



another one of its advantages. Memrise claims that “research suggests that reminders are most effective when they occur just before a memory fades completely and that successive reminders should be separated by longer and longer intervals.” With this statement in mind Memrise presents itself as a spaced repetition learning tool which helps with the remembering of the fading memories – as the app’s name suggests.

But Memrise is not perfect. As a matter of fact, it has several inherent weaknesses. One is that it simply does not have a strong structured base for learning languages. Memrise’s courses do not offer a comprehensive learning system. Learners are not likely to come across any explanation about the grammar, the phonology, or the exceptions of the language; instead Memrise expects them to deduce those rules on their own, and by doing so, it puts the learners in danger of the abnormalities of the target language. Another downside to this app is its crisp and computerized voice (In the case of some less popular languages, there are no voices whatsoever). Moreover, the app does not have voice recognition for the learners to practice speaking. Listening and speaking (mostly the latter) are surely ignored in the learning process. Instead Memrise tries to plant new words and phrases in the learners’ minds as quickly as possible.

Conclusion

Memrise is a great free online learning tool that offers its courses as a smartphone app and as a browser-based web app. The courses are mainly designed to teach languages, but are also used for other academic and nonacademic contents. It uses many vivid images

that aid memory with retention of the materials, although personalized images might work better. In fact, developers of the software believe that creating mental associations or “vivid encoding” is key to learning anything. The app also systematically reminds users to attend to the words or phrases they have planted through adaptive testing. The plants will wither if not attended to. This aspect of the game, according to its developers, infuses emotions into the learning process and makes it more effective. The main criticism levelled against the app is that it is currently focused on getting users to memorize words and phrases, and that other language skills and components are largely ignored. Furthermore, Memrise does not have a strong structured base for learning a new language; learners are simply and directly presented with some vocabulary, which are not necessarily grammatically beneficial, can skip around their built-in syllabus (Ellis, 2005) and go through any level of any course anytime they want. Despite the shortcomings, the authors of this review recommend Memrise as a useful secondary learning aid, one that can definitely help its users learn new things in the target language.

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short span of time, which works in favor of the mnemonics of this learning tool (See Figure 4).



Figure 4. Speed reviewing a sentence in Esperanto

In the learning sessions of the more popular language courses, learners are presented with listening skills as a bonus. They hear, for example, a sentence or a word in the target language and have to choose the correct translation in the second language (See Figure 5).



Figure 5. A listening exercise in a French course

One of the most important features of this app is its gamification of the learning process. Learners find mems playful and funny, strive to achieve their daily goals so they do not lose their “daily streak”, and generally experience a different atmosphere than the one they do in the classroom. Many of the interesting features of this app happen in the Pro Version. If learners upgrade from Free to Pro, in certain language courses, for example, they can work on their listening skills.

They are provided with a platform to meet native speakers, and are able to review their difficult words (the ones they have learned with a lot of mistakes).

Evaluation

As a language learning tool, Memrise has many strengths. With its slogan “learning, made joyful”, Memrise motivates and keeps track of the learner’s progress neatly and on a regular basis. The mems and the fact that it gives learners points for each correct answer adds to the gamification of the app. Learners’ interest and focus can be retained for a long time. Memrise’s large community of learners, who add mems and courses every day is another one of its great features. Thanks to its community, learners have huge possibilities of choices for learning languages. Even though for every word only 7 mems are shown, learners themselves can add their personal mems to the already huge collection, and that says a lot about the engagement that learning needs to be completed (Miller, 2010). Members of Memrise are not just learners who passively look at their mobile screens. They can be actively engaged with the app and the community it presents them.

Memrise’s scheduled reminders are



in which they choose to learn the target language. They do not just learn the words; rather, they “plant” and “grow” them through time. Learners can swipe left to see more “mems” which are designed to make the learners remember more effectively (See Figure 1). According to the Memrise website “a mem is anything that helps you create a connection between a word and its meaning. Often colloquially called “educational mems”, a mem could really be a photo, GIF, mnemonic, video, cartoon, example sentence, etymology or even a witty remark.”



Figure 1. The flashcard and the “mem” in an Esperanto course

Immediately after learning the words or phrases in the target language, learners are “tested”. Memrise tests them in different ways: Sometimes they are presented with the learned words or phrases and are asked to choose the correct translation from among three other wrong translations (See Figure 2). Other times they have to type the word or phrase correctly in the app (See Figure 3). If they are wrong, they are again presented with the flashcards and the mems. This continues as long as learners can pass

the tests, and their “plant” of words and phrases are fully grown.



Figure 2. Choose the correct translation

Figure 3. Type in the word

Based on their setting preferences about how much they want to learn, Memrise presents learners with materials. They can go to “Learning Settings” to choose how many items they want to learn per learning session, and how many they want to review. When a learning session is over and learners have long before “planted” new words and phrases in their minds, and see them fully grown now, Memrise reviews the previous materials. There are two types of reviewing in Memrise. One is called “The Classic Review”, which is basically the same exercises learners were presented with in the learning sessions (See Figures 2 and 3). Learners are prompted to review them from time to time, and if they answer incorrectly, they are presented with the flashcard and the mems again. Another way Memrise reviews the already learned words is through “Speed Review”. In this type of review, learners are presented with the learned words or phrases and have to choose the correct translation among six possible answers in a very short time. Speed Review makes it possible to review everything from the beginning in a really

Introduction

Mobile assisted language learning (MALL), a subarea of the field of M(mobile)-learning, is a thriving research field with important implications for second language acquisition (see Ballance, 2012; Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). Mobile devices such as smartphones, tablet computers, laptops, MP3 and MP4 players, iPads, and so on are appealing to language learners because they afford them the possibility to study anytime, almost anywhere and at their own convenience. The potential is a great advantage for people who are pressed for time due to work and family commitments. There are many studies (See Burston, 2013 for a review) that show the effectiveness of mobile technology in learning the different aspects of a second language. New mobile language learning applications (e.g., Busuu, Babbel, Duolingo, enTeacher, ...) now allow learners to not only learn a new language in an entertaining and personalized manner but also to interact with learners of other countries and cultures. The developers of these applications, who are usually from outside of the field of second language pedagogy, claim their creations provide learners with an easy and effective tool to learn a new language. This paper focuses on one such application by the name of Memrise, and explores the possibilities the app offers for learning a second language.

Memrise: A Detailed Description

Memrise is readily accessible to learners in Android or IOS, and can be downloaded from Google Play/iTunes respectively.

Since the app is hugely community-driven, the number of languages and courses presented in it, is enormous. Languages offered to English speakers range from European to Asian and Pacific, to African languages and many others. This is mainly because any member of Memrise can create a course if they so wish and have others learn from it. In this way, Memrise is a very special language learning tool, compared to others such as Duolingo or Anki. Memrise users can even take part in courses such as Ainu; a dying language spoken only by a very small number of speakers in Japan. The content of other non-language learning courses in Memrise includes Trivia, Geography, Memory Training, and so on.

Novice teachers' schooling experience is an umbrella term that covers a wide range of issues such as all levels of training from the basic and elementary to university, something that Lortie (1975) mentions as knowledge gained through observation

After registering on the app via their Google, Facebook, or email accounts, learners choose from a variety of courses that they see before them. When they touch "start learning" from their selected course and level, they immediately see a flashcard containing a word or phrase in the target language, and the meaning of the word or phrase in the language

Memrise: Does It Hold up as a Language Learning Tool?

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مقدمه

از چند دهه گذشته به این سو شمار افراد آشنا به بیش از یک زبان، رشد چشمگیری داشته است. پیشرفت دستاوردهای تکنولوژیک، به ویژه در علوم رایانه‌ای و فناوری اطلاعات و به دنبال آن به بازار آمدن حجم وسیعی از نرم‌افزارهای دوسویه (تعاملی)، نحوه تدریس، یادگیری و ارزیابی را متحول ساخته است. اکنون، منابع جدید تکنولوژی آموزشی به مدرسان زبان این امکان را می‌دهد تا افزون بر ایجاد محیط‌های یادگیری تعاملی، فعالیت‌های واقعی را با هدف یادگیری زبان مقصد که موجب پیوند کلاس‌های درس با دنیای بیرون می‌شود بازآفرینی کنند. این تکنولوژی، همچنین برای فراگیران زبان بسیار مفید است، زیرا باعث انعطاف‌پذیری بیشتر در یادگیری، ایجاد روابط اجتماعی و تأمل درباره زبان می‌شود. ابزارهای متنوع دنیای مجازی امکان ارزیابی و مشاهده پیشرفت فراگیران زبان را نیز فراهم می‌سازد. با وجود این از آنجا که بسیاری از این نوآوری‌ها به دست افرادی خارج از حوزه آموزش زبان ساخته می‌شود استفاده از آن‌ها و کاربرد در زمینه تدریس و یادگیری نیازمند ارزشیابی و بررسی دقیق است. در مقاله حاضر، نرم‌افزار یادگیری زبان ممرایز (Memrise)، معرفی و محاسن و معایب یادگیری زبان دوم از طریق آن بیان شده است.

کلیدواژه‌ها: نرم‌افزار ممرایز، نرم‌افزارهای تعاملی، نرم‌افزارهای آموزشی و یادگیری زبان