

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

English is a global language that people use to connect with other nations; in some places, it is also a second language. Every country in the world learns English since it is an international language. English is not only taught, but also used frequently for interpersonal communication. It is also sometimes referred to as a second language or a foreign language. It is used for communication across the ocean, to improve technology literacy, and even to expand knowledge. Someone needs to prepare himself with the knowledge and abilities in the English language that are required and appropriate for the working environment (Suhermanto, 2019).

Vocabulary skill is one of linguistic features, which influences the communicative competence (Hasan, 2018). Vocabulary is one basic component to be mastered. It is reasonable, remembering that the four language skills need knowledge of words because they will get nothing without vocabulary (Diantoro et al, 2020). Paulston in Hasan (2018) state that the one thing that interferes most with our students' communicative competence is pitiable vocabulary and we have recently come to accept the fact that our students' have been right all these years when they complained about not knowing and not being taught sufficient words. The above statement reveals that vocabulary skill is very important but students' are very weak in it. Furthermore, Hammer (1991: 23) asserts that for many years that vocabulary was seen as supplementary to the main purpose of language teaching, namely the acquisition of grammatical knowledge about the language. Vocabulary was necessary to give student something to suspend on learning structures, but was frequently not a main focus for learning itself. Words are basic structure blocks of language; in fact survival level of communication can take quite comprehensibly when people simply link words together without any grammatical rules applied at all (Hasan, 2018). So if we interested in being communicative, words are among the first order of business. to develop themselves and has become a strategic tool to enable them to cope with rapidly developing technology. It is undeniable, people live now in an informative lifestyle where everything is updated

very quickly, and the internet has become one of the human needs regardless of age or gender in society. However, the use of the internet among teenagers and children is often questioned as many of them tend to be addicted (Husna et al, 2022). According to Wei-Meng (2011) there are some benefits of mobile learning such as: Relatively inexpensive opportunities, as the cost of mobile device are significantly less than Pc and laptop, multimedia content delivery and creation options. Continuous and situated learning support, Decrease in training cost, potentially a more rewarding learning experience. Improving levels of literacy, numeracy and participation in education amongst young adult. Using communication features of a mobile phone as part of larger learning activity, e.g. Sending media or text into a central portfolio, or exporting audio files from a learning platform to you phone. The english teachers could use Mobile Legends as the alternative teaching media to make students' Vocabulary mastery. Further, students' are suggested to use Mobile Legends to improve their vocabulary (Diantoro et al., 2020).

One activity that is currently very popular among adults, teenagers, and students' is playing online games. One very popular example is Mobile Legends, a mobile-based game that has millions of active users worldwide. This game not only offers entertainment but also provides exposure to a wide range of vocabulary through its Quick Chat feature and other communication features within the game. These features allow players to repeatedly use vocabulary in meaningful and relevant contexts, which ultimately supports the process of acquiring new vocabulary (Yogatama et al., 2019).

According to research conducted by Li et al.(2022), mobile games have now evolved into educational tools that provide multimodal learning experiences-combining text, audio, and visuals and if used in a planned and intentional manner, can be an effective tool to aid vocabulary development. Based on observations at SMAN 6 Palopo, it was found that a significant number of students' actively play Mobile Legends. However, their overall vocabulary proficiency remains relatively low. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the extent to which Mobile Legends can influence students' vocabulary proficiency at SMAN 6 Palopo.

1.2 Problem Statement

Based on the background of the research above, the researcher formulate the problem statement as follow:

1. Does the use of the Mobile Legends game improving students' interest in learning English vocabulary?
2. Is Mobile Legends effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery at SMAN 6 Palopo?

1.3 Objective of the Research

Based on the problem statement, the researcher formulates the objective of the research as follows:

1. To find out whether the use of the Mobile Legends game improving students' interest in learning English vocabulary at SMAN 6 Palopo.
2. To find out the effectiveness of Mobile Legends in improving students' vocabulary mastery at SMAN 6 Palopo.

1.4 Significances of the Research

This research is expected to:

1. First, through the use of media that is interesting and relevant to the interests of students', such as the online game Mobile Legends, this research aims to help improve students' vocabulary mastery more effectively. A fun approach is expected to improve learning motivation and active student involvement in the learning process.
2. Second, the results of this research are expected to provide insights and alternatives for educators in selecting innovative learning strategies or media. With this, teachers can utilize technology that is familiar to students' daily lives as a tool to support the achievement of learning objectives, particularly in vocabulary instruction.
3. Third, this research is expected to serve as a consideration for educational institutions in integrating technology-based media into the learning process. This integration not only aligns with the times but also has the potential to improve the overall quality of English language learning, particularly in terms of vocabulary mastery.

1.5 Scope of the Research

This research focuses on the use of Mobile Legends as a learning medium to improve the vocabulary of tenth-grade students' at SMAN 6 Palopo. The main focus of this research is on vocabulary that frequently appears and is used in the game, including verbs, nouns, adverbs, and other relevant parts of speech. These words were selected because they are considered representative and contextual, thus potentially helping students' expand their vocabulary in a more natural and meaningful way through interaction in the game.

1.6 Operational Definition

To get a general understanding of the title of the research, the researcher given the definition of the key term related of the title.

1. Mobile Games

Mobile games are digital applications specifically designed to provide entertainment through mobile devices. These applications generally include elements of communication and strategy, making them not only entertaining but also interactive (Li et al., 2022).

2. Mobile Legends

Mobile Legends is a Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) game developed by a company called Moonton. In this game, players are required to work together strategically, one of which is through communication features such as Quick Chat, which makes this game a potential medium for providing contextual vocabulary exposure (Yogatama et al., 2019).

3. Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery refers to a person's ability to understand, remember, and use words appropriately and effectively in various forms of communication. This ability includes receptive skills, such as reading and listening, as well as productive skills, such as speaking and writing (Rahmah et al., 2023).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Review

1. Vocabulary

a. Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is fundamentally defined as a set of words known and used by a person in a particular language. In language learning, vocabulary refers not only to single lexical items but also to multi-word expressions and phrases that carry meaning (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020). This includes idioms, collocations, and phrasal verbs, which are essential for natural and fluent communication.

According to Nation (2016), vocabulary is a part of language knowledge that involves knowing the form (spoken and written), meaning (conceptual and associative), and use (grammatical functions and collocations) of a word. This definition implies that vocabulary knowledge is not limited to simply knowing what a word means; rather, it encompasses the ability to use it correctly in context.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), vocabulary is a crucial component for developing four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Webb and Nation (2017), vocabulary is often the biggest obstacle for learners in understanding spoken or written language, and vocabulary size strongly correlates with reading comprehension and academic success.

Thornbury (2017) states that vocabulary is the backbone of language and that without grammar, little can be conveyed; but without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed. This famous quote emphasizes the vital role that vocabulary plays in all forms of communication.

Furthermore, vocabulary can be classified into three major forms:

- 1) Lexical words: such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, which carry the core meanings in communication.
- 2) Grammatical words: such as prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and auxiliary verbs, which function to structure sentences.

- 3) Fixed expressions and multiword units: like "take it for granted" or "as a matter of fact," which often cannot be interpreted literally.

Understanding vocabulary includes mastering:

- 1) Phonological knowledge: how the word sounds
- 2) Orthographic knowledge: how the word is written or spelled
- 3) Morphological knowledge: the internal structure of the word (prefixes, suffixes, root words)
- 4) Syntactic knowledge: how the word fits grammatically in a sentence
- 5) Semantic knowledge: what the word means and what associations it carries
- 6) Pragmatic knowledge: how the word is used in social and cultural contexts

The multidimensional nature of vocabulary shows why its acquisition takes time and requires exposure, practice, and reinforcement. For example, students might understand the meaning of the word "*defend*" when reading, but they might struggle to use it correctly in a sentence like "*We need to defend the base,*" especially in real-time communication like gameplay in Mobile Legends.

In sum, the definition of vocabulary in the field of language learning is not limited to a list of word meanings. Instead, it is a complex and dynamic system that involves the integration of form, function, and context. Learners must engage with vocabulary both receptively and productively to achieve communicative competence.

b. Types of Vocabulary

In the field of language learning, vocabulary is not a monolithic construct. It is multifaceted and categorized in several ways to help educators and researchers understand how words function and are acquired. Categorizing vocabulary allows educators to tailor instructional approaches based on learners' needs and the type of vocabulary being targeted.

1) Based on Use: Receptive and Productive Vocabulary

One of the most common classifications is based on how vocabulary is used and acquired:

- a) Receptive Vocabulary (also known as passive vocabulary) refers to the words that learners recognize and understand when they encounter them in listening or reading contexts. Learners may not use these words in speech

or writing, but they can comprehend them. For example, a learner may understand the word "*ambush*" while reading or hearing it in a game but may not actively use it in conversation.

- b) Productive Vocabulary (also known as active vocabulary) refers to the words that learners can confidently use in speaking or writing. Productive vocabulary generally develops after receptive vocabulary as it requires deeper knowledge and practice (Nation, 2016).

This distinction is critical in vocabulary pedagogy because instruction must aim to convert receptive vocabulary into productive vocabulary through contextual use and practice (Teng, 2020).

2) Based on Frequency and Function: Nation's Vocabulary Categories

Nation (2016) proposes a frequency-based classification of vocabulary that is highly influential in language teaching:

- a) High-Frequency Vocabulary: These are the most common words that appear in general language use. Approximately 2,000–3,000 word families make up the bulk of spoken and written texts. Examples include: *make, good, go, want, school*.
- b) Academic Vocabulary: These are words that appear frequently in academic texts but are not common in everyday conversation. For example: *analyze, hypothesis, theory, assume*. Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL) has been widely used for this purpose and continues to influence instructional design.
- c) Technical Vocabulary: Words that are specific to a particular subject or field of study. For instance, *photosynthesis* in biology, *syntax* in linguistics, or *retreat* in a battle-themed game like Mobile Legends.
- d) Low-Frequency Vocabulary: These are rare words, often literary or specialized, that occur infrequently in texts. Examples might include *perfidious* or *incandescent*. These are usually not prioritized in early stages of language learning.

This classification assists teachers in setting vocabulary learning priorities. High-frequency and academic vocabulary are often emphasized for beginner and

intermediate learners, while technical and low-frequency vocabulary are introduced as needed.

3) Based on Grammatical Function: Content and Function Words

Vocabulary can also be grouped according to its grammatical role:

- a) Content Words: These carry semantic meaning and include:
 - 1) Nouns (e.g., enemy, jungle)
 - 2) Verbs (e.g., attack, gather)
 - 3) Adjectives (e.g., strong, weak)
 - 4) Adverbs (e.g., quickly, safely)
- b) Function Words: These are used to express grammatical relationships and include:
 - 1) Prepositions (e.g., on, at)
 - 2) Conjunctions (e.g., and, but)
 - 3) Articles (e.g., the, a)
 - 4) Auxiliary verbs (e.g., is, have)

Function words are learned early and used frequently, while content words are often the focus of vocabulary expansion.

4) Based on Word Structure: Simple and Complex Vocabulary

From a morphological perspective, vocabulary can be divided into:

- a) Simple Words: Words that cannot be broken down into smaller meaningful parts (e.g., run, base, chat).
- b) Complex Words: Words formed through affixation or compounding (e.g., unbelievable, retreat, outnumbered).

Understanding how complex words are formed helps learners deduce meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary. Morphological awareness also improves vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension (Li & Kirby, 2015).

5) Based on Meaning Relationships: Semantic Categories

Vocabulary can be grouped semantically into:

- a) Synonyms (e.g., enemy – opponent)
- b) Antonyms (e.g., attack – defend)
- c) Hyponyms (e.g., hero under character)
- d) Superordinates (e.g., object is the category of weapon, tower, etc.)

e) Collocations (e.g., deal damage, gather team)

These groupings support deeper understanding and organization of vocabulary in the learner's mental lexicon (Webb & Nation, 2017).

c. **Vocabulary Acquisition**

Vocabulary acquisition refers to the process by which learners come to understand, retain, and use new words in a language. It is a central component in second and foreign language learning, as vocabulary serves as the building blocks of communication. According to Schmitt and Schmitt (2020), vocabulary acquisition is both a cognitive and contextual process that involves encountering new words, forming connections between word forms and meanings, and using them appropriately in different contexts.

1) **Two Main Approaches to Vocabulary Acquisition**

Vocabulary acquisition generally occurs through two primary approaches: incidental learning and intentional learning.

a) **Incidental Vocabulary Learning**

Incidental vocabulary learning happens as a by-product of other activities, such as reading, listening, or engaging with digital media, where learning is not the primary focus. For example, learners may encounter and acquire new English vocabulary while playing a game like *Mobile Legends* without actively trying to learn those words. Teng (2020) asserts that incidental learning plays a vital role in vocabulary development, especially when learners are exposed to high-frequency words repeatedly in meaningful contexts.

Webb and Nation (2017) highlight that incidental learning is most effective when learners have a high level of engagement and when the language input is rich and contextual. In gameplay, this includes hearing or seeing commands like "*Attack the base*" or "*Enemy missing!*", which due to their repetition and real-time relevance can be retained more easily by the learner.

b) **Intentional Vocabulary Learning**

Intentional vocabulary learning refers to deliberate efforts to learn new words, often involving memorization, translation, word lists, and vocabulary-focused tasks. This method is typically used in formal educational settings. For example, students might be asked to write down and define all the commands

used in *Mobile Legends*, translate them into Indonesian, and create sentences using them.

According to Nation (2016), intentional learning is especially effective for acquiring low-frequency or technical words that are not easily encountered in everyday exposure. Teng and Zhang (2021) further argue that vocabulary retention is strongest when intentional instruction is paired with contextual application, suggesting that students remember vocabulary better when they both study and use it in real tasks.

2) Factors Influencing Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary learning is influenced by several factors:

- a) Frequency of Exposure: The more often a learner encounters a word, the more likely they are to acquire it (Nation, 2016). Digital games, particularly those with repetitive language elements, provide natural opportunities for this.
- b) Contextual Richness: Words learned in rich, meaningful contexts such as through a story or an in-game command are easier to remember than words learned in isolation (Webb & Nation, 2017).
- c) Depth of Processing: The deeper a learner processes a word (e.g., by using it in a sentence or connecting it with prior knowledge), the better it is retained (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020).
- d) Motivation and Engagement: Learners who are motivated and engaged such as students who enjoy gaming are more likely to acquire vocabulary effectively. Rahardja et al. (2018) found that game-based learning environments improve students' attention and emotional involvement, which support vocabulary acquisition.

3) Stages of Vocabulary Learning

Nation (2016) outlines several stages in the vocabulary acquisition process:

- a) Noticing: The learner notices the word during reading, listening, or interaction.
- b) Recognition: The learner begins to recognize the form and associate it with meaning.

- c) Consolidation: The learner sees or uses the word multiple times, strengthening memory.
- d) Productive Use: The learner can use the word accurately in speaking or writing.

In the context of *Mobile Legends*, for example, a student might first notice the word “gather” in the Quick Chat feature. After repeated exposure, they recognize and understand it. With practice and discussion, the word is consolidated, and eventually, the student might use it in class discussions or writing tasks (e.g., “Let’s gather before the presentation”).

4) The Role of Digital Media in Vocabulary Acquisition

With the growing presence of technology in education, digital tools including mobile games play an increasingly important role in vocabulary acquisition. Li et al. (2022) assert that mobile games provide multimodal input (text, audio, interaction) that supports incidental learning and strengthens retention. When students are immersed in a digital environment that repeatedly uses key vocabulary in meaningful ways, the acquisition process is enhanced.

In game-based learning, vocabulary learning happens through context-rich tasks, peer interaction, visual reinforcement, and feedback loops. This aligns with constructivist learning theories, where knowledge is built actively by the learner through experience.

d. Importance of Vocabulary in Language Learning

Vocabulary plays a foundational role in second and foreign language acquisition. It is widely recognized that vocabulary knowledge is a strong predictor of overall language proficiency. According to Schmitt and Schmitt (2020), vocabulary is at the heart of language use because communication cannot occur without words. Learners may have a solid understanding of grammar, but without vocabulary, their ability to express ideas remains severely limited.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), vocabulary mastery is often the key to enabling students to perform across all four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teng and Zhang (2021) emphasize that vocabulary size is directly related to reading comprehension. Learners with a limited vocabulary struggle to decode the meaning of texts and instructions,

while those with a broader vocabulary can read with greater speed and understanding.

1) Vocabulary as the Foundation of Language Skills

Vocabulary is intricately connected with the four primary language skills:

- a) **Listening:** Understanding spoken English requires the ability to recognize and interpret known words. Without an adequate vocabulary, learners cannot follow conversations, lectures, or instructions (Webb & Nation, 2017).
- b) **Speaking:** Productive vocabulary is essential for fluency and accuracy in oral communication. Learners with a limited vocabulary may face hesitation, repetition, and ineffective expression, which can lower confidence.
- c) **Reading:** A large vocabulary facilitates better comprehension. Learners who know more words are more likely to infer meaning, recognize nuance, and retain what they read (Nation, 2016).
- d) **Writing:** Expressing ideas in writing depends heavily on lexical resources. An enriched vocabulary allows learners to produce more varied, accurate, and cohesive writing (Teng, 2020).

2) Vocabulary and Academic Achievement

Vocabulary also plays a significant role in academic success. According to Rahmah et al. (2023), students with higher vocabulary mastery tend to perform better in English subjects, particularly in reading comprehension and writing tasks. In academic settings, a limited vocabulary can hinder understanding of instructions, textbooks, and test questions.

Moreover, academic vocabulary (e.g., *analyze*, *evaluate*, *assume*) is not always part of everyday communication but is essential for academic discourse. Therefore, explicit instruction of academic vocabulary is critical in preparing students for further education.

3) Vocabulary for Independent Learning and Autonomy

Another reason vocabulary is vital is its impact on learner autonomy. Learners with a broader vocabulary range can engage independently with authentic materials books, videos, games, websites without needing constant

translation or explanation. This leads to more meaningful learning experiences and sustained motivation (Oxford, 2017).

Mobile games such as *Mobile Legends* provide opportunities for students to encounter and use new vocabulary in real-time, interactive contexts. Players often pick up words such as *defend*, *recall*, *eliminate*, or *base*, which they later transfer into academic or communicative settings. Such incidental vocabulary learning supports learner autonomy and long-term retention (Li et al., 2022).

4) Vocabulary and Motivation in Language Learning

Vocabulary also plays a key role in sustaining learners' motivation. According to Rahardja et al. (2018), vocabulary is one of the easiest aspects of language learning to track and measure. Learners feel a tangible sense of progress when they remember more words, use them correctly, or understand them in a conversation or text.

Digital and game-based learning platforms often incorporate vocabulary in ways that make it meaningful and fun. The use of *Mobile Legends* as a vocabulary learning tool, for instance, not only enhances vocabulary acquisition but also improves learners' engagement and motivation due to its interactive and competitive nature.

5) The Central Role of Vocabulary in Communication

Without vocabulary, communication breaks down. Grammar may allow for sentence structure, but only vocabulary conveys meaning. This is echoed in the famous quote by Wilkins (1972), "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." Though the quote is older, it continues to be relevant and frequently cited in modern vocabulary research, such as in Schmitt & Schmitt (2020).

In real-life situations, especially in gameplay communication or daily interaction, learners depend heavily on their vocabulary bank to express feelings, give directions, or explain ideas. As such, vocabulary becomes not only a tool for learning but also a bridge to social and functional use of the language.

2. Vocabulary Mastery

a. Definition of Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery refers to a learner's full and functional command of vocabulary in a target language, encompassing both the quantity of words known (breadth) and the quality of understanding and use (depth). It signifies not only the knowledge of word meanings but also the ability to use vocabulary accurately and appropriately across various contexts, both receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing).

According to Schmitt and Schmitt (2020), vocabulary mastery is achieved when learners are able to recall and use words correctly and fluently in communication. This includes recognizing words when heard or read, producing them in writing or speech, and applying them appropriately in different grammatical and social contexts. In other words, learners do not just memorize vocabulary items; they integrate them into their language system for spontaneous use.

Nation (2016) further explains that vocabulary mastery involves knowledge of multiple word aspects: form (spoken and written), meaning (denotative and connotative), and use (collocations, grammar, and frequency). Learners who master a word are expected to:

- 1) Pronounce it correctly,
- 2) Spell it accurately,
- 3) Understand its meaning and nuances,
- 4) Use it in grammatically appropriate ways,
- 5) Combine it correctly with other words (e.g., collocations), and
- 6) Know in which contexts and registers it is appropriately used.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), vocabulary mastery is essential for overall communicative competence. Teng and Zhang (2021) state that vocabulary mastery is a strong predictor of learners' performance in reading, writing, and even speaking fluency. The more vocabulary a student masters, the

more capable they are of decoding meaning, expressing ideas, and understanding texts or conversations.

Additionally, vocabulary mastery can be viewed as a continuum of learning. Learners gradually move from recognizing new words (receptive knowledge) to being able to recall and produce them in speaking and writing (productive mastery). This shift from passive to active use of vocabulary requires repeated exposure, meaningful practice, and contextual reinforcement.

For example, in a digital game like *Mobile Legends*, a student might initially only recognize the term “*eliminate*” when hearing it during gameplay. Over time, through repeated exposure and in-game experience, the learner might begin to use the word in conversation or writing, saying, “*We need to eliminate the enemies before they reach our base.*” This progression marks a movement toward true vocabulary mastery.

In educational assessment, vocabulary mastery is often operationalized through indicators such as:

- 1) Ability to match words to definitions,
- 2) Use of words in grammatically correct sentences,
- 3) Ability to identify synonyms/antonyms,
- 4) Application of vocabulary in different contexts.

Therefore, vocabulary mastery is a multidimensional concept that integrates linguistic knowledge, contextual awareness, and practical usage. It plays a central role in learners’ ability to engage with the language effectively and confidently.

b. Components of Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery is not a singular ability, but rather a composite of several interrelated components. Understanding these components is essential for both learners and educators, as they reflect the full scope of what it means to “master” a word. Nation (2016) and Schmitt & Schmitt (2020) classify vocabulary knowledge into three main dimensions: form, meaning, and use.

Each of these categories encompasses specific subcomponents that contribute to learners' overall mastery.

1) Knowledge of Form

This component focuses on how the word looks and sounds, and how it is structured. It includes:

- a) Spoken Form: The ability to recognize and produce the correct pronunciation of a word. For example, a learner must not only know what “gather” means but also how it is correctly pronounced in natural speech.
- b) Written Form: The ability to recognize and produce correct spelling. Misidentifying or misspelling a word (e.g., *defend* vs *depend*) can lead to communication breakdowns.
- c) Word Parts (Morphology): Understanding the internal structure of words roots, prefixes, and suffixes can help learners deduce meanings of unfamiliar words. For example, recognizing that “re-” in “recall” implies repetition aids comprehension.

2) Knowledge of Meaning

Understanding what a word refers to, its range of meanings, and how it relates to other words is critical to mastery. This includes:

- a) Form and Meaning Link: Knowing what specific form (spoken/written) corresponds to what meaning. For instance, understanding that the word “base” in *Mobile Legends* refers to the team’s central area in gameplay.
- b) Conceptual Meaning: The literal or denotative meaning of a word, often including visual or functional understanding (e.g., *eliminate* means to remove or destroy something).
- c) Associative Meaning: This includes a word’s connotation and emotional or cultural associations. For example, *ambush* may carry a more negative or strategic implication than *attack*.
- d) Synonyms and Antonyms: Learners master a word more fully when they can relate it to other vocabulary items with similar or opposite meanings.

3) Knowledge of Use

This component involves the ability to use vocabulary accurately in real communication. It includes:

- a) Grammatical Function: Knowing the part of speech and how the word behaves grammatically. For example, whether “*eliminate*” is used as a verb or noun (*elimination*), and how it fits into a sentence.
- b) Collocations: Understanding which words typically go together. For example, in English, we say “*launch an attack*” rather than “*start an attack*”. Mastery of collocations enhances fluency and naturalness in speech and writing.
- c) Register and Frequency:
 - 1) Register refers to the appropriateness of a word in different contexts (formal/informal, academic/casual).
 - 2) Frequency refers to how commonly a word is used. High-frequency words should be prioritized for early mastery.

c. Importance of Vocabulary Mastery in EFL Contexts

Vocabulary mastery is fundamental for achieving communicative competence, particularly for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. As Rahmah et al. (2023) argue, students who demonstrate strong vocabulary mastery tend to perform better in all language skill areas especially reading comprehension and writing. Without adequate vocabulary, learners are unable to access the meaning of texts or express themselves effectively.

In productive skills such as speaking and writing, vocabulary mastery allows for precision, creativity, and fluency. Learners with a rich vocabulary repertoire can choose words that best fit their intended meaning, adjust their language to suit the audience and context, and avoid ambiguity.

In receptive skills such as listening and reading, vocabulary mastery enables learners to comprehend complex texts, follow instructions, and make inferences. As Nation (2016) explains, a vocabulary size of 3,000 word families is required for fluent spoken comprehension, while academic reading requires closer to 8,000–9,000 word families.

Vocabulary mastery can be defined as the ability of learners to understand, remember, and use various types of vocabulary accurately in different situations. This mastery encompasses two aspects, namely receptive vocabulary (the ability to understand through listening and reading) and productive vocabulary (the ability to use in speaking and writing). Salawazo et al. (2020) emphasize that vocabulary mastery plays an important role in students' academic success, particularly in understanding reading materials and expressing ideas in writing.

d. Factors Affecting Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery is a multifaceted process influenced by various factors that interact to shape a learner's ability to acquire, retain, and use vocabulary effectively. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, these factors can be broadly categorized into **internal** (within the learner) and **external** (from the learning environment). Understanding these factors is essential for educators to develop effective teaching strategies and provide appropriate support for vocabulary development.

1) Internal Factors

a) Learner Motivation

Motivation is a crucial driver of vocabulary learning. Learners who are highly motivated either intrinsically (due to personal interest) or extrinsically (due to exams or rewards) tend to invest more effort in learning and practicing new vocabulary (Oxford, 2017). According to Rahardja et al. (2018), students who are enthusiastic about English, especially when learning is integrated with engaging activities such as digital games, demonstrate faster vocabulary retention and more frequent use of new words.

b) Learning Styles and Strategies

Individual differences in cognitive style also influence vocabulary mastery. Some learners benefit from visual learning strategies (e.g., using flashcards or mind maps), while others may prefer auditory or kinesthetic approaches. Schmitt and Schmitt (2020) highlight the importance of metacognitive strategies such as self-testing, reviewing, and planning, which are strongly associated with long-term retention and transfer of vocabulary.

In EFL contexts, where input may be limited, the use of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) such as grouping words by topic, using keywords, or employing spaced repetition can significantly improve both breadth and depth of vocabulary mastery.

c) Cognitive Abilities and Prior Knowledge

Learners' cognitive capabilities, such as memory capacity, attention span, and analytical thinking, influence how well vocabulary is processed and stored. Students with stronger working memory are generally more effective at retaining word forms and meanings, particularly when words are encountered in clusters or thematic contexts.

Prior linguistic knowledge also plays a role; learners who already possess a basic vocabulary base in English can make connections more easily when learning new words. For instance, knowing the word "*build*" helps learners guess the meaning of "*rebuild*", "*builder*", or "*building*."

2) External Factors

a) Frequency and Repetition of Exposure

Nation (2016) emphasizes that frequent and repeated exposure to vocabulary items in varied contexts is necessary for mastery. The more often learners encounter a word, the more likely it is to be remembered and integrated into active use. EFL learners, who may not be surrounded by English in their daily lives, benefit greatly from structured classroom repetition and multimedia tools that provide this exposure.

Digital games like *Mobile Legends*, for example, introduce and reinforce certain words repeatedly in real-time contexts terms like "*defend*," "*attack*," "*eliminate*," or "*gather*" which accelerates incidental vocabulary learning.

b) Learning Environment and Materials

A rich learning environment, one that includes authentic materials, multimedia tools, peer interaction, and supportive teachers, greatly facilitates vocabulary mastery. In classrooms where learners are encouraged to read, listen, speak, and write using target vocabulary, retention and application are significantly enhanced (Teng, 2020).

Technological integration such as mobile apps, educational platforms, and digital games also provides learners with interactive and meaningful vocabulary input. Li et al. (2022) emphasize that such environments support multiple modes of learning (visual, auditory, kinesthetic), making vocabulary more memorable.

c) Teacher's Role and Instructional Method

The teacher's ability to select relevant vocabulary, provide clear explanations, and integrate vocabulary learning into communicative tasks plays a critical role in student mastery. Effective teachers often contextualize vocabulary within themes, use storytelling or real-world examples, and give learners the chance to practice actively.

Moreover, explicit vocabulary instruction such as teaching word roots, collocations, and usage patterns is shown to be particularly beneficial in EFL settings, where learners might not acquire such information through input alone (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020).

d) Cultural and Linguistic Distance

The degree of similarity between a learner's first language (L1) and English also influences vocabulary mastery. If the target word has a clear equivalent in the L1 (e.g., "*banana*"), it is usually learned quickly. However, abstract words, idioms, or culturally specific terms ("*take it for granted*," "*retreat*") can be more difficult for EFL learners due to lack of equivalent concepts or expressions.

3. Mobile Games and Vocabulary Learning

a. Definition of Mobile Games

Mobile games are a type of digital game designed to be played on mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets. This game combines visual, audio, and interactive elements to create an engaging gaming experience. According to Li et al. (2022), mobile games can support educational goals by enhancing motivation, attention, and language acquisition in the context of informal learning.

b. Game Base Learning

Game Based Learning (GBL) refers to the application of game elements in an educational environment to support the learning process. Rahardja et al. (2018) explain that games can create an immersive learning atmosphere, where learners find it easier to remember vocabulary due to frequent exposure and use in real contexts. GBL is very effective in language learning if the vocabulary being studied appears naturally in the dialogue or actions of the game.

c. Benefits of Vocabulary Learning Through Games

Learning vocabulary through digital games offers various benefits, such as contextual learning, active student engagement, and improved motivation. When vocabulary is learned in an interactive and meaningful context, students' tend to remember and use it more easily. Li et al. (2022) state that digital games can enhance retention, reinforce understanding through visual and audio cues, and reduce students' anxiety in using a foreign language.

4. Mobile Legends Game

a. Overview of Mobile Legends

Mobile Legends: Bang Bang is an online game of the Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) genre developed by Moonton in 2016. This game is played in groups, five against five, which requires players to cooperate, strategize, and respond to the game's situations in real-time. One of its communication features is Quick Chat, which provides commands in English such as "Attack the Lord," "Defend the base," "Gather for team fight," and "Retreat."

b. Language Features in Mobile Legends

This game facilitates real-time strategic communication through text and audio. As explained by Yogatama et al. (2019), players are routinely exposed to various vocabulary and expressions in English, especially those related to battle commands and teamwork. This authentic and repetitive exposure has the potential to enhance incidental vocabulary learning.

Communication features in the Mobile Legends game consist of 3 types, namely:

1) Voice Chat

A feature that allows players to communicate by voice (spoken) in real time. This feature can function when players activate the microphone, and other players also activate the loudspeaker feature. If not, then other players would not hear any voice, even though there are other players who activate their microphones. And vice versa. Ideally, for this voice chat feature to work optimally, all members of the team should agree to activate their microphones and loudspeakers.

2) Chat box

A feature that allows players to communicate with text messages typed in the chat box. This feature seems difficult to use when in the middle of battle, because it takes time in typing messages. In line with the results of research by Ananda, et al (2022) which suggests that the communication feature that tends to be rarely used by teams is chat box because it is late in delivering messages and the chat display that appears disturbs the player's concentration. The shortcomings of the chat box feature then gave rise to a new communication culture among lovers of this Mobile Legends game. The new culture is the creation of a variety of languages, codes, or abbreviated terms with the aim of shortening typing time when using the chat box feature in the middle of battles (Ananda, et al, 2022).

3) Quick chat

A feature that allows players to communicate by sending instant messages or quick messages that have been customized. The Quick Chat feature in Mobile Legends has been set by default, allowing players to simply choose what messages they want to send to their team members. There are 4 types of quick messages, namely “attack” with an axe symbol, ‘retreat’ with a running person symbol, “gather” with a gathering point symbol, as well as a collection of other quick messages that have also been set in general. These other quick message sets use the message box symbol.

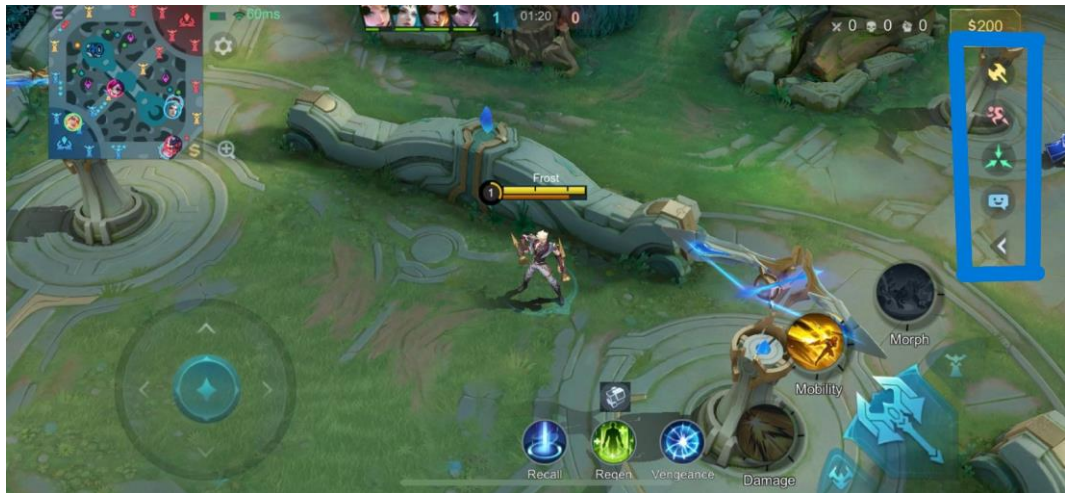


Image 2.1. Display of Quick Chat Mobile Legends

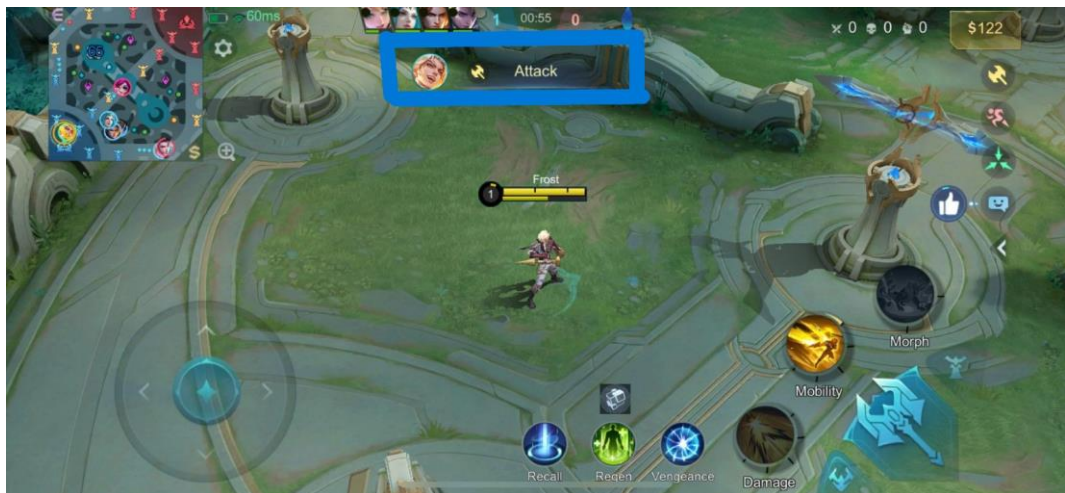


Image 2.2 Using Quick Chat "Attack" Mobile Legends

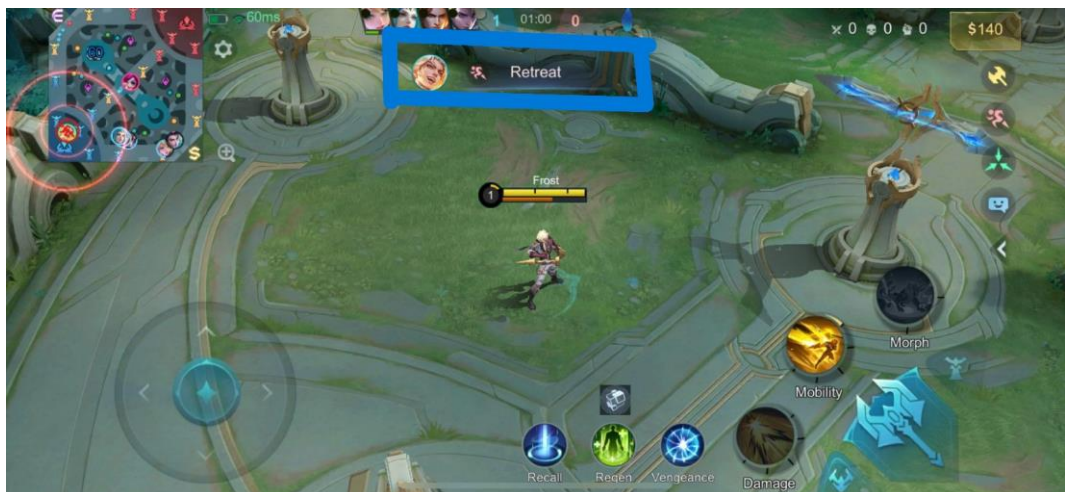


Image 2.3 Using Quick Chat "Retreat" Mobile Legends



Image 2.4 Using Quick Chat “Gather” Mobile Legends

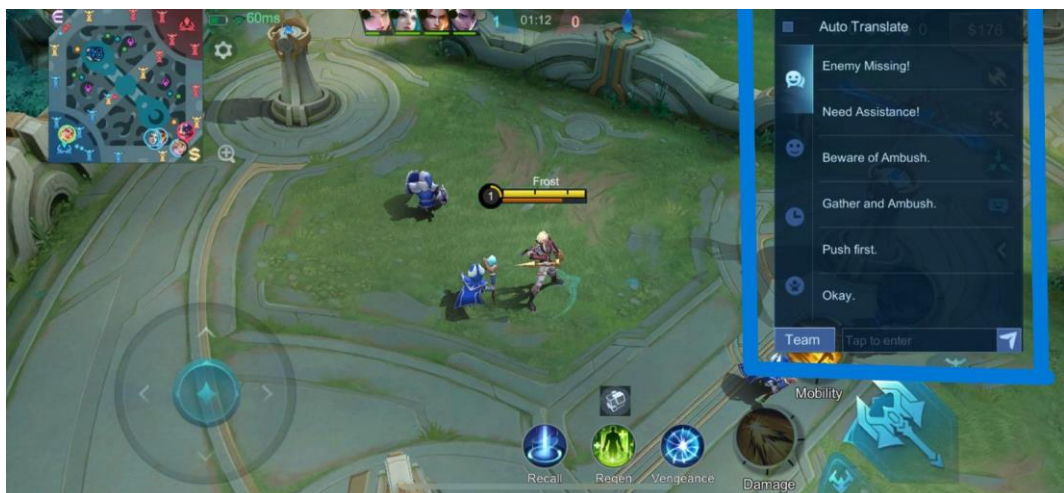


Image 2.5 Display Another Quick Chat in Mobile Legends

In addition, Almajid (2019) found that there are various misuses of communication features in Mobile Legends, one of which is using the chat and voice features to hurl harsh words to swear at other players, both for team member players and opposing team players with a variety of swearing that is diverse because of the chat and voice features that give freedom for players to say at will. Besides that in the quick chat feature there are still many communication commands that have 3 functions, namely defense, attack and communicate. some examples of quick chats are as follows:

a) Quick Chat for Defend

Table 2.1 Quick Chat for Defend

No	Quick Chat	Translate
1	Enemy Missing!	Musuh menghilang!
2	Follow me!	Ikuti saya!
3	Turn on Voice Chat!	Aktifkan Obrolan Suara!
4	Beware of Ambush!	Waspada Penyergapan!
5	Watch out for Flanking!	Hati-hati Pengepungan

b) Quick Chat for Attack

Table 2.2 Quick Chat for Attack

No	Quick Chat	Translate
1	Kill the Damage Dealer.	Bunuh Damage Dealer.
2	Need Ganking.	Perlu Penyerangan.
3	Wait For me.	Tunggu saya.
4	Split Push.	Dorong Terpisah!
5	Invade the Enemy Jungle.	Serbu Hutan Musuh.

c) Quick Chat for Communicate

Table 2.3 Quick Chat for Communicate

No	Quick Chat	Translate
1	Sorry	Maaf
2	Thank you	Terima Kasih
3	Wait	Tunggu
4	Good game	Permainan yang bagus
5	Help in jungle!	Tolong di hutan
6	Unstable network	Jaringan tidak stabil
7	Come and take the monster jungle	Datang dan ambil monster hutan
8	Prepare for team fight	Bersiaplah untuk pertarungan tim
9	Give me vision	Beri saya penglihatan

10	Let me engage	Biarkan saya terlibat
11	Gather	Berkumpul
12	Don't give up	Jangan menyerah
13	Defend	Bertahan
14	Attack	Serang
15	Let me farm	Biarkan saya bertani

c. Integration of Mobile Legends in Language Learning

If used purposefully, the game Mobile Legends can be utilized as a supportive medium in language learning. Students' who are already familiar with this game can be invited to reflect on the use of language within the game. Teachers can also design learning activities that involve translation, analysis, or role-playing using commands from the Quick Chat feature. Because students' have shown interest in this game, its integration into learning can enhance engagement and help with their vocabulary retention (Li et al., 2022).

2.2 Previous Studies

In writing this research, the researcher found some research which are related. Those are:

1. Diantoro et al. (2020), in their journal entitled "The Effect of Mobile Legends on Vocabulary Mastery of the Tenth Grade Student of SMAN 1 Cluring. *Lunar*". This research focuses on the effect of the mobile legends game on students' vocabulary mastery as well as the techniques used in this research namely Pre-Experimental. Based on the result of the data analysis of T-test formula, it can be known that the result of t- test is higher than the t table. That is $7,833 > 2,048$. The degree of freedom in the level significant is 30 the valuable of ttable is 2.048 from the analysis. It shows that "There is a significant effect of Mobile Legends Game on the vocabulary mastery of the tenth grade students' at SMAN 1 Cluring in the 2018/2019 Academic year. Based on the result, the English teachers could use Mobile Legends as the alternative teaching media to make students' Vocabulary mastery. Further, students' are suggested to use Mobile Legends to improve their vocabulary

2. Mawalia (2020) in their journal entitled “The Impact of Mobile Legends Game in Creating Virtual Reality”. This research focuses on the impact of mobile legends games on creating virtual reality, in this research the method used. The method in this research uses a qualitative type with a virtual ethnographic method. In addition, this research collects data on using virtual tracing to record and documenting virtual activities, and interviews with seven informants of Mobile Legends' players. This research shows that when a person plays games, he can become more apathetic and minimize interaction and communication with the social environment around him. Technology like Mobile Legends has eroded the sociocultural side and communication sensitivity of an individual in society. All users also become more active and narcissistic in creating multiple identities that exist in the virtual world. So this research shows that online games in creating virtual reality have both positive and negative impacts on the players.
3. Husna et al. (2022), in their journal entitled “The Effects of Mobile Games on Elementary School Students’ Achievement in Aceh” This research is to determine the relationship between online games and academic achievement among students’, in this research the method used questionnaire. The research population consisted of elementary students’ from Aceh, with a sample size of 55 pupils. Included in the study was the Game Addiction Scale (Lemmens et al., 2009). Then, using regression analysis, the hypothesis was tested. From the finding, we can conclude that academic performance was found to be negatively associated with online gaming. This is because playing games for a long time reduces their ability to focus on academic tasks. This study can serve as a reference to adolescents' online gaming habits, which could be a factor affecting their academic achievement.
4. Rahmah et al. (2023) conducted a study aimed at determining the effectiveness of using game-based learning media on students’ vocabulary mastery. In the study, it was found that students’ who used game-based learning tools showed significantly higher vocabulary scores compared to students’ who relied solely on textbooks as the main source in the learning process. These results suggest that an approach incorporating elements of play can make a positive contribution to the development of learners' vocabulary.
5. Salawazo et al. (2020) also carried out a similar study emphasizing the importance of interactive activities in vocabulary learning. They found that

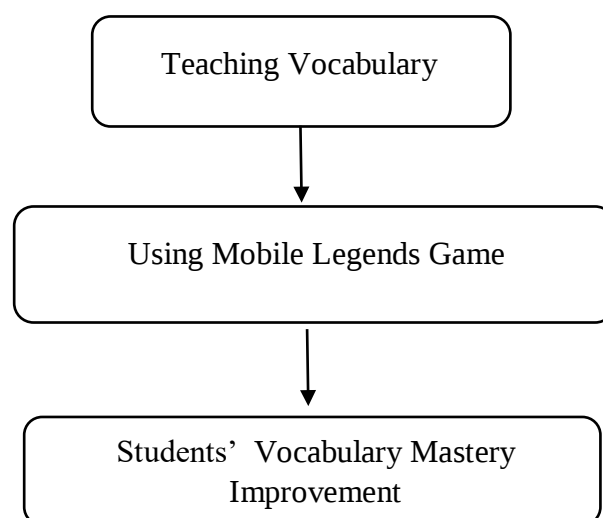
students' who actively engaged in activities such as online gaming or online gaming had the ability to maintain new vocabulary for longer periods of time than those who learned through conventional methods. This research strengthens the notion that direct involvement and interaction in digital games can strengthen memory of the new vocabulary obtained.

6. Yogatama et al. (2019) highlighted the phenomenon of English usage among Mobile Legends players through observational studies. They found that players who played regularly could understand and use various commands in English that appeared during the game. Although Mobile Legends is not specifically designed as an educational tool, the game indirectly exposes players to functional English vocabulary, especially those related to strategy, teamwork, and instruction in the context of the game. These findings suggest that gaming experiences can provide a natural opportunity for students' to interact with foreign languages.

What this research has in common with previous research is that they both examine the influence of the mobile legends game on students' vocabulary mastery. Meanwhile, the difference in this research lies in the focus of the research, where previous research focused on the effect and impact of mobile legends on students', while this research focuses on the influence of mobile legends on students'.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Based on the theory of the research, the theoretical framework is described in the following:



Flow Explanation:

1. **Vocabulary Teaching.** Becomes the instructional foundation, providing learners with targeted vocabulary input and strategy guidance.
2. **Mobile Legends Game.** Serves as the contextual learning medium that supports vocabulary exposure, practice, and reinforcement in an engaging, game-based environment.
3. **Student Vocabulary Mastery Improvement.** Emerges as the outcome of combining structured instruction with contextual, meaningful language use in the game.

2.4 Hypothesis

By referring to the problem formulation and research objectives, the hypothesis in this research can be structured as follows:

1. Null Hypothesis (H0)
There is no significant difference in students' vocabulary mastery before and after using Mobile Legends as a learning medium.
2. Alternative Hypothesis (H1)
There is a significant difference in students' vocabulary mastery before and after using Mobile Legends as a learning medium.