

The Influence of "Mobile Legends" Game on the Vocabulary Acquisition of Serambi Mekkah University's Students

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Abstract. *In the era of increasingly advanced technology, the use of digital media, including online games, is widely used by young people these days, especially among students. This research aims to analyze and explore how the online game such as Mobile Legend increases the vocabulary of Universitas Serambi Mekkah students. This research was descriptive qualitative in nature. The participants were 12 Universitas Serambi Mekkah students who played the Mobile Legends game. To collect data, researchers used semi-structured interviews. There were 7 questions related to the Mobile Legends game. To analyze the data, the researchers used thematic analysis. The results of this study showed that the Mobile Legend game is able to increase the vocabulary of students at Universitas Serambi Mekkah by interacting with other players through features such as discord, voice note, and chatting. It is expected that this study will be useful for EFL teachers, providing insight about the positive impact of Mobile Legends on English language learning despite some claims that it is negative for students.*

Keywords: *online games, mobile legends, english language learning, vocabulary*

1. Introduction

In the current technological era, various kinds of online media have emerged, especially media that helps in learning English. However, recently online games are becoming popular among young people, especially among students. In 2023, there will be 53.884 billion people using online games in Indonesia. Most people have negative opinions about the influence of online games for learning. However, Rohmatin (2023) in his research regarding the introduction of educational games, stated that games can improve vocabulary skills in students' English learning. Online games provide an immersive and enjoyable environment for vocabulary enrichment (Angraeni et al. 2019). Apoke et al. (2023) also analyzed if the use of educational games could improve learning processes and vocabulary comprehension among students.

Educational games often provide a language context so that players can choose a language and replace it at any time. However, English is certainly the most commonly used language in the context of gameplay. Therefore, the players must understand words and phrases in order to understand the context of the game.

One of the recently popular online games among young people is "Mobile Legends", predicted to be able to influence interest and increase vocabulary in students. This MOBA (Massively Online Battle Arena) game was released on June 11 2016 by the Moonton game company, China. The game later became quite popular even at the beginning of its release. At first the Moonton gaming company was founded by Justin Yuan and Xu Zhenhua, in 2014. However, the Moonton company was officially acquired by ByteDance in 2021.

However, some studies argued that the Mobile Legend game has a negative impact on student learning. This game is considered addictive, hindering brain development, wasting time, and increasing students' laziness in learning. According to Haidar and Antika (2022), Mobile Legends addiction has a negative correlation with student academic achievement. However, many also assess the positive and communicative side of this game in developing students' interest and language skills. Several students experienced an increase in language mastery (Canarias, 2019). Furthermore, it can increase a person's enthusiasm and motivation for learning to achieve maximum results compared to non-game learning which usually uses methods such as reading tests and listening tests in English (Prastius, 2020). Sometimes, ordinary methods such as learning English in general can be boring for students, compared to playing games while studying, so it becomes more relaxed and fun.

The Mobile Legends game has several features that lead to the benefits. It provides a verbal and non-verbal communication channel system specifically designed for Android or iOS devices. This game has discord, voice chat, microphone, emoji and sticker features as communication channels between players or teams. This game can also connect players to other servers so that players can interact with players from other countries. This communication system then gave rise to many terms which later became popular among gamers such as AFK, noob, surrend, recall, push, tourette, roaming, farming, mid lane, gold line, lord, buff, HP, damage and others. Not only that, the words in each character's speech are also widely imitated by the players, who without realizing it have acquired new vocabulary.

The Mobile Legends game also makes players more communicative to build good teamwork to achieve victory and increase scores, as well as increase levels in each season. Social interactions are more or less the same as general interaction patterns in society. This social interaction shows a dynamic and mutually beneficial relationship between individuals, between individuals and groups and between groups (Andayani et al., 2020). So far, there is no research investigating the influence of Mobile Legends on the vocabulary of Universitas Serambi Mekkah students, so this is what prompted us to conduct this research.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative research design with semi-structured interview techniques. The qualitative research design is a research method that tries to explain a phenomenon that occurs in its natural context, meaning that there is no manipulation of the data observed by the researcher (Sarosa & Sarwiji, 2017). Therefore, the researchers try to observe the data as it is so that they can answer the phenomenon being studied well. In research that uses qualitative methods, it really depends on how good the quality of the data is and the completeness of the data produced. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) claim that qualitative research is a study that produces descriptive data in the form of written and verbal descriptions of people and observable behavior. The focus point in qualitative research is centered on an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon that occurs in the environment, whether social or human, and the researcher acts as the main instrument. According to the definitions above, it is clear that this research design focuses on exploring the meaning, in-depth understanding, and observation of a social phenomenon in its original context.

By using this design, the researcher tries to explain the phenomenon of increasing EFL students' ability to acquire vocabulary through the use of the mobile legends online

game application. The population of this research is students from the 2022-2023 academic year who have played the Mobile Legends online game. Participants in this research consisted of 15 students who were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research topic. Inclusion criteria include active students at Universitas Serambi Mekkah who play the online game Mobile Legends.

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews. Each participant was interviewed individually to obtain detailed and personal data about their experiences in enriching their vocabulary with the online game Mobile Legends. The interview was conducted online via WhatsApp and lasted around 6-10 minutes. A semi-structured interview guide was carried out to ensure that there were no inconsistencies throughout the interviews, but participants were encouraged to provide elaborations or explanations about their experiences freely without any restrictions.

The interview guide includes questions such as:

1. What do you think about the influence of the online game Mobile Legends in improving your vocabulary?
2. How often do you encounter new words or terms in the Mobile Legends online game that you don't understand? How do you usually find out the meaning?
3. Do you think the online game Mobile Legends provides context that helps you understand the meaning of new words more effectively?
4. Do communication features between players in the Mobile Legends online game, such as chat and on mic, contribute to increasing your vocabulary? Can you give an example?
5. To what extent do you feel your vocabulary skills have improved after playing the online game Mobile Legends?
6. Is the vocabulary from the online game Mobile Legends useful in your academic activities?
7. How do you apply words learned from the online game Mobile Legends in everyday conversation or writing?

All interviews were audio recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis by the researcher. As for the data analyzed, researchers used thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework:

1. Get to know the data: Researchers listen to and reread the interview data to be able to note ideas and patterns that emerge when they are familiar with the content.
2. Create initial codes: Researchers systematically assign codes to each valuable data
3. Looking for themes: Researchers collect codes into relevant themes
4. Review themes: The themes were reviewed to ensure that they accurately reflect the data.
5. Defining and naming themes: The final themes were clearly defined and named, capturing the essence of each theme.
6. Write a report: Findings are organized into a coherent narrative, with quotes from participants to illustrate each theme to address the problem under study.

3. Results and Discussion

Mobile Legends Can Improve Vocabulary

It was found that Mobile Legends can help players improve their understanding of English. This MOBA or MultiPlayer Battle Arena-based game can be claimed as one of the online games that can increase the players' vocabulary. This can be seen based on the

number of opinion presentations from players who said that they have experienced a significant increase in understanding (see Figure 1). Forty seven percent of participants felt that this mobile legends game greatly improved their vocabulary because they often heard new terms when playing this game. They also believe their vocabulary increased due to the voice note and chat features, forcing them to communicate with other players when competing, most of whom were from abroad. Twenty percent of the participants also agreed that Mobile Legends enriches vocabulary, although perhaps not as much as obtained from formal learning. They stated that the use of special terms in the game, such as "push" and "recall" gave them the initiative to learn new understanding that was previously quite foreign to them. This provides evidence that through daily interactions in games, new vocabulary can be learned naturally, even without realizing it.

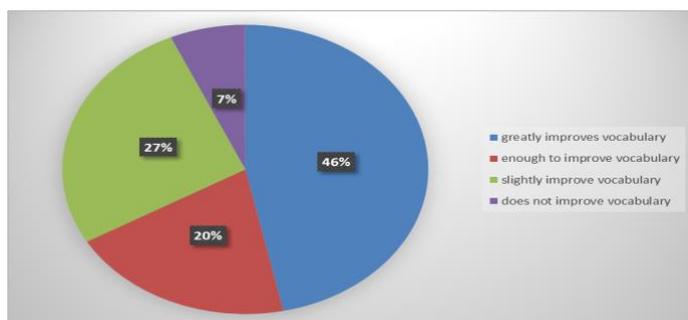


Figure 1. Responses for aspect of mobile legends can improve vocabulary

However, not all players felt a significant impact on their vocabulary. There were 27% of participants who stated that the increase in understanding through Mobile Legends was not too significant because most of the terms found in games are not relevant to everyday life or academic activities. The language used is quite different in context, so their benefits are very limited and can only be used in games. Only 7% percent said that mobile legends did not improve their vocabulary at all.

However, most players agree that Mobile Legends can improve vocabulary, although in varying amounts and focus more on terms that are relevant to the game. The effectiveness of this game in improving vocabulary is also influenced by how often players interact with foreign players, who use English as the main language in communication.

Mobile Legends Provides Context for Understanding New Vocabulary

Apart from increasing vocabulary, Mobile Legends turned out to be quite good at providing context for players to understand new terms and phrases which improve players' understanding of new vocabulary. In this game, players are often faced with situations that require understanding certain terms or phrases. 21% participants said that Mobile Legends was not effective at all in increasing vocabulary because there were very few words in Mobile Legends. According to our research (see Figure 2), 73% of participants agreed that this game provides an effective context for understanding new words. This happens when they have to communicate with the team in the game, either through the chat feature or voice chat. The terms they encounter in the context of the game become easier to understand because they are directly used in relevant actions and interactions.

It is necessary to emphasize the importance of context in learning new vocabulary. Participants stated that the communication features in the game were very helpful in

understanding new terms because their use was directly applied in certain situations. Understanding new words like "gank" or "push" becomes easier because they are used in a clear game strategy. that the context in the game makes it easier for him to understand foreign terms that he previously did not know.

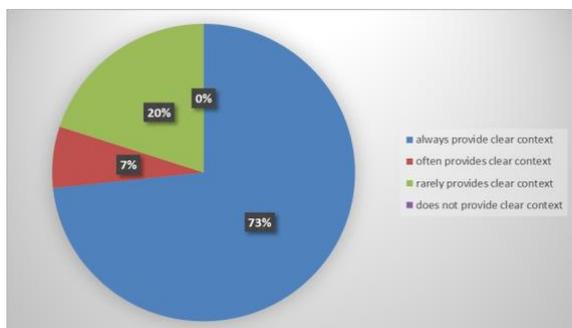


Figure 2. Responses for aspect of mobile legends provides context for understanding new vocabulary

However, there were 20% of participants who felt that Mobile Legends did not provide effective context. They considered that this game often uses local languages, so the context for learning English vocabulary was limited. Apart from that, the use of foreign terms obtained from this game is usually only limited to the scope of the game, and is rarely applied in the context of daily life or academics, such as when Hiro uttered certain words and it was very little to use in Jasmine vocabulary. Therefore, it is not surprising that the rest perceived that Mobile Legends does not provide a relevant context at all for understanding new vocabulary. Seven percent of participants believed so.

Overall, although not every player felt the same impact, many agreed that Mobile Legends is able to provide context that helps in understanding new vocabulary. For those who often interact with foreign players or use English in team communication, this game can be an unexpected but useful learning medium in mastering new vocabulary. This research is similar to research of Prastius (2020) where he argues that mobile games can be useful in learning English.

Vocabulary from Mobile Legends are Applicable in the Academic Context

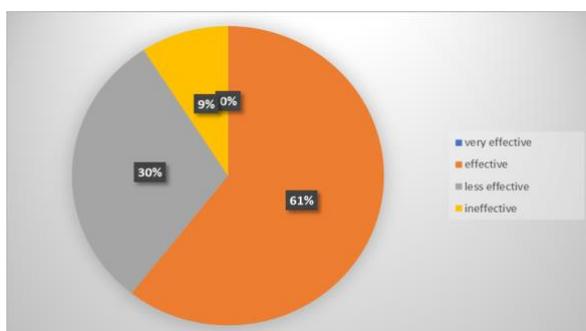


Figure 3. Responses for aspect of vocabulary from mobile legends are applicable in the academic context

From the interview, we also found that the majority of participants agreed that vocabulary from Mobile Legends was very effective to be used in academic activities

(61%) because the game is provided in English along with the communicative features that come with it. The game often displayed vocabulary or terms such as “Assist”, “Map Blind”, “Carry”, “Critical Chance”, “Rework”, “Eliminated”, “Domain”, “Inventions”, which were considered useful in the academic context. However, 30% of the participants stated that the vocabulary provided in the game was less effective for the academic field because it only provided players with limited vocabulary because the words in the mobile legend application were only the same and repeated at each level. Meanwhile, 9% strongly agreed that it was not effective because the main focus of the players was only on the game and there was no increase in their vocabulary. Its impact on vocabulary acquisition was very minimal.

Repetitive Displays of Vocabulary Facilitates Longer Memory Retention

According to the interview results, 55% of participants admitted that Mobile Legends helped them remember the vocabulary longer because new words or terms were shown repetitively during the gameplay, making them familiar to the participants and helping them to memorize the words for a long term. However, 24% said that they memorized less vocabulary from the Mobile Legends despite frequent display while 21% admitted that the terms were not memorable because they rarely used them in daily life communication.

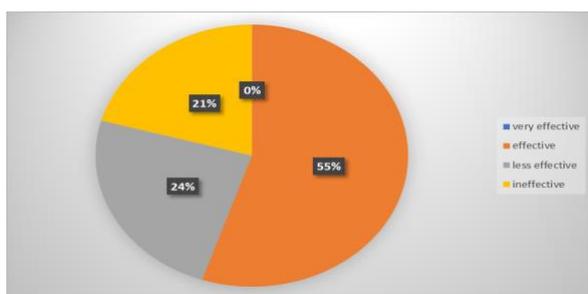


Figure 4. Responses for aspect of repetitive displays of vocabulary facilitates longer memory retention

4. Conclusions

From the research findings, it can be concluded that the Mobile Legends online game is considered quite influential and effective as a means of increasing the English vocabulary of its users (players), especially among the students of the Universitas Serambi Mekkah. The majority even believed that the vocabulary is applicable in the academic context while only a few disagreed with it. This research has a limitation in which it only included a small sample size, thus future research is recommended to include a larger sample size to generate a stronger finding.

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