associated with student motivation in learning English and the amount of time that they spent in using the apps. Inferential statistics was performed further to find out whether there was a significant difference among the different motivation groups in their use of the applications.

## **FINDING**

As stated earlier, the current study is directed to investigate three main questions; how students' motivation in learning is, how they used the two apps to learn English on their own outside the class, and whether there would be any difference among the motivation groups in how they used the apps. Hence, the findings here are presented based on those themes.

### **Students' motivation in learning English**

In the questionnaire about students' motivation in learning English, the students could choose one of the four statements adopted from Alamer's description of SDT framework in English language learning or wrote about their feeling freely in their own words. This one option was left open so that the students could write a statement that precisely describes how they find themselves related to learning English. Figure 2 shows detail data obtained from this questionnaire.

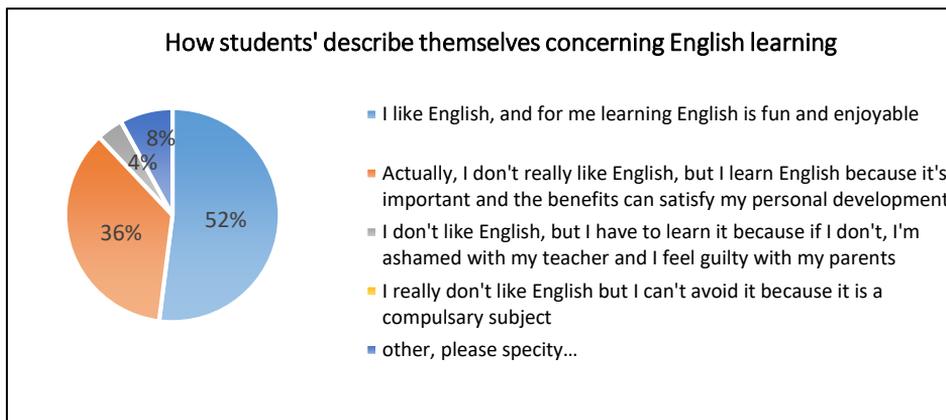


Figure 2. Chart of students' feeling in learning English

As it is appeared in the chart, more than a half of the students specifies to like English and find it fun and enjoyable. In other words, this group of students described themselves to have intrinsic motivation in learning English. The rest of other expressed themselves to have extrinsic motivation. However, the majority of them (36%) displayed a strong motivation despite being for extrinsic motives. SDT concept stresses that extrinsic motivation may be as significant as intrinsic motivation when it is deeply internalized. Its power depends on how much control each individual has over it (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Being aware of the significance of English for self-development and recognizing its integrality with other life aspirations reflects extrinsic motivation of identified regulation. It is a very strong extrinsic motivation as the students possibly develop a strong control over the goal. On another hand, extrinsic motives that are influenced by others such as learning English for being ashamed and feeling guilty was pointed to be likely endorsed by students with introjected regulation that is less strong than the previous one (Alamer, 2015). In this case there was only one students (4%) who specified to have this orientation.

The rest of 8 % (two students) appeared to disagree with the available options, thus specifically described their feeling in their own words. Both of them noted that they actually like English but the

difficulty to pronounce and remember the words make them feel troubled. One student added that she really wanted to speak English with others, but she found it hardly possible for such difficulties she experienced. It is interesting as their statement to be fond of English may indicate a fairly strong determination to learn English. Yet, that difficulty in learning English was mentioned as a considerable constraint too may also point that they tend to give up easily. Thus, we assumed that they were less self-determined compared to the intrinsic and identified regulation group. In this regard, they were considered to be in the same level with the student displaying introjected regulation orientation in which we believed they had some motivation to learn English but was not strong enough that can keep them engaged in learning when facing difficulties. To sum up, based on this data, in general, the majority of students participated in this study expressed to have a strong motivation to learn English.

### **Students' use of the applications**

Aligned with their motivation in learning English, information gathered from students' daily journal indicated that they were considerably active in using the apps to learn on their own. Although each student allocated different time to access the apps, in general, they showed a good engagement with the apps. The average time spent each day ranged from 11 to 57 minutes. This was a quite large amount of time as it reached over the time limit for the relax mode of learning described in Duolingo which is only 5 minutes a day. Furthermore, most of the students use both Duolingo and Hello English interchangeably. Only a few students that decided to use only one app of either Duolingo or Hello English because they found using two apps at the same time was challenging.

In addition to active access of the apps, the students also seemed to enjoy the excellence affordances offered by these mobile soft-wares. In numerous literature, mobile apps were repeatedly highlighted for offering flexibility and practicality. The users were reported to feel convenient and comfortable to use the apps anywhere and anytime.

Hidayati & Diana. (2019). Students' motivation to learn English using mobile applications: The case of Duolingo and Hello English.

Table 1 Description of students' use of the applications during 21 days period

Participants	Apps used	Place (in order of frequency)	Average time spent daily
P.1	DL	Home	13 minutes
P.2	HE & DL	Home, classroom, coffee shop	19,5 minutes
P.3	HE & DL	Home, campus, classroom	29,7 minutes
P.4	HE	Home, classroom, garden	14,25 minutes
P.5	DL & HE	Home, campus, cafe	25,3 minutes
P.6	HE	Home, internet station, classroom	44,9 minutes
P.7	DL	Home, campus	11,2 minutes
P.8	DL & HE	Home, classroom, coffee shop	20,75 minutes
P.9	DL & HE	Home, classroom, coffee shop	29,75 minutes
P.10	DL & HE	Home, campus, cafe	18,24 minutes
P.11	HE & DL	Home, campus	11,4 minutes
P.12	DL & HE	Home, campus, cafe, coffee shop	19,74 minutes
P.13	DL & HE	Home, campus, workplace	27,26 minutes
P.14	DL & HE	Home, campus	26 minutes
P.15	DL & HE	Home, campus	17,6 minutes
P.16	DL & HE	Home, campus, library	32,25 minutes
P.17	HE & DL	Home, the beach	57,25 minutes
P.18	DL & HE	Home, campus, library	15,83 minutes
P.19	DL & HE	Home, campus	19 minutes
P.20	DL & HE	Home, classroom, campus	12,2 minutes
P.21	DL & HE	Home, campus	55,65 minutes
P.22	HE & DL	Home, campus, volleyball field	17,11 minutes
P.23	DL	Home, campus, classroom, coffee shop	44,69 minutes
P.24	HE	Home, campus, classroom, library	35,5 minutes
P.25	DL & HE	Home, campus, classroom, library	31 minutes

Although for all the participants in this study home appeared as the most comfortable place to access the apps, they also reported to access the apps in other places ranging from classroom, campus area, library,

coffee shop, workplace, and garden. The students reported that they found home more comfortable than other places because some features of the apps have listening part and require voice recording. They felt distracted, unconfident, and also shy when they had to speak English to the phone by themselves in the crowd. So, for the majority of the students, the applications were still quite practical and flexible to use albeit being not used to learning and practicing English everywhere.

Another important finding associated with students' use of the apps was that they appeared to miss some fundamental language inputs available in the apps although they were active in using them and enjoy their practicality. Many students did not make use all the functions of the apps available to them properly. For example, in using Duolingo app many of the students did not pay attention to the correction given when they made mistakes and just kept guessing for the correct answer so that they can get to the next level quickly. Whereas in using Hello English, many of them missed tips of the day and word of the day features that present new words and special expressions on a daily basis which can be a significantly important language inputs. In other word, the students seemed to be only superficially engaged regardless of their activeness and convenience in accessing the apps. Apparently, the students still have limited understanding on the learning system offered by both apps and missed some important sections.

### **Students' English motivation and use of the applications**

Two earlier findings yielded that in general the students have strong motivation in learning English and show a good engagement with the apps when they learned on their own outside the class. Nevertheless, as it is appeared in the table describing the time they spent each day to access the apps, there was a wide range between the lowest (11 minutes) and the highest time (57 minutes). It is likely that there could be a statistical different in how the students used the apps as they, indeed, also indicated to have different level of motivation in learning English. Literature on motivation indicated that students

Hidayati & Diana. (2019). Students' motivation to learn English using mobile applications: The case of Duolingo and Hello English.

having high motivation tend to have deep engagement and spend more effort in learning tasks. High motivated students were expected to spend much more time or the highest amount among others.

Table 2 Result of statistical test on students' English motivation and use of the applications

Motivation * Time_spent Crosstabulation					
Count		Time_spent			Total
		Long	Medium	Short	
Motivation	Less_strong	2	5	2	9
	Low	0	2	1	3
	Very_strong	2	10	1	13
Total		4	17	4	25
Chi-Square Tests					
		Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square		2,401 <sup>a</sup>	4	,663	
Likelihood Ratio		2,840	4	,585	
N of Valid Cases		25			
Symmetric Measures					
		Value	Approximate Significance		
Nominal by	Phi	,310	,663		
Nominal	Cramer's V	,219	,663		
	Contingency Coefficient	,296	,663		
N of Valid Cases		25			

To find support for this assumption, it is important to have a statistical test. For this purpose the students were grouped into three categories of those having a very strong motivation (those endorsing statement of intrinsic motivation), less strong motivation (those endorsing statement of identified regulation), and low motivation (those endorsing statement of introjected regulation). Furthermore, the amount of time they spent in accessing the applications were classified into the category of long, medium, and short based on the calculation of mean and SD. As all the variables are categorical, the statistical test utilized here was a chi-square group independence test.

The test yields Pearson Chi-Square  $\chi^2 = 2,40$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = .663$  with an effect size of  $w = .309$ . In this case, the hypothesis testing results

in failure to reject  $H_0$ . Also, the effect size obtained is medium which means the difference among the groups is neither big nor small. In other words, there is no significant statistical difference among the motivation groups related to the time they spent in using the apps. It is fairly justified to conclude that students' motivation in learning English has very little influence (not to say no) on the time students allocated to use the apps. The differences appeared in the amount of time in using the apps by different motivation groups just happened by chance.

## **DISCUSSION**

Technological changes and development require a new thinking about the role and the shape of education. With more learning tools available on the learners' reach, it is a time to develop a wider range of pedagogies that are less formal and give more control to the learners (Chun et al., 2016; Kukulska-hulme, Norris, & Donohue, 2015; Richards, 2014). These days, the classroom is no longer the only place where students can learn and practice their English. Even for the learning context in the Expanding Circle countries that was previously claimed to have a lack of learning materials and resources, it is now possible to have more interesting, engaging and, communicative learning activities by taking advantages of the internet and mobile technology's sophisticated affordances. The current study is an effort performed to seek for more information to understand how the available free mobile English learning applications can be utilized by the students to learn English independently outside the classroom.

The finding indicates that, in general, the students are quite enthusiastic in using the applications and can considerably enjoy the flexibility and practicality offered by them. This finding strengthens the fact about the great potentials and positive responses toward mobile language learning which have been highlighted in numerous literatures. The current finding itself resonates with a number of other previous studies of mobile-assisted language learning involving university students as the participants (Alkhezzi & Al-Dousari, 2016; Muhammed, 2014; Okumura & Bronson, 2016; Yudhiantara, 2017).

Hidayati & Diana. (2019). Students' motivation to learn English using mobile applications: The case of Duolingo and Hello English.

However, there are a number of important points to note for further studies concerning the use of mobile applications for independent English learning outside the classroom.

One of the intriguing issues emerged is the students unfamiliarity to learn flexibly outside the class. Having the applications installed on their smartphone, the students were expected to be able to learn comfortably and casually at different time and in any places. The finding indicates that the students do find some convenience and can learn quite flexibly on their own in different places outside the class. However, the majority of the students also appear to allocate a particular time (mostly at night) and find home as the most convenient place to use the applications out of other places. In other words, the students also experience some uneasiness in doing this activity. On our observation, we believe that this issue is a matter of new tradition for the students. They have been used to depend on teacher as the sole source of information and have never been expected to make use of mobile applications to learn autonomously. Moreover they are non-English major students who have little exposure to English. To encourage language learning on mobile applications it is fundamental that the technology has been an integral part of students' daily life or become normalized (Barrs, 2011; Bax, 2003). Although at current, the use of applications to learn English is unfamiliar for many of the students, we are convinced that the more students accustomed to taking advantages of mobile applications to learn independently outside the class the more confident and comfortable they can be in learning English on their own.

Another interesting finding is the students' less explorative use of the application functions despite their enthusiasm in using them. It is true that for the majority of the students, using mobile English learning applications to learn English independently is a new experience. Nevertheless, they are quite familiar to browse for learning materials on the internet utilizing Google Search as well as using social media or game applications to interact and have fun with others. Thus, their unfamiliarity with the applications' features was not predicted to

influence engagement in using the applications. Besides, all the students participating in the study had been given specific information about the application features before being asked to use them intensively during the project period. Apparently, the students' limited knowledge and lack of prior experience in using mobile applications to learn independently have some influence on their engagement with the applications causing them to miss some important features that can potentially be a valuable language input for them.

Regardless of the students' new experience in learning with mobile applications, superficial engagement in mobile learning, in fact, was considered as one of its limitations. Mobile device such as smartphone in particular, has a limited interface with its small screen size. With this condition, despite the great affordances a smartphone can afford, accomplishing tasks requiring a large amount of time for high level thinking is more difficult than doing it on a larger device like the computer (Li, Link, & Hegelheimer, 2015). The smartphone is more valued for small chunk content and the practicality for signing in and out while on the go (Kim & Kwon, 2012; Steel, Springett, & Kirk, 2012). Hence, superficial engagement probably can be perceived as one of the learning styles that characterizes mobile learning. Nevertheless, it does not mean that its value is less beneficial. Ushioda (2013) pointed that rather than deep level of engagement, the potential values in learning with mobile technologies lie in the frequent engagement with language learning and language use opportunities because this can play important role once the learners realize that they do learn and can see the benefits from this casual learning. In this regard, we are positive that the learners experience in using Duolingo and Hello English to learn English on their own will make the students have better experience in learning English.

Lastly, finding that students' English learning motivation has very little influence (not to say no) in the time they spent to use the apps is also captivating. A number of studies had identified motivation as a good predictor of involvement in learning and persistence to challenges (Bernard, 2010; Galishnikova, 2014; Huizenga, Admiraal,

Hidayati & Diana. (2019). Students' motivation to learn English using mobile applications: The case of Duolingo and Hello English.

Akkerman, & Dam, 2009). Nevertheless, this study find that students' description of their English learning motivation appears to have no relation to the amount of time spent to use the apps. In other words, even the highest motivation group appears to show little engagement with the apps. In fact, many of them spent less time than their counterparts who described to have less strong motivation in learning English. This finding clearly demands a further investigation.

One logical justification can be made here is that merely using the endorsed statements linked to the different levels of motivation on SDT concept perhaps did not properly address the complexity of English learning motivation. Instead of using a single statement of each level of motivation ranging on a continuum of intrinsically motivated to unmotivated, probably, it would be more appropriate to examine the students' motivation by employing a series of questionnaire statements displaying the complex nature of English language learning. Literature pointed that there were a number of key motivational elements that influence learners' motivation in learning L2 comprising milieu, self-confidence, cultural interest, vitality of L2 community, attitudes toward L2 speakers, instrumentality and integrativeness (Adolphs et al., 2018; Csizer & Dornyei, 2005; Dornyei, 2009). Further studies in this topic need to carefully take into account the complexity of L2 motivation.

## CONCLUSION

Aligned with a number of previous studies investigating and exploring mobile applications in language learning, the current study also yields that mobile applications are quite potential in assisting language learners to learn the target language. The students participating in the research project showed a considerably good engagement with the two applications. Although there is a diverse range of time spent by the student in using the applications, and their English learning motivation does not seem to influence the way they use the applications, the fact that they can enjoy some practicality and flexibility offered by the applications is convincing that the learners can

make use the available mobile applications to learn independently outside the classroom and improve their English.

Mobile technology is the device that is increasingly attached to the students. Having mobile technology and internet facility in hand, English language learners these days are open to many learning resources. The teacher is no longer the only learning source for the students. The students can get many language inputs while spending time on social media or involving in various other pop culture. It is important that English teachers can encourage the students to make use of the available resources and materials to help them improve their English. Mobile technology will keep evolving. To ask the students to take away something they highly depend on will not be a wise decision. Thus, more studies on the use of the current mobile applications for English language learning need to be carried on as every learning context is unique and it is likely distinctive from one another.

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