The Potential of Mobile Legend Game as a Supplementary Tool in Enhancing English Vocabulary

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Abstract

Mobile Legend is popularly played by the current generation. Apart from being popular because of the entrainment value, Mobile Legend as online video games have opportunities as EFL learning because there is an opportunity to explore language options available in online video game features. This research explores the potential of Mobile Legend as a supplementary tool for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. It adopts a qualitative approach, specifically a phenomenological study, using interviews and observations. The informants are long-term users of Mobile Legends, aged 25-27 years old. The research findings suggest that Mobile Legend has the potential to enhance English vocabulary when certain strategies are employed, such as setting the game language to English, focusing on in-game communication, using translation tools, and practicing vocabulary. However, it is important to note that Mobile Legend should not be relied upon as the sole solution for comprehensive language learning. Other activities like formal instruction, reading, and communication practice are crucial for balanced language proficiency. Additionally, the research highlights the popularity of Mobile Legend as a leisure and socialization platform but emphasizes the need for moderation and awareness of potential challenges related to gaming. Furthermore, the observations indicate that game users understand the in-game vocabulary based more on context and meaning rather than dictionary definitions.

Keywords: Mobile Legend, Potential, Vocabulary.

The current generation is a generation who have grown up with modern technology, such as video games, and has seen a significant impact on their leisure time and social life. Numerous studies have identified Generation Z or called gen Z as the generation born between 1995 and 2015 (Dwidienawati & Gandasari, 2018). They are the first generation to have widespread access to digital communication technologies like mobile phones, Wi-Fi, and interactive computer games (Tulgan, 2013). This accessibility has made video games a popular source of entertainment that can be enjoyed individually or in online multiplayer mode.

Video games have also become a social phenomenon, with players interacting with other people around the world which is

now known as online video games. With the growing interest in video games, there have emerged professional gaming tournaments and e-sports events with generous prizes for the best players (Quwaider et al., 2019). Apart from being fun and entertaining, games are also a place for learning second languages, especially for EFL. Online video games can be more engaging and motivating for EFL learners than traditional classroom activities (Taskiran, 2019; Thompson & von Gillern, 2020). Online video games have opportunities as EFL learning because there is an opportunity to explore language options available in online video game features, such as developing English language skills by paying close attention to grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation found in video games (Nur et al., 2020; Syafiqah Yaccob & Md Yunus, 2019; Toh & Kirschner, 2020). Video games are popular because they provide an interactive and fun learning experience. Besides that, playing online video games for EFL learners is quite flexible because users can access them anywhere using digital devices without time restrictions. Games provide an innovative and fun approach for EFL learners (Almusharraf, 2023).

Several studies have explored the use of online video games for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. For instance, (Simatupang, 2017) conducted a study with thirty-five first-semester students majoring in Cyber Security who were avid video game players. The findings revealed that all the participants (100%) reported improvements in their English skills through playing video games. However, 80% of the students also acknowledged the negative impacts of video games, both online and offline, such as addiction and time wastage. Therefore, they recommended that gamers effectively manage their time.

(Reinders, 2015) conducted a study on the effects of digital gameplay on second language interaction. The research involved thirty EFL learners in Thailand and demonstrated that playing video games led to a significant improvement in English interaction compared to classroom-based activities.

Another research review conducted by (Richtoff & Persson, 2022) examined the effect of video games on language learning motivation. The findings suggested that playing video games at home generally increased students' motivation to learn English in school. The results also indicated that factors such as age, culture, and students' beliefs could influence the motivation affected by extracurricular video gaming.

There are many online video games. However, this research particularly focused on Mobile Legend game because it is widely popular among various age groups. Mobile Legend is popularly played because it provides entertainment, and it also has strong player interactions or Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA). Additionally, Mobile Legends has a rapidly growing eSports scene, with regular and international tournaments and competitions which has created enthusiastic communities around the game.

This research will primarily examine the potential of Mobile Legend as online video games in facilitating English as a foreign Language (EFL) learning. Because games through digital tools being the part of current generation life, this research is examining the potential of activities current generation often do, that is Mobile Legend as EFL learning.

Method

This research is a qualitative approach with a phenomenological study to obtain information through interviews. The selection of informants employed the purposive sampling technique. There are 7 informants aged 23-25 years from various backgrounds who are avid players of the Mobile Legends game. The informants are users who had been playing the Mobile Legends game for a range of 5-7 years. The research instrument of this research is interviews accompanied by observations. The interviews were conducted face-to-face using a semi-structured interview

format to gather information about their game experiences, while the observations involved examining the informants' knowledge of game terminology during the interviews. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, encoded, and subsequently analyzed by categorizing the data using pattern coding and thematic analysis. The analysis interpreted the meaning of each informant's experiences and their reflections on the effectiveness of learning English through playing the Mobile Legends game.

Result and Discussion

The following data represents the results of interviews conducted informants regarding the potential of Mobile Legend in enhancing the English vocabulary of game users.

Table 1. Game users' reason of playing Mobile Legend

Informant	Transcription
A	"Just for spending my time"
B	"Limited multiplayer games, so I choose this game to play."
C	"my friends invite me for join"
D	"In mobile legend we can find new friend and find people from another country. Then know to fight with team work."
E	"Spending the leisure time"
F	"Seeking fun activity and stress relief"
G	"Just for fun when I have nothing to do"

In general, Table 1 indicates that Mobile Legend users have similar reasons for choosing to play this game. The main reasons that emerged were to fill leisure time and seek entertainment. They see Mobile Legend as a source of fun and excitement during their free time. Additionally, some users mentioned that they became involved in the game because they were invited by their friends and considered Mobile Legend as their last choice among various multiplayer games available (Toh &

Kirschner, 2020).

Apart from its entertainment function, users also recognize that Mobile Legend provides opportunities to meet and interact with new people. Mobile Legend provides an avenue for user games to establish connections and form friendships within the gaming community, which may extend beyond the virtual world and lead to real-life encounters (Firdaus & Aesthetika, 2023). They detect that through the game, they can form friendships with individuals from different backgrounds. This demonstrates that Mobile Legend is not only a means for playing games but also a social platform that allows users to expand their social networks.

Table 2. The effect of playing Mobile Legend

Informant	Transcription
A	"Earn money because join the tournament of eSport. But it is always ruining my sleep. So there is call me to hang out."
B	"having fun and getting new friends, but it's challenging to control emotions when getting too focused while playing this game."
C	"I have many friends from this game and fun game. But always forget the time and don't realize I was spending much time. Also make me too lazy do my homework."
D	"Positive impact of this game is makes me happy cause fun, forget about my problem, and get money if playing while streaming like in youtube, tiktok, and other social media. But the bad impact of this game is wasting time and not good for health if always playing this game. Make the money run out and forget about the task from school, make the eyes red cause always screen time if playing every day, every night. It also makes the phone broke because the temperature being hot."
E	"Spending a lot of time and not good for health cause always focus on screen phone continuously. But it's a decent way to pass the time and learn some language terms in the game when I'm bored. "

F	"It's quite profitable for me because sometimes I join tournaments and also livestream while playing on Tiktok, so it's earning money. It helps me also relieve stress as well. However, once I start playing, sometimes I can become dependent and get emotional during the battles."
G	"This game improves my mood. But if I play too often, it make me lost track of time and forget my work."

Table 2 shows that playing Mobile Legend can have both positive and negative effects. Because this game is multiplayer game, it has a chance to rise to conflicts and arguments among the user of game (Firdaus & Aesthetika, 2023). While it offers entertainment, financial opportunities, and social connections, it is essential to be mindful of potential challenges related to emotional control, time management, health, and financial responsibilities. Striking a balance and practicing moderation is crucial for a healthy and enjoyable gaming experience.

Among all the informants who were interviewed, there was one informant who stated that playing Mobile Legend can offer opportunities to learn and familiarize oneself with language terms used within the game. (Dananaya & Kusumastuti, 2019) also said that engaging in gameplay can be advantageous for individuals who are learning a language or aiming to enhance their vocabulary in an interactive and captivating way. This can be beneficial for language learners or those seeking to expand their vocabulary in an interactive and engaging manner. There are several research supported that statement about Mobile Legend as Vocabulary mastery or acquisition. For instance, the research of (Diantoro et al., 2021) which found that there is a significant effect of Mobile Legend on the vocabulary mastery of tenth-grade students. Another research also found that online game Mobile Legends positively influenced students' ability to attain favorable outcomes in English vocabulary learning (Ta'uno & Poai, 2022).

These indicates that there is potential for enhancing the English vocabulary through playing the Mobile Legend game.

Table 3. Do you learn english of this game?

Informant	Transcription
A	"Just a little. Cause actually I understand english before playing this game."
B	"Yaa, I learn english from this game. Actually I understand a lot of english vocabulary from playing this game compared to learning English at school."
C	"not really. Because I already knew about english and the terms in the game"
D	"of course. I encountered many words in Mobile Legends, like defeat, surrender, enemy missing, enemy attack, and others."
E	"Yes, exactly. For example, double kill, turtle, there are many more. I can understand many english word while playing this game."
F	"it's decent, but only a few words. Because my focus just playing the game. Sometimes, the I change the language setting to other language than english."
G	"not really, I only know terms like maniac, savage, the terms popular which people always mention when playing."

Based on Table 3 above, it can be concluded that the impact of Mobile Legend on their English language learning varies. Some informants mentioned that they already had a good understanding of English prior to playing the game, so the impact on their vocabulary was minim. However, others expressed that they learned a significant amount of English vocabulary from playing Mobile Legend, even more than what they learned in a traditional classroom setting. There were also informants who mentioned encountering various English words and terms in the game, such as defeat, surrender, enemy missing, etc., which enhanced their understanding of the

language. On the other hand, a few informants acknowledged that their focus was primarily on gameplay, leading to a limited acquisition of English words, although they were familiar with popular terms. Overall, these statements highlight the potential for Mobile Legend to contribute to English language learning, but individual experiences and language proficiency levels play a significant role in the extent of vocabulary enhancement (Nur et al., 2020; Syafiqah Yaccob & Md Yunus, 2019).

Table 4 shows the statements from the informants above regarding the impact of Mobile Legend on English language learning can be concluded that it depends on the language setting chosen by the user. The game is effective as a tool for learning English vocabulary if the player has the language setting set to English. However, if not, the game is not recommended for language learning purposes. Many players also engage in the game primarily for the gameplay aspect and enjoyment rather than for learning, especially for improving their understanding of English vocabulary. The statements provided by the informants offer diverse perspectives on the impact of Mobile Legend on English language learning. Individual preferences, language settings, and levels of focus on language learning contribute to varying experiences and outcomes.

After conducting interview sessions with all the informants, the researcher also proceeded to observe the informants while playing the Mobile Legend game and asked for the meanings of each word that appeared. This observation was aimed at gaining insights into the players' understanding of the terms used in the game.

Based on the observations, the researcher arrived at a general conclusion that Mobile Legend players do possess a certain level of understanding regarding the terms present in the game. However, it was noted that their understanding primarily relied on the interpretation or context they grasped while actively playing the game, rather than being based on the actual definitions that might be

found in a dictionary.

Table 4. Do you recommend Mobile Legend game as tool for enhancing English vocabulary of EFL learning

Informant	Transcription
A	"No. The reason why? You can't learn english a lot from this game because some people can change their language setting to Indonesia. So, I don't recommend it."
B	"yes, but it depends because there are many language settings in this game. Sometimes I set it to english, sometimes in Indonesia. So, it depends on the language setting of user. Maybe it will enhance if they set in international language setting."
C	"No, I don't. I think people can't get better understanding of english vocabulary of this game. They will just focus of playing this game."
D	"I think not. This game is multiplayer and there are many toxic users here. It's just waste of time and you forget your work because always keep playing this game a whole day."
E	"for enhancing, yeah I recommend this game. But it should be with the language setting of english. If it set to bahasa or Indonesia, you might difficult to improve the vocab."
F	"no, many people play this game just for fun and to fill their spare time, including me"
G	"Maybe, because the vocabulary in this game is simple. Easy to understand. But personally, I don't pay much attention to it because I'm only focused playing. So, I don't recommend it."

Based on the observations, the researcher arrived at a general conclusion that Mobile Legend players do possess a certain level of understanding regarding the terms present in the game. However, it was noted that their understanding primarily relied on the interpretation or context they grasped while actively playing the game, rather than being based on the actual definitions that might be

found in a dictionary.

The players seemed to comprehend the usage of these terms within the game's specific context, which allowed them to effectively communicate and navigate through the gameplay. Nevertheless, it was evident that the correlation between their understanding and the true meanings of the vocabulary terms in Mobile Legend was not highly accurate. Their interpretations were more inclined towards the functional aspects of the terms rather than their precise definitions (Almusharraf, 2023; Quwaider et al., 2019; Taskiran, 2019).

It is important to acknowledge that this limited correlation between the players' understanding and the actual meanings of the vocabulary terms in the game could be attributed to the dynamic nature of language within the gaming community. As the game evolves and develops, new terminologies and slang emerge, shaping the understanding and usage of these terms among the players.

Overall, while Mobile Legend players may possess a practical understanding of the game's vocabulary, it is crucial to recognize that their comprehension might not align perfectly with the formal definitions found in a dictionary. This highlights the unique language dynamics and interpretations that exist within the Mobile Legend gaming community (Thompson & von Gillern, 2020; Toh & Kirschner, 2020).

Mobile legend has evolved into a social phenomenon, particularly with the rise of online video games, where players can interact with individuals from different parts of the world. This global connectivity has led to the emergence of professional gaming tournaments and e-sports events, where skilled players compete for substantial prizes. While Mobile Legend are primarily enjoyed for user games entertainment value, they also offer a unique opportunity for language learning, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. In fact, online video games can be more engaging and motivating for EFL learners compared to traditional classroom activities (Almusharraf, 2023; Toh & Kirschner, 2020).

The multiplayer feature of Mobile Legend fosters social interaction and cooperation. Players can team up, join guilds, and engage in communication with other players in a collaborative environment. This social element not only cultivates a sense of community but also offers chances for valuable language exchanges, cultural interactions, and the growth of intercultural competency. The interactive nature of the game is to analyze situations, make decisions, and communicate effectively with their teammates to achieve success in the game. These cognitive processes stimulate language use and foster language acquisition.

Mobile legend has a potential as a supplementary tool in enhancing English vocabulary depends on the game users. It has chance if the user of Mobile Legend game set the games' language on English to fully immerse the user in the language, focus on game communication to learn new vocabulary and slang, translate the unfamiliar terms on translation tool, then keep remember a vocabulary and practice the new words while playing.

However, it should be emphasized that although Mobile Legend game can help improve vocabulary, the game cannot be relied upon as the sole solution for comprehensive language learning. It is important to consider other language learning activities, such as formal instruction, reading, and communication practice, to achieve a balanced and comprehensive language proficiency.

Conclusion

The result of this research reveals that Mobile Legend game serves as a popular choice for leisure and entertainment among its users. The game offers a source of fun and excitement during free time and allows users to socialize and form friendships with people from different backgrounds. However, it is important to be mindful of the potential challenges related to

emotional control, time management, health, and financial responsibilities associated with gaming. Striking a balance and practicing moderation is essential for a healthy and enjoyable gaming experience.

Based on the observations of Mobile Legend users' understanding of the in-game vocabulary, game users understand the terms used in the game. However, their understanding relies more on the meaning or context they grasp while playing, rather than the actual definitions found in the dictionary.

Regarding English language learning, the impact of Mobile Legend varies among users. Some already have a good grasp of English, resulting in minimal impact on their vocabulary. However, others find the game beneficial for learning and expanding their English vocabulary, even more so than traditional classroom settings. Encountering English words and terms in the game enhances their language understanding. On the other hand, some users primarily focus on gameplay, leading to limited acquisition of English words, although they may be familiar with popular terms. Overall, Mobile Legend has the potential to contribute to English language learning, but individual experiences and language proficiency levels significantly influence the extent of vocabulary enhancement.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that players who are specifically interested in improving their English vocabulary through Mobile Legend should set the game language to English. However, for those who primarily play for enjoyment or to pass the time, language learning may not be the focus. It is crucial for users to consider their goals and prioritize their language learning objectives accordingly.

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