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IMPLEMENTING DUOLINGO ENGLISH TEST TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY PROGRAM AND INDEPENDENT LEARNING INDEPENDENT CAMPUS (MBKM)

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Abstract

This research aims to find out students' Duolingo English Test/DET scores at an international university in Bandung, Indonesia, used as a requirement for applying international mobility program called IISMA, as the implementation of Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM). A DET English proficiency test was held for Year 1 vocational students of Diploma 3 and Diploma 4, at the beginning of the semester. The score results were analyzed by calculating the average results of the independent sample t-Test, which aims to test whether there is a significant difference in English language skills between the two study programs. The study results showed that the average score for the D3 Study Program was 68, and D4 was 55, with the highest score from D3 105 and from D4 95. Referring to Duolingo's score requirements for the D4 level, which is 100, the study program is still unable to send its candidates for IISMA Program. At the D3 level, the minimum requirement is 90, so this study program can send its candidates for this Program. And the results of the independent sample t test calculations also show that the two study programs have significant differences in English language skills based on the DET.

Keyword: *Duolingo English Test, IISMA, MBKM, students' perception, t-test*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui nilai tes Duolingo mahasiswa di universitas internasional di Bandung, Indonesia, yang digunakan sebagai persyaratan untuk program mobilitas yang disebut IISMA atau Indonesia International Student Mobility Awards yang merupakan implementasi dari Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM). Tes kemampuan Bahasa Inggris DET dilakukan untuk mahasiswa dari Fakultas Vokasi Tingkat 1 Program Studi Diploma 3 dan Diploma 4 Tahun pada awal semester. Hasil skor tersebut dianalisis dengan menghitung rata-rata hasil Independent Sample t-Test yang bertujuan untuk menguji apakah terdapat perbedaan kemampuan bahasa Inggris yang signifikan antara kedua program studi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata Program Studi D3 adalah 68, dan D4 adalah 55, dengan nilai tertinggi dari D3 sebesar 105 dan dari D4 sebesar 95. Mengacu pada syarat nilai Duolingo untuk jenjang D4 yaitu 100, maka prodi tersebut masih belum bisa mengirimkan calonnya ke Program IISMA. Pada jenjang D3, syarat nilai Duolingo minimal adalah 90, sehingga prodi ini dapat mengirimkan calonnya pada Program ini. Dan hasil perhitungan uji Independent Sample t test juga menunjukkan bahwa kedua prodi mempunyai perbedaan kemampuan bahasa Inggris yang signifikan berdasarkan DET.

Kata kunci: *Duolingo English Test, IISMA, MBKM, persepsi siswa, t-test*

Introduction

On the Independent Learning Independent Campus website, Junaidi stated that Merdeka is a policy of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, which aims to encourage students to master various knowledge that is useful for entering the industry. In Minister of Education and Culture Regulation no. 3 of 2020 concerning National Higher Education Standards, Article 18 states that fulfilling the study period and load for undergraduate and applied undergraduate students can be implemented by following the entire learning process in the university study program according to the study period and study load, and participating in the learning process within the study program to fulfill part of the study period and load and take part in learning outside the study program for the rest.

From Article 18, a more detailed regulation regarding the MBKM Program was made, which are students have the opportunity for 1 (one) semester or the equivalent of 20 (twenty) credits to study outside the study program at the same university. Then, a maximum of 2 (two) semesters or the equivalent of 40 (forty) credits studying the same study program at a different university, studying at a different study program at a different university; and/or learning outside of higher education.

The Mobility Program designed by the Directorate General of Higher Education (DITJEN DIKTI) is an implementation of the Independent Campus Learning Program (MBKM), and one of them is the International Mobility of Indonesian Students (Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards) or IISMA. The Mobility Program is a program to internationalize higher education with a global perspective and commitment to expanding knowledge. There are various forms of this Mobility Program, starting from providing scholarships to students undertaking student exchanges, bringing in foreign professors to teach on domestic campuses, or sending lecturers abroad for further studies or conducting joint research with world-class universities. Meanwhile, IISMA aims to provide opportunities for Indonesian students to interact with international students, teachers and the local community and culture at foreign universities. So, Indonesian students are facilitated to gain knowledge and skills, exchange ideas and culture, and build networks with academics globally.

According to the news site tekno.tempo.co, in 2023 IISMA was recorded as having registered 12,704 students, with 10,496 students registering at the undergraduate level and 2,208 students at the vocational level. This very high student interest shows the students' high desire to obtain the best in their education along with the benefits offered by this program in the context of internationalization. In the implementation period of 2023 or the third generation, the number of institutions for undergraduate and vocational education would reach 140 institutions and collaborate with 27 countries. This program invites undergraduate students in semesters 4 and 6 to register and carry out MBKM activities in semesters 5 and 7, while for vocational students the only applicants from semester 4 will take part in activities in semester 5. And as explained in the discussion regarding MBKM above, this program provides students with the opportunity to study for 1 semester with the conversion of 20 learning credits.

One of the main requirements for participating in this program is adequate English language skills, which is demonstrated by an English language competency certificate that has been recognized by educational institutions and other institutions. This program requires English language skills with certifications that can be chosen, which are TOEFL iBT with a minimum score of 78, IELTS with a minimum band 6.0, and Duolingo English Test (DET) with a minimum score of 100 for undergraduate level, and 95 for vocational. Meanwhile, the minimum requirements for each university are different from the requirements given by IISMA, which means that universities have their own English language certification requirements. So, if a university requires a Duolingo score of 130, then applicants must show a Duolingo score of at least 130, following the requirements of the target university. Of the three certifications that can be chosen, Duolingo has relatively more enthusiasts and it was shown in a study that the majority of students chose Duolingo as an English learning platform (Silmi, 2019). So, one of the efforts that can be made for joining the program is to improve English language skills and hone them by practicing continuously so that when the time comes to complete the English language competency requirements, students can get at least the minimum DET required score. However, it was still unknown whether students in this institution had already known about DET itself and what scores students would achieve on testing English using Duolingo. Moreover, based on the different DET requirements for IISMA registration, the average of English competences of students from Diploma 3 study program and Diploma 4 study program had never been measured before.

Studies on students' perceptions toward Duolingo had been conducted to find out the use and utilization in learning English (Fadilah 2023, Irzawati & Unamo 2023, Silmi 2019) and to find out the knowledge about Duolingo (Budiharto & Sahroni, 2020). So, in this study the questionnaire items are following those used in the previous studies. Moreover, to find out the average English level between the two different study programs, this study will follow the analysis conducted by Sriyati (2022).

Therefore, in this study the formulation of the problems is:

1. What is the students' perception towards DET?
2. What are students' DET Score?
3. What are the results of independent sample t-test from two different study programs?

Research Methods

This study was carried out in a D4 and D3 Study Program at an international private university in Bandung, Indonesia. The participants involved in this study were at the first level with an age range of 19 to 20 years and were taking English lectures in semester 1. The population from level 1 was taking English language courses in Semester 1 TA. 2023/2024 is 345 people, so the number of participants who will take the DET test is 47 students with an error rate of 10% (Sugiyono, 2018: 87). So it can be determined that the participants came from 2 English classes from two different study programs.

To answer problem formulation no. 1 regarding student perceptions of DET and to find out information that students know about DET, the questionnaire was distributed to 2 classes as respondents. The questionnaire items were about students' perceptions towards DET, their test experiences, and their knowledge of international mobility program.

To answer problem formulation no. 2, DET was done by the participants of the study on the platform <https://englishtest.duolingo.com/> using the free practice test feature. The DET included the question categories as follows:

1. Literacy, the ability to read and write
2. Comprehension, reading and listening skills
3. Conversation, listening and speaking skills
4. Production. Writing and speaking skills

To answer formulation no. 3 in this study, a t-test was carried out on the average DET score from participants in two different study programs, using an independent sample t test. From the calculation, the study would like to find out whether there is a significant difference of English proficiency between D3 and D4 study programs using the DET instrument.

Results and Discussion

Students' Perceptions towards DET

To answer the first research question, a survey was conducted among participants and 57 participants answered the questionnaire distributed via Google Form. Questions were asked about knowledge of the Duolingo English test, previous test performance, confidence in the test, and the use of Duolingo scores for student exchange programs. The following is the questionnaire data that has been collected:



Figure 1. Students' Perceptions of the importance of English skills

From the figure above, it can be seen that the new students at the university are aware of the importance of English skills for the academic and professional world. There were 98.3% who agreed and strongly agreed with this statement. Meanwhile, the new students' perceptions of the Duolingo English test can be seen in the following figure:



Figure 2. Students' Perceptions towards DET

From the graph above, it can be seen that 50.9% of respondents or new students knew about the Duolingo English test, and half of the respondents said they were doubtful and did not know about the test. This number is better than the one as the result of Budiharto and Syahroni's (2020), which was 95% of respondents were not familiar with Duolingo. It can be argued that Duolingo has been well known by people in Indonesia as time went by from 2020 to 2023.

Even though they already know about Duolingo, respondents stated that they had never taken the test as seen in the following picture:

Apakah Anda pernah mengambil tes Bahasa Inggris Duolingo?

57 jawaban

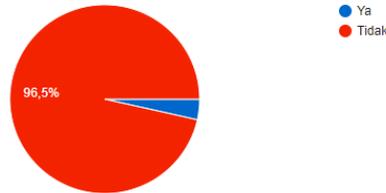


Figure 3. Experience taking DET

From the figure above, it can be seen that the majority of respondents have never taken the Duolingo English test, the remaining 3.5% have taken the test and one respondent answered that the score he obtained was 90. Compared to the result of Budiharto and Syahroni (2020), the number is almost similar as the result was 100% respondents never used Duolingo. It is argued that the use of the application is in line with the need of the users. If they think there is no benefit in using it, they will not use the application.

The Perceptions of new students or respondents regarding their confidence in facing the Duolingo English test which they have never done before are as follows:



Figure 4. Confidence on DET

It can be seen from the picture above that 49.1% of respondents feel confident and very confident in the Duolingo test they would take. Meanwhile, half of the respondents felt doubtful, not confident and very not confident. In terms of the relevance of using Duolingo test scores, one of which is as an administrative requirement in the student exchange program or what is called the Indonesia International Mobility Awards (IISMA), it can be seen that the respondents' knowledge about the program is as follows:

Apakah Anda pernah mendengar/mengetahui program pertukaran pelajar yang diselenggarakan oleh Kemendikbudristek?
57 jawaban

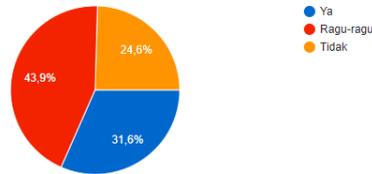


Figure 5. Student Exchange Knowledge

From the graph above, it can be seen that 31.6% of respondents already know about the student exchange program, especially those organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This figure is moderately low, while 78.5% of respondents did not know and were doubtful about the student exchange program. Of the 31.6% of respondents who knew about the program, 3 people answered IISMA, the rest answered PMM, YFU, Independent Learning Campus, and did not answer the program specifically.

DET Scores from two different study programs

The next step in the study was to implement DET for participants of D3 and D4 study programs. The following are the results of all participants:

Table 1. DET results

Prodi	N	Mean	Highest Score	Lowest Score
D3	27	68	105	35
D4	20	55	95	15

From the table above it can be seen that the average score for the D3 Study Program is 68, and D4 is 55, with the highest score from D3 being 105 and from D4 being 95, and the lowest from D3 being 35 and the lowest from D4 being 15. The low average scores from two study programs indicate that the students have never experienced the test before, as shown in the previous discussion of questionnaire results, that they have never coped with question models of the test, and that they have never been prepared with the component materials of the test before (Sriyati, 2022). Based on Duolingo Score Scale, the average score of the two study programs shows that students are at an average level above beginner who can understand the main elements of speech, understand writing about everyday topics, school and work, and can explain the

purpose of speech, opinions, plans, and experiences that have been experienced with some hesitation. Then, the two highest scores from the two study programs show that they are at the same level that is being able to speak effectively and absorb information on various topics, understand the main themes of concrete and abstract writing, and communicate with competent speakers in their fields. Meanwhile, the lowest scores for both study programs show that they are at the same level that is at beginner level (10 – 55) because they only understand basic English, general information, and can express themselves in a familiar context.

However, if it refers to the Duolingo score requirements for level D4, which is 100, then the study program is still unable to send its candidates for IISMA activities. At the D3 level, the minimum Duolingo score requirement is 90, so this study program can send its candidates for this activity. In general, from the average score, the two study programs still have a lot to catch up in improving their English language skills by practicing referring to the four skills tested in DET.

Analysis of independent t-test

After DET has been done by two different study programs at the Vocational School at the institution, the D3 study program and the D4 study program, it is necessary to carry out an analysis of the English language ability scores of students from two different study programs to see whether the abilities of students from both Different study programs have significant differences. Then the t-test calculation is carried out from the DET results that have been obtained, with the following results:

Table 2. DET results and t-test calculation

Prodi	N	Mean	Highest Score	Lowest Score	SD
D3	27	68	105	35	19.87
D4	20	55	95	15	22.66
t-test					2.046
df					45
t _{0.025}					2.015
t _{0.095}					- 2.015

In this study, the hypothesis determined or H₀ is that there is no significant difference in English language skills between the D3 Study Program Group and

the D4 Study Program Group as indicated by the DET scores obtained, with a significance level (α) of 0.05. Then the critical value calculated from the t distribution table is used to determine whether H_0 can be rejected or not, with degrees of freedom $df = (n_1+n_2-2) = 45$.

With a significance level of $\alpha/2 = 0.025$ and $df = 45$, then the critical value of $t_{0.025}$ in the distribution table is 2.015, and the critical value of $t_{0.095}$ with $\alpha/2 = 0.095$ is -2.015, so it can be determined that the t-test > from critical value, then H_0 can be rejected. So it can be concluded from the calculations above that there is a significant difference in English language skills between the two groups of D3 and D4 Study Programs.

Conclusion

From the research results described above, it can be concluded that most students are aware of the importance of academic and professional English skills, but students have not measured their English skills using Duolingo because 96.5% of respondents have never used Duolingo for an English test, even though 50.9% already know about Duolingo. Of all the respondents, only one person had a Duolingo score, which is 90.

In terms of the use of Duolingo scores as one of the requirements for the IISMA Program, 78.5% of respondents still do not know about the Student Exchange Program organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Duolingo test was implemented on new students' class of 2023 from Diploma 3 and Diploma 4 vocational study programs, totaling 47 participants, divided into 4 (four) sessions, on different days and times. In socialization activities, the importance of English language skills is emphasized and one of them is to take part in the Mobility Awards Program, IISMA. Because the majority of participants have never taken part in DET, the types of questions that usually appear in DET are also explained.

The average score for the D3 Study Program is 68, and D4 is 55, with the highest score from D3 being 105 and from D4 being 95, and the lowest from D3 being 35 and the lowest from D4 being 15. Referring to the Duolingo score requirements for the D4 level, which is 100, then the study program is still unable to send its candidates for IISMA activities. At the D3 level, the minimum Duolingo score requirement is 90, so this study program can send its candidates for this activity. In general, from the average score, the two study programs still have a lot to catch up in improving English language skills. Indeed, the results of

the independent sample t test calculation also show that the two study programs have significant differences in English language skills as shown by the Duolingo test results.

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