

Quizlet as an Alternative Application for Learning German Nouns

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ABSTRACT

Web-based learning media plays an important role in learning process nowadays. Quizlet is a web-based application that could be used as a good alternative learning media. It provides a variety of features ranging from flashcards to interesting games that suit to help learning German nouns. German nouns are considered difficult to be mastered Indonesian learners due to their wide coverage and significant differences between nouns in Indonesian and nouns in German. Therefore, this study was conducted to find out whether Quizlet is feasible application to use for learning German nouns. This study aimed at: (1) portraying how German noun learning content presented in the Quizlet, and (2) evaluating the suitability of the Quizlet as a medium for learning German nouns. This study used a descriptive case study method with the criteria of "Criteria for Evaluating Web Tools and Apps" by Nik Peachey to evaluate applications for educational purposes. The study results showed that based on the four main criteria, namely technology, financial, motivation, and learning, the Quizlet meets the technology, motivation, and learning aspects well. This application can also present learning materials for German nouns in an interesting manner. Quizlet application features can be used to learn German nouns and practice the material that has been obtained.

Keywords: Learning media, Quizlet, German nouns.

1. INTRODUCTION

For Indonesian learners, German nouns are difficult to master because of its wide scope and a significant difference between nouns in Indonesian and in German. The difference lies in the writing form. German nouns always begin with capital letters. There is also the use of articles that attached to every German noun. Articles in German serve as gender indicators (Desrochers, Wieland, & Coté, 1991). There are three articles in German: *der* for masculine, *die* for feminine, and *das* for neutral nouns.

The majority of German learners have three main difficulties in mastering German nouns, namely remembering nouns in German, the use of articles, and declaring plural forms. In the acquisition of German as a foreign language, grammatical gender has often been viewed as a problem by both learners and teachers alike (Rogers, 1987).

In addition to textbooks, learning media is also needed that suits the characteristics and habits of current students and is expected to help the learning process of

students, especially in mastering nouns and improving German language skills. Learning media has an important position in the learning process to create effective and innovative learning. One of the media that can be used is online-based learning media. In this sense, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has a significant role in vocabulary learning as it includes activities embracing metacognitive issues such as making inferences from a context, using imagery and semantic techniques, etc. (Köse, İmren, E., & Mede, 2016). There are many online learning sites and applications to learn German; Quizlet is one of them.

Quizlet is an application that provides a variety of features ranging from flashcards to interesting games that can be used to learn German both independently and in groups. Quizlet app is available in 18 languages from different parts of the world. Quizlet allows users to instantly receive near perfect pronunciation for words with direct translation in one of several languages while also providing a visual aid for each word item where appropriate (Lander, 2015). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to describe how the Quizlet application can

be used as media for learning German nouns, and to find out whether Quizlet meets the criteria for a good learning media.

Media plays an important role in the learning process to achieve learning goals (Danielsson & Wiberg, 2006; Ramdhani & Muhammadiyah, 2015). In achieving learning goals, an intermediary is needed that allows to support communication between students and teachers. The intermediary can be referred to as a learning medium as stated by Jacobs, Gawe and Vakalisa (2002, p. 240) "a teaching-learning medium can be defined as an object the teacher uses, or which is given to the learners to use, to achieve specific teaching and learning outcomes. It is not only apparatus or pictures, but include many other types of learning experience.". Cahyadi (2019) also stated that the medium of learning is a tool, means, intermediary, and liaison to spread, carry or convey message and ideas, to stimulate the student's thoughts, feelings, actions, interests, and attention in such a way that the teaching and learning process occurs in students.

The learning process that uses learning media will become more interesting and varied. The use of interesting media and following the material to be taught is effective enough to overcome the boredom of students (Ramdhani & Muhammadiyah, 2015). From the exposures about the learning media mentioned above, it can be concluded that the learning media is a tool used to help convey information or transfer knowledge in the learning process so that learning takes place efficiently and effectively.

One of the real forms of technological innovation in the world of education today is the emergence of the term e-learning. There is no official and standard term in the definition of e-learning so that it brings up various interpretations from some experts. In term of language, e-learning stands for electronic learning (Sohn, 2005, as cited in Suartama, 2014).

In various studies, experts tried to define the term e-learning with different views and emphasis Garrison and Anderson (2003 in Sangrà, 2012) describe e-learning as a learning facilitated online through network technologies. Meanwhile Ruipérez (in Sangrà, 2012) emphasizes different factors and defines e-learning as distance teaching characterized by a physical separation between teacher and student, between whom there is a mainly asynchronous two-track communication where the internet is the preferred means; distance teaching is characterized by a physical separation between teacher and student, between whom there is a mainly asynchronous two-track communication where the internet is the preferred means of communication and distribution of knowledge so that the student is at the center of independent, flexible education since they have to manage their learning, generally with the help of external tutors.

1.1. Criteria of Application and Website

As initiated by Peachey (2013) at the IATEFL 2013 conference in Liverpool, web-based application for educational purposes can be evaluated based on four main criteria, namely 1) from technical aspects, 2) financial perspective, 3) motivation, and 4) pedagogical aspects. As a result of the workshop and the results of research developed by Peachey (2013), four criteria for evaluating mobile-based learning applications are contained in the following questions:

1.1.1. From technical aspects

1.1.1.1. Accessibility

Does the learner have the necessary equipment to use it? Will it work on all/most mobile platforms and can also be accessed via a desktop web browser? In this case, the media must be able to support or support the application. In addition, the mobile application must have a web page that can be accessed via a desktop browser so that students can still access learning even without using a mobile device.

1.1.1.2. User Friendly

Can students learn how to use the app quickly? Applications must be able to operate easily and quickly without being verbose.

1.1.1.3. Registration

Are students required to register in advance to be able to use it? The application should not require registration run by the browser (internet) as it is quite a waste of time.

1.1.1.4. Security

Is this app safe? In this case, it means that if there is a social interaction that can be accessed from the application, there is a mechanism or process available to block and report abuse.

1.1.2. From a financial perspective (cost)

1.1.2.1. Price

Is it free and affordable? Learning applications should be free to download, and tend to be inexpensive for learners.

1.1.2.2. Business Model

Is there a business model to support the application? Is it clear how the model generates profits? Even though the application is free, application manufacturers are certainly looking to profit from making applications. It

could be that an app makes a profit through advertising or trading data.

1.1.3. Motivation

1.1.3.1. Digital Literacy

Can learning use this application help learners develop useful digital literacy? Digital literacy is a way to teach the use of technology that exists today, namely by utilizing information technology as a learning resource like a library. This is done so that someone can maximize the technology used. Learning applications should be the right means for learners to become "literate" to technology and can access learning materials easily.

1.1.3.2. Authenticity

Does the app have native speakers that can be used outside of class? Applications should motivate language learners by having native speakers.

1.1.3.3. Personalization

Does the application allow users to express some aspects that they have? Applications should be able to support learners to use their language creatively, for example enabling learners to practice their pronunciation.

1.1.4. Pedagogical aspects

1.1.4.1. Learning goals/outcomes

Is there a possibility that this application can provide learning outcomes? The learning objectives in the application should be clear, directed, and still continuous with the learning that learners get in class.

1.1.4.2. Interaction/communication

Is there any support for interacting and communicating between users? Applications should provide chatrooms for students to be able to interact socially like in a classroom.

1.1.4.3. Prolonged use

Does the application require long-term use to achieve satisfactory results? Most applications are designed for some kind of practice that can be done in a short time, but some applications use a long period to get good learning results.

2. METHOD

The research used a descriptive case study method. This method is carried out by the process of collecting, compiling, and decrypting data to obtain an objective

picture of the features, way of presentation of the material, advantages, and disadvantages of Quizlet application as a medium of learning German nouns.

The instruments used to analyze the learning media refer to the criteria of web and applications in the context of learning according to Peachey (2013). These criteria evaluate the web-based learning media in terms of four aspects as follows These criteria include:

1. Technical aspects
Evaluation based on accessibility, interface, registration, and security
2. Financial perspective
Evaluation in terms of cost and business model.
3. Motivation
Evaluation based on digital literacy, authenticity, and personalization.
4. Pedagogical aspects
Evaluation in terms of learning outcomes, interaction and communication, and prolonged use.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Quizlet application can be used for the learning process with a variety of subjects or disciplines. A diverse set of materials makes it easy for users to learn. Material about the German language has also been widely uploaded and can be accessed by users. Below is the analysis of the use of Quizlet in learning of German nouns.

3.1. Using Quizlet as Media for Learning German Nouns

Quizlet application has eight mainstay features that can support the learning process, especially German language mastery. The presentation of German noun material on the Quizlet application is as follows: The Flashcards feature is used to create sets of German noun material. This feature becomes the source of material from other features. Learn, test, match, and writing features are supporting features that serve as tools to review material that has been created. These features feature a simulation of tests or tests in the form of questions that must be answered by the user. Galaxy and live feature the same goal of reviewing the material that has been studied, but in the form of an interesting game. There is also one additional feature that is the audio feature contained in almost all other features in the Quizlet application.

Quizlet is an online learning tool developed by a high school student in California named Andrew Sutherland. The idea of developing this device came from personal experience when asked to remember the names of 111 animals by a French teacher.

The presence of Quizlet is not new because this device was originally designed in 2005, but was then

released to the public in January 2007 in the form of a website. Furthermore, in August 2012 Quizlet was released in the form of a mobile application for iOS which was then followed a year later by an application for Android in August 2013.

Quizlet has been transformed into a simple, easy-to-use, and innovative tool that can help to learn. More than 20 million active users every month visit Quizlet, either through the website or application. This app is easy to use for all ages, from elementary school to college.

The app also allows students to practice and reflect on the learning material by summarizing the key materials that may come upon their exams. The Quizlet application allows students to understand the information concisely and easily (Foti & Mendez, 2014)

Quizlet allows users to create a set of cards which are often known in the world of education as flashcards which consist of terms and definitions that can be adapted to the needs of each individual. Furthermore, users can immediately interact, cooperate, and share flashcards. Creating flashcards can be started from scratch or by editing an existing set of cards (Aribowo, 2015)

Each user can create and upload self-made material. Users can also access sets of material uploaded by others. In the creation of a set of German noun material, users can enter the noun and its article in the column field and its meaning in Indonesian in the definition field. The addition of images can also be done to make it easier to learn nouns. The use of different columns is used to distinguish German nouns in singular and plural forms.

3.1.1. Flashcard

The following is an explanation of creating a material set with the Flashcard feature in the Quizlet application. To make it easier for students to understand the material, the teacher can make sets of German nouns with different themes. The teacher must also make German noun material according to the standard level of German language proficiency. For example, at the beginner level, the teacher should make a set of German nouns at the A1 level, such as the *Schulsachen* theme, namely school tools. Each set can be given a title according to the theme of the noun that is created.

The first step to take is to open the Quizlet app homepage. After that press the plus symbol (+) at the bottom to create a new set.

After that, a column will appear to write the title on the set. Give a title according to the material to be made. For example, noun material with the *Schulsachen* theme. In one column there are two parts, namely the top and the bottom. At the top is used to write terms. In learning German nouns, the upper part is used to write German nouns and their articles, and the lower part is used to write

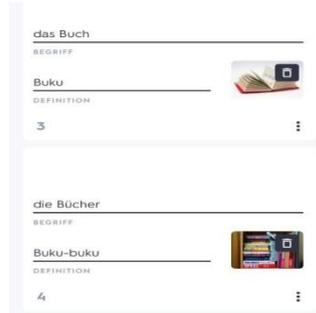


Figure 1. Example of a German noun flashcard column

definitions or in learning German nouns the lower part is used to write down the meaning of nouns in Indonesian.

The uniqueness of German nouns is that they have a singular form (a noun that has one number) and also a plural form (a noun that has more than one number). By using the Flashcard feature, it is easier for students to distinguish between the singular and plural forms of German nouns. Utilizing the teacher or material maker to make a separate column between the plural form and the singular form. Examples can be seen in Figure 1.

In addition to writing nouns in German and Indonesian, the teacher can insert pictures of objects with appropriate nouns to clarify examples of plural and singular nouns.

3.1.2. Learn

Another feature found in the Quizlet application is the learn feature. This feature allows users to type terms from the displayed definition, and vice versa. After typing the answer, the user can know whether the answer is right or wrong. Then automatically the score of the answer can be known (Figure 2).

3.1.3. Speller

In the this feature the user will be given a question in the form of an audio that mentions the noun in German then the user is asked to fill in the correct answer or vice versa the user is given an audio noun in Indonesian, then asked to write the noun in German (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Learning feature display

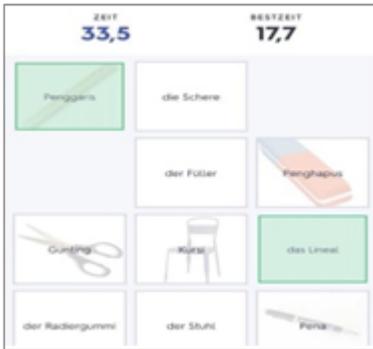


Figure 3. Speller features display

3.1.4. Match

Match is a feature that contains matching games. The user must match the term to the definition by dragging the term and then stacking it onto the correct definition. The correct pair will then disappear. Finally, the user is asked to clear the screen with the fastest possible time.

For example, training a set of German nouns with the Schulsachen theme. After opening this feature, users are asked to match nouns in German with their meanings in Indonesian or vice versa. The work will be timed, so the user must finish the game quickly.

3.1.5. Test

Test feature in the Quizlet application allows users to take tests by affixing the answers to the questions displayed. There are four methods, namely true or false, writing, multiple choice, and match that the user can choose from in this test. Each round contains 20 questions.

3.1.6. Gravity

The Gravity feature is adopted from a feature in the previous Quizlet application called Space Race. This feature is a game that is played individually. The uniqueness of this feature is how it looks set in outer space. In this feature, users can practice writing and spelling German nouns.

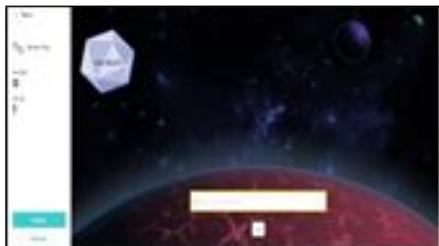


Figure 4. Display of gravity features

How to play this feature is very easy. Users only need to open Quizlet then select the set to be studied. An example is the set of German nouns with a Schulsachen

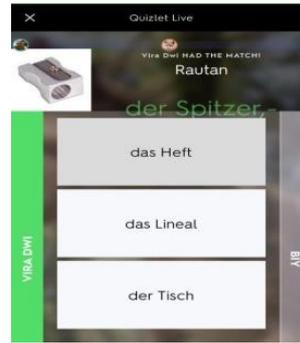


Figure 5. Game display live features

theme. Then select the Gravity feature (Figure 4). After the game starts, a meteor icon will appear moving downwards. If the meteor icon reads a noun in German, the user must write down its meaning in Indonesian in the answer column. But on the other hand, if the meteor that appears as a noun in Indonesian, the user must write down the meaning in German along with the article.

3.1.7. Live

This feature is also a feature in the form of a game (Figure 5). This game is in the form of multiple-choice questions. The questions contained in this feature are taken from sets that have been made previously.

The uniqueness of this feature is that it can be played individually or in groups. This feature can be played by a minimum of four participants. In this feature, there is one person who is the host.

In the learning process, generally, the host is the teacher. The host is in charge of making games and spreading links so that other players can join. After that, users only need to enter the code provided by the host to enter the same game room. If the selected mode is individual, then the game is done individually. If the selected mode is group mode, several groups will be created before the game starts. Group members are selected randomly and automatically by the Quizlet application.

How to play this feature is very easy. After the game starts, a question will appear in the form of multiple choice. In the German noun set with the Schulsachen theme, noun terms will appear in German and at the bottom, there will be answer choices in Indonesian or vice versa.

3.1.8. Audio Features

The audio feature can be used to listen to the spoken term. The language setting in the Quizlet application must first be set to German so that the pronunciation of nouns in the audio matches the pronunciation of the native speaker's language.

3.2. How Quizlet Meets the Criteria for a Good Learning Media

Based on the criteria for evaluating applications and websites with educational objectives based on Nik Peachey's (2013) criteria, Quizlet application meets almost all the criteria mentioned, including:

3.2.1. Technical aspects

Quizlet is an easy-to-operate app. Downloading this application can be done using a smartphone device with a mobile platform that supports iOS and Android. Downloads can be done at app providers namely Appstore for iPhone and Playstore for Android. Downloading does not take a relatively short time because the size of the application is not too large, but it is still influenced by the quality of the internet network used. Quizlet application can also be accessed in the form of a website through www.Quizlet.com. Quizlet apps are easy to learn, easy to remember, and efficient in use. The app's navigation system can clearly show where users are and where they can go. In addition to the excellency of self-learning through various learning modes and features, simplicity in use and configuration is the main advantage offered by Quizlet (Sanosi, 2018). The application also uses a registration system equipped with a password so that the security of users' data can be protected.

3.2.2. Term of Cost

Users don't have to pay to download Quizlet app because this application falls into the category of free in the application service provider. But for the use of applications with more premium facilities, users are charged per month of Rp 56,583 or per year of Rp 679,000

3.2.3. Term of motivation

The use of the Quizlet application as a learning resource can be used as one of the efforts to develop the digital literacy of learners and motivate them to learn. Studies showed that the application of Quizlet in learning can make students motivated (Setiawan & Wiedarti, 2020; Wright, 2016) visibly engaged (Barr, 2016), and have positive attitudes and interests in learning (Lander, 2015).

3.2.4. Learning

Quizlet application is in line with the main foreign language learning objective of learning German in mastering nouns because this application is equipped with native Speakers of German and also several other foreign languages. Quizlet is presented to students through different learning modes including flashcards,

games, collaborative activities and quizzes to allow rote learning environments that can help students master different subjects especially languages and vocabulary (Sanosi, 2018). Quizlet application also has a directed learning purpose, able to provide feedback on learning outcomes directly, the material to be made can be adjusted according to the level of user ability, access to find easy learning materials, and this application is not only designed to memorize vocabulary but is combined also with language learning support activities such as writing and listening. Quizlet application can be used anywhere and anytime to support the self-learning process. In particular, internet based learning give an opportunity to engage language learners in communicative tasks outside the classroom (Ballance, 2012). Nevertheless, Quizlet has a lack of interaction or communication criteria because it does not have the facilities to communicate with fellow users.

4. CONCLUSION

The focus of this research is to describe the application of Quizlet as a medium of learning German nouns. This research is expected to provide benefits in the form of information about online-based learning media, especially those used to support the mastery of German nouns. Based on the analysis using application evaluation criteria for learning, it can be seen that the Quizlet application meets most of these criteria except for two criteria, namely price, and interaction.

Limitations of this study are this research is still limited to one learning subject on the Quizlet application, so it is still possible to make more research on other learning subjects. In addition, more research is needed find out how effective the use of Quizlet application is in the learning process. Especially learning German nouns.

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