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Students' perceptions of the ease of use and usefulness of the Memrise app for learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary

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ABSTRACT

Digital technology has a positive impact on the vocabulary learning process. This research discusses students' perceptions of the ease and usefulness of the Memrise application in intermediate Korean vocabulary learning. The method used is descriptive qualitative, with instruments such as Likert scale questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. We selected 65 active Memrise users learning intermediate Korean as subjects, and 4 informants based on their highest scores for in-depth interviews. The results of the questionnaire showed a very positive perception of the concept of ease of use (average 87.1%–88.6%) in the "Strongly Agree" category and usefulness (average 85.7%–87.5%) in the "Strongly Agree" category. Students assess that the Memrise application has features and an interface that are easy to learn. This application is also considered flexible, effective, efficient, beneficial, and motivating. Interviews reinforced the finding that features such as native-speaker videos, interactive exercises, conversation with AI, community courses, and gamification techniques are considered advantageous for vocabulary mastery. In addition to improving vocabulary, this application can also enhance other language skills, such as grammar and speaking. The main constraints include vlimited access to paid features and dependence on an internet connection, which have become focal points for improvement for the application developers. These findings support the application of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which is useful for providing references for self-directed Korean language learning applications and for understanding its strengths and weaknesses. It can also offer suggestions for application developers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Similar to other foreign languages, Korean language learning focuses on developing proficiency in four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nugroho, 2019). Therefore, a strong command of vocabulary is essential to support the successful development of these four language skills. Vocabulary mastery can be enhanced through interactive learning methods that help improve learners' memory retention (Wooderson et al., 2024).

In the current digital era, proficiency in a foreign language is no longer merely an additional skill but has become an essential competency that can create opportunities in both professional careers and social life. Foreign language proficiency plays an increasingly important role as the world becomes more interconnected through information technology, international trade, and global culture (Balanaieva et al., as cited in Sholihah et al., 2024). In learning Korean or other foreign languages, vocabulary acquisition is essential to support effective communication with others, both orally and in written form. Adequate vocabulary knowledge enables learners to convey their intended messages accurately and helps minimize the risk of misunderstandings during communication (Taebenu & Katemba, 2021).

The challenge of mastering vocabulary is highly relevant for foreign language learners, as it can make it difficult to express themselves in speaking and writing and can also reduce their motivation to read and listen (Ghalebi et al., 2020). Digital technology has a positive impact on the vocabulary learning process (Soyoof et al., 2023). Through digital technology, students can learn vocabulary in more varied and relaxed contexts, thereby strengthening their understanding of new words. However, this technology should be used with discipline to achieve optimal results. In addition, psychological factors such as resilience also play a role in the success of vocabulary learning. They state that highly motivated students tend to be better able to overcome challenges in vocabulary learning and strengthen their language skills (Kim et al., 2019).

In today's digital age, technology-based learning is increasingly being used by educators. These technological advancements have had a significant impact on education. With more advanced technology, many learning resources can be accessed more easily. It can also improve skills and understanding of the material by up to 75% (Saleh et al., 2018). Technology in learning can help students learn anytime and anywhere (Pasaribu & Sirait, 2022). There are many specialized foreign language learning apps that are engaging, fun, and interactive. These apps typically provide content that focuses on vocabulary, grammar, listening, writing, and reading. Technology in education is understood as a structured approach to designing, implementing, and assessing the entire learning process. The goal is to create a more effective educational process and support the achievement of optimal learning outcomes (Nurillahwaty, 2022).

Memrise is an app designed to help users effectively memorize new vocabulary and phrases. The app uses a repetition-based method, which can improve retention of the material being studied. Memrise is known for its interactive approach and relies on repetition to enhance memory retention. Memrise helps users learn and remember new words effectively by using visual and audio aids. This app is suitable for beginners through intermediate learners who want to focus on vocabulary and phrases relevant to everyday expressions. It also features short videos designed to demonstrate proper pronunciation and intonation (Dalimunthe, 2021).

This app is also interactive and can improve language proficiency (Mas'ud & Nuryuliani, 2024). The use of flashcards, periodic repetition, and creative visualizations are Memrise's key features, which help students memorize and understand new vocabulary. Among college students, Memrise has become a popular choice because of its flexibility, which allows them to learn anywhere and anytime (Zohoorian et al., 2022). Previous research has shown that students' perceptions of an app's ease of use and benefits play a role in its effectiveness and their motivation to continue using it, consistent with Zohoorian et al. (2022), who found that the Memrise app helps EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students improve their vocabulary comprehension through a user-friendly interface.

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These findings are consistent with the principles of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989), which indicates that the success of technology adoption by users can be influenced by two main aspects: perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. TAM posits that perceived ease of use has a direct impact on the perception of the technology's usefulness. Perceptions of a technology's usefulness and ease of use have been shown to encourage users' intention to continue using the system in the future. These findings indicate that ease of use and usefulness are key factors influencing usage intention; therefore, developers must ensure that the systems they design are easy to use and beneficial to users (Salloum et al., 2019). In the context of Memrise, students' perceptions of the app's ease of use and benefits significantly influence their decision to continue using it.

One study shows that Memrise can be a tool that supports students in learning Arabic, particularly in acquiring vocabulary and grammar, while also increasing student motivation and participation in the learning process (Fadilah & Tatang, 2024). On the other hand, the use of the Memrise app has proven effective in expanding students' vocabulary. Its ease of use and diverse features make Memrise a highly beneficial learning tool for improving students' vocabulary skills in a learning environment that is anything but monotonous and that supports their motivation to learn (Taebenu & Katemba, 2021). These findings align with the TAM principle, according to which an app's ease of use and benefits influence users' motivation to use it over the long term. Furthermore, the use of Memrise in vocabulary learning has a positive impact. Students can fully focus on the material being presented, making the learning environment more engaging and interactive (Pasaribu & Sirait, 2022).

Although the research described supports the positive impact of Memrise on foreign language learning, studies that specifically explore the use of the app for learning Korean at the intermediate level remain very limited. Previous research has focused more on English or other foreign languages, so further research is needed on the effects of this app in the context of Korean language learning. This study aims to fill that research gap by focusing on students' perceptions of the ease and usefulness of Memrise in learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary. The intermediate level was selected because previous studies on Memrise have largely focused on beginner-level learners, leaving its application in intermediate-level Korean vocabulary learning relatively underexplored. This study therefore aims to address this gap by examining students' perceptions of the app's ease of use and usefulness for learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary.

The results of this study are expected to make a positive contribution to the development of language teaching apps and help students choose learning methods that suit their needs.

Based on the above background, this study will address two research questions:

1. How do students perceive the ease of use of the Memrise app for learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary?
2. How do students perceive the usefulness of the Memrise app for learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary?
3. What challenges do students face when using the Memrise app to learn intermediate-level Korean vocabulary?

This study is expected to contribute to the literature on technology-based language learning and provide insights into the factors that influence users' perceptions of the ease of use and usefulness of learning apps.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive mixed-methods design to examine students' perceptions of the Memrise application's ease of use and usefulness for intermediate-level Korean vocabulary learning. Quantitative data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into students'

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perceptions and experiences. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including response frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations. Meanwhile, the interview data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings from both data sources were compared to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions of the application. Furthermore, this study utilized the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), proposed by Davis (1989), as the primary theoretical framework to examine students' perceptions of the Memrise app's ease of use and usefulness.

2.2. Research Participants

The study involved college students throughout Indonesia who had studied Korean using Memrise. The questionnaire was distributed via social media. The following are the criteria for participants:

1. Active college students in Indonesia who use the Memrise app
2. Have used the Memrise app (mobile or desktop version) to study Korean for at least 3 months and are at the intermediate or advanced intermediate level.

Participants' Korean learning levels were determined by the courses they completed and their progress within the Memrise application. These criteria were established to ensure that participants have real-world experience using the Memrise app for intermediate-level Korean language learning. According to statista.com, the total number of users who downloaded the Memrise app was 211,670 in 2024; however, only a small fraction of them used the app for intermediate-level Korean language learning. For the sample in this study, purposive sampling was used. The researcher used this technique to select participants who met all the criteria and were able to provide in-depth information about their experience using Memrise. Consequently, the sample that met the established criteria consisted of 65 people, and all of their data will be used. From the 65 respondents, four were selected for interviews. Four participants were subsequently selected for semi-structured interviews based on their willingness to participate and their high questionnaire scores. This selection was intended to obtain more detailed accounts of participants' experiences and perceptions of Memrise. However, selecting interview participants primarily based on high questionnaire scores may have overrepresented positive perceptions and limited representation of moderate or negative experiences. Therefore, we interpreted the interview findings in light of this potential limitation and considered them alongside the questionnaire findings from all 65 participants to provide a broader understanding of students' perceptions and the challenges they encountered when using Memrise.. Although the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) typically relies on large samples and a quantitative approach, this study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, allowing the researchers to focus on the depth of the data.

2.3. Research Instrument

This questionnaire uses a Likert scale (Likert Scale Questionnaire). This scale is used to measure a person's attitudes, opinions, and perceptions regarding a particular phenomenon (Sugiyono, 2023). The variables to be measured are broken down into indicators. The questionnaire indicators are used to assess perceptions regarding the ease of use and perceived usefulness of the Memrise app for learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary, as well as the barriers users face. Meanwhile, the interview questions will be derived from the questionnaire to elicit more in-depth responses than those provided in the questionnaire alone. Regarding perceived ease of use, the indicators include: ease of learning the app, ease of the app's interface, ease of the app's features, flexibility, and availability of technical support. Meanwhile, regarding perceived usefulness, the indicators include: learning effectiveness, learning efficiency, and usefulness. In addition to these two aspects, this study also examines users' perceptions regarding the obstacles or challenges they face.

After developing the research instrument, a validity test was conducted. A validity test is an important step to ensure that the instrument created or used in the questionnaire actually measures what it is intended to measure. The initial questionnaire was distributed to two experts in the fields

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of educational technology and Korean language learning for review. Based on the experts' feedback, the questionnaire was revised. Next, we conducted a pilot test with 45 participants (N=45) who met the research criteria to further test the questionnaire's validity before distributing it to the rest of the sample.

. After obtaining responses from the pilot sample, the validity of the questionnaire items was analyzed using SPSS version 23.

After obtaining responses from the pilot sample, the statistical validity of the items was analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation in SPSS version 23. An item was deemed valid if the calculated r-value (r_{hitung}) exceeded the critical r-value from the table (r_{table} = 0.294 for N=45 at a 5% significance level). Based on the validity test results, the 10 items for the "perceived ease of use" indicator, the 10 items for the "perceived usefulness" indicator, and the 5 items for the "user barriers" indicator all yielded r-values > 0.294. Consequently, all items were deemed valid and will be used. The tests for the user barriers were conducted separately because these items contained negative wording and were inversely related to the ease of use and usefulness indicators.

Research data collection techniques are methods used to gather information useful for research (Iba & Wardhana, 2019). Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire distributed online via social media platforms such as X/Twitter platform, by sharing a Google Forms link. The questionnaire was administered from May 9, 2025, to June 10, 2025, yielding 65 respondents who met the criteria. The scarcity of participants meeting these criteria made it difficult for the researcher to obtain a large sample within a realistic timeframe. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted from June 14, 2025, to June 17, 2025; face-to-face interviews were conducted with 4 respondents via Google Meet to obtain more in-depth data. Informants were selected because they were willing to be interviewed and had the highest scores on the questionnaire.

2.4. Data Analysis

To systematically address the research questions, the data analysis distinguished between quantitative and qualitative procedures before integrating them. The quantitative data from the Likert-scale questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data were reduced and presented by indicator, calculating response frequencies, percentages, mean values, standard deviations, and category conclusions to identify broad trends in the students' perceptions.

The data analysis procedure in this study follows the data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1984), which comprises three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The researcher selected data from the distributed questionnaires and interview transcripts, thereby obtaining data deemed relevant to this study. In this study, data from the distributed and collected questionnaires are presented by indicator, which had been previously reduced using a Likert scale table consisting of questions, total scores derived from the responses, response frequency percentages, mean values, mean percentage values, standard deviations, category conclusions, and descriptive explanations.

Next, data triangulation will be performed. Data triangulation is an approach that employs various methods, which researchers apply when collecting and analyzing data. A phenomenon can be understood in greater depth, yielding more valid findings, when analyzed from various perspectives. Therefore, the purpose of data triangulation is to verify the validity of data or information through different perspectives on the research findings (Nurfajriani et al., 2024). The researchers triangulated the statistical trends from the 65 survey respondents with the in-depth thematic narratives from the 4 interviewees. Specifically, the researchers examined how the interviewees' detailed experiences (e.g., specific interactions with the AI conversation feature or video native speakers) explained and contextualized the high or low mean scores for specific questionnaire indicators. By identifying similarities and elaborating on the quantitative data through qualitative narratives, the study provides a comprehensive and valid conclusion about

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both acceptance and the challenges of using the Memrise app. The final step involved drawing conclusions from the data presented earlier.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To interpret the questionnaire results and determine the category of respondents' answers for each indicator, the data were analyzed using average percentages. The categorization was based on class intervals calculated as 100% divided by 5 (the number of Likert scale options), resulting in an interval length of 20%. Based on this calculation, the scale category criteria were established as follows: 0%–19.99% (Strongly Disagree), 20%–39.99% (Disagree), 40%–59.99% (Neutral), 60%–79.99% (Agree), and 80%–100% (Strongly Agree).

3.1. Students' Perceptions of the Ease of Use the Memrise App for Learning Intermediate-Level Korean Vocabulary

In the findings regarding perceived ease of use, all indicators will be described in detail, supplemented by explanations drawn from the interviews. Table 1 below presents a summary of the respondents' answers regarding the ease of learning the Memrise app.

Table 1.
Descriptive statistical results of students' perceived ease of use

No	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage (%)	Category
Ease of Learning Applications					
1	I found it easy to learn how to use the Memrise app.	4.35	0.61	87.1%	Strongly Agree
2	It didn't take me long to figure out how the Memrise app works.				
3	Learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary with the Memrise app				
Ease of Use of the App Interface					
4	The Memrise app interface is easy to understand.	4.32	0.65	86.5%	Strongly Agree
5	The Memrise app interface is easy to				
User-Friendly Features in the App					
6	The Memrise app has clear and easy-to-understand features	4.35	0.62	87.1%	Strongly Agree
Flexibility					
7	I can use the Memrise app to learn anywhere and anytime	4.43	0.68	88.6%	Strongly Agree
8	The Memrise app is easy to use on any device..				
Availability of Technical Support					
9	I found it easy to contact customer support when I encountered a problem with the Memrise app.	4.22	0.80	84.8%	Strongly Agree
10	When I run into problems, I find that the Memrise app offers responsive technical support (e.g., FAQs, chat support).				

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the respondents rated this indicator as "Strongly Agree." These results indicate that the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the Memrise app is easy to learn how to use, that it takes little time to understand how it works, and that the intermediate-level Korean vocabulary material is easy to learn.

These questionnaire results are further supported by interviews with the informants, as follows: "When I first used Memrise in 2017, the app had evolved to become more structured and organized." (Informant 1). "The app is easy to use—as soon as I open it, I can start learning right away." (Informant 3). Informant 2 added, "I've been using it for about two years. The app is easy to use—even though I was a little confused at first, once I got the hang of it, I realized it wasn't

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that hard after all." This statement indicates that the informants felt they could easily learn how to use the Memrise app.

Regarding the app's user interface, the results show that users found it easy to use and did not encounter any difficulties while using the app. Overall, users had a positive perception of the Memrise app's interface. These questionnaire results were further supported by the following interviews with informants: "The app is simple and visually appealing; all menu items are clearly displayed, both in terms of font and color." (Informant 3). Informant 4 emphasized that, "The user interface design is simple and easy to navigate." Informant 2 also added, "The app's interface is simple and user-friendly. I've studied on other language-learning apps before, but their interfaces were quite complicated; Memrise's interface is much simpler," which indicates that the app's interface design supports a positive user experience.

Furthermore, with an overall average score of 4.35, users had a positive perception of the clarity of Memrise's features and were satisfied with the features provided by the app. Additionally, several respondents shared the following comments during interviews: "The learning, practice, and review menus are clearly organized, making it easy to access the material." (Informant 4). "The pronunciation in the native video feature is very clear, and the questions provided can be answered right away." (Respondent 3). "The features on Memrise are easy to understand, and nothing is difficult." (Respondent 2). These statements indicate that the app's features are clear and understandable.

As for the fourth indicator, flexibility, users have a positive perception that the Memrise app can be used to learn anywhere and anytime and is easy to use on any device. These findings are supported by statements from several respondents during interviews, who answered as follows. Informant 3 replied, "This app can be used anytime." Informant 4 added, "Memrise is quite flexible because it can be accessed anytime and anywhere via a cell phone." Informant 1 also replied, "I can use it during short breaks, such as while waiting for the train or during the remainder of my break." These statements demonstrate that the informants also feel the Memrise app is flexible to use.

Regarding the final indicator, with an overall average of 4.22, the results show that, on the whole, users have a positive perception of the ease of contacting customer support. The Memrise app also provides responsive technical support, such as FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) and chat support. Respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the Memrise app provides responsive technical support. Respondents found it easy to contact customer support when they encountered issues.

The questionnaire and interview data are consistent, as both data sets indicate highly positive perceptions of ease of use. This high perceived ease of use aligns closely with Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which suggests that intuitive navigation significantly reduces the cognitive load required to operate a system. For intermediate language learners, cognitive resources must be dedicated to processing complex linguistic input rather than struggling with the app's interface. Memrise's structured design and seamless multi-device flexibility successfully minimize technological friction, allowing users to focus entirely on language acquisition. The questionnaire and interview results also align with Zohoorian et al. (2022), who found that the Memrise app helps EFL students improve vocabulary comprehension through a user-friendly, easy-to-navigate interface.

Furthermore, in Salloum et al. (2019), system quality and self-efficacy positively affected perceptions of ease of use in an e-learning context. This aligns with positive experiences with the Memrise app's ease of use. The aspect of flexibility in mobile apps, as identified by Jeong (2022), is also consistent with these findings, as the Memrise app has been shown to enable learning across various locations and devices, including mobile phones and desktops.

3.2. Students' Perceptions of the Usefulness of the Memrise App in Learning Intermediate-Level Korean Vocabulary

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Table 2. below presents a summary of the respondents' feedback regarding the usefulness of the Memrise app for learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary.

Table 2.
Descriptive statistical results of students' perceived usefulness

No	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage (%)	Category
Effectiveness of Learning					
1	The features in the Memrise app help me learn intermediate-level Korean vocabulary.	4.27	0.74	86.6%	Strongly Agree
2	The Memrise app helped me effectively master intermediate-level Korean vocabulary.				
3	The intermediate-level Korean vocabulary provided by the Memrise app is relevant and effective for my learning needs.				
Efficiency of Learning					
4	The Memrise app helps me save time when learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary.	4.34	0.70	85.7%	Strongly Agree
5	The Memrise app helps me save money on intermediate-level Korean language learning.				
6	The Memrise app can save me both time and money when learning Korean, tailored to my needs.				
7	The Memrise app helps me learn intermediate-level vocabulary quickly.				
Motivation and benefits					
8	The learning materials in the Memrise app have helped me boost my motivation to study.	4.37	0.71	87.5%	Strongly Agree
9	After using the Memrise app, I've seen the benefits.				
10	The Memrise app has helped me expand my intermediate-level Korean vocabulary.				

Based on the data obtained, with an overall average of 4.27, users have a positive perception of this indicator. It also shows that respondents agree that the Memrise app can effectively help them master intermediate-level Korean vocabulary. Furthermore, the Korean vocabulary provided by the Memrise app is relevant and effective for their learning needs. These results are supported by the following responses from interviews regarding the Memrise app's helpfulness and effectiveness. Informant 4 stated, "The native speaker video feature really helps me master intermediate-level vocabulary because I can see and hear firsthand how words or phrases are used in real-life contexts." According to Informant 1, "The community course feature is very helpful because it includes flashcards and vocabulary matching exercises, and it often provides tips on how to make it easier to remember a word."

Regarding relevance to the needs of intermediate-level Korean language learners, four informants agreed that the material presented was relevant to their needs. Informant 2 added, "The material presented matches my proficiency level, which is at the lower intermediate to intermediate level. Since I want to focus on conversation and dialogue, it's a good fit." This statement indicates that the informants feel the material in the Memrise app aligns with their level and needs.

Furthermore, the results show that the majority of respondents feel the app is time-efficient. Respondents strongly agree and agree that the Memrise app helps them save money on learning. Respondents feel the app offers good value for the cost. With an overall average score of 4.34, users generally have a positive perception of this indicator. The results also indicate that respondents agree that the Memrise app can help save time and money when learning vocabulary. The Memrise app can also save time and money when learning Korean according to respondents' needs and can help them quickly learn intermediate-level Korean vocabulary.

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Furthermore, most respondents believed that the learning materials in the Memrise app helped boost their motivation to learn. Users also felt that the app was effective in helping them learn intermediate-level Korean vocabulary. These results are supported by the following interview responses. Informant 1 stated, "This app motivates me to keep learning because each level is challenging and shows my progress. My confidence has also increased, especially when chatting with friends who are just starting to learn Korean." Informant 4 noted, "The quality of the learning materials is quite good; they don't get boring and really boost my motivation. This helps me feel more enthusiastic about learning. I also feel my vocabulary has improved, and I'm more confident when listening, reading, and speaking, because I've gotten used to the pronunciation of native speakers and through practice." These statements indicate that the informants experienced benefits and an increase in their motivation after using the Memrise app.

Moving beyond basic descriptions, these findings highlight a critical intersection between app design and the specific cognitive needs of intermediate-level learners. Unlike beginner-level learning, which focuses mainly on the Hangul alphabet and basic rote memorization, intermediate Korean learning requires a deeper understanding of contextual usage, pragmatic nuances, and native-speed pronunciation. Memrise's multimedia integration heavily drives its quantitative effectiveness. Features like the "Conversation with AI" and "Native Speaker Videos" bridge the gap between theoretical vocabulary and real-world application. Furthermore, at the intermediate stage, learners often hit a motivation plateau. The gamification elements (spaced repetition, scoring, and progress tracking) observed in Memrise effectively combat this plateau. Thus, Memrise proves useful not merely as a memorization tool, but as a simulated immersive environment that caters to the specific communicative needs of intermediate learners.

The finding that Memrise is effective in helping users master vocabulary aligns with the research by Dalimunthe (2021), and the fact that its features are relevant to learning needs supports the research by Taebenu and Katemba (2021) and Fadilah and Tatang (2024), which states that the Memrise app has proven effective in expanding students' vocabulary through interactive and enjoyable learning methods. In addition, the grammar lesson feature can help users master Korean grammar. Other features, such as cultural and language tips, help users understand the contextual usage of the words provided.

Furthermore, the gamification aspects of Memrise that can boost learning motivation are also consistent with the findings of Mirdad et al. (2023). Informants stated, "I'm motivated because each level is challenging and shows my learning progress," and "it makes me study more often, because after finishing one level, I want to keep going." These interviews clearly support the role of gamification in boosting motivation. The informants also reported an increase in self-confidence and overall language proficiency, as evidenced by statements such as, "I can watch Korean dramas without subtitles" and "when I listen to songs, I also understand the meaning." These statements expand upon the findings of Pasaribu and Sirait (2022) regarding the positive impact of the Memrise app on vocabulary learning, particularly on other language skills.

3.3. Obstacles faced by students when using the Memrise app for intermediate Korean vocabulary learning

Table 3 below shows a summary of the respondents' feedback regarding the limited features of the Memrise app.

Table 3.
Descriptive statistical results of students' learning obstacles

No	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage (%)	Category
1	I'm having trouble accessing some features in the Memrise app.	3.48	1.14	69.5%	Agree
2	Some features in the Memrise app require a subscription to access, which is an obstacle.				

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3	My internet connection affects how smoothly I can use the Memrise app.	4.05	1.15	80.9%	Strongly Agree
4	Some features of the Memrise app don't meet my needs for learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary.	3.11	1.38	62.2%	Agree
5	I feel that the intermediate-level Korean vocabulary material in the Memrise app is still limited.	3.57	1.15	71.4%	Agree

The results show that the majority of respondents feel that subscription-based features can be a barrier to accessing app features. Overall, respondents feel that this barrier significantly impacts their ability to access Memrise's features and view the existence of subscription-based features as a hindrance. These results are supported by the following interview responses. According to Informant 2, "One of the obstacles I face without a subscription is that access is more limited. For example, the 'Conversation with AI' feature is limited in the free version. With a subscription, you can use it as many times as you want and have access to more features." Informant 3 also added, "Without a subscription, there's no grammar instruction, and vocabulary learning is also limited." These statements indicate that the informants perceive limitations in the app's features, particularly when not subscribed to Memrise.

In addition, respondents felt that this obstacle was so significant that the internet connection affected the smooth operation of the Memrise app. These findings are supported by the following interview results. Informant 4 said, "An unstable internet connection disrupts learners. It hinders learning progress and causes a temporary drop in motivation." Informant 1 also agreed, saying, "Sometimes when I'm on the train, the signal drops, and my learning progress isn't saved. Although this happens very rarely, sometimes learning progress continues even when the signal is unstable." Another obstacle experienced by users is that the app's features do not align with their needs for learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary. For example, Informant 1 stated, "The scenario, conversation with AI, and video features make it confusing to decide which one to learn first." This statement indicates that the informant felt the app's features were not well-suited to their needs. The limited vocabulary material was the final barrier. The intermediate-level vocabulary material in the Memrise app is still considered limited. Although the interview results did not directly state that the intermediate-level vocabulary material is limited, Informant 2 mentioned, "Even though I sometimes still have a little trouble, I can still understand it well." This information was also confirmed by Informants 1 and 3. These responses also indicate that there are challenges in understanding the available material.

The limited vocabulary material was the final barrier. The survey data showed that the intermediate-level vocabulary material in the Memrise app is still considered limited by many respondents. However, the interview results did not directly state that the intermediate-level vocabulary material is limited; instead, Informant 2 mentioned, "Even though I sometimes still have a little trouble, I can still understand it well." Informants 1 and 3 also confirmed this. To address this apparent discrepancy between the broader survey data and the interview excerpts, a more critical interpretation is required. While the existing intermediate materials are highly comprehensible and accurate (as praised by interviewees who could "understand it well"), the overall volume, depth, or variety of advanced-intermediate content may not fully meet the broader user base's needs. Intermediate learners typically require vast exposure to diverse topics (e.g., academic, professional, and idiomatic expressions) to achieve fluency. Therefore, while the quality of Memrise's intermediate content is high, its overall quantity or scope remains a constraint.

These findings are consistent with Quyen's (2022) research, which found that some features are available only to subscribers and that this issue is one of the barriers. In this study, cost and connectivity acted as barriers, even if the app itself was considered very good, consistent with the findings of Quyen (2022), Zohoorian et al. (2022), Fadilah and Tatang (2024), and Mirdad et al. (2023) that this app relies on a stable internet connection. Barriers related to content mismatches and limitations also exist, though they received a lower level of agreement from some respondents

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who experienced them. This suggests that while these barriers exist, they may not be as significant as the barriers related to the accessibility of paid features or internet connectivity. The reliance on technology access and paid features as barriers is supported by the findings. These barriers also highlight areas where app developers need to improve.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine students' perceptions of the ease of use and usefulness of the Memrise app in learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary, as well as the obstacles encountered by students who use the app. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the Memrise app is perceived very positively among students in terms of its ease of use for learning intermediate-level Korean vocabulary. Students "Strongly Agree" that the app takes little time to learn how to use and that the vocabulary is easy to learn. The Memrise app's interface idos also easy to understand and use, and its features are clear and intuitive. The app is flexible and makes it easy to contact customer support. Regarding usefulness, students also strongly agree that the app helps them master Korean vocabulary quickly and efficiently, in terms of both time and cost. Furthermore, most students feel that the app boosts their motivation to learn and provides tangible benefits in accelerating the learning process. It can also improve other language skills, such as speaking and grammar.

Despite the highly positive perceptions of ease of use and usefulness, students experienced several barriers when using the platform. The main barriers identified in this study were the dependence on a stable internet connection (categorized as "Strongly Agree") and limited access due to subscription-based premium features (categorized as "Agree"). Other barriers were also felt, namely a mismatch between certain features and students' needs and the limited scope of intermediate vocabulary content, although agreement levels were relatively lower.

This study reinforces the role of technology as a supplementary tool in Korean vocabulary learning. Features of this app—such as visuals, audio, gamification, videos of native speakers, conversation practice with AI, and community courses—are considered effective and can be adapted into teaching methods. For application developers, it is recommended to consolidate fragmented topics (such as scenarios, videos, and AI conversations) into a single menu, improve app stability regarding internet connectivity, and resolve inconsistent audio issues. As for recommendations for future research, it is suggested to examine other aspects of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as they relate to this app. Future research is also recommended to directly assess the effectiveness of the Memrise app for vocabulary learning or other Korean language skills at the intermediate level, using a smaller sample size to ensure more accurate results, and to compare students' perceptions of Memrise with other language learning applications

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