Memrise: Promoting Students' Autonomous Learning Skill through Language Learning Application

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Abstract

To master English language, students cannot only learn English from what is learned in the classroom given by the teacher. They need to explore many things to support their understanding about language. Therefore, independent learning skill is crucially needed. The students are the one who knows what they need to study according to their priority. However, sometimes, it is hard for students to build their independent learning skill since there is no encouragement from the teacher to promote it, and also students' lack of awareness related to what they are learning. The role of technology like online learning application nowadays really helps teachers and students overcome this problem. This study is aimed to explore the use of language learning application named *Memrise* to enhance students' autonomous learning skill outside the class, especially in studying English. A descriptive study was conducted to eighteen Management students taking English for Business II subject. The data gained from questionnaire and interview showed that *Memrise* helps students learn English and especially improve their vocabulary. Moreover, because it can be accessed anywhere and anytime, students can always learn English whenever they want to. Thus, it really supports students' independent learning skill and boosts their English skills.

Keywords: *Memrise,* English, autonomous learning.

Introduction

The advance of technology has brought a significant transformation in several aspects in life. Many fields have been affected by the progress of this improvement. Education is one of them. Technology has affected almost all sphere of human life such as education and social life, then changed the cultural norms and human's behaviors (Elsobeihi & Naser, 2017). Teachers' way of teaching has shifted from traditional to modern way. As stated by Jagtap (2015), there are a variety of transformations and trends appear in the field of education in this global era which also makes the role teacher change. Teachers nowadays can use different medium to teach in every meeting they are teaching. Moreover, teachers are now demanded to make students become independent learners. Therefore, the roles of teachers are not only teaching, but also facilitate students to

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study. Xiao, et al (2005) mentioned that one of important role as a facilitator for a teacher is that to make sure that their students have learning resources and to scaffold them. Teachers need to encourage their students to utilize technology for their study. This kind of encouragement can help students get closer with what they are studying because technology is one of the things that cannot be separated from people who live in modern era. Humans are becoming more dependent on technology and spend more time on the mobile and internet (Elsobeihi & Naser, 2017). In education field, it was revealed that modern equipment technology and tools make students' learning and interactivity improves (Raja & Nagasubramani, 2018).

Millennial students are expected to be able to embrace technology as one of the tools for learning. Comprehending how to use technology well will help students in their life including their study. As described by Aminatun (2019), the expansion of technology truly enhances many educational areas such as teaching, learning, and research, in which it supplies various resources that help teachers and students learn autonomously. Knowing how to use technology well for study will enable students to explore many things outside the classroom. Students can also bring what they have got to be discussed with their teacher or classmates when learning in the class. In this case, teacher's encouragement is needed to push students to be more autonomous. Therefore, teacher cannot also be left behind from the advance of technology for teaching and learning. Accessing learning applications from any gadget such as laptop, smart phone, or tablet is one of the ways to utilize technology in such a good way though there are still many things should be considered when using it in long time, such as creating addiction or even can result asthenopia or tired eyes (Wahyuningrum & Prameswari, 2018).

Currently, there are tons of learning application provided online that can support both teachers and students in teaching and learning process. Studying every subject becomes much easier using learning application, including learning English, as it becomes the main topic of discussion in this study. There are many English learning applications that can be downloaded to our gadget as we can also use it for studying. One of language learning applications that can be used is *Memrise*. *Memrise* is an educational tool to learn various subjects that is available online and in mobile device (Luczak, 2017). In learning language especially, students can use *Memrise* to learn various aspects and specification, such as vocabulary, grammar, etc. Moreover, there are also specific English such as English for Business as it is also learned in the university this study took place.

As learning English as a foreign language is not an easy thing, learning English for specific purpose such as English for Business also needs some effort, especially for those who are not currently studying in English program and with such little English background knowledge. Students with low English skills need to learn basic things when studying language, especially vocabulary since provide many choices for those who want to learn language with the power of memorization. *Memrise* uses spaced repetition of flash cards to boost rate of learning (Shellenbarger, 2015). It also allows the users to learn about many words of certain language or certain fields which will contain of the definitions, synonym, antonym, and even their pronunciation (Luczak, 2017).

Moreover, this online application can promote students' autonomous learning since *Memrise* can be accessed anytime and anywhere. This can be downloaded freely to students' gadget and is supported by interactive learning tools and interface. An autonomous learning skill is really vital for students nowadays since it can give several merits especially for students themselves, such as giving same chance for different level of students, encouraging confidence and responsibility, and focusing students' attention (Long, Pao-Nan, Wei-Fan (in Francis and Flaningan, 2012)). By having independent learning skill, students will be able to measure their ability and try to train their awareness of the importance of learning. Besides that, students can also formulate their learning objectives and to monitor their own learning progress. It is in line with Zulaihah and Harida's statement (2017) with concluded that students with autonomous learning ability will be able to find out their own learning needs, set their learning goals, find appropriate way of learning, monitor and evaluate their learning progress.

To help students have independent learning skill in studying English, teacher can also help them by asking them to use *Memrise* application. This application enables teacher or lecturer to make a learning group for their students to learn a certain topic. In this part, teacher can create a group for their students and can monitor their students' activity by seeing the points get by students after using the application. Besides building good habit to learn independently, this also can encourage students to always learn English, especially English for Business. The application enables the users to learn a language much quicker and easier than ever before without having to learn rules of grammar deductively (Abarghoui & Taki, 2018). This method will also be able to implement the role of teacher as a facilitator since it is really needed in learning system nowadays. As summarized by Zoghi & Deghan (2012), in this type of learning, students has a role as an "active learning manager" while teacher or lecturer is the facilitator that gives space for students' independent learning progress. Therefore, although it does not happened in the classroom, learning process by students still can be done autonomously and can also be monitored by the teacher.

Seeing the phenomena of the role of technology and many online learning applications in promoting teaching and learning process, in this research, the writer wants to reveal the students' perspective after using learning application called *Memrise* to promote students' learning processes especially those that happen outside the classroom and its impacts on their independent learning skill during a semester of taking English for Business subject.

Method
This research used qualitative research method to describe students' perception after using Memrise application in enhancing their autonomous learning while studying English for Business. William (2011) stated that one identifier of a qualitative research is the social phenomenon being examined from the participant's point of view. This study took place at Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia, in Management study program, in the even semester of academic year of 2018/2019. As it is stated previously, that one of the reasons of conducting this

research is because there was a certain case happened in teaching and learning process. In this special case, the researcher used a case study method to conduct the research. Creswell (2003) defined that case study is a study where researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process on one or more individuals.

The subject of this study was chosen by using purposive sampling as the participants need to meet some specific predetermined criteria (Dornyei, 2007); that is using online application for learning. There were 18 students of Management Study program who took English for Business subjects. These students were asked to use Memrise as learning application that can be accessed by them outside the classroom. The lecturer provided a learning group to monitor the students' activity in Memrise and students can finish some activities and practices provided on Memrise. The points got by students would be reported to the students later on as one way to boost students' independent learning outside the class.

The primary techniques in data collection were questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire and interview were talking about the impact of using Memrise to boost students' independent learning skill according to students' viewpoint. The questionnaire is in a form of open-ended and closed-ended questions. The interview was employed to support the validation of the data. The data then will be analyzed and explained descriptively. Suryana (2010) affirmed that descriptive study focuses on making description systematically and precisely based on the facts of a certain object.

Findings and discussion

The results of questionnaire applied to eighteen students revealed that 94.4% of students can access *Memrise* application anytime and anywhere. It means that there is only one person who cannot easily access it. This happened because of special problem had by the student such as the limitation of internet connection s/he had. This kind of problem is also one of the drawbacks of learning by using online application since it must be supported by good internet connection.

In terms of promoting students' motivation, *Memrise* was able to attract students' attention to get into *Memrise* because this application provides such a fun learning in learning English for business vocabulary. The interface and tools of learning in *Memrise* are easy to use. The picture below shows *Memrise* provides the words related to the subject being studied, how to pronounce it, the meaning in Bahasa Indonesia as well as in English, and some related terms to the word being learned.

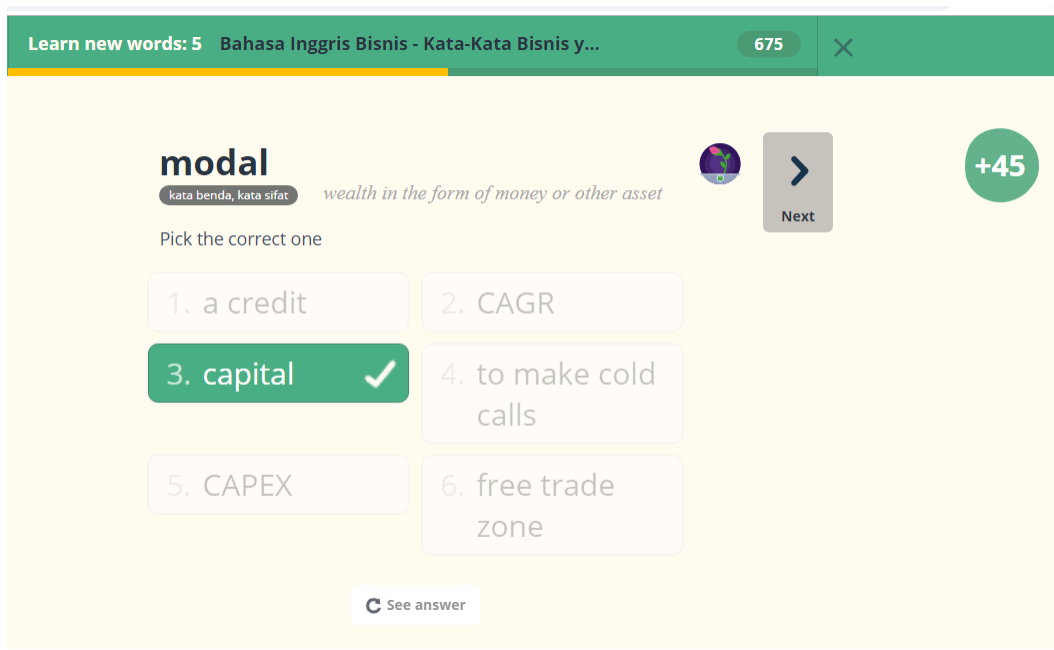Figure 1. *Memrise*'s vocabulary material

Figure 2.*Memrise*'s vocabulary exercise

Before lecturer asked students to do some practices or exercises on *Memrise*, lecturers made a group to monitor students' activity in using *Memrise*. Monitoring can be done by seeing the points got by students in which these points then will be informed to the students to boost their motivation to access *Memrise*. According to the interview conducted to the students, one of the reasons students feel motivated is because there is a point system or achievement in learning process using *Memrise*.

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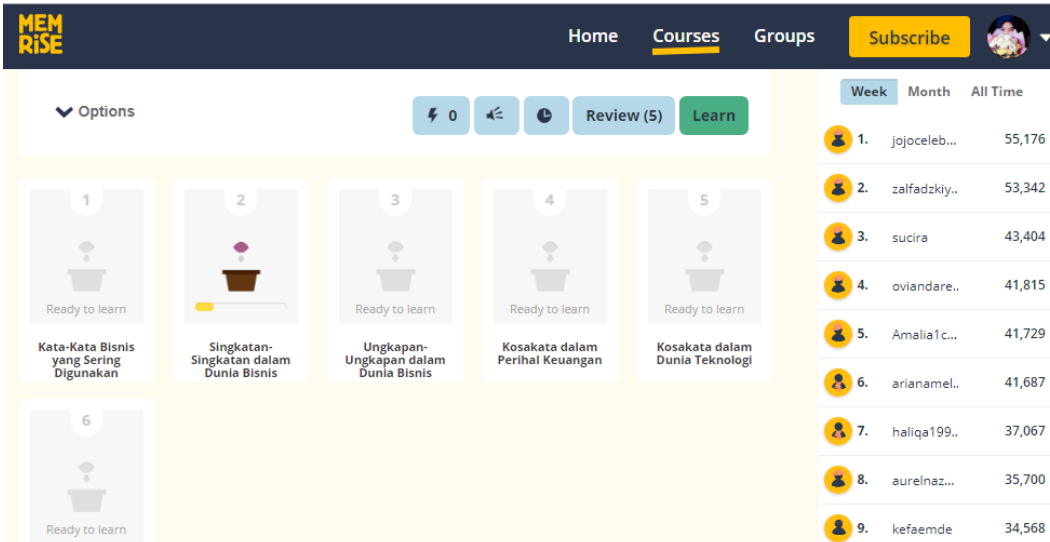
Figure 3. Students' point and achievement

The materials provided in *Memrise* had been chosen by lecturer according to the need of materials being taught in the classroom. Thus, students can relate well. The questionnaire data reveals that there are 16 students think that learning English for business vocabulary using *Memrise* is fun and is related with the subject that they take.

Figure 4.*Memrise*'s English for Business materials

The students were asked to use *Memrise* at least once in a week. In every access, there are 50% of students who mostly spent around 15-30 minutes, 27.8% spent less than 10 minutes, and 11.1% spent more than 30 minutes and more than an hour.
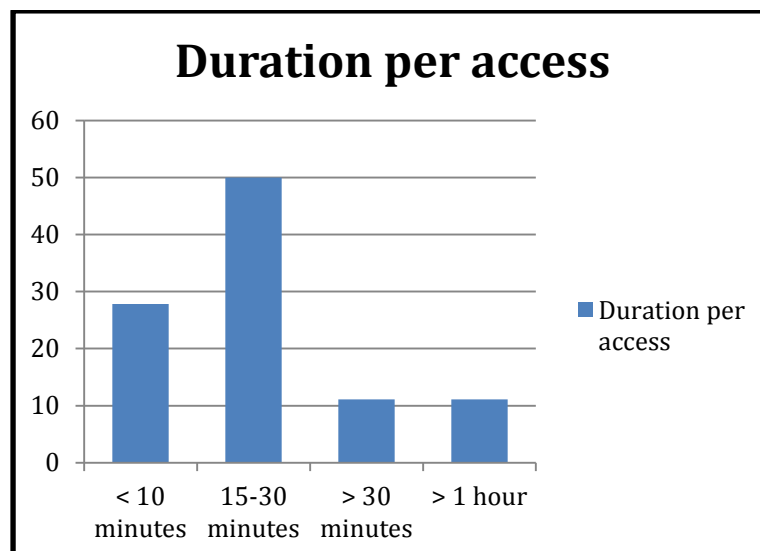
Figure 5. Duration of using *Memrise* per access

From the data above it can be seen that although student used *Memrise* every week, the duration from every student was different from one to another. There were several factors affecting this, such as different quality of internet connection had by students and students' motivation level. They were sometimes distracted by many activities and assignments that they need to do besides accessing *Memrise*. This finding is in line with research conducted by Fu (2013) which found that there are several barriers happened when using ICT for learning from students' perspective, such as student mobility, different technical skill, lack of time and motivation.

However, students thought that by using *Memrise*, they could get several benefits, such as getting easier to understand English for business vocabulary. This is because *Memrise* system does a repetition for every word students learn. The result of students' point of view after using *Memrise* is summarized on the table below.

Table 1. Students' Perception towards *Memrise*

No.	Statement	Agree	Disagree
1.	*Memrise* helps me learn English	100%	-
2.	*Memrise* not only helps me memorize, but also improve my English for business vocabulary	100%	-
3.	*Memrise* is easy to use	83.3%	16.7%
4.	*Memrise* facilitates me to know how to pronounce the words	100%	-
5.	Learning vocabulary using *Memrise* is fun	83.3%	16.7%
6.	*Memrise* can be accessed anywhere and anytime	94.4%	5.6%
7.	Points system in *Memrise* motivates me to use *Memrise*	94.4%	5.6%
8.	*Memrise* improves my independent learning	100%	-

From the table above, it can be concluded that *Memrise* has given positive input for students' English vocabulary mastery, especially English for business. By knowing and understanding English vocabulary, it will be easier for them to understand the materials. Besides, *Memrise* is easy to use since students only need to open their smart phone to access *Memrise* and it can be done anywhere and anytime as long as students have their internet connection.

Moreover, it is also stated that students definitely agree that *Memrise* can improve their independent learning skill. One of the reasons is point system that can boost their motivation to learn English using *Memrise* outside the classroom. Accessing *Memrise* also lets the students to learn not only English for Business, but also other English vocabulary from different field because *Memrise* has various learning content. If students find some difficulties in some ways when studying using *Memrise* application, they can ask and share the lecturer and friends in the classroom to be solved later on. In this case, lecturer has done one of their jobs, those are to help students direct their own learning and find out problem solving strategies in learning English (Xiao, et al., 2005).

The findings explained above are in accordance with some previous studies. One of them is conducted by Abarghoui and Taki (2018) which concluded that *Memrise* is an effective method of English language instruction that can be a supplement to state language instruction. Besides that, Fu (2013) also stated that learning through technology makes students capable of using information and data from various sources, supports student-centered and self-directed learning. Students and lecturers are really helped by the role of technology in education. Lecturers can direct students to the relatable resources needed by students; also students can improve their way of learning. Olaore (2014) mentioned that information and communication technology provides resources and services to support the education, and it also improves the quality of teaching and learning. in this research, students can understand the materials easier when studying in the classroom since they have already learned the materials beforehand by using language learning application, *Memrise*. It verifies that guiding students to use

technology, in this case is *Memrise*, for studying can help them find other sources to learn the materials as well as enhance their independent learning skill.

Conclusion

This research confirms that the employment of online learning application can boost students' initiation to learn more. The use of *Memrise* by students can trigger them to build their positive learning attitude. This can be seen during the class of English for Business that students become more responsive towards the materials being taught. Most students state that *Memrise* is really helpful to improve their English knowledge, especially in enhancing their vocabulary. By knowing the vocabulary, learning becomes much easier; they do not need to often open dictionary to find out the meaning of certain words. Although there are some inconvenient happens to the students, students still agree that *Memrise* really gives contribution in their English learning, especially in learning English for Business. Besides that, *Memrise* is also able to boost students' autonomous learning skill since it can be used anytime and anywhere as long as students have internet connection. One way autonomous learning can be activated is by motivating students' through point system provide by *Memrise*. In conclusion, *Memrise* learning application supports students' independent learning as well as boosting their English skills.

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