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A COMPARISON STUDY OF MEMRISE AND DUOLINGO: ANALYZING VOCABULARY ACQUISITION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

This study is aimed to assess the impact of Memrise and Duolingo on vocabulary acquisition language learners. Students used both applications for 4 weeks daily, accomplishing four modules in Duolingo and four levels in Memrise. A quasi-experimental approach was used, including pre- and post-test to assess the level of vocabulary proficiency, memorization and engagement. The results showed significant improvements in vocabulary proficiency by all participants, with obvious benefits noted for each application. Memrise succeeded in memorizing vocabulary using mnemonic techniques, while Duolingo promoted greater engagement and practical use of the language and selected as preferred application. The comparison highlights the complementary advantages of both platforms and suggests their joint use to achieve maximum results in learning vocabulary. This research provides teachers and language learners with evidence-based information and helps optimize language learning strategies using mobile devices. Both applications prove to be significant resources for lexicon acquisition, with Duolingo emerging as the preferred tool due to its engagement and versatile features. However, the choice of the preferred application should depend on individual needs, preferences and learning goals.

Keywords: Memrise, Duolingo, EFL learners, English, vocabulary, mobile-assisted learning, applications, technology-assisted learning.

Introduction

A mobile application, often known as a mobile app, is a computer software created for mobile devices like smartphones or tablet computers that is usually

downloaded from stores like the Apple Store or Google Play Store, according to award-winning technology expert, Rouse [1].

Acquiring vocabulary continues to be a crucial component of linguistic competency in the constantly changing field of language learning. Effective communication requires a strong vocabulary, which also forms the basis for the development of other critical language abilities like speaking, writing, listening and reading. According to research of Nation [3], vocabulary development of has a big impact on students' total language competency and academic achievement, especially when they are young. As technology-assisted learning has grown in popularity, digital tools have become well-known as useful methods for teaching vocabulary because they provide chances for interesting, interactive and self-paced learning.

According to Ghanbaran and Ketabi [4], and Loewen et al. [5], Memrise and Duolingo are two well-known examples of these kinds of learning applications. Because of their gamified learning experiences, user-friendly interfaces, and information created to different skills levels, both are popular. Munday [6] stated that while Duolingo offers thorough language practice by mixing vocabulary activities with sentence construction and grammar, Memrise uses multimedia and spaced repetition to improve vocabulary memory. The combined use of these apps and their effects on young learners' vocabulary retention, however have not received much attention in studies.

The research is intended to measure the effect of using the applications together on vocabulary acquisition in language learners. Importantly, the study intends to draw out comparative advantages of the apps, especially as they relate to young learners' vocabulary retention. The data explored into learning outcomes in each application may be used toward language authorities to sharpen approaches to language while furnishing educators and students with evidence-based knowledge to inform the proper selection of app.

By examining the relative benefits of using Memrise and Duolingo in tandem to improve vocabulary acquisition, this study aims to close this gap. Research of Chen et al. [7], and Peters [8], has demonstrated how gamified applications can enhance vocabulary retention by highlighting elements including active involvement, context-based learning, and repetition. This study intends to offer useful insights for teachers, students, and language authorities by investigating how various applications affect learning outcomes.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will add to the expanding corpus of research on technology-assisted language acquisition. In order to improve young learners' vocabulary acquisition and retention, they may also help build

evidence-based techniques for choosing and using digital resources into classroom and self-directed learning environments.

The main research questions are:

Did usage of Memrise and Duolingo improve students' vocabulary acquisition?

Which app is preferred by students' to learn language in comparison of both applications?

Literature Review

These days vocabulary acquisition process is heavily affected by digital learning. The role of digital learning is captured within mobile applications, the examples include Memrise and Duolingo. Users of these mobile applications testify to their success as a result of easy access, gamification, and customized content encouraging retention of vocabulary.

Research that was conducted by Anh Thi Nguyen et al. [9] sought to find the effects of Memrise's technology-assisted vocabulary learning tool on rural Vietnamese EFL college students.

Vitaly Pichugin et al. [10] investigated effectiveness of mobile applications in foreign language learning through improvements in vocabulary acquisition and retention and language confidence. There were 203 Kazan Federal University students in this study distributed between three groups. All groups used either specific mobile applications (Duolingo, Memrise) or traditional teaching methods for six weeks.

Mingli Xie [11] focused on examining the relevance, importance, and effectiveness of multimedia technologies in global education owing to modernization in approaches to pedagogy and developments made through educational technology.

Mohamed Essafi et al. [12] evaluated the three outstanding MALL applications: Babbel, Memrise, and Duolingo, with the evaluation rubric adapted from app evaluation by design, content and pedagogy. The qualitative content analysis, included in the study, assessed these apps by means or direct contact as well as a specific evaluation tool. This review present a comparative analysis of three language-learning applications: Memrise, Duolingo, and Babbel in terms of effectiveness for vocabulary acquisition and user experience.

From Memrise chose Arabic as L1 and French as target language (TL) at the intermediate level, so that precise documentation could be made on "planting" methods from the source, involving these aspects: flashcards, audio, videos, and mnemonic aids ("mems"). Duolingo would be tested using English as L1 and Arabic as TL, to evaluate its gamified structure via a placement test and daily-language exercises involving typing, listening, and speaking tasks.

Babbel served as the destination test with English as the source language (L1) and Spanish as the TL.

The study by Kholod Naser Olimat [13] focused in finding how effective Duolingo has been in developing English skills among EFL learners in Jordan. For the current research, a descriptive analytical approach was taken and surveyed 500 first-year university students randomly selected from Jordanian universities, who later filled a questionnaire related to their opinion about Duolingo and its role in language learning. Ouyang et al. [14] investigated the impact of Duolingo, an AI-integrated language learning app, on EFL learners' willingness to communicate and engagement in online classes. Using a quasi-experimental design with 40 EFL students.

The research by Valentina Panfilova et al. [15] gives a detailed analysis of the educational mobile games designed for foreign language learning and evaluates their effectiveness as compared to traditional educational methods through two experiments with university students. The study, which involved 342 students from three Russian universities, indicated higher engagement and retention rates with mobile applications.

A study by Lin and Lin [16] looked at how well gamified apps work for vocabulary learning, emphasizing how they encourage learners to be motivated and give them instant feedback while they're learning. In their investigation of the function of multimedia content in language learning, Smith and Kessler [17] demonstrated how multimodal learning experiences can improve memory retention by integrating different media types into vocabulary instruction. In their investigation of the incorporation of context-based learning into digital tools for vocabulary acquisition, Takac and Singleton [18] talked about how context-based methods can lessen cognitive load by assisting learners in acquiring vocabulary in a meaningful way. The use of adaptive learning techniques in mobile applications was examined by Liu and Chu [19], who concentrated on how these techniques might meet the unique requirements of students, enabling a more customized vocabulary-learning process.

Materials and methods

Research Design

For this study, a quasi-experimental design was implied to check for vocabulary acquisition and retention of students by using both applications by comparing and improving. The research relied on quantitative data, gathered through pre- and post-tests and a survey, to assess students' knowledge and preferences. All students were given to use both of the applications at the same time. Participants used Memrise and Duolingo concurrently within the intervention duration to evaluate the improvement from both apps.

Participant and Settings

Participants in this study will thus include a sample of 30 students aged 10-11 attending fifth grade at school number 15, M.Zhumabayev. The students were assigned to use both apps through the study period. The participants were told to finish 4 modules in Duolingo and 4 levels in Memrise throughout the week for a period of 4 weeks, switching between the two applications for four weeks. This approach ensures that all students practice the applications, making it easy to compare their usefulness. In the table 1. there is shown the number of students, their gender and age.

Table 1 – Participants description

Gender	Male:13; Female:17
Age	10-11

Data Collection

Data will be gathered at two points during the sessions associated with intervention: before and after.

Pre-test: Vocabulary pre-test will be given for all learners at the start of the study to measure the baseline knowledge of the vocabulary. A pre-test consisted of 20 multiple choice questions for the topics of vocabulary divided into 5 parts, 5 fill in the gap questions, 5 short-answer questions, in sum 30 questions for pre-test.

Post-test: After the experiment to measure the improvement of vocabulary acquisition there was conducted a post-test, with 15 multiple choice questions, 8 fill in the gaps questions, 7 short-answer questions, in sum 30 questions for post-test.

Survey: A post-experimental survey was conducted to measure students involvement, preferences in applications, the hardships of easy usage of applications, the survey was measured by Likert Scale questions consisting of 15 questions separately for Memrise and separately for Duolingo. The examples of the survey questions were like 'Memrise helps me to learn vocabulary better than Duolingo'; 'I find it hard to navigate through the Memrise app'; 'Duolingo is better in learning new words than Memrise'.

Data Analysis

To analyze the research questions there were conducted several types of analysis. To address the first research question "Did usage of Memrise and Duolingo improve students' vocabulary acquisition?" a paired samples t-test was conducted by comparison of the results of the participants of pre-test and post-test.

To answer the second research question "Which app is preferred by students' to learn language in comparison of both applications?", there was used the

reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha and descriptive statistics of total sum of each participants answers to questions about Memrise and Duolingo separately.

Treatment

In the first week of the experiment, students began using both Memrise and Duolingo to improve vocabulary skills. The students were introduced to both apps with clear instructions. The tasks were given for completing Module 1, 1-4 Parts in Duolingo and Levels 1-4 in Memrise. This approach ensured a gradual and manageable progression, allowing students to familiarize themselves with the features of apps and building a base of vocabulary.

Students were taken a pre-test to check the knowledge and find out the level of students to compare the results. During the week students were guided through the setup of both apps. Teachers gave demonstrations of how to use the platforms, track progress.

In the second week, students continued their progress in both Memrise and Duolingo completing Module 1, Parts 5-8 in Duolingo and Levels 5-8 in Memrise. Throughout the week, students demonstrated varying levels of comfort with the tasks.

During the third week students continued the work with the applications and worked on Module 1, Parts 9-12 in Duolingo and Levels 9-12 in Memrise. While the structure remained the same as the previous weeks, a noticeable shift was noticed in students' engagement, with much students adapting to apps and getting motivation from accomplished levels and parts and had streaks in both of the applications.. During the final week, students continued their work by finishing Module 1, parts 13-16 in Duolingo, and levels 13-16 in Memrise.

There was taken a post-test to review the improvement of students by tracking their progress, the students also gave their opinions and filled out the post-experimental survey where students described which app was more engaging and easier to adapt. Students finished the levels easily and showed a greater engagement and commitment to completing their assigned tasks. During four weeks students were exposed in the applications and the aim was to improve students' vocabulary skills and engagement through Memrise and Duolingo.

Results and Discussion

To determine the effectiveness of mobile applications in vocabulary acquisition there were conducted a pre- and post-test, in the table 2 there will be shown a paired samples t-test results of the pre- and post-test results' comparison of thirty participants.

Table 2 – Comparison of pre- and post-tests of thirty participants

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	p
	Pre_test	16,3000	30	1,91455	-19,007	,000
	Post_test	23,3000	30	2,10336		

The paired samples t-test revealed a statistically important difference between two test' results, demonstrating an improvement in vocabulary knowledge after using the applications for four weeks.

The mean score for the pre-test was $M=16.30$ with ($SD=1.91$), whereas the mean score of post-test increased to $M=23.30$ ($SD=2.10$). This difference demonstrated a growth in vocabulary knowledge of students. By the results it yielded a t-value of $t=-19,007$ with p less than .005, showing that the difference was statistically important. These results suggest that the use of mobile applications had a positive impact on participants' vocabulary knowledge, with a strong increase in post-test results compared to pre-test.

To analyze the post-experimental survey, there was conducted a reliability analysis, in table 3 there will be the results of Cronbach's Alpha for checking if the survey reliable. The reliability of the post-experimental survey, which consisted of 15 questions, was assessed and indicated.

Table 3 – Reliability of post-experimental survey

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,975	15

The analysis showed a high reliability coefficient ($\text{Alpha}=.975$), which indicates a good consistency of the test results. This results shows that the survey is reliable instrument for evaluating the learners' preferences and perceptions concerning the vocabulary knowledge through mobile apps. To compare the students preferences in the post-experimental survey, there was conducted a descriptive analysis, therefore table 4. demonstrates the descriptive statistics of the Memrise and Douling totals of the questions.

Table 4 – Descriptive analysis of post-experimental survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
MEMRISE	30	1,50	4,88	2,9458	1,36997
DUOLINGO	30	1,33	4,83	3,4111	1,36649

The descriptive analysis revealed that Duolingo had a higher mean score ($M=3.41$) than Memrise total ($M=2.94$), demonstrating that students generally perceived Duolingo as more effective and engaging application for vocabulary retention and acquisition. Additionally, the higher number of students (18 vs. 12) shows the preference of students using Duolingo than Memrise.

Nevertheless, both of the application showed a variability in experiences, as shown by the similar standard deviations. This shows that while Duolingo was flavoured individual learning preferences and experiences may significantly influence app effectiveness.

The findings indicate that both Memrise and Duolingo are effective tools for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. However, Duolingo is shown as most preferred application among the students, with 18 students compared to 12 students for Memrise. Duolingo appears to be the better application based on students preferences, but Memrise still remains a vulnerable tool.

The results of this study shed important light on how well Memrise and Duolingo compare in terms of improving young learners' vocabulary learning. The study broadens our knowledge of how mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) applications can promote language development by concentrating on vocabulary acquisition and retention. In this section, the findings are discussed in light of previous research, emphasizing parallels, divergences, and implications for future study and practice.

Memrise's ability to promote long-term language memory has been demonstrated by earlier research. Memrise's spaced repetition technique, which methodically reinforces previously acquired words, has been shown by Panfilova et al.'s to be very beneficial for retention. The study's findings support it since Memrise users had high retention rates on post-tests, especially for difficult language. This study's findings of Memrise's usefulness in methodical vocabulary building are consistent with Pichugun et al.'s conclusion that it is better than conventional teaching methods for vocabulary acquisition.

Memrise was found to be less entertaining than Duolingo in this study, despite its retention advantages. This result deviates from several of the assertions made in previous studies of Ghanbaran and Ketabi that commended Memrise for its multimodal capabilities. According to this study, Memrise's relative lack of involvement may reduce its appeal, particularly for younger students who prefer learning settings with lots of activity.

It is commonly acknowledged that Duolingo's gamified design is a major contributor to its efficacy. The app's dynamic activities and user-friendly UI greatly increase learner motivation and engagement, according to Loewen et al. these results are supported by the study's conclusion that Duolingo is more engaging

than Memrise, as seen by students' greater levels of perceived enjoyment and active participation.

Furthermore, this study confirms Mingli Xie and Lertlit's results that the combination of Duolingo's real-time feedback, progress tracking, and sentence construction promotes motivation as well as a deeper comprehension of language structures. The interactive aspect of Duolingo's challenges suggests potential benefits for acquiring other language skills, such as grammar and syntax, even though the primary focus of this study was vocabulary acquisition.

This study's distinctive focus was the combined usage of Memrise and Duolingo, which makes a substantial addition to the corpus of existing literature. These applications have typically been studied separately in the past by Munday and Peters. According to this study, learners were able to take advantage of both Memrise's controlled repetition and Duolingo's captivating gamification when they used both apps at the same time.

This result is consistent with Chen et al.'s discussion of multimodal learning principles, which state that integrating various learning resources and techniques can improve learning results. The synergy found in this study, where Memrise helped with long-term recall and Duolingo kept students motivated, implies that teachers could improve their performance by including complimentary tools into their lesson plans.

The study's findings add to the larger conversation over the use of technology in language learning. After comparing the efficacy of Memrise, Duolingo, and Babbel, Mohamed Essafi et al. (2024) came to the conclusion that Duolingo was the most popular program among students because of its gamified methodology. This study extends the data to show how Memrise enhances Duolingo's advantages while bolstering their conclusion, especially with regard to student engagement.

Smith and Kessler highlight how gamification can increase motivation and learner involvement in language acquisition. This is consistent with our results, which show that Duolingo performed noticeably better than Memrise at sustaining students' interest and zeal throughout the intervention period. The significance of adaptable learning characteristics was also highlighted by Liu and Chu, who investigated individualized mobile learning strategies and their effect on vocabulary acquisition. Our research revealed that Memrise's less interactive design in comparison to Duolingo may limit its appeal to younger learners, even if it uses multimedia and spaced repetition to help with long-term vocabulary recall.

Nonetheless, Memrise's emphasis on personalized learning paths enhances Duolingo's gamified structure, indicating that combining the two applications can successfully accommodate a range of learning styles. Takac and Singleton offer a more comprehensive viewpoint on vocabulary learning techniques, stressing

the importance of contextualized learning and repetition in second language acquisition. Though in different ways, Memrise and Duolingo both incorporate these techniques. Whereas Duolingo integrates vocabulary drills within contextual sentence patterns, Memrise uses multimedia flashcards and spaced repetition. Our results support their conclusion, demonstrating that improved vocabulary usage and retention are fostered by a combined strategy that capitalizes on the advantages of both apps.

Although the study's results largely support previous studies, they also point out significant differences: **Emphasis on Young Learners:** This study places more emphasis on young learners, whose preferences and learning methods may differ from those of adult learners, in contrast to studies like Loewen et al. and Panfilova et al. **Combination of Apps:** By examining how Memrise and Duolingo may be used together, this study closes a gap in the literature by shedding light on how complimentary apps can overcome the drawbacks of each program when used separately.

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Conclusions

This research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Memrise and Duolingo as vocabulary acquisition tools, comparing the impact on users engagement, learning outcomes and preferences. By using a strong methodology, including pre-tests, post-tests, and a survey, this demonstrates that both stages contribute altogether on vocabulary improvement, but with particular qualities.

The findings uncovered that Duolingo was the most compelling instrument, its gamified plan which coordinating an assortment of intuitively errands, cultivated more noteworthy engagement and inspiration among learners. Whereas Memrise less favored, was acknowledged for its mnemonic-based approach and organized learning ways, making it a great choice.

These findings align with previous studies that underscore the importance of mobile-assisted language learning. They also show the need for different tools to accommodate individual preferences. Future research could explore combined methodologies, strengths of both platforms, further making it easier to learn.

Despite offering insightful information, this study's focus was restricted to language learning and retention within a brief intervention period. Future studies could look into: consequences of using several applications over time; impacts on more general language abilities like pronunciation and grammar; comparisons with other well-known programs, such as Quizlet and Babbel; additionally, learner interviews and other qualitative data may supplement the quantitative findings to offer a more thorough knowledge of the preferences and experiences of the learners.

In conclusion, both applications prove to be significant resources for lexicon acquisition, with Duolingo emerging as the preferred tool due to its engagement and versatile features. However, the choice of the preferred application should depend on individual needs, preferences and learning goals.

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MEMRISE ПЕН DUOLINGO-НЫ САЛЫСТЫРУ: ТІЛ ҮЙРЕНУДЕ СӨЗДІК ҚОРДЫ МЕНГЕРУДІ ТАЛДАУ

Бұл зерттеу тіл үйренушелерінің сөздік қорды меңгеруіне Memrise пен Duolingo қосымшаларының әсерін бағалауға бағытталған. Оқушылар екі қосымшаны 4 апта бойы күнделікті қолданып, Duolingo-ның төрт модулін және Memrise-тың төрт деңгейін аяқтады. Зерттеу жартылай эксперименттік әдіспен жүргізілді, оған сөздік қорын меңгеру, есте сақтау және қызығушылық деңгейін бағалайтын алдын ала және кейінгі тестілер енгізілді. Нәтижелер барлық қатысушылардың сөздік қорын меңгеруде айтарлықтай жетістіктерге жеткенін көрсетті, әр қосымша үшін өз артықшылықтары байқалды. Memrise мнемоникалық әдістер арқылы сөздерді есте сақтауда тиімді болса, Duolingo тілдің практикалық қолданысын арттырып, үлкен қызығушылық тудырды және қалаулы қосымша ретінде таңдалды. Салыстыру екі платформаның өзара толықтыратын артықшылықтарын көрсетіп, сөздік қорды меңгеруде ең жақсы нәтижелерге қол жеткізу үшін оларды бірге қолдануды ұсынады. Бұл зерттеу мұғалімдер мен тіл үйренушілерге ғылыми дәлелдерге негізделген ақпарат ұсынады және мобильді құрылғыларды пайдалану арқылы тіл үйрену стратегияларын оңтайландыруға көмектеседі. Екі қолданба да лексиконды меңгеру үшін маңызды ресурстар болып табылады, Duolingo өзінің қатысуы мен жан-жақты мүмкіндіктерінің арқасында таңдаулы құрал ретінде пайда болды. Дегенмен, таңдаулы қолданбаны таңдау жеке қажеттіліктерге, қалауларға және оқу мақсаттарына байланысты болуы керек.

Кілтті сөздер: Memrise, Duolingo, EFL оқушылары, ағылшын тілі, сөздік, мобильді оқыту, қосымшалар, технологиялық оқыту.

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СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ MEMRISE И DUOLINGO: АНАЛИЗ ОСВОЕНИЯ СЛОВАРНОГО ЗАПАСА В ИЗУЧЕНИИ ЯЗЫКА

Данное исследование направлено на оценку влияния приложений Memrise и Duolingo на усвоение словарного запаса обучающихся иностранному языку. Учащиеся использовали оба приложения ежедневно в течение 4 недель, завершив четыре модуля в Duolingo и четыре уровня в Memrise. Был применён квазиэкспериментальный подход, включавший предварительное и итоговое тестирование для оценки уровня владения словарным запасом, запоминания и вовлечённости. Результаты показали значительные улучшения в освоении словарного запаса всеми участниками, с явными преимуществами для каждого приложения. Memrise оказался успешным в запоминании слов с использованием мнемонических приёмов, тогда как Duolingo способствовал большей вовлечённости и практическому использованию языка, став предпочтительным приложением. Сравнение подчёркивает взаимодополняющие преимущества обеих платформ и предлагает их совместное использование для достижения максимальных результатов в изучении словарного запаса. Это исследование предоставляет учителям и изучающим языки информацию, основанную на доказательствах, и помогает оптимизировать стратегии изучения языка с использованием мобильных устройств. Оба приложения оказались значительными ресурсами для приобретения лексики, причем Duolingo становится предпочтительным инструментом благодаря своей вовлечённости и универсальным функциям. Однако выбор предпочтительного приложения должен зависеть от индивидуальных потребностей, предпочтений и целей обучения.

Ключевые слова: Memrise, Duolingo, EFL learners, английский язык, лексика, мобильное обучение, приложения, обучение с использованием технологий.

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