

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study intends to investigate the students' perceptions of Memrise app use in vocabulary learning. This chapter depicts the background of the study, the research questions, scope, purpose, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

In recent years, the phenomenal growth in digital technologies has provided new opportunities for assisting university students to learn (Godwin-Jones, 2017; Grigoryan, 2020; Lai, 2016; Nazari & Xodabande, 2020; Wrigglesworth & Harvor, 2018). Technology offers modern educational tools for learning English as a foreign language. Technological innovations have gone hand in hand with the growth of English and are changing how people communicate and learn. Sung, Chang, and Yang, (2015) added that technologies have been widely used in education whether as learning or teaching media that enable teachers to create opportunities that may support learners' self-directed study efforts and assist them to consolidate learning English.

In this case, students must be proficient in high technology to master something including English, due to technology playing a crucial role in assisting the students to learn English. The role of technology has been recognized as vital in the education of the English language, and many areas of the world have noted the importance of information technology within the context of English education, which has facilitated and augmented English learning to a great extent (Alsulami,

2016). The term of high technology could be such mobile devices; smartphones, computers, and the internet as the media in learning English. All of that had a huge impact on today's learning process.

Alhadiah (2020) mentioned that the growing availability of smartphones and computers since the 1960s has greatly influenced learning. The widespread availability of mobile devices, a phenomenon that represents an extraordinary opportunity in education (Miller & Doering, 2014), has led to the emergence of mobile assisted language learning (MALL) which enables new ways of learning (Jarvis & Achileos, 2013) and create the potential for valuable contextualized language learning. With the emergence of mobile devices, it became apparent that mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) has highly contextualized the students learning, which means they can learn everywhere, anywhere, and anytime by using a smartphone, computer, etc.

Smartphone as mobile devices have been introduced as a high technology device and have been a vital tool to operate mobile applications; they are currently used by large proportions of the population in most developed countries. In other words, mobile applications that commonly refer to applications can be installed on smartphone devices, and offer an enormous market of educational resources, including language learning. In addition, the potential application for language learning includes the possibility to learn, practice, and enhance language skills. Particularly, the usage of mobile applications in vocabulary learning is an area that has received significant attention from researchers over the last decade, as a variety of applications and programs for language learning, and vocabulary

learning in particular (Godwin-Jones, 2011; Heil, Wu, Lee, & Schmidt, 2016; Stanley, 2013).

Application can serve as a good supplement and assistance for language learners who enroll in informal instruction as well as a good starting point for beginner independent learners. In other words, associated applications are found as the way into educational practices in university courses (Papadakis, S., Kalogiannakis, M., Sifaki, E., & Vidakis, N., 2018a & 2018b). Other than that, applications serve regular practice for language learners who are no longer formally studying a language but wish to keep practicing it (Rosell-Aguilar, 2017). Added by Burston, (2014) who claimed that learning activities on mobile applications are basic and mostly replicate what has been done before with other technology.

Vocabulary as the foundation unit of language need to be learned for those who intend to mastery language especially English. Generally, in school students learn vocabulary through a conventional method that makes the students feel uninterested with such atmosphere and has not been shaping students' personality to be self-directed learners (Nuralisah & Kareviati, 2020). The stereotyped traditional teaching methods and environment are unpopular while multimedia technology featuring audion, visual animation effects naturally and humanely makes us more access to information besides, with such characteristic as abundant-information and crossing time and space. Technology offers a sense of reality and functions very well, which greatly cultivates students' interests and motivations.

In this regard, it needs to be revolutionized in a convenient way such as using digital platforms or mobile-assisted language learning. It is related to some previous studies investigating the impacts of mobile technologies in language learning and teaching indicating that the use of mobile devices contributed significantly to language development in general (AbuSa'aleek, 2014; Chwo, Marek, & Wu, 2018; Godwin-Jones, 2011; Golonka, Bowles, Frank, Richardson, & Freynik, 2014; Stockwell, 2013; Sung, Chang, & Yang, 2015; Wong & Looi, 2011; Xodabande, 2017)

On top of that, it can be utilized as a Memrise application as one of the mobile applications widely used in MALL. Memrise application as an educational tool allows students to study a variety of subjects online and on mobile devices (Luczak, 2017). It can be employed to assist the students in acquiring vocabulary, establishing the students' self-directed learning, and can also be a motivating factor for vocabulary acquisition with certain students' competitiveness especially was found to be potentially linked with the desire to learn more words in the applications (Jacob & Daniel, 2018)

In like manner, students can utilize the Memrise application to learn various aspects and specifications, such as vocabulary, grammar, and so on, when learning languages in particular. However, the focal point of the Memrise application setting is to enlarge students' vocabulary acquisition or lexical learning process. In other words, the program of the Memrise application is designed to build up long-term memory of vocabulary through systematic and frequent testing of vocabulary items. Hence, the purpose of the application is to

assist the users to enrich their vocabulary repertoire by learning effectively. Some researchers noticed that the Memrise application is effective for learning vocabulary.

However, in the previous study on an international scale, the implementation of the Memrise application in the class was slightly limited as it was not able to separate the well-known phenomenon of learning by regular assessment, from any potential extra benefit from using the Memrise application (Walker, 2015). This study indicates centralizing in Latin vocabulary, not the English vocabulary. In addition, the majority of previous studies conducted in experimental research that take a long time and did not excavate the cognitive aspect rely on students' perceptions during the learning process (Esmaili & Shahrokhi, 2020).

That is in line with Jacob and Daniel (2018) who revealed that the previous study limited the scope to examining affective and cognitive responses amongst university English majors studying with Memrise application outside of the classroom. Hence, they recommended for future research that focusing on mobile-assisted language learning might instead look at whether or not there is a difference in effect between majors and no majors of English language studies, or compare autonomous and classroom-oriented study. Furthermore, in the Asian context has been also conducted such Chau and Huong (2021) either conducted research in Vietnam about the efficiency of Memrise application in vocabulary learning of EFL students, in this case, they focused on EFL students as the participants.

The researchers above are on international and Asian scales. While, in Indonesian context, some researchers have shown some studies about mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) and Memrise mobile applications in vocabulary learning. The majority of studies were using Memrise application to learn English vocabulary which is applied in senior high school level, not in university level, such Arifin (2020) who did quasi-experimental research about the effectiveness of Memrise application to teach adjective at SMA Kartika Banyubiru, Indonesia, but this research is unpublished. In addition, Nuralisah and Kareviati (2020) conducted research on seventh-grade students in junior high school. Even though there are a few pieces of research in a university context, in the EFL student context (Hamer, 2021).

Therefore, the study of students' perceptions of using the Memrise app is still less known whether in international, Asian, or Indonesian contexts in terms of building the student's mindset of vocabulary learning concepts facilitated by Memrise application with non-majors English students. To counterattack those gaps, this current study attempts to investigate non-English major study programs concerning the cognitive and affective responses of using the reflective questions approach to seek their vocabulary learning style relies on their perceptions.

1.2 Research Question

Concerning the focus of the study that has discussed earlier, the researcher formulates the following research question "How do the students perceive learning vocabulary using Memrise app?"

1.3 Scope of the study

This study examines the perceptions through responses of non-English major students at IAIN Kendari with app-based English learning experience. This study did not limit the app-based Memrise application in learning vocabulary for some levels and daily targets depend on their willingness because this study is not focusing on how many words they have learned, but on how far they perceived, how they find the conducive atmosphere to learn vocabulary with the application based on their experiences during the learning process. The researcher attempts to focus on the students' responses in acquiring vocabulary facilitated by the Memrise application, in terms of lexical processing based on their cognitive.

1.4 Purpose of the study

This current current study aims to investigate the students' perceptions of vocabulary acquisition learning process using Memrise application as an online application platform to facilitate the students to learn English words.

1.5 Significance of the study

The finding of this study can be utilized as a reference for those who intend to conduct research in analyzing the students' perceptions of using the Memrise application in vocabulary acquisition learning. There are assorted following contributions of this study.

Firstly, this study will be helpful for the students that will be expressing their reflective responses using the Memrise application as a learning medium. Secondly, for lecturers or teachers, this study will serve the understanding of them

students' perceptions including such perceived usefulness of Memrise application, the usability of Memrise application in learning vocabulary particularly, students' satisfaction of utilizing Memrise app in learning vocabulary, students' behavioral intentions and suggestions of using Memrise application in acquiring vocabulary for non-English major class. Ultimately, this study will be a reference for universities that use this application as learning medium that can be applied in the teaching and learning process as a preparation for a better education program system in the future.

This study also serves as a new kind of paradigm about the importance of utilizing online technology learning to overcome certain problems in an educational context. Hence, this study is expected to contribute to the educational context that attempts to explore the mobile application of language learning in terms of the Memrise application that can revolutionize the way languages are learned.

1.6 Definition of Key terms.

Students' Perceptions in this research refer to how the non-English major students perceived the usability of the Memrise application in the vocabulary acquisition learning process. Relying on the concept of this study, the identification of the students' perceptions will be the students' perception of usefulness, the usability of Memrise application, students' satisfaction of utilizing Memrise application, and students' behavioral intentions of utilizing Memrise application which means to elicit the side phenomena about

contextualization learning using the application in terms of Memrise application.

Learning Vocabulary in this research refers to the non-English students' process of learning words mediated by Memrise application with some levels, for instance, A1 level and A2 level. There are 456 words in A1 level and 492 words in A2 level. Hence, there are 948 words in total that the non-English major students need to learn in this application.

Memrise application this research is convinced as an online language-learning platform specializing in vocabulary learning. The Memrise app (application) is one of the applications in MALL that provides the students. The non-English major students operate the application by downloading it on their smartphone and then they attempt to learn vocabulary based on the guidance of the researcher and the features of the application.