

DUOLINGO AS A TOOL TO SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Maria Vilanova Cifre

University of the Balearic Islands

"Paper presented at the 50th Poznań Linguistic Meeting"

This paper examines Duolingo as a tool to second language acquisition. Duolingo is one of the most famous apps used in Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). The topic of second language acquisition with the use of ICT resources has been broadly studied by linguists internationally. However, with its new platform "Duolingo for Teachers", not only researchers, but also teachers are interested in seeing the possibilities of this application. Throughout this paper, the main characteristics of Duolingo as regards its learning process are identified. Language acquisition mainly occurs due to gamification consisting of getting points by playing in a learning platform similar to a game. It has been discovered that due to its layout and design, Duolingo appears to be very motivating and entertaining. This research proposal is aimed at analysing the effects of Duolingo on the acquisition of SLA. The methodology used consisted of dividing two groups of students. The first group used Duolingo while the other did not. Then, a test took place in order to see which group got better results. By doing this, it seeks to demonstrate that even though this free app states to improve the language skills, it does not apply to all functions of the language. There are several negative aspects which are still to be investigated in depth such as lack of interaction and feedback as the teacher's role is absent. Another significant drawback is the unnatural sentences. They are highly unlikely to be used in a real-life situation with native speakers.