



How can Duolingo increase motivation in a language learning process?

Laura Viganò

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano (Italy)

ABSTRACT

The spread of the MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) has been widely studied, however, the continuous evolution of the platforms towards new and most engaging solutions are leading to challenging products on the web. Duolingo is today one of the most famous apps able to involve students and teachers in a language acquisition process; this app provides a path to learn a language based mainly on gamification (Mahmudah, 2015): the students earn points in the learning platform as they advance through challenges and stories (Gonzalez, 2018). According to researchers, it appears that Duolingo is built on motivation strategies including the effectiveness of its layout and the competition that is risen among learners from all over the world (Ahmed, 2016; Bodgan, 2016 and Redjeki 2020). This paper aims to prove whether Duolingo can be an effective and motivational tool to learn a second language by analyzing the learning outcomes of a group of students that used Duolingo to practice the vocabulary compared to a second group that didn't use the app. The results will show that Duolingo can improve motivation but at the same time will be pointed out the crucial importance of the teacher role in the language acquisition process.

Keywords: foreign languages; gamification; learning app; MALL; vocabulary