

# Higher Education Students' Perceptions of Using Memrise Mobile Application for English Vocabulary Learning

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## Abstract

This study explores higher education students' perceptions of using the Memrise mobile application for English vocabulary learning and the challenges they experience. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected from 28 University students through open-ended questionnaires and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings show that students perceive Memrise as an engaging and user-friendly Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) tool that supports vocabulary retention, pronunciation, and learning motivation through repetition, multimedia features, and gamification. However, limitations were also identified, including insufficient academic vocabulary, limited contextual and grammatical explanations, and difficulties in applying vocabulary in academic contexts. Overall, Memrise is considered an effective supplementary tool for vocabulary learning in higher education when integrated with formal instruction.

**Keywords:** Memrise; Higher Education Students; Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL); Students' Perceptions; Vocabulary Learning

## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary knowledge is a fundamental component in second language learning, as it plays a crucial role in the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as overall communicative competence. Learners with limited vocabulary often encounter difficulties in comprehending texts, expressing ideas, and engaging effectively in communication. Vocabulary mastery serves as a key element in connecting learners' understanding of new concepts, ideas, and principles, enabling them to apply language knowledge across different contexts (Havwini et al., 2024). Vocabulary knowledge becomes increasingly important in the context of higher education. University students are expected to acquire a wide range of academic vocabulary related to their fields of study and scholarly discourse. Insufficient vocabulary knowledge may hinder students' ability to understand academic texts, write research papers, participate in classroom discussions, and comprehend lectures delivered in English. Makovskaya & Juraeva (2023) emphasize that academic vocabulary is a central component of tertiary-level English learning, and students' perceptions of its importance are closely related to their level of vocabulary mastery. Along with the growing demands of higher education, rapid developments in educational technology have introduced new approaches to language learning. One such approach is Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which has gained increasing attention as a means of supporting vocabulary acquisition. MALL provides flexible, context-sensitive, and interactive learning opportunities through mobile applications, allowing learners to engage in vocabulary practice beyond the classroom setting. These features contribute to increased learner engagement and support vocabulary retention through repeated exposure and active involvement (Mihaylova et al., 2022). A recent systematic review and meta-analysis by (Okumuş, 2023) reported generally positive effects of MALL on vocabulary learning, although outcomes may vary depending on

instructional design, learning duration, and the integration of mobile applications into formal instruction.

Among various Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) applications, Memrise has attracted attention due to its emphasis on spaced repetition, multimedia content, gamification, and regular practice accompanied by instant feedback, which are designed to support long-term vocabulary retention and learner motivation. Previous studies have indicated that Memrise can assist learners in expanding vocabulary knowledge and fostering autonomous learning habits (Aprizal & Wachyudi 2024; Nhu & Quyen 2021), while its flashcard-based repetition has been shown to increase the speed of learning and remembering vocabulary (Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019). Furthermore, Memrise's gamification and repetition features create efficient and engaging learning experiences aligned with MALL principles of accessibility and learner autonomy, particularly for students with limited study time (Zain & Bowles, 2021). In the Indonesian context, mobile applications for vocabulary learning have also been reported to increase learner motivation and engagement, especially among students in higher education settings (Katemba, 2025).

Despite these positive findings, research focusing specifically on higher education students' perceptions of using Memrise remains limited (Sakkir & Syamsuddin, 2023). University learners have distinct learning needs compared to younger EFL learners, particularly in relation to academic vocabulary, independent learning, and discipline-specific language use. These factors may influence how students perceive, utilize, and benefit from mobile-assisted vocabulary learning, aspects that may not be fully captured through quantitative approaches alone. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate students' perceptions, perceived benefits, and challenges in using Memrise as a vocabulary learning tool in higher education contexts.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore higher education students' perceptions of using the Memrise application to support English vocabulary learning and to identify the challenges they experience during its use. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights into effective Mobile-Assisted Language Learning practices and to contribute to the development of more meaningful vocabulary learning strategies in higher education. The research questions guiding this study are: (1) How do higher education students perceive the use of Memrise as a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning tool for improving English vocabulary? and (2) What challenges do students encounter when using Memrise for vocabulary learning?

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design by (Sandelowski, 2000) to explore students' perceptions of using the Memrise application in learning English vocabulary. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to gain a rich and detailed understanding of students' subjective experiences, opinions, and interpretations regarding vocabulary learning through mobile-assisted language learning. Rather than emphasizing numerical measurement, this study focuses on how students perceive and experience the use of the Memrise application as a vocabulary-learning tool within their natural learning context. The research was conducted in a higher education context in Indonesia. The participants were undergraduate students who had experience using the Memrise application as an independent tool for learning English vocabulary. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that the participants met the criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. The selected students were those who were enrolled in English-related courses, had used the Memrise application for at least one month, and were able to reflect on their vocabulary learning experiences. A total of 28 students participated in this study, which is considered sufficient for qualitative inquiry as it allows the collection of varied perspectives while remaining manageable for in-depth analysis.

Data were collected through an online open-ended questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to ensure accessibility and convenience for the participants. The research instrument was developed according to theoretical elements of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), such as mobility, accessibility, contextual learning, personalization, and learner engagement, as well as limitations that have been frequently reported in earlier vocabulary-learning studies (Sutrisna, 2025). The questionnaire was designed to explore students' perceptions of using Memrise for vocabulary learning, their experiences with specific application features such as spaced repetition, multimedia content, feedback, and gamification, and the challenges they encountered during the learning process. The open-ended format allowed participants to express their ideas freely in their own words, which is essential for qualitative research.

The collected data were analysed using a thematic analysis technique following the framework proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). The analysis process began with familiarization with the data through repeated reading of the participants' written responses. Initial codes were generated inductively from meaningful units in the data and were subsequently grouped into broader categories and themes that represented recurring patterns in students' perceptions, perceived benefits, and challenges related to the use of the Memrise application for vocabulary learning. The analysis was further supported by procedures suggested in recent qualitative studies (Naeem et al., 2023) to ensure systematic interpretation and internal consistency of the themes. Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. Electronic informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. No personal or identifying information was collected, ensuring participants' anonymity. All data were treated confidentially and stored securely in password-protected electronic files accessible only to the researcher, and the information was used solely for research purposes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The analysis of students' responses revealed several key themes regarding their perceptions, experiences, and challenges in using the Memrise application for English vocabulary learning. These themes are presented below, supported by representative excerpts from the participants' responses.

#### *Students' general perception of using Memrise for vocabulary learning*

The responses from the students generally reflect positive perceptions of using Memrise as a vocabulary learning tool. Overall, Memrise is perceived as useful, engaging, and easy to use. Many students indicated that the application provides an enjoyable and intuitive learning experience, making vocabulary learning less boring and more accessible. The use of repetition, audio, and visual features was also viewed as effective in supporting vocabulary acquisition. In general, the students' responses suggest that Memrise is a dependable and effective tool for vocabulary learning, particularly for beginners and intermediate learners.

**Table 1.** Students' General Perception of using Memrise for Vocabulary Learning

Repondent	Statement
Student 3	"I think Memrise is a useful and engaging tool for learning vocabulary, especially for beginners and intermediate learners"

Student 5	“I think Memrise is a helpful tool for learning vocabulary. My experience has been mostly positive because the app is easy to use and not boring”
Student 10	“it was quite intuitive, easy to use and pretty dependable.”
Student 12	“Memrise is an effective and enjoyable tool that helps me learn vocabulary through repetition, audio, and visuals.”

### ***Usage Patterns and Learning Support in Vocabulary Learning***

Students reported using Memrise regularly, often on a daily basis, through short practice sessions focused on reviewing and memorizing vocabulary. The repetition feature was perceived as effective in supporting vocabulary retention. Overall, regular use of Memrise contributes positively to students’ vocabulary learning through continuous practice.

**Table 2.** Data Sample of Usage Patterns and Learning Support in Vocabulary Learning

<b>Repondent</b>	<b>Statement</b>
Student 10	“I used it daily, the memrise support me learn English better”
Student 11	“I used it daily and it definitely help me to learn and memorize vocabularies.”
Student 24	“I use it regularly to review and practice new vocabulary.”
Student 28	“I use Memrise in short daily sessions to learn and review vocabulary. The repetition system helps me remember words more effectively.”

### ***Motivational Features Supporting Vocabulary Learning***

Students reported that several features in Memrise help sustain their motivation in learning vocabulary. Repetition, progress tracking, points, streaks, and daily reminders encourage regular use of the application and support consistent vocabulary practice. As a result, students tend to engage with Memrise more frequently, which contributes to ongoing vocabulary development.

**Table 3.** Data Sample of Motivational Features Supporting Vocabulary Learning

<b>Repondent</b>	<b>Statement</b>
Student 2	“Features such as repetition, progress tracking, and daily reminders keep me motivated. They are effective because they help me stay consistent and show clear progress in my vocabulary learning.”
Student 4	“Streaks, points, and progress tracking keep me motivated because they make learning feel like a game.”
Student 7	“The reviewing vocabulary, because helps improve my vocabulary the most because it allows me to review words regularly until I remember them well”
Student 27	“The points, daily streak, and levels keep me motivated. I want to keep my streak, so I open the app every day. It makes learning feel like a challenge.”

### ***The Influence of Learning Activities on Vocabulary Learning***

Students’ responses indicate that Memrise learning activities significantly influence vocabulary acquisition. Activities such as listening to audio, recalling answers, typing, and reviewing help learners recognize words faster and understand their pronunciation and meaning. Engaging with vocabulary through multiple activity types promotes deeper processing and better retention, encouraging active involvement and supporting effective memorization and recall.

**Table 4.** Data Sample of The Influence of Learning Activities on Vocabulary Learning

Repondent	Statement
Student 5	“Activities like listening to audio and choosing correct answers help me recognize words faster and remember their pronunciation.”
Student 11	“Memorizing and recalling new vocabulary.”
Student 22	“The mix of listening, typing, and choosing answers helps me remember the word from different angles, not just memorizing the meaning.”
Student 24	“listening and repetition help me remember words better”
Student 28	“Audio and recall activities help me connect written words with pronunciation and meaning.”

***Memrise’s Adaptability to Learning Pace and Learning Needs***

Students’ responses indicate that Memrise effectively adapts to individual learning needs through its repetition and review system. Difficult words appear more frequently, while familiar words are repeated less often, allowing learners to focus on challenging vocabulary. This adaptive approach was perceived as helpful for efficient and personalized vocabulary acquisition.

**Table 5.** Data Sample of Memrise’s Adaptability to Learning Pace and Learning Needs

Repondent	Statement
Student 12	“Memrise repeats difficult words more often, which helps me learn at my own pace.”
Student 14	“Memrise adapts to my learning pace by adjusting how often words reappear based on how well I remember them. Words I struggle with show up more frequently, while familiar ones are reviewed less often, which makes learning feel efficient.”
Student 16	“Memrise adapts to my learning pace by repeating words that I often forget and reducing repetition for words I already remember. This adaptive system is helpful because it allows me to focus more on difficult vocabulary and learn more efficiently.”
Student 22	“It’s very helpful. It knows which words I’m struggling with and shows them more often, so I don’t waste time on stuff I already know.”

***The Effectiveness of Multimedia Features in Learning***

Students’ responses indicate that Memrise’s multimedia features, including audio, images, and example sentences, support vocabulary learning by enhancing meaning, usage, and pronunciation. Audio aids correct pronunciation, images help associate and remember words, and example sentences illustrate contextual usage. Some students noted that image clarity may affect effectiveness, but overall, these features were seen as valuable for comprehension and retention.

**Table 6.** Data Sample of The Effectiveness of Multimedia Features in Learning

Repondent	Statement
Student 1	“They are highly effective because they provide a multisensory learning experience. Images help bridge the gap between an abstract English word and a concrete concept, while the example sentences provide necessary context regarding word collocations.”
Student 3	“The audio and simple examples are helpful, but sometimes the images are not very clear.”

Student 5	“Audio helps me with pronunciation, and images make the meaning clearer.”
Student 18	“The audio and images are very helpful because they give clearer meaning and context, making it easier to remember and use the words correctly.”

***Integration of Memrise in In-Class and Out-of-Class Vocabulary Learning***

Students’ responses indicate that Memrise is commonly used both during and outside class to preview, review, and reinforce vocabulary. Many reported using it before lessons for preparation, after lessons for review, and independently for daily practice or exam preparation. These responses suggest that Memrise facilitates continuous and flexible vocabulary practice beyond formal classroom instruction.

**Table 7.** Data Sample of Memrise in In-Class and Out-of-Class Vocabulary Learning

Repondent	Statement
Student 18	“I use Memrise before class to preview vocabulary and after class to review what I have learned.”
Student 19	“I use Memrise outside of class for daily review and vocabulary reinforcement, especially before or after lessons. It helps me strengthen what I learn in class independently.”
Student 21	“I usually use Memrise to review vocabulary after class and practice a little in my free time. Sometimes I also use it before exams or quizzes, so it helps me feel more prepared and confident.”
Student 27	“I mostly use Memrise outside of class for daily practice. Sometimes I use it to learn extra words that are related to my lessons.”

***Vocabulary learning strategies when using Memrise***

Students’ responses indicate that they employ various strategies to support memory and understanding when learning vocabulary through Memrise. Common strategies include repetition, spaced review, and using audio features for pronunciation. Learners also make personal notes, associate words with images or experiences, and practice using new vocabulary in simple sentences. These strategies reflect active engagement and effective use of Memrise features to enhance vocabulary acquisition.

**Table 8.** Data Sample of Vocabulary Learning Strategies When Using Memrise

Repondent	Statement
Student 6	“I make a small notes on the new vocabs I read and learn, along with the meaning of each vocabulary.”
Student 8	“I usually apply repetition, listening carefully to pronunciation, and associating words with images or personal experiences. Sometimes I also try to use new words in simple sentences to better understand their meaning and usage.”
Student 13	“Use it periodically and regularly.”
Student 23	“When learning new vocabulary with Memrise, I usually repeat the words, listen carefully to the audio, and review them regularly using spaced repetition to better remember and understand the meanings.”

***Perceived vocabulary improvement***

The students’ responses indicate that several aspects of their vocabulary knowledge have improved since using Memrise. Overall, students reported improvements in vocabulary familiarity, word recognition, spelling, and pronunciation. Some students also noted an increase

in their vocabulary range, particularly related to commonly used and everyday words. In addition, frequent exposure to audio features was perceived as helpful in improving pronunciation accuracy. These findings suggest that Memrise contributes positively to the development of students’ vocabulary knowledge by enhancing both receptive and productive aspects of vocabulary learning.

**Table 9.** Data sample of Perceived Vocabulary Improvement

Repondent	Statement
Student 7	“I have become more familiar with common vocabulary that often appears in movies.”
Student 9	“Since using Memrise, my vocabulary has improved in terms of word recognition and spelling. I can remember more words and recall them faster, especially common and frequently used vocabulary. My pronunciation has also improved because I often listen to the audio provided in the app.”
Student 12	“My vocabulary range and pronunciation have improved.”
Student 14	“Based on my experience, my vocabulary size has increased, especially for everyday and commonly used words.”

***Challenges in maintaining consistent vocabulary learning***

Students’ responses indicate several difficulties in consistently using Memrise for vocabulary learning. Common challenges included maintaining regular use due to busy schedules, declining motivation, and forgetfulness. Boredom from repetitive exercises and the difficulty of certain words also affected engagement. These findings highlight both internal and external factors that influence sustained use, suggesting the need for additional strategies to support consistent vocabulary practice.

**Table 10.** Data Sample of Challenges in Maintaining Consistent Vocabulary Learning

Repondent	Statement
Student 2	“The main difficulty is maintaining consistency due to a busy schedule. In addition, limited free features sometimes reduce my motivation to use the app regularly.”
Student 5	“Sometimes I forget to open the app or feel bored after using it for a long time.”
Student 17	“Sometimes I am too busy with my college assignment and exam, so I forget to open Memrise. Also, some word is too difficult for my level and I need to repeat many time but still forget. Sometimes I lose motivation when I see too many new word.”
Student 24	“Sometimes I forget to use it regularly.”

***Responses to Limited Vocabulary Context in Vocabulary Learning***

Students’ responses indicate that when vocabulary in Memrise is presented with limited or confusing context, learners employ various strategies to clarify meaning and usage. Many used external resources, such as online dictionaries, while others relied on repetition and audio features within the app. Some inferred meaning and then confirmed it through further review or additional references. These findings suggest that students actively use problem-solving strategies to overcome contextual limitations and support their vocabulary learning.

**Table 11.** Responses to Limited Vocabulary Context In Vocabulary Learning

Repondent	Statement
Student 3	“I usually look for examples online or in a dictionary to understand the word better.”
Student 7	“When the context is limited or confusing, I usually rely on repetition and audio to understand the word better.”
Student 21	“When the context is confusing, I usually try to guess the meaning first and listen to the audio carefully. If I’m still not sure, I look for examples in the app or search the word online to understand it better.”
Student 28	“I usually check dictionaries or other sources for better understanding.”

***Vocabulary Difficulties due to Limited Background Knowledge***

Students’ responses indicate that some vocabulary items in Memrise are difficult to understand due to limited general or academic background knowledge. Academic or topic-specific terms were often not fully explained, requiring additional effort or external references. While contextual clues were somewhat helpful, limited background knowledge still hindered full comprehension. These findings suggest that Memrise is more effective when supplemented with explanations or instructional support, especially for academic vocabulary.

**Table 12.** Vocabulary Difficulties due to Limited Background Knowledge

Repondent	Statement
Student 5	“Yes, some academic words are difficult because Memrise does not explain them in detail.”
Student 10	“Sometimes yeah. especially with words that i never seen before but it give me context most of the time so it easier to learn.”
Student 13	“I’ve heard some pretty niche vocab on Memrise that left me scratching my head, not because the language was hard, but because the topic was super specific or required some background knowledge.”
Student 20	“Ya sometimes. some vocabulary is hard to understand because it relates to topics im not very familiar with, especially academic terms. Without enough background knowledge, it takes extra effort to fully understand the meaning.”

***Linguistic issues in vocabulary learning through Memrise***

Students’ responses indicate several linguistic issues while learning vocabulary through Memrise, mainly related to grammar and sentence patterns. The application emphasizes word recognition over grammatical explanations, so learners may know meanings but struggle to use words correctly in sentences. Limited use of full sentences also makes understanding grammar challenging. Overall, Memrise functions primarily as a vocabulary tool and may need supplementary resources for grammar support.

**Table 13.** Linguistic Issues in Vocabulary Learning Through Memrise

Repondent	Statement
Student 6	“I have noticed that grammar explanations and sentence patterns are sometimes limited, so I often recognize the meaning of words but still need other resources to learn how to use them correctly.”
Student 12	“Memrise focuses more on words than grammar or sentence patterns.”
Student 18	“Sometimes the words are presented without full sentences, so it is difficult to understand how they are used grammatically.”

Student 24 “Limited grammar explanation.”

**Technical Issues in Vocabulary Learning**

The students’ responses indicate that several technical issues occasionally interfere with their use of Memrise for vocabulary learning. The most frequently reported problems were unstable or slow internet connections, which affected audio playback, lesson access, and overall app performance. Some students also experienced application lag and interruptions caused by advertisements or limited feature access in the free version. Although these issues were not always experienced, they were perceived as disruptive to the learning process and could reduce learning efficiency and concentration.

**Table 14.** Technical Issues in Vocabulary Learning

Repondent	Statement
Student 16	“Occasional slow loading, internet connectivity problems, and limited access to some features in the free version can interfere with my learning experience.”
Student 19	“Occasional internet connection problems interfere with audio playback and lesson access.”
Student 23	“Some technical issues that interfere with my use of Memrise include internet connection problems and occasional app lag.”
Student 27	“Sometimes the app is slow when my internet is bad. Ads can also interrupt learning.”

**Perceived Use of Vocabulary in Academic and Everyday Communication**

The students’ responses indicate that vocabulary learned through Memrise is generally easier to use in everyday communication than in academic contexts. Many students reported that the vocabulary acquired through the application is familiar, easy to recall, and suitable for daily conversations. However, applying this vocabulary in academic communication was perceived as more challenging, as academic contexts require more precise usage, appropriate formality, and a deeper understanding of word meaning and context. The limited focus on formal sentence structures and academic usage in Memrise was also mentioned as a factor contributing to this difficulty. Overall, these findings suggest that while Memrise effectively supports everyday vocabulary use, additional support may be needed for academic vocabulary application.

**Table 15.** Perceived Use of Vocabulary in Academic and Everyday Communication

Repondent	Statement
Student 2	“It is relatively easy to use the vocabulary in everyday communication. However, applying it in academic contexts is more challenging because Memrise focuses more on memorization than on formal usage and context.”
Student 6	“It is fairly easy to use vocabulary learned through Memrise in everyday communication because the words are familiar and easy to recall, but using them in academic contexts can be more difficult since the app provides limited practice with formal sentence structures and academic usage.”
Student 16	“It is relatively easy to use Memrise vocabulary in everyday communication, but using it in academic contexts can be more challenging because academic writing requires precise usage and deeper understanding.”
Student 22	“It’s easy for daily chat, but for academic essays, I still have to be careful about whether the word is formal enough for a paper.”

**Suggestions for Improving Memrise for College-Level Vocabulary Learning**

The students’ responses indicate that several changes and additions could enhance the effectiveness of Memrise for vocabulary learning at the college level. Overall, students suggested the inclusion of more academic vocabulary, such as Academic Word Lists, along with clearer and more detailed contextual examples. Many respondents emphasized the need for explanations related to word usage, collocations, and grammar patterns to support more accurate vocabulary application. In addition, students recommended incorporating activities that promote productive skills, such as writing or speaking tasks, as well as vocabulary related to specific academic disciplines. These suggestions indicate that while Memrise is effective for basic vocabulary learning, further development is needed to support advanced academic vocabulary use in higher education contexts.

**Table 16.** Suggestions for Improving Memrise for College-Level Vocabulary Learning

Repondent	Statement
Student 1	“To be more effective at the college level, Memrise should integrate Academic Word Lists (AWL) and provide more in-depth context, such as synonyms, antonyms, and collocations. Additionally, adding AI-powered writing prompts and specialized terminology for specific majors (like Linguistics or Education) would help students move from basic memorization to advanced academic application.”
Student 9	“In my opinion, Memrise would be more effective if it provided more example sentences, especially academic contexts. Adding short explanations about word usage, collocations, and grammar patterns would also help college students use vocabulary more accurately.”
Student 16	“Memrise could be more effective by providing more academic vocabulary, clearer contextual examples, grammar explanations, and tasks that encourage productive skills such as sentence writing or speaking practice.”
Student 21	“Memrise could be more effective at the college level by adding more academic vocabulary, detailed explanations, and practice activities related to university subjects.”
Student 23	“In my opinion, Memrise could be more effective at the college level by adding more academic vocabulary, clearer context and examples, grammar explanations, and activities that encourage active use such as writing or speaking tasks”
Student 26	“Memrise could add more academic vocabulary and clearer example sentences for university topics. It would also help if there were simple grammar explanations.”

**Discussion**

The findings of the present study indicate that higher education students generally perceive Memrise as an effective and enjoyable tool for English vocabulary learning, despite several challenges. Students described the application as interactive, engaging, and user-friendly, which aligns with previous research. Demir (2025), for example, reported that Memrise fosters learner motivation through gamification, autonomous learning, and peer collaboration, allowing students to take ownership of their vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2023) found that students in a rural college setting appreciated Memrise as a supplementary tool that facilitated vocabulary learning, even when facing technological limitations. These findings correspond with the principles of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which emphasize the importance of accessibility, flexibility, and learner autonomy in enhancing language learning outcomes.

Gamification features such as points, streaks, and reward systems were found to significantly influence students' learning experiences. While these elements encouraged consistent vocabulary practice, some students noted feelings of pressure when their streaks were disrupted. This dual effect of gamification, both motivating and potentially stressful, has also been observed in prior studies. Demir (2025) highlighted that gamified features enhance engagement and enjoyment, while Essafi et al., (2024) emphasized that excessive focus on game mechanics could reduce the depth of learning. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, students benefit most when they feel competent and autonomous without experiencing undue external pressure. In this study, students particularly appreciated the points, progress tracking, and immediate feedback, which promoted continuous engagement and aligned with previous findings on motivational aspects of MALL (Demir, 2025; Nguyen et al., 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2019). Accessibility and flexibility emerged as essential factors shaping students' perceptions. Memrise allows learners to practice vocabulary anytime and anywhere using mobile devices, supporting independent learning habits (Li & Hafner, 2022; Demir, 2025). Students also valued the multimodal nature of the platform, which integrates visual, auditory, and interactive inputs to reinforce vocabulary retention. Rahmawati et al. (2019) specifically highlighted the role of audio-visual aids in facilitating pronunciation proficiency, as learners received immediate feedback on their performance. This aligns with Multimodal Learning Theory and prior MALL research, which underscore the benefits of processing information through multiple sensory channels (Esmaili & Shahrokhi, 2020; Essafi et al., 2024). Furthermore, the application's systematic and repetitive presentation of vocabulary items, based on spaced repetition, supports long-term retention and reduces the forgetting curve, as demonstrated in prior studies (Li & Hafner, 2022; Demir, 2025).

The adaptive features of Memrise were perceived as beneficial for addressing individual learning needs. Immediate feedback and content tailored to learners' performance allowed students to focus on challenging items, facilitating differentiated learning (Essafi et al., 2024). This approach is particularly valuable in higher education contexts where students' proficiency levels vary widely. Prior research confirms that adaptive and gamified features contribute to sustained engagement and improved vocabulary acquisition (Demir, 2025; Esmaili & Shahrokhi, 2020). Similarly, Dian et al. (2023) demonstrated that using Memrise significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery, as reflected in the increase from pre-test to post-test scores, highlighting the application's effectiveness as a supplementary learning tool.

Despite these advantages, several challenges were identified. Some students noted that vocabulary items lacked sufficient context or depth, limiting the transfer of knowledge to academic or real-life communication. This concern aligns with findings from (Nguyen et al., 2023; Esmaili & Shahrokhi, 2020), who observed difficulties in applying learned collocations or vocabulary beyond the platform. Technical issues, such as unstable internet connections or suboptimal mobile devices, were also reported, reflecting challenges in implementing mobile-assisted learning under certain conditions (Nguyen et al., 2023; Essafi et al., 2024). These limitations can be understood through the lens of Transfer of Learning Theory, which emphasizes the potential difficulty in applying knowledge learned in one context to other communicative situations.

In addition, although Memrise facilitates vocabulary acquisition and retention, students did not view it as a replacement for traditional classroom instruction. Instead, they perceived it as a complementary resource that supports vocabulary learning by providing additional exposure and practice. This aligns with prior research, which underscores that MALL applications are most effective when integrated with conventional teaching methods (Demir, 2025; Li & Hafner, 2022). Memrise, therefore, functions optimally as an auxiliary tool within a larger curriculum,

enhancing students' vocabulary mastery while fostering autonomous learning and sustained motivation.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that Memrise offers substantial benefits for higher education students' vocabulary learning. Its gamification, accessibility, adaptive features, multimodal input, and repetitive learning design contribute to positive learning experiences and measurable improvements in vocabulary knowledge. However, its effectiveness depends on the integration of instructional guidance, technical support, and the provision of contextually relevant content. The application is best utilized as a supplementary tool that complements traditional pedagogy, enabling learners to strengthen both receptive and productive vocabulary skills in English.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that higher education students generally hold positive perceptions toward Memrise as a mobile-assisted tool for enhancing English vocabulary learning. The application is perceived as engaging, interactive, and easy to use, which contributes to increased motivation and active involvement in the learning process. These findings suggest that independent vocabulary learning can be effectively facilitated through mobile applications such as Memrise beyond classroom settings, in line with the principles of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Nevertheless, despite its advantages, students also encounter several challenges in using Memrise. The vocabulary content is sometimes perceived as insufficient for academic purposes, learning activities may become repetitive over time, and learners may experience difficulties applying the acquired vocabulary in academic or real-life contexts. These limitations indicate that Memrise functions more effectively as a supplementary tool rather than a standalone instructional medium. Therefore, teachers and curriculum designers should consider these constraints when integrating mobile-assisted vocabulary learning into higher education contexts. Overall, Memrise can serve as a valuable addition to vocabulary learning by supporting students' motivation, engagement, and vocabulary development, provided that it is appropriately integrated into a broader instructional framework to address limitations related to content depth and contextual usage.

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