

Aulia Subita*
Mohammad Ahsanuddin

**Universitas Negeri
Malang**

*Corresponding author
email:
auliasubita11@gmail.com

The Utilization of Memrise in Arabic Language Learning with Blended Learning Method

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Abstract

Rapid development of technology influences learning process where online learning has replaced the traditional learning. However, because of the numerous problems posed by this transition, the learning process has changed to use blended learning by utilizing technological media. This research aims to describe the utilization of Memrise in Arabic language learning with blended learning method and to describe the obstacles in utilizing Memrise in learning process. This study employs a descriptive qualitative methodology with Miles-Huberman's data analysis techniques. This study revealed that the process of utilizing Memrise in Arabic language learning using the blended learning method is conducted through several stages, which are preparing the media, face-to-face learning, and online learning. The obstacles in utilizing Memrise in learning process faced by the teacher and students, including inadequate facilities, extra payment for more features and less flexible quizzes.

Keywords: *Blended Learning, Memrise, Arabic Learning*

Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi yang pesat berpengaruh pada proses pembelajaran. dimana pembelajaran online telah menggantikan pembelajaran tradisional. Namun, karena banyaknya masalah yang ditimbulkan oleh peralihan ini, maka proses pembelajaran berubah menggunakan blended learning dengan memanfaatkan media teknologi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pemanfaatan Memrise dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab dengan metode blended learning dan mendeskripsikan kendala-kendala dalam pemanfaatan Memrise dalam proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik analisis data Miller-Huberman. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa proses pemanfaatan Memrise dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab dengan menggunakan metode blended learning dilakukan melalui beberapa tahapan, yaitu menyiapkan media, pembelajaran tatap

muka, dan pembelajaran online. Kendala-kendala dalam pemanfaatan Memrise dalam proses pembelajaran yang dihadapi oleh guru dan siswa, diantaranya fasilitas yang kurang memadai, pembayaran ekstra untuk fitur yang lebih banyak dan kuis yang kurang fleksibel.

Kata Kunci: Blended Learning, Memrise, Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab.

INTRODUCTION

The information technology has been developing rapidly. This development is characterized by technological convergence, digitization, fiber optic (laser) technology and network technology. Technology convergence is an integrated information and cybernetics capability. Digitization is the change of analog technology to digital technology that contains rich information communication. Fiber optic and laser technology allows very high bandwidth. Network technology is an interconnection between networks that is global in nature (Kasemin 2015, 9).

Information technology is related to the activities of collecting, processing, storing, disseminating, and utilizing information. According to Nuryanto (2012, 1), information technology activities are related to the collection, processing, storage, management, dissemination, and utilization of information related to communications as human activities. This affects the way humans communicate in performing their activities.

The impact of technological development in education causes a transition in the learning process. Rosenberg (2001, 8) mentions that the learning process can be done anywhere and anytime, from using paper to the virtual world with virtual channels (internet), and from physical facilities to network facilities. This transition has led to communication between teachers and students not only face-to-face but also through long-distance communication using the internet.

Traditional classroom learning is gradually losing its relevance in this digital age (Jamil and Agung 2021). This is because the common people believe that learning in the modern day is being replaced with learning that depends on electronic gadget (Maulida 2020). Especially since the Covid 19 pandemic, the learning process cannot be carried out face-to-face, or changed into what is commonly known as distance learning. However, this transition poses many obstacles such unclear presented

material, monotonous atmosphere, and lack of interaction between teacher and students (Purwanto et al. 2020).

On the other side, the teachers find it difficult to design materials that can be presented virtually. As a result, many teachers tend to focus more on how to deliver material rather than the competence of students' knowledge (Wahidah 2020). Like that statement mentioned by Andrianto Pangondian, Insap Santosa, and Nugroho (2019) that the teacher required more time to prepare online learning, and active practice did not proceed quickly so this may reduce the time to deliver the material.

Based on the benefits and drawbacks of the two learning methods, expert educators propose a new method, called blended learning, to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the learning process. Due to the ease with which both students and teachers may access online resources in this digital age, blended learning has become a popular approach for teaching and learning languages (Isti'anah 2017).

Blended learning has been implemented in Arabic language learning. (Alasraj and Alharbi (2014) revealed in their research how e-learning websites can be used in blended learning to assist students in learning Arabic as a second language and boost their confidence. Al-Qatawneh, Eltahir, and Alsalhi (2019) also revealed the same thing, that blended learning can affect students' attitudes and accomplishment levels in Arabic language learning courses.

Memrise is a web-based language learning platform that can be utilized in online learning. This language learning platform can encourage students' independent learning as Memrise can be accessed from any place and at any time (*aminatun*). Students must acquire the fundamentals to learn Arabic as a second language. Especially vocabulary, as it functions as a medium for the transmission of thought and meaning (*mahmud*). This can be maximized by using Memrise especially for students who learn languages by memorizing. Memrise accelerates learning by using spaced repetition of flash cards (Shellenbarger 2015).

Observing the phenomenon of how technology and various online learning applications in upgrading the teaching and learning process, this study aimed to describe the utilization of Memrise in Arabic language learning with blended learning method and to describe the obstacles in utilizing Memrise in learning process.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a descriptive-qualitative research methodology to describe how Memrise is used in the blended learning method to learn Arabic. According to Bogdan and Taylor, that the data produced by qualitative research is generated via qualitative research through observation of behavior and spoken and written word (Salim and Syahrums 2012, 46).

This study was conducted at MTSN 1 Malang City. The various accomplishments made in Arabic language classes attest to the superiority of this madrasah in Malang. This madrasah has created digital learning materials and makes use of blended learning method in tandem with the growth of technology. The subjects in this study were students of class VII E.

Data information derived from both primary and secondary sources (Hardani et al. 2020, 121). Primary data was obtained through observational technique while secondary data was obtained through unstructured interview techniques and documentation. Unstructured or spontaneous interviews were conducted by asking questions related to the utilization of Memrise to teachers and students.

Three steps of data analysis were used to examine the acquired data. The data analysis technique uses the concept of Miller and Huberman. First reducing the data, then presenting it, and finally forming conclusions. Reducing data means choosing important things, summarizing, and looking for patterns so that the reduced data can provide a clearer picture. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of a brief description. Presentation of data can make it easier to understand and plan further work. Furthermore, drawing conclusions from the previous data which is then used to answer the formulation of the problem (Abdussamad 2021, 160).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Utilization of Memrise in Arabic Language Learning with Blended Learning Method

Teacher in MTsN 1 Malang City was using Memrise to help students learn Arabic. The program's primary focus is on the theme of "family everyday activities" (*a'malul yaumiyatil usroti*). This study was carried out for four meetings. The learning Arabic objective using Memrise is to be able to read vocabulary and sentences by

understanding the meaning and function of vocabulary, *tasrif fi'il mudhori*, and *isim istifham*.

With the blended learning approach, Arabic language learning is delivered both face-to-face learning and online learning. Face-to-face learning takes place in the classroom while online learning is using Memrise or can be described as traditional learning. In this study, Arabic language learning with blended learning method is implemented face to face and online alternately. The following are the stages for blended learning for learning Arabic language by using Memrise.

a. Preparing learning material

In this stage, the teacher is preparing the lesson plans, media, and learning material. The learning meter is adapted to the material in the 2013 curriculum Arabic book. Then the teacher designs the material through Memrise so that students can access it easily. After completing the lesson plan and learning instructions that will be given to the students, the teacher sets up a link of Memrise that students may access through WhatsApp group. Students may use the given link at any time and from any location, allowing them to absorb the teacher's instructions throughout the day.

b. Face-to-face learning

There are three activities that used in this stage. First, opening activities, second, core activities, dan third, closing activities. The teacher always completes these three steps during face-to-face learning. Opening activities are the initial stage that must be carried out by a teacher in the Arabic language learning process. In this step, the teacher engages in the following activities:

- (a) The teacher greets, and asks a student to lead the prayer
- (b) The teacher conveys learning objectives, and
- (c) The teacher stimulates students by posing questions related the lesson's subject.

Core activities are a vital step in Arabic language learning to transfer knowledge to students. In this study, face-to-face learning is conducted for the first time to learn vocabularies and *tasrif fi'il mudhori*. In these activities, the teacher engages in the following activities:

- (a) The teacher presents the new words in a sentence along with a visual that illustrates the sentence's meaning

- (b) The teacher reads the sentence and asks the students to repeat it
- (c) The teacher asks the students to translate the sentence by observing the illustration.
- (d) The teacher asks the students to memorize the meaning of the new vocabulary and how to pronounce it.
- (e) The teacher shows several sentences using *fi'il mudhori* with different *dhomirs*.
- (f) The teacher reads the sentences and asks the students to repeat it
- (g) The teacher asks the students to translate and explain the difference between the sentences.
- (h) The teacher shows the questions and appoints students randomly to answer the questions
- (i) The teacher gave compliments to all students who answered the question.

The second time face-to-face learning is conducted to learn *isim istifham* and conversation. In these activities, the teacher shows the interrogative sentence "*madza ta'malu?*" and "*madza taktubu?*" and its translation. The students were then asked to describe the differences and the function for the two interrogative phrases. Along with feedback on performance, teachers give guidance and corrections to assist students communicate things correctly.

The lesson continued with conversation material. The conversation text is presented by the teacher. The students are then asked to repeat the text's pronunciation after the teacher has read it aloud. The teacher has the students translate the conversation text together to comprehend its meaning. Finally, to develop students' language skills, the teacher asked students to practice conversation in pairs.

The last activity in face-to-face learning is the closing activity. In this activity the teacher gives students the opportunity to convey conclusions about the lessons taught that day while students perform the teacher provides reinforcement or justifies student statements. Then the teacher closes the class by praying and greetings.

In the core activities, the teacher explains *tasrif fi'il mudhori* material in an inductive approach. An inductive approach of learning *qawaid* involves five steps

(Syahatah 1996, 210). First *muqaddimah* (introduction), the teacher conveys the learning objectives and gives a stimulus. Second *'ardh* (delivering the material), the teacher shows several sentences using *fi'il mudhori* with different *dhomirs*. Third *rabth* (linking to previous material), the student asked to translate the sentences. Fourth *istinbath al-qa'idah* (concluding the rules), the student asked to analyze and explain the difference of the sentences. Fifth *tathbibq* (applying the rules), students are asked to answer the questions that have been given. This inductive approach can encourage students to think logically and actively participate in the learning process (Setyawan 2015).

c. Online learning

Online learning using Memrise has been implemented twice alternately after face-to-face learning. There are two activities that students do when learning Arabic using Memrise, those are reviewing lessons that were learned in class and taking quizzes. The lesson is presented using images, text, tables, and audio. While the quiz is presented with various forms that allow students to practice several language skills, especially reading, writing, and listening.

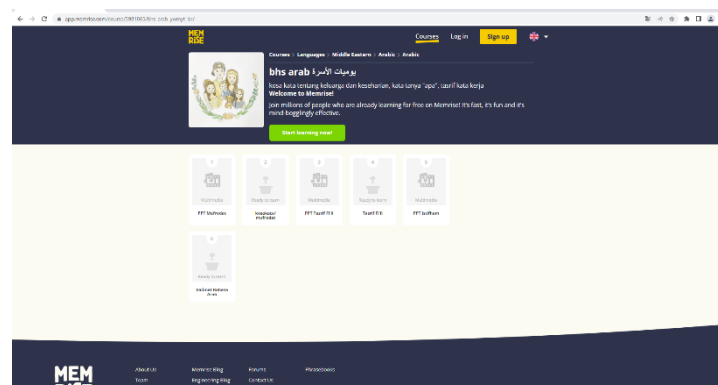


Figure 1. View of Memrise Platform

Figure 1 is an initial view of the Memrise platform. In order to join in this Memrise class, students should register for an account first. Then students can reviewing the mufrodat, *tasrif fi'il* or *isim istifham* and continued by taking the quiz.

Reviewing Lessons

Students review the vocabulary, *tasrif fi'il mudhori*, and *isim istifham* lessons that have been taught by the teacher in the class. To review vocabulary, the students

are shown illustration, text, and audio of word without translation. Writing the meaning of the word in the native tongue is avoided so that students can interpret the word by associating it with the illustration displayed.

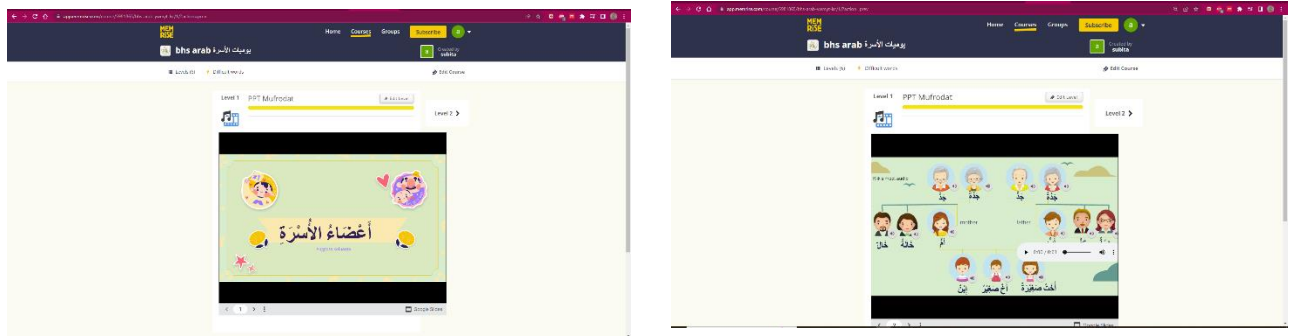


Figure 2. View of Vocabulary Lesson

Vocabulary learning using a combination of text and pictures can improve students' vocabulary acquisition. This is supported by Plass et al. (1998) Plass's research on 103 English learners studying German. It was found that the group of participants who learned new vocabulary with verbal and picture annotations scored higher in reading comprehension than the group of participants who chose verbal annotations only, or pictures only, or even neither.

Levi & Lentz in Azhar Arsyad (2007, 16) that the use of images has a cognitive function and compensatory function in learning. Cognitive function is to provide opportunities for students to associate images with text to find the meaning of words. This thinking process has an impact on the fluency of understanding and remembering the meaning of Arabic words. The compensatory function is to accommodate students who are weak in reading by organizing information and recalling it.

The aim of vocabulary learning is not simply to understand the meaning of words. However, students also be capable of pronouncing words correctly because proper pronunciation leads to good reading and speaking skills (Wahab 2008, 151). To accomplish this, Memrise's audio feature can be utilized as a tool to pronounce words correctly. Students use Memrise's audio feature to listen to the correct pronunciation so they can repeat it or pronounce it correctly. This technique is in accordance with the technique described by Effendy (2005, 99) to acquire new vocabulary, namely the word listening technique.

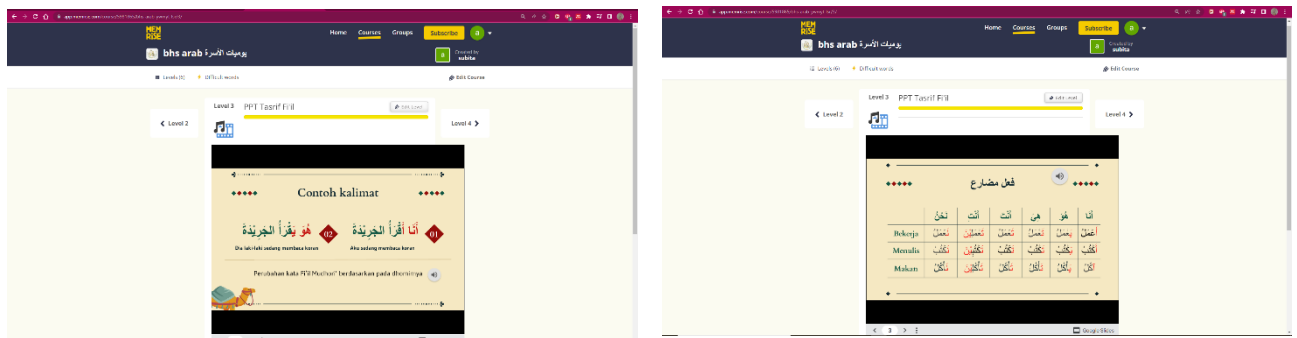


Figure 3. View of *Tasrif Fi'il Mudhori*' Lesson

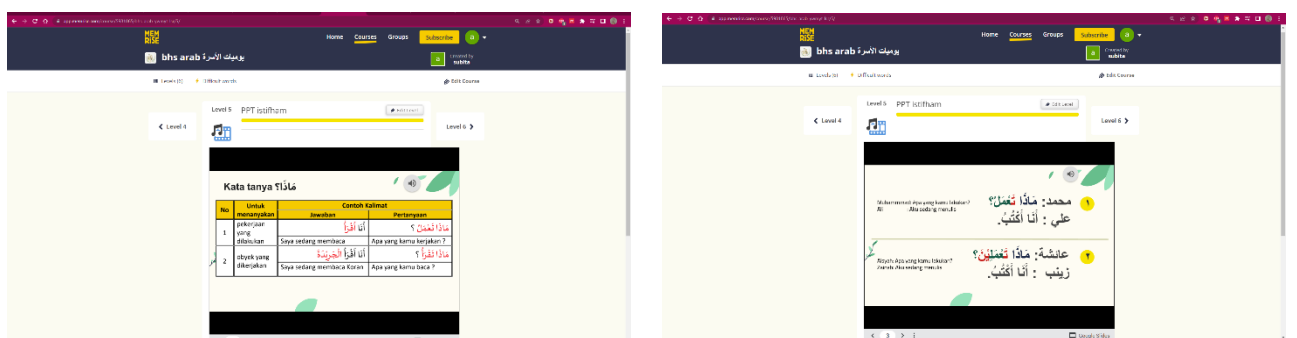


Figure 4. View of *Isim Istifham* Lesson

The lesson is continued with reviewing *tasrif fi'il* and *isim istifham*. First, *tasrif fi'il* and *isim istifham* are shown in sentences. The sentences are composed of common daily words and new vocabulary with the theme of a'malul yaumiyyatil usroh in the form of jumlah mufidah. Then the qowaid for *tasrif fi'il* and *isim istifham* are presented in a table form to assist students in understanding and organizing information. This teaching technique is in accordance with the gradual principle (*at tadarruj*). Taufik (2016, 9) explained that in teaching Arabic as a second language there is a gradual principle, which is teaching from the global to the detailed.

This session contains an audio explanation of the lesson. The audio presents a teacher-recorded explanation to ensure that students are not confused nor misunderstood. Moreover, the audio can be played more than once so that they can listen to it until they understand. Unlike in classroom learning, when students who do not listen or are absent cannot repeat or even follow the lesson.

Taking quizzes

The first quiz in Memrise is translating words or sentences using multiple choice question. Students are shown words or sentences in Arabic and then asked to translate them into Indonesian by choosing the correct answer. The second is writing translation from Indonesia to Arabic. The second is writing translations from Indonesian to Arabic. Students are shown a word or sentence in Indonesian and then asked to write it in Arabic by writing letters or sequencing words into correct sentences.

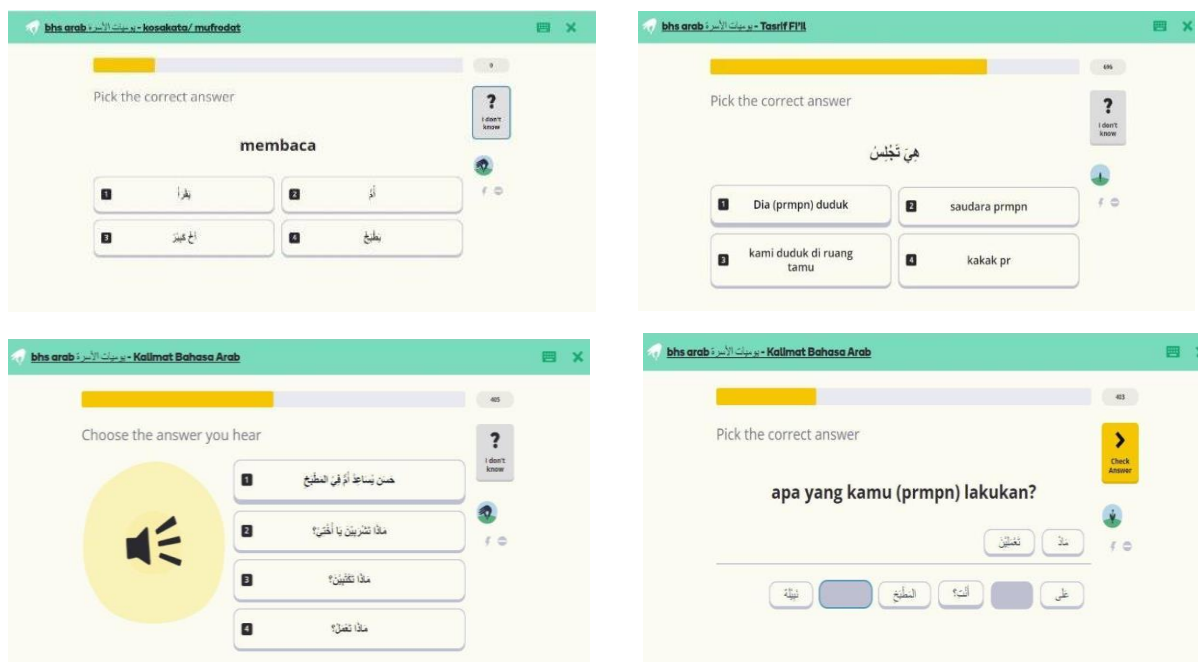


Figure 5. View of translation quizzes (1)

The third quiz is multiple-choice questions based on spoken word or sentences. in this session students will listen to a word or sentence in Arabic then students are asked to choose the option with the correct translation or choose the option with the correct or choose the option with the correct Arabic text.

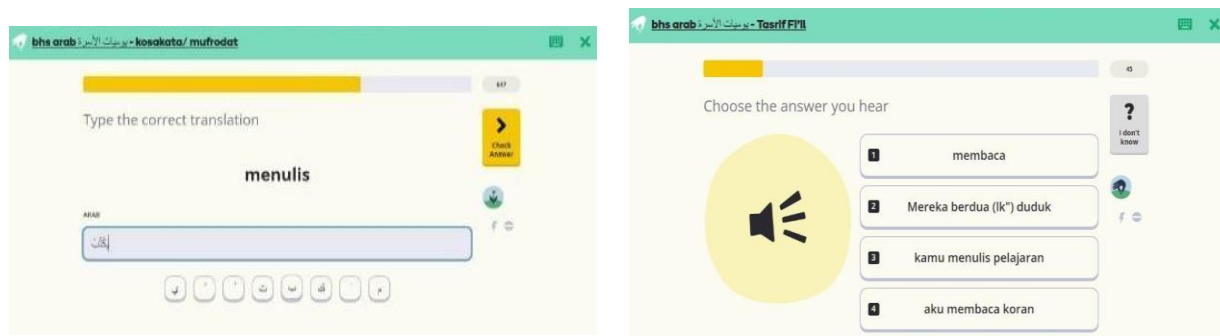


Figure 6. View of translation quizzes (2)

The fourth quiz is writing Arabic words or sentences and writing what is heard. In this session students will be read a word or sentence in Indonesian then students are asked to write it back in Arabic. They will also hear Arabic word or sentence and then asked to write back what they heard.

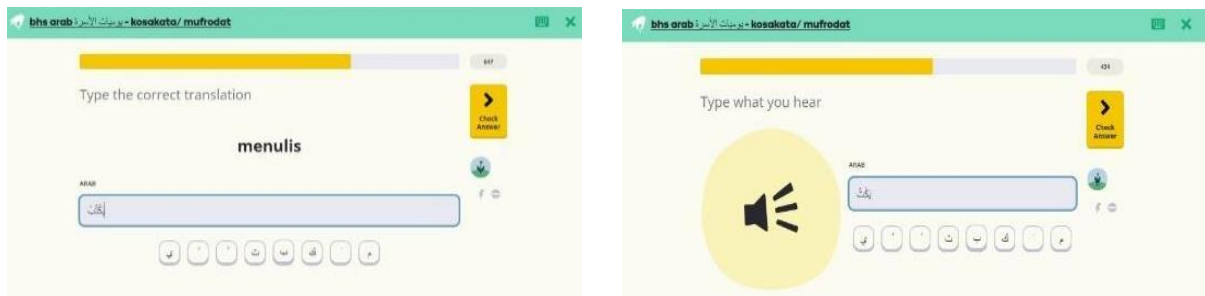


Figure 7. View of translation quizzes (3)

These quizzes can be used to improve students' reading, writing, and listening skills. Reading skill (*maharah qira'ah*) is actually classified as receptive language skills (Effendy 2012, 135). During the reading process, a person attempts to understand the message communicated by others through text. This does not imply that a person accomplishes nothing during this process. Because a person needs to engage in mental and psychological processes including thinking, analyzing, evaluating, reasoning, and problem-solving in order to transform textual symbols into information (Athiyah 2005, 252). By taking the translation quiz, students are expected to understand both the meaning and the writing. Recognizing and comprehending what they read is one of the objectives of learning to read at a beginner level (Mustofa 2011, 164).

Listening skills are an activity that involves using the auditory system to extract messages from what is heard (Khoiriyah 2020). In this process, a person does not just hear but deliberately hears so that it is accompanied by attention and purpose, a process known as *auding (al inshat)* (Hamami 2013). By taking quizzes in Memrise, students are expected to understand the words or sentences they heard either in meaning or the text. This quiz is in compliance with the listening learning goals, that

The goal of istima' learning is student can understanding and determining every letter spoken by Arabs (Amrina, Mudinillah, and Ghazali 2022)

Writing skills (*Maharah Al-kitabah*) are the skill of describing or expressing ideas (Huwaitirini 2001, 31). There are at least two aspects that exist in writing skills, which are proficiency in forming letters, mastering spelling and proficiency in producing thoughts and feelings in the form of Arabic writing (Asyrofi 2010, 135). By taking quizzes in Memrise, students are expected to be able to write the spelling of words or sentences in Arabic. Although students who take this quiz have not reached the level of producing thoughts, the students expected will become familiar with the sentence structure of the mufidah.

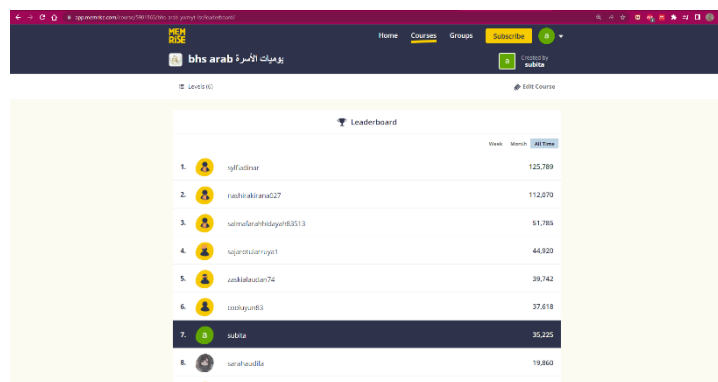


Figure 8. View of Scoreboard

The scores from taking the quiz will be accumulated and displayed sequentially on the scoreboard. Students can see their score order and compare with their friends' ranking. Through this score ranking, students are expected to be motivated to learn. This is supported by the results of Aminatun and Oktaviani's (2019) research that students are increasingly motivated to outperform their friend's scores. Duludu (2017, 17) explained that learning media has a psychological purpose which can attract students' attention and inspire student's emotion. Similarly, Harry in Jennah (2009, 20) expresses that learning media might drive students to be more active and focus their attention on the object being studied.

The obstacles in utilizing Memrise in learning process

The utilization of Memrise in Arabic language learning with blended learning method has several obstacles which are faced by teachers and students. The obstacles faced are (1) inadequate facilities, the facilities referred to in this study include laptops, smartphones and the internet, (2) extra payment for more features, and (3) less flexible quizzes.

Some only have one device that can be used for online learning, such as a computer only or a smartphone only, while the use of Memrise via computer and smartphone has different advantages. Memrise, which is accessed via the website, can display materials and quizzes. Meanwhile, through a smartphone, Memrise is not able to open the material but can display quizzes with a better and more enjoyable appearance. Moreover, some students use their parents' smartphones, so they must take turns using it with their parents. The lack of facilities can affect the learning process. The teaching and learning process will operate optimally if it is supported by adequate facilities.

In using Memrise, students need a device that is connected to the internet. Although the internet has many benefits when used in learning, it can be an obstacle for students. Some students find it difficult to use Memrise since they live in places with weak internet connections. Students who have a strong internet connection and want to use the pro mode's additional features must pay extra.

While working on quizzes in Memrise, some students discovered that the answers in Memrise were less flexible. This occurs when students provide the right response, but Memrise incorrectly marks it since the text's format is different. This happens because the data inputted in Memrise is only single form. As the result students must entered the same answer as the available data in Memrise.

With these obstacles in the utilization of Memrise, teachers must be able to adapt and find the solutions. Especially teachers play a role as facilitators in blended learning (Shivam and Singh 2015). As explained by Wina Sanjaya (2008, 56) that the teacher is a facilitator, the teacher will provide services that aim to make it easier for students to carry out teaching and learning activities.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The process of utilizing Memrise in Arabic language learning using the blended learning method is conducted through several stages, which are preparing the media, face-to-face learning, and online learning. Face-to-face learning takes place in the classroom while online learning is using Memrise or can be described as traditional learning while online learning is carried out after face-to-face learning alternately by using Memrise. The blended learning method is used to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning process by combining face-to-face and online learning.

There are several obstacles in the process of learning Arabic using Memrise with blended learning method faced by the teacher and students. Including inadequate facilities, extra payment for more features and less flexible quizzes. With these obstacles in the utilization of Memrise, teachers as a facilitator must be able to adapt and find the solution.

This study focuses on seventh-grade students learning Arabic with vocabulary words, *tasrif fi'il*, and *isim istifham*. Therefore, the next researcher is hoped to maximize the usage of this media for other Arabic language materials.

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