

Enhancing Speaking Motivation Through Duolingo and NLP Presupposition: "There Is No Failure, Only Feedback"

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Abstract

Speaking skills in English are essential in the era of globalization; however, many learners still face challenges due to low motivation, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes. This study aims to analyze how the integration of the Duolingo application and the Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) presupposition "There is no failure, only feedback" can enhance students' motivation in speaking English. This research employs a qualitative approach through literature review and a survey conducted with 30 Duolingo users. The results show that 83.3% of respondents felt more enthusiastic, 90% felt more confident, 83.3% experienced significant benefits from the NLP principle, and 93.3% felt more motivated after using the combination of Duolingo and the NLP principle. Additionally, 93.3% of respondents also recommended combining these two approaches to other learners. Open responses from participants indicated that Duolingo provided a fun learning environment, while the NLP principle helped them overcome the fear of making mistakes. The discussion highlights that the synergy between enjoyable technology-based learning and a psychological approach that fosters a positive mindset towards mistakes significantly contributes to creating a supportive learning environment. These findings indicate that an approach combining learning technology and positive thinking is highly effective in helping students speak English without fear of making mistakes.

Keywords: *Duolingo, NLP Presupposition, Learners Motivation, English Speaking*

Introduction

In the era of globalization, English proficiency especially speaking skills has become an essential need for learners in non-native English-speaking countries. However, many learners face challenges such as low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, and declining learning motivation. In this context, motivation plays a crucial role in the success of language acquisition, particularly in speaking skills that require both linguistic and psychological readiness. The integration of technology into language learning has shown great potential in increasing learner engagement and autonomy. One popular platform is Duolingo, a gamified language-learning application. Duolingo offers an interactive and enjoyable learning experience through features such as instant feedback, reward systems, and progress tracking. Research by Gragera (2024) indicates that using Duolingo significantly improves motivation and vocabulary acquisition in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning among secondary school students.

On the other hand, psychological approaches such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) offer additional perspectives in shaping learners' positive mindset toward the learning process. Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), developed by Bandler and Grinder in the 1970s, aims to identify and model the patterns of language, thought, and behavior that lead to success in communication and personal change. We have modeled the patterns of behavior and language used by effective therapists, with the goal of making these patterns explicit and learnable (Bandler & Grinder, 1975). In other words, NLP is the study of the structure of subjective experience and how this structure can be used to create positive change in communication, learning, and self-development. One of the core presuppositions in NLP is: "There is no failure, only feedback." Hartati et al. (2024) state that every reaction and event can be used as feedback and as an opportunity to learn. This principle encourages learners to view mistakes as a natural part of the learning process rather than as indicators of inadequacy.

Considering both approaches, this study aims to explore the integration of the Duolingo application and the NLP presupposition "There is no failure, only feedback" as a synergistic strategy to enhance speaking motivation and skills in English language learning. Through the combination of technology and psychological approaches, it is expected to create an empowering learning environment that encourages students to speak with greater confidence and transforms their perception of mistakes into valuable learning opportunities.

Motivation is one of the most influential factors in the success of language learning, especially in productive skills such as speaking. Putri and Ramadhani (2021) assert that motivation is a key psychological aspect that determines the level of student engagement in speaking English. The higher the motivation students have, the more likely they are to actively speak, practice independently, and overcome the fear of making mistakes during communication. Conversely, low motivation often negatively impacts the learning process, resulting in anxiety, reluctance to try, and a low frequency of speaking practice. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), this becomes a unique challenge because students do not have a natural environment that supports direct language practice. Therefore, learning strategies are needed that can sustainably nurture and enhance student motivation.

In recent years, gamification has become a popular strategy in education to increase student participation and engagement. Duolingo is one of the gamified language learning applications that offers features such as points, levels, badges, and daily challenges. These features are designed to create a fun and pressure-free learning experience. Amaniarsih et al. (2025) show that regular use of Duolingo can improve students' speaking skills while also strengthening their learning motivation. Similar findings were presented by Humairoh and Martriwati (2025), who stated that Duolingo's interactive design and real-time feedback encourage students to become more confident in practicing English speaking. The non-judgmental learning environment allows students to feel freer and more comfortable in making mistakes, which in turn accelerates their learning process. Thus, the use of gamified technology like Duolingo can significantly contribute to enhancing students' motivation and speaking skills in English language learning.

In addition to technology-based approaches, language learning also requires psychological support that helps shape students' positive mindsets. Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is an approach that emphasizes the connection between language, mindset, and behavior. One of the core principles of NLP that is highly relevant in the learning context is the presupposition "There is no failure, only feedback." This presupposition teaches that mistakes are not a form of failure, but rather a part of the

learning process that provides valuable information for improvement. According to Hartati et al. (2024), this principle encourages learners to shift from a results-oriented mindset to one that values process and progress. By changing their perception of mistakes, students become more open to receiving corrections and more confident in facing learning challenges. Research by Yemima et al. (2025) supports this idea, showing that the application of NLP techniques in the classroom can increase student enthusiasm, self-confidence, and perseverance in learning English. When students understand that mistakes are part of the process, they not only become more active in practicing but also develop a positive attitude towards gradual and meaningful communication.

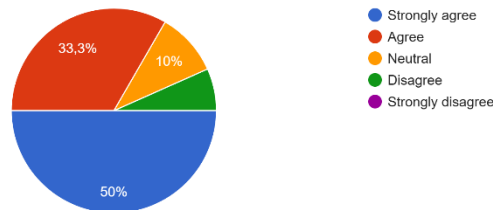
Combining the technological approach (Duolingo) with the psychological approach (NLP) creates a powerful synergy in English language learning, particularly in speaking skills. Duolingo provides an enjoyable and supportive learning environment, while NLP principles help students build a healthy mindset when facing mistakes. Hanifah and Lisan (2024) found that students who use Duolingo feel more relaxed and motivated to speak, even when they are not yet fully fluent. This aligns with the NLP principle that views mistakes as an essential part of feedback in the learning process. Qushoy et al. (2023) also emphasized that NLP techniques can help students improve their confidence through changes in internal dialogue and how they perceive their own abilities. Therefore, the integration of gamified learning platforms and NLP principles can support the development of students' internal motivation and psychological growth. This approach not only fosters the cognitive achievement of language competence but also provides a strong affective foundation for students to become confident and reflective communicators.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the integration of the Duolingo application and one of the core principles of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), namely "There is no such thing as failure, only feedback," in enhancing learners' motivation to speak English. The methodology consists of two main components: literature review and in-depth interviews. First, the literature review was conducted to identify previous findings related to the use of Duolingo and NLP principles in the context of language learning. The sources used include academic articles and journals that discuss the effectiveness of technology-based language learning applications, learning motivation, and the implementation of NLP principles in education. This review aims to establish a solid theoretical foundation and to explore various approaches to enhancing speaking motivation in English. Second, data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with Duolingo users and a survey conducted via Google Forms. The interviews were semi-structured and involved 30 university students who actively use Duolingo, allowing for broader participation and diverse perspectives. Respondents came from various backgrounds and different levels of English proficiency. The interview and survey questions were designed to explore users' experiences with Duolingo, their perceptions of mistakes in the learning process, and how the NLP principle influenced their motivation to speak English. The data obtained from the interviews and surveys were analyzed qualitatively. The findings from this analysis were then compared with the results of the literature review to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of integrating Duolingo and NLP principles in increasing speaking motivation. By combining empirical data and theoretical insights, this study aims to provide in-depth and applicable knowledge regarding the role of technology and NLP approaches in English language learning.

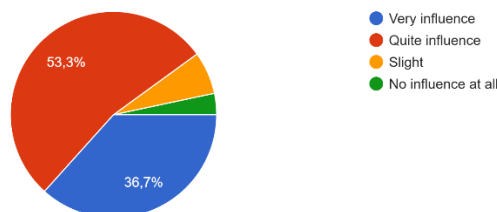
Results

1. Does learning through Duolingo make you more enthusiastic to practice speaking in English?
30 jawaban



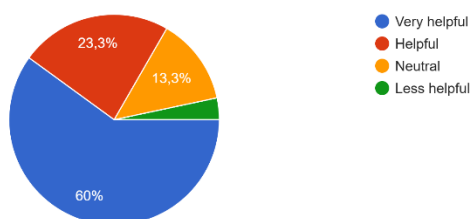
The first question in the questionnaire aimed to determine whether the use of the Duolingo application made students more enthusiastic about practicing spoken English. Based on data from 30 respondents, the majority showed a positive perception. A total of 50% of respondents selected "Strongly agree," and 33.3% chose "Agree," meaning that 83.3% of respondents felt more motivated to practice speaking English after using Duolingo. Meanwhile, 10% responded "Neutral," indicating that they had no strong opinion about the statement. Additionally, 6.7% of respondents selected "Disagree," and none chose "Strongly disagree." These results indicate that most students felt that Duolingo provided a positive boost in motivating them to practice speaking. The gamification features and appealing interface of the application are likely contributing factors in creating a fun learning environment that encourages active use of English.

2. How much influence does Duolingo have in helping you become more confident in speaking English?
30 jawaban



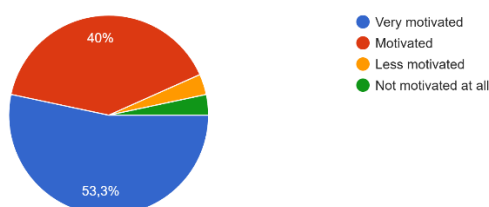
The second question aimed to determine the extent to which Duolingo influenced students' confidence in speaking English. According to the data from 30 respondents, most indicated a positive impact. A total of 36.7% of respondents chose "Highly influential," and 53.3% selected "Quite influential," meaning that 90% of respondents acknowledged that Duolingo helped them become more confident in speaking English. Meanwhile, only 6.7% said "Slightly influential," and 3.3% stated "Not influential at all." These findings reinforce earlier research indicating that Duolingo not only increases learning motivation but also plays a role in building students' confidence in speaking English. Features such as instant feedback, a step-by-step learning approach, and a pressure-free environment likely help students practice more confidently and without fear of making mistakes.

3. How helpful is the NLP presupposition 'There is no failure, only feedback' in increasing your motivation to speak English?
30 jawaban



The third question aimed to assess the extent to which the NLP presupposition "There is no failure, only feedback" was considered helpful in enhancing students' motivation to speak English. Based on data from 30 respondents, the majority gave highly positive responses to this principle. A total of 60% stated it was "Very helpful," and 23.3% said it was "Helpful," meaning that 83.3% of respondents found significant benefit in this NLP principle for boosting their speaking motivation. On the other hand, 13.3% responded "Neutral," and 3.3% found it "Less helpful." These results show that psychological approaches such as NLP have a strong influence on changing students' mindset regarding mistakes in the learning process. The idea that mistakes are feedback not failure provides emotional safety for students to try, practice, and accept correction without fear or embarrassment. This strengthens the position of NLP as an effective approach in fostering learning motivation, particularly in speaking skills, which are often fraught with psychological challenges.

4. After using Duolingo and applying the presupposition 'There is no failure, only feedback', how motivated are you now to speak in English?
30 jawaban



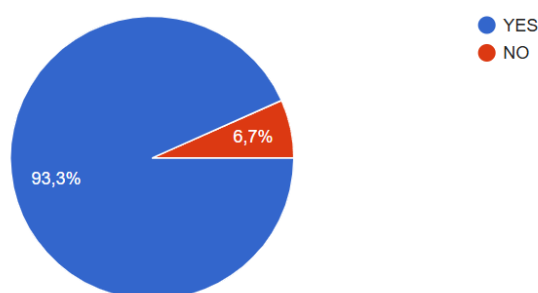
The fourth question aimed to identify students' level of motivation to speak English after learning through Duolingo and applying the NLP presupposition "There is no failure, only feedback." Data from 30 respondents indicated that the combination of the Duolingo application and NLP approach had a positive impact on increasing students' motivation. A total of 53.3% of respondents stated they were "Highly motivated," and 40% answered "Motivated," meaning that 93.3% of respondents felt encouraged to speak English more actively after experiencing both approaches. Meanwhile, 3.3% said they were "Less motivated," and another 3.3% stated they were "Not motivated at all." These findings reinforce previous results that combining technology-based learning with psychological strategies creates a synergistic effect in shaping learning enthusiasm. Not only from the enjoyable system provided by Duolingo but also through the mindset shaped by the NLP presupposition, students felt more confident and driven to continue improving their speaking skills without fear of making mistakes.

The fifth question was given in an open-ended format to explore participants' personal opinions on how learning through Duolingo and the NLP principle "mistakes are feedback" contributes to increased motivation in speaking English. All 30 respondents gave various responses, which generally indicated positive and appreciative feedback toward the approach. Most respondents stated that they felt safer and more comfortable during the learning process because they no longer perceived mistakes as failures. The idea that "mistakes are feedback" made the learning experience feel more human and supportive. One respondent wrote, *"I feel more motivated because mistakes are not seen as something embarrassing, but as an opportunity to learn and improve."* Additionally, several respondents mentioned that Duolingo provided a pressure-free space for learning. Features such as enjoyable exercises and instant feedback made them feel more confident. For example, one participant said, *"Duolingo is fun and doesn't put pressure on you, and the NLP principle keeps me motivated."*

Other respondents also noted that they were no longer afraid to practice speaking because they began to understand that mistakes are a normal part of the learning process. *"I'm more excited to learn because I know that mistakes are not the end, but part of the practice,"* said one participant. However, there were also some critical views from a small number of respondents. One mentioned that Duolingo was perceived as less effective for improving speaking skills directly due to its lack of real-time, two-way conversation features. Nevertheless, this respondent still acknowledged the value of the NLP principle in building self-confidence. Overall, the responses indicated that the combination of Duolingo and the NLP presupposition created a more inclusive, positive, and supportive learning atmosphere. This approach not only helped students become more willing to speak but also cultivated the understanding that mistakes are an important part of skill development.

6. Would you recommend using Duolingo and the NLP presupposition to help other learners stay motivated in speaking English?

30 jawaban



The final question in the questionnaire aimed to determine whether the respondents would recommend the use of Duolingo and the NLP presupposition *"There is no failure, only feedback"* to other learners as a way to maintain motivation in speaking English. Based on the data collected from 30 respondents, the majority (93.3%) answered "Yes," while only 6.7% responded "No." This percentage indicates a high level of satisfaction and confidence among the respondents regarding the effectiveness of combining Duolingo with the psychological approach of NLP.

This recommendation suggests that both approaches are not only perceived as personally beneficial but are also considered suitable for broader application among learners facing challenges in speaking English. These findings reinforce earlier results indicating that Duolingo provides a fun and interactive learning experience, while the NLP

presupposition offers mental support that helps students manage their fear of making mistakes. Thus, this combined approach is perceived as a holistic learning strategy and is considered worthy of recommendation in the context of teaching English as a foreign language.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the combination of using the Duolingo application and the NLP presupposition "*There is no failure, only feedback*" significantly contributes to enhancing learners' motivation and confidence in speaking English. The majority of respondents responded positively to the effectiveness of Duolingo as an enjoyable learning tool and to the NLP approach as a psychological strategy for fostering an adaptive mindset toward mistakes.

The results of the first question reveal that 83.3% of respondents felt more enthusiastic about practicing spoken English after using Duolingo. This supports literature suggesting that gamification can increase student engagement and motivation (Amaniasih et al., 2025; Humairoh & Martriwati, 2025). Features such as points, daily challenges, and instant feedback create a pressure-free learning environment that motivates users to continue learning consistently. In response to the second question, 90% of respondents stated that Duolingo helped boost their speaking confidence. This aligns with the findings of Hanifah and Lisan (2024), who asserted that enjoyable and non-intimidating learning experiences help students become more courageous in speaking practice. Confidence is a crucial factor in speaking ability, and Duolingo provides space for learners to make mistakes without fear. Furthermore, questions three and four showed that over 80% of respondents felt significantly helped and more motivated by the NLP principle "*There is no failure, only feedback.*" This indicates that psychological approaches play a vital role in shaping positive mindsets toward errors. As explained by Hartati et al. (2024) and Yemima et al. (2025), this principle teaches that mistakes are a natural part of learning, not a sign of failure. It has proven effective in creating a psychologically safe space for students to keep trying and improving.

The open-ended responses to the fifth question qualitatively reaffirm the previous quantitative findings. Respondents expressed that Duolingo and the NLP presupposition helped them stay motivated, feel more confident, and become unafraid of making mistakes. Many reported feeling appreciated during the learning process, as mistakes were not seen as shameful but rather as opportunities for growth. This reinforces literature by Qushoy et al. (2023), which notes that NLP is effective in boosting confidence through changes in mindset and self-perception.

Finally, data from the sixth question showed that 93.3% of respondents would recommend Duolingo and the NLP presupposition to other learners. This recommendation reflects a high level of trust in the effectiveness of both approaches. The combination of a technological tool (Duolingo) and a psychological method (NLP) is perceived to offer a learning experience that supports not only cognitive development but also affective aspects such as motivation, courage, and learning resilience.

Overall, the results of this study are consistent with the literature review, which highlights that effective language learning should engage both technical and emotional aspects. Duolingo supports the technical side with engaging learning features, while NLP provides an emotional foundation through the reinforcement of a healthy mindset toward learning. The synergy between the two creates a more meaningful, sustainable, and empowering learning experience, enabling learners to actively speak English without the fear of failure.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of Duolingo and the NLP presupposition “*There is no failure, only feedback*” plays a significant role in enhancing students’ motivation and confidence in speaking English. Duolingo, with its gamified features, creates an enjoyable and pressure-free learning environment that encourages students to practice consistently. Meanwhile, the NLP principle helps shape students’ mindsets to view mistakes as a natural part of the learning process rather than as signs of failure.

Survey results show a strong positive response from participants, with more than 80% of respondents feeling more motivated and confident after applying both approaches. The synergy between technological support and psychological strategy highlights the importance of addressing both cognitive and emotional aspects in language learning. Therefore, combining digital tools like Duolingo with positive thinking principles such as the NLP presupposition is recommended as a holistic strategy to support EFL students in developing their speaking skills without the fear of making mistakes.

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