

Using Memrise Application To Learn Adjectives: An Experimental Study At The Second Grade Students of SMPN 1 Kediri

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Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Memrise app in improving adjective vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Kediri. The background of this research is the low mastery of adjectives in English by students, which impacts their ability to understand and use descriptions in the context of sentences. This study fills a gap in previous research that has not specifically evaluated the effectiveness of the Memrise application on adjective mastery experimentally. This study used a quasi-experimental design with two groups: the experimental group was taught using Memrise, while the control group received conventional instruction, each of which consists of 26 students. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test assessments. The results revealed that the experimental group showed significant improvement, with the mean score increasing from 60.77 to 75.38, while the control group only improved slightly, from 55.38 to 60.77. Statistical analysis using paired-sample t-test and independent t-test confirmed that the difference between the two groups was significant ($p < 0.05$). These findings indicate that the use of Memrise is more effective than traditional methods in improving students' adjective vocabulary mastery. This study suggests that Memrise can be integrated into English language teaching as an engaging and effective digital tool in learning English at the junior high school level.

Keywords: Memrise, Vocabulary, Adjectives, Quasi-Experimental Study.

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INTRODUCTION

English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia as part of the national curriculum from elementary school to university (Kurniawan, 2018). Many students still struggle with English, particularly in vocabulary mastery, despite this long-standing inclusion. Vocabulary is crucial for language learning as it supports four essential skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Nation, 2001). A lack of vocabulary often hinders students' comprehension, expression, and communication, which can lead to a lack of motivation and passive participation in class (Nugroho et al., 2021). Secondary school students are expected to use English academically and communicatively, making this issue even more pronounced. Conventional teacher-centered methods, such as textbook-based exercises and memorization, often fail to meet students' learning needs or stimulate their interest in learning (Bakti, 2017).

Therefore, incorporating technology into learning and implementing appropriate teaching strategies are crucial to increasing student engagement and understanding (Melani et al., 2021).

Among various types of vocabulary, adjectives play a particularly important role in developing students' descriptive and communicative abilities. Adjectives allow learners to describe people, objects, and situations with greater detail and clarity, which is essential for mastering descriptive and narrative texts. However, based on preliminary observations during the researcher's Pre-service Teaching Program (PLP) at SMPN 1 Kediri, many students demonstrated limited mastery of adjectives and often misused them in context. According to the English teacher's report, students' average achievement in adjective vocabulary reached only around 50% of the expected target in the curriculum. This situation highlights a clear gap between the expected learning outcomes and the actual performance, indicating the need for innovative strategies that can improve students' understanding and use of adjectives. In contrast to Mawaddah's (2023) research, which only observed the effect of Memrise on general vocabulary, this study specifically explored the application's influence on mastery of adjectives.

The development of educational technology offers a promising solution to overcome these pedagogical challenges. According to Thohir (2017), teachers are responsible for motivating students to learn, and digital applications like Memrise can serve as effective tools to sustain motivation and attention. The use of interactive applications in English teaching has been shown to increase student engagement and enjoyment in the classroom (Reviana et al. 2024). Memrise incorporates memory-based learning strategies, such as spaced repetition and recall exercises, which have been shown to strengthen long-term vocabulary retention. In addition, the app's use of audio and visual stimuli helps learners associate words with meaningful contexts, thereby improving comprehension and usage accuracy. Most previous studies have focused on the use of Memrise for general vocabulary, while studies examining its impact on adjectives mastery at the secondary school level in an Indonesia EFL environment are still rare.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using the Memrise application in enhancing students' mastery of adjective vocabulary among eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Kediri. The school provides a supportive environment for technology-based learning, with adequate facilities such as a computer laboratory and students' access to personal smartphones. This makes it an ideal setting for exploring the integration of digital media into vocabulary learning. By examining how Memrise supports vocabulary acquisition, this research seeks to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to English language teaching in Indonesia. Theoretically, it offers insights into how MALL-based approaches can improve learners' vocabulary retention and motivation. Practically, it proposes pedagogical recommendations for teachers and curriculum developers to integrate innovative learning applications into classroom instruction to enhance the overall effectiveness of English vocabulary learning. This study measures the mastery of adjectives through students' ability to recognize, use, and apply adjectives contextually according to the grade VIII syllabus.

METHOD

In this study, researchers used a quasi-experimental approach to perform quantitative research. Quasi-experimental approach. A nonequivalent control group design is an example of a quasi-experimental design. In this approach, researchers utilize two groups, the experimental and control group, which are not randomly assigned. The two groups will get a pretest treatment followed by a posttest. As a result, researchers picked VIII F as the experimental class and VIII E as the control class. Researchers will deliver treatment in the experimental class by employing Memrise Application. While the control class is treated as a normal with conventional method. This research design is illustrated as follows:

Table 1. The Research Design

Class	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
C	Y_1	X	Y_2
E	Y_1	—	Y_2

Note:

E : Experimental group

C : Control group

Y_1 : Pre-test

Y_2 : Post-test

X : Treatment by using Memrise application

— : The group without treatment or using a conventional method

The population of this research was all the second-grade students at SMPN 1 Kediri from class 8A-8F in the academic year 2025/2026, each class consisting of 26-30 students. The population consists of 173 students. The reason for choosing this group of students as the subject of research is that they already have a basic understanding of English, having learned it since first grade, so they are familiar with the basic concepts of vocabulary and language structure. For this study researchers selected classes VIII F and VIII E from current population. Class VIII F functions as the experimental group, while class VIII E functions as the control group.

DATA COLLECTION

The data of this study were collected through pre-test and post-tests administered to both the experimental and control group. These tests served to measure the students' mastery of adjectives vocabulary before and after treatment using the Memrise Application.

Prior to implementation, the test instruments were validated by two English lecturers and one English teacher to ensure their content validity, clarity, and suitability for eighth-grade students. The validation process involved expert judgment on the test's relevance to the syllabus, appropriateness of item difficulty, and accuracy of the vocabulary being assessed. Based on their feedback, minor revisions were made to improve the clarity and alignment of several test items. The research was conducted in three main stages:

Pre-test : Before the treatment, both the experimental and control groups underwent the same pretest. The purpose of this examination was to determine students' initial

vocabulary proficiency, particularly in terms of word properties. The English syllabus for eighth graders at SMPN 1 Kediri served as the inspiration for this test, which consisted of 20 questions: 15 multiple-choice questions, and 5 complete sentence questions. To compare the posttest results with the pretest scores, baseline data was used.

Treatment : After the pre-test, the experimental group was taught using the Memrise app, while the control group received instruction through conventional methods. The treatment lasted three sessions, each lasting approximately 30 minutes. During the treatment, the experimental group learned adjectives through a Memrise course custom-designed by the researchers, which included word definitions, images, audio pronunciations, and interactive, repetition-based exercises. The control group, on the other hand, learned the same vocabulary set using printed worksheets and teacher explanations without any digital media.

Post-test : At the end of the treatment, both groups were given the same test as the pre-test (with the item order rearranged to minimize recall bias). The post-test was conducted to assess the students' improvement in adjective vocabulary mastery after the learning process.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed quantitatively using numerical data using statistical approaches. The independent sample T-test is used to compare the values of pretest and post-test students to evaluate if there are significant differences in the use of Memrise Application in learn adjectives of students in Class VIII F as a experimental class at SMPN 1 Kediri. Before using the T-test, the researchers verified the data's normality and homogeneity. It is used to determine if the given data is normal or not, as well as homogenous. Normality and homogeneity tests were done using IBM SPSS version 26 for Windows.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study determined whether there was a significant difference in student learning outcomes at SMPN 1 Kediri who used the Memrise app to teach adjective vocabulary to eighth-grade students. Vocabulary tests were administered as pre- and post-tests to assess students' initial vocabulary mastery. Data were also collected for significance and comparison testing. During the research process, observations and documentation were also conducted to obtain data to support the analysis. This table shows the collected data and picture entries may be reduced.

Table 2. Data Experimental Class

Descriptive Data	Pre-test	Post-test
Total	1580	1965
Mean	60.77	75.38
Max	80	95
Min	30	60
Range	50	35

Table 3. Data of Control Class

Descriptive Data	Pre-test	Post-test
Total	1440	1580
Mean	55.38	60.78
Max	80	85
Min	20	40
Range	60	45

The results of this study were obtained from the students' pre-test and post-test scores in both the experimental and control groups. The data showed that both groups improved after the learning process, but the improvement in the experimental group which used the Memrise application was significantly higher than that of the control group.

It has a significant difference on both groups' prior knowledge. Furthermore, the post-test score provides the information of students' development of vocabulary after being treated, the post-test also provides the information about the paper-based and Memrise application whether it has any significant differences or not. This information is obtained by comparing the post-test score of both groups through several stages of data analysis.

Normality test

Following data collection, before deciding on a data analysis method, researchers conducted a normality test on the data by using the Shapiro-Wilk test at a significance level of 0.05, the following result was shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Test of Normality

Test of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest Experiment	0.178	26	0.033	0.928	26	0.069
Posttest Experiment	0.170	26	0.052	0.927	26	0.066
Pretest Control	0.145	26	0.169	0.929	26	0.075
Posttets Control	0.167	26	0.061	0.940	26	0.131

Based on the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, the significance values for the experimental group were 0.069 (pre-test) and 0.066 (post-test), while for the control group they were 0.075 (pre-test) and 0.131 (post-test). Since all values were greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data from both groups were normally distributed.

Test Homogeneity

A homogeneity of variance test was also conducted to determine whether the variances of the experimental and control groups were equal. This assumption is important in order to justify the use of independent sample t-tests when comparing the performance of the two groups.

According to the decision rule, if the significance value is greater than 0.05, the data can be considered homogeneous, meaning that the groups share equal variances. The results of this test are presented in the following section, confirming that the scores of both groups meet the assumption of homogeneity required for parametric analysis.

Pretest Scores

Table 5. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pretest	Based on Mean	0.002	1	50	0.963
	Based on Median	0.073	1	50	0.788
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	0.073	1	49.826	0.788
	Based on trimmed mean	0.005	1	50	0.943

The table above shows a significance value of 0.963. Since $0.963 > 0.05$, it can be concluded that the pretest scores for both groups come from the same variance or are homogeneous.

Posttest Scores

Table 6. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Posttest	Based on Mean	0.399	1	50	0.530
	Based on Median	0.299	1	50	0.587
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	0.299	1	49.837	0.587
	Based on trimmed mean	0.387	1	50	0.537

According to the information above, it becomes evident that the significance value of 0.530. Since $0.530 > 0.05$, it can be concluded that the posttest scores for both groups come from the same variance or are homogeneous.

Hypothesis Test

Because the results of the normality test indicate that the data are normally distributed, hypothesis testing can proceed. The main objective of hypothesis testing in this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of using the Memrise application in improving the vocabulary mastery of adjectives of class VIII-F students at SMPN 1 Kediri. After all prerequisites are met, specifically, the data meets the assumptions of normality and homogeneity—parametric statistical tests are applied. Paired sample t-tests are used to assess differences in student performance before and after treatment in each group, while independent sample t-tests are used to compare performance results between the experimental and control groups.

Table 7. Independent Sample Test Experimental and Control Group Paired Samples Test Control

		Paired Differences						t	df	Sig (2-tailed)			
		Mea n	Std. Deviatio n	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference								
					Lower	Upper							
Pai r 1	Pretest Experimen t- Posttest Experiment	-14.615	13.411	2.630	-20.032	-9.199	-5.557	25	0.000				

		Paired Samples Test						t	df	Sig (2-tailed)			
		Paired Differences											
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference								
					Lower	Upper							
Pair 1	Pretest Control-Posttest Control	-5.385	12.241	2.401	-26.000	-440	-2.243	25	0.034				

Based on the results, the significance value for the experimental group was $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores. This means that the treatment using the Memrise application was effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. Similarly, the control group showed a significance value of $0.034 < 0.05$, which also indicates a difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. Thus, both groups experienced improvement, but the experimental group showed greater progress due to the use of the Memrise application.

Independent T-Test

It was important to ascertain whether the post-test performance difference between the experimental and control groups was statistically significant because both groups demonstrated improvement. In order to compare the post-test results of the two groups and determine whether using the Memrise app led to higher vocabulary increases than the traditional method, an independent samples t-test was performed.

Table 8. Pretest Scores of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Score	N	Mean	Significance
Experimental Group	26	60,77	0,524
Control group	26	55,38	

Table 9. Posttest Scores of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Score	N	Mean	Significance
Experimental Group	26	75,38	0,000
Control Group	26	60,77	

The results in Table 8 show a significance value of $0.524 > 0.05$, indicating no significant difference between the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The mean scores were relatively similar, with 60.77 for the experimental group and 55.38 for the control group, suggesting that both groups had comparable initial abilities.

Meanwhile, Table 9 shows a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference in the post-test results between the two groups. The experimental group achieved a higher mean score of 75.38 compared to 60.77 in the control group. This finding confirms that the Memrise application significantly improved students' mastery of adjective vocabulary. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, proving the effectiveness of the Memrise application in learning adjectives.

The findings show that using the Memrise application had a significant positive impact on students' mastery of adjective vocabulary. The experimental group of 26 students from class VIII-F at SMPN 1 Kediri showed a substantial improvement, with the mean score increasing from 60.77 in the pre-test to 75.38 in the post-test—an average gain of nearly 15 points. This improvement demonstrates that Memrise effectively enhanced learning through its interactive features such as repetition, mnemonic techniques, and gamified exercises, which promoted better engagement and vocabulary retention.

In contrast, the control group, which learned through traditional teacher-centered methods, achieved only a slight increase—from 55.38 to 60.77—showing limited progress. This suggests that conventional instruction can still support learning but lacks the motivational and interactive elements that digital applications provide. These results support Hatch and Brown's (1995) argument that vocabulary learning requires active engagement and meaningful input, both of which are better facilitated through interactive tools like Memrise.

Statistical analyzes confirmed the effectiveness of Memrise. The paired sample t-test showed a significant improvement in the experimental group ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), while the control group also showed improvement but to a lesser degree ($p = 0.034 < 0.05$). The independent t-test revealed that both groups started at a similar level ($p = 0.524 > 0.05$), but after treatment, the post-test difference was significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) accepted, confirming that Memrise was effective in improving students' adjective vocabulary.

The effectiveness of Memrise can be explained through several theoretical perspectives. According to Nation (2001), repeated exposure to vocabulary enhances retention and productive use. Memrise applies this through spaced repetition and multisensory learning, helping learners store new words in long-term memory. Similarly, Kukulska-Hulme (2018) emphasizes that mobile-assisted learning promotes flexibility, interactivity, and learner autonomy—all reflected in this study. Moreover, the app's gamified features align with Gardner's (1985) theory that motivation is a major factor in language learning success.

These findings are consistent with previous research by Santri (2020) and Mawaddah (2023), who also found that Memrise significantly improved vocabulary learning outcomes compared to conventional methods. However, this study provides new insights by focusing specifically on adjective vocabulary, a lexical category that is crucial for descriptive writing and communication. Unlike Mawaddah's (2023) study, which examined the overall impact of Memrise on high school students' vocabulary, this study targeted junior high school students in Kediri, where students' lexical competence and attention span are typically more limited. These differences in student profiles and educational contexts may explain why the improvements in this

study were so strong—Memrise's interactive, game-like environment is highly engaging for younger students, providing a fun and motivating experience that maintains attention throughout short learning sessions.

Furthermore, the learning context at SMPN 1 Kediri, where students have good access to smartphones and a stable internet connection, allows for the smooth implementation of mobile-based learning. This is something that is not possible in schools with fewer digital facilities. Consequently, this study not only confirms the findings of previous research but also applies Memrise contextually to demonstrate its effectiveness for EFL students already familiar with technology.

However, despite its positive result, this study has several limitations. First, the duration of the treatment was relatively short only three sessions, which might not fully capture long-term retention or the sustainability of learning outcomes. Second, the research relied on a single digital platform (Memrise), which limits generalization to other mobile assisted applications. Additionally, students enthusiasm may have been influenced by the novelty effect, as using a mobile app might have been a new and exciting experience for them. The study also did not include direct feedback from students regarding their engagement levels, perceptions, or difficulties while using the application, which could have provided deeper insights into its effectiveness.

Future research is recommended to address these limitations. Longer treatment durations could be implemented to measure long-term vocabulary retention. Comparative studies could also explore the effectiveness of Memrise alongside other MALL platforms to determine which features best support vocabulary learning. Including qualitative data such as students interviews or questionnaires about motivation and engagement would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how digital tools influence learning experiences.

In summary, both groups showed improvement, but the experimental group achieved significantly better results, proving that the use of Memrise leads enhances retention and productive use. Memrise applies this through spaced repetition and multisensory learning, helping learners store new words in long-term memory. Similarly, Kukulska-Hulme (2018) emphasizes that mobile-assisted learning promotes flexibility, interactivity, and learner autonomy—all reflected in this study. Moreover, the app's gamified features align with Gardner's (1985) theory that motivation is a major factor in language learning success.

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In summary, both groups showed improvement, but the experimental group achieved significantly better results, proving that the use of Memrise leads to higher and more consistent learning outcomes. Integrating digital learning applications such as Memrise into vocabulary instruction provides an effective, engaging, and modern approach to enhancing students' English proficiency, particularly in mastering adjectives.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the use of the Memrise application was effective in improving the eighth-grade students' mastery of adjectives vocabulary at SMPN 1 Kediri. This conclusion is supported by the results of the statistical analyses conducted during the research. The data revealed that the mean score of the experimental group increased significantly from 60.77 in the pre-test to 75.38 in the post-test after receiving treatment with Memrise. In contrast, the control group, which was taught through the traditional method, showed only a modest improvement, with the mean score rising from 55.38 to 60.77.

The results of hypothesis testing further confirmed these findings. The independent sample t-test demonstrated that while both groups had similar pre-test scores, the post-test scores of the experimental class were significantly higher than those of the control class, confirming that Memrise was more effective than traditional methods. Furthermore, the paired sample t-test showed a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the alpha level of 0.05. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0), while the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a), which indicated that Memrise significantly enhances vocabulary learning.

Suggestion

For english teacher: Teachers are encouraged to integrate Memrise into their vocabulary instruction, particularly when teaching adjectives. The interactive features, spaced repetition, and gamified learning provided by Memrise can make vocabulary learning more engaging

and effective compared to conventional methods. By using this application, teachers can provide students with meaningful practice and help them achieve better learning outcomes.

For students: Students are advised to use Memrise as an additional learning resource outside the classroom. The application allows learners to review vocabulary independently, monitor their progress, and practice repeatedly until mastery is achieved. Regular use of Memrise can increase students' motivation, strengthen retention, and enhance their confidence in applying adjectives in various language contexts.

For future researchers: This study serves as a reference for future research on technology-assisted language learning, especially in vocabulary acquisition. Researchers may consider exploring the effectiveness of Memrise for different types of vocabulary (e.g., verbs, adverbs, collocations) or extending the investigation to other language skills, such as reading, listening, or speaking. Further studies could also examine the long-term impact of Memrise on vocabulary retention or compare it with other digital platforms to broaden the understanding of its role in language education.

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