

## Students' Perceptions of Using Mobile Legends: Bang Bang for English Vocabulary Learning

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze students' perceptions of the use of the game Mobile Legends: Bang Bang in English vocabulary learning. The study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive survey design. The participants consisted of 30 eleventh-grade students of SMK Unggulan NU Mojoagung, Jombang, selected through cluster sampling. Data were collected using a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores and percentage distribution. The results showed that the overall mean score was 3.65, categorized as high, indicating that students have positive perceptions of the use of digital games in vocabulary learning. Most responses were dominated by the Agree and Strongly Agree categories, suggesting that students perceive the game as providing contextual language exposure and supporting incidental learning. Students also demonstrated the ability to understand, remember, and apply vocabulary encountered in the game. However, not all students fully agreed that games could function as formal learning media, indicating the influence of individual factors such as learning styles, motivation, and perceptions. In conclusion, digital games have strong potential as alternative media for English vocabulary learning, but their use should be integrated with structured instructional strategies to achieve optimal learning outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Digital Games; Vocabulary Learning; Students' Perception; Incidental Learning; EFL

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### INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has brought significant changes to the field of education, particularly in language learning. One of the emerging phenomena among students is the widespread use of digital games as both entertainment media and platforms for interaction. Games such as Mobile Legends: Bang Bang not only function as recreational tools but also provide various text-, audio-, and visual-based features that utilize the English language. This condition offers the potential for contextual vocabulary exposure, which can indirectly support the language learning process.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), vocabulary mastery is a fundamental aspect that influences overall language proficiency. However, in practice, vocabulary instruction in classrooms often remains conventional, relying on memorization and textbook-based approaches, which tend to provide limited meaningful learning experiences. As a result, students' motivation and engagement in the learning process are often low. Conversely, students tend to spend more time engaging in digital activities such as playing games, which have not been fully utilized as part of instructional strategies.

Theoretically, language learning is more effective when it occurs in interactive and contextualized environments. The sociocultural theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process. In addition, the experiential learning theory by Kolb (2014) highlights that direct experience serves as the foundation for knowledge construction. In the context of game-based learning, Gee (2003) argues that video games provide contextual and meaningful learning environments (situated learning), enabling learners to acquire language through authentic in-game experiences. Furthermore, Mayer (2009) asserts that the integration of visual, audio, and textual elements can enhance students' comprehension of learning materials.

Several previous studies have demonstrated the potential of digital games in enhancing vocabulary learning. Zohud (2023) found that repeated exposure to games significantly improves vocabulary acquisition through incidental learning processes. Similarly, Syavaqilah et al. (2025) reported that students are not only exposed to vocabulary but are also able to understand and retain it. Moreover, studies by Bustang as well as Rachmawati and Fadhilawati (2025) revealed that the use of digital games can increase learning motivation and expand students' vocabulary mastery in the EFL context.

Despite these potentials, a gap remains between the affordances of digital games and their actual utilization in formal learning environments. Most existing studies focus on the effectiveness of games in improving learning outcomes, while limited attention has been given to students' perceptions of using games as learning media, particularly in vocational high school settings. Furthermore, there is still a lack of research exploring how students perceive games not only as entertainment but also as meaningful learning tools. These differing perceptions are crucial to examine, as they may influence the successful implementation of game-based learning.

Based on these considerations, this study offers novelty by examining students' perceptions of the use of Mobile Legends: Bang Bang in English vocabulary learning through a quantitative descriptive approach. This research not only supports previous findings regarding the potential of games in education but also enriches the literature by emphasizing students' perceptions as a key factor in the acceptance of learning media.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to describe students' perceptions of the use of Mobile Legends: Bang Bang in English vocabulary learning, including aspects of playing intensity, vocabulary exposure, vocabulary understanding, and retention, as well as students' perceptions of the benefits of games in the learning process.

## METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive survey design. Descriptive research aims to systematically describe facts or phenomena occurring in the field based on data obtained from respondents, without providing any treatment or manipulation of the research variables.

- **Participants and Sample**

The population of this study consisted of all eleventh-grade students at SMK Unggulan NU Mojoagung, Jombang. The sample was determined using a cluster sampling technique, in which one class was selected as the sample, namely class XI TBSM, consisting of 30 students. This technique was chosen because the subjects were naturally grouped into classes.

- **Research Instrument**

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire constructed using a five-point Likert scale, consisting of: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. The questionnaire consisted of 10 statement items (see Figure 1) designed to measure several aspects, including: (1) game-playing intensity, (2) exposure to English vocabulary, (3) vocabulary understanding, (4) vocabulary retention, and (5) students' perceptions of the benefits of games in learning.

**Table 1** Research Instrument

Statement	SS	S	N	TS	STS
I play Mobile Legends regularly.					
I often see English vocabulary while playing Mobile Legends.					
Menus, items, and features in Mobile Legends mostly use English.					
I pay attention to the meanings of English words that appear in the game.					
English vocabulary in Mobile Legends is easy to remember.					
I understand the functions of English words that appear in the game.					
Mobile Legends helps me improve my English vocabulary.					
I can use vocabulary from Mobile Legends in English lessons.					
Games can help in learning English vocabulary.					
I agree if games are used as a learning media.					

- Data Collection Technique

Data were collected through direct distribution of the questionnaire to the respondents. The respondents were asked to provide answers based on their experiences and conditions while playing the game Mobile Legends: Bang Bang.

- Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis. Each response was scored based on the Likert scale (1–5). The mean score was calculated using the following formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} \text{ or mean score} = \frac{\text{total score}}{\text{number of respondents}}$$

The mean scores were then interpreted using the following criteria:

**Table 2** Descriptive Statistics of Students’ Perceptions toward Mobile Legends in English Vocabulary Learning

Interval	Category
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low
1.81 – 2.60	Low
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
3.41 – 4.20	High
4.21 – 5.00	Very High

In addition, the percentage of respondents’ answers was calculated using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\% \text{ or Percentage} = \frac{\text{Frequency of a particular response}}{\text{Total number of respondents}} \times 100\%$$

The percentage results were interpreted using the following categories:

**Table 3** Distribution of Students’ Responses Based on Likert Scale Categories (%)

Percentage	Category
0% – 20%	Very Low
21% – 40%	Low
41% – 60%	Moderate
61% – 80%	High
81% – 100%	Very High

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Based on the results of questionnaire data analysis from 30 respondents, the mean scores for each statement item were obtained to describe students’ perceptions of the use of the game Mobile Legends: Bang Bang in learning English vocabulary.

**Table 4** Mean Scores of Respondents’ Answers

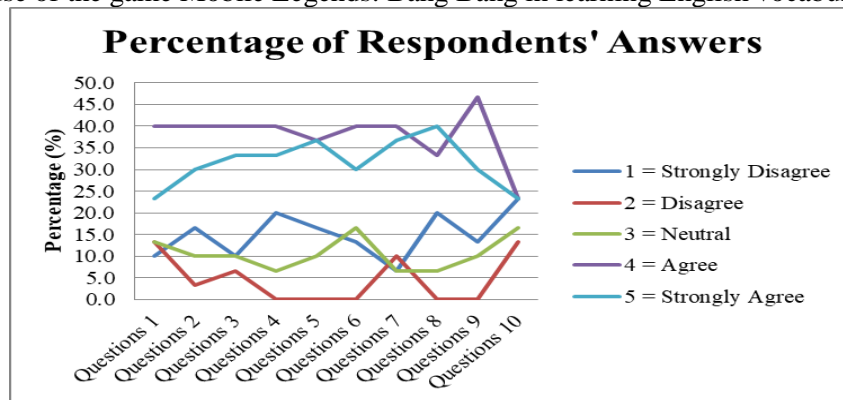
Statement	Mean	Category
Playing intensity	3.53	High
Vocabulary exposure	3.63	High
Use of English in the game	3.80	High
Attention to word meaning	3.63	High
Ease of remembering vocabulary	3.73	High
Understanding vocabulary functions	3.70	High
Vocabulary enrichment	3.90	High
Use in learning	3.70	High
Game supports learning	3.77	High
Game as a learning medium	3.10	High
Overall mean	3.65	High

Based on Table 3, the overall mean score is 3.65, which falls into the high category. This indicates that, in general, students have positive perceptions of using games in English vocabulary learning. For the playing intensity indicator, the mean score is 3.53, indicating that students are quite active in playing the game. This activity serves as an important basis for exposure to English vocabulary. For the vocabulary exposure and use of English in the game indicators, the mean scores are 3.63 and 3.80, respectively, both

categorized as high. This shows that students are aware of the presence of English vocabulary in various game features.

Furthermore, for the attention to word meaning, ease of remembering vocabulary, and understanding vocabulary functions, all mean scores are above 3.60. This indicates that students are not only exposed to vocabulary but also pay attention to, understand, and remember it. The vocabulary enrichment indicator shows the highest mean score of 3.90, indicating that students perceive the game as helpful in increasing their English vocabulary. Meanwhile, the use of vocabulary in learning indicator also shows a high mean score (3.70), suggesting that students are able to relate vocabulary obtained from the game to classroom learning. However, for the game as a learning medium indicator, the mean score is 3.10, which is the lowest among all indicators, although it still falls within the high category. This suggests that not all students fully agree that games can be used as a formal learning medium.

The distribution of respondents' percentage answers for each statement item reflects students' perceptions of the use of the game Mobile Legends: Bang Bang in learning English vocabulary.



**Figure 1** Percentage of Respondents' Answers (%)

Based on Figure 2, it can be seen that the distribution of responses across all items is dominated by the categories Agree and Strongly Agree. This indicates that, in general, students have positive perceptions of the use of games in English vocabulary learning.

When viewed from the combined percentage of positive responses (Agree and Strongly Agree), most items fall into the high category (61%–80%). This percentage indicates that the majority of students agree that games provide benefits in vocabulary learning. More specifically, the percentage of positive responses for each item shows that: Most students reported that they are exposed to English vocabulary while playing the game; Students also demonstrate a tendency to understand and remember the vocabulary encountered in the game and the majority of respondents stated that the game helps increase their vocabulary and supports the process of learning English.

However, for the item related to the game as a learning medium, the distribution of responses is more varied. The percentage of Agree and Strongly Agree responses for this item is lower compared to other items and is accompanied by relatively higher percentages of Neutral and Disagree responses. This indicates that not all students fully agree that games can be used as a formal learning medium. In addition, the presence of responses in the Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree categories across several items indicates differences in students' experiences and perceptions. This variation suggests that the use of games in learning does not have the same impact on every individual.

## Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that students have positive perceptions of the use of the game Mobile Legends: Bang Bang in learning English vocabulary. This is reflected in the overall mean score of 3.65, which falls into the high category, and is further supported by the dominance of respondents' answers in the Agree and Strongly Agree categories across most items. These findings suggest that digital games can serve as a source of contextual language exposure. The vocabulary that appears in the game, such as terms in menus, features, and instructions, provides opportunities for students to experience incidental learning, which refers to learning that occurs indirectly through enjoyable activities. This is consistent with the findings of Safiah (2025), who reported that digital games can enhance vocabulary acquisition through meaningful repeated exposure.

Furthermore, the findings of Imani et al. (2024) indicate that students are not only exposed to vocabulary but also understand and remember it. This is evidenced by the high scores on indicators such as attention to word meaning, ease of remembering vocabulary, and understanding the function of vocabulary. These findings are in line with the sociocultural theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978), which emphasizes the importance of interaction in the learning process. In addition, Kolb (2014) explains that direct experience forms the basis of knowledge construction. In the context of game-based learning, Gee (2003) argues that video games provide contextual and meaningful learning environments, thereby supporting situated learning. Moreover, Mayer (2009) highlights that the integration of visual, audio, and textual elements can enhance students' understanding of learning materials.

The indicator of vocabulary enrichment, which obtained the highest mean score (3.90), suggests that students perceive tangible benefits from using games to improve their English vocabulary. This finding is consistent with the study by Bustang and Usman (2025), which found that digital game-based learning can increase students' motivation while expanding their vocabulary mastery, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Furthermore, students demonstrated the ability to relate vocabulary acquired from the game to classroom learning, as reflected in the indicator of vocabulary use in learning. This indicates the occurrence of knowledge transfer, where informal learning experiences from games support formal learning in the classroom.

However, the results also show that not all students fully agree that games can be used as formal learning media. This is evident from the lowest mean score on this indicator (3.10) and the more varied distribution of responses. These findings suggest that although games have potential as learning media, their acceptance is still influenced by individual factors such as learning styles, interests, and perceptions of the role of games. This is in line with the perspective of Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), who argue that motivation and individual attitudes play a crucial role in language learning success. Additionally, Horwitz and Rebecca Oxford (1991) emphasize that differences in learning styles and strategies lead to variations in the effectiveness of instructional media. Moreover, the variation in responses within the neutral to disagree categories indicates that learning experiences through games are not universal. Some students may perceive games primarily as entertainment rather than as learning tools, resulting in differences in their effectiveness in supporting learning.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce previous research suggesting that digital games can be utilized as alternative media in English vocabulary learning, particularly in enhancing motivation, engagement, and language exposure. However, the use of games should not stand alone but needs to be integrated with structured instructional strategies to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that the use of the game *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang* has a positive impact on students' English vocabulary learning, as reflected in the high overall mean score and the dominance of positive responses. The game provides contextual language exposure and supports incidental learning, enabling students to understand, remember, and apply vocabulary in learning contexts. However, the effectiveness of game-based learning is not uniform across all students, as it is influenced by individual factors such as learning styles, motivation, and perceptions toward games. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers integrate digital games as complementary learning media rather than as standalone tools by aligning them with structured instructional strategies. Future research is suggested to employ experimental or mixed-method approaches, involve larger and more diverse samples, and examine the long-term effects of game-based learning on language proficiency to provide more comprehensive and generalizable findings.

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