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Student's Responses of Using Mobile Legends Bang Bang as A Game Based Learning Media in Teaching Vocabulary Mastery on Junior High School in Padalarang

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Mobile Legends Bang Bang, Vocabulary Mastery, Game Based Learning

Abstract

This study explores students' responses toward the use of Mobile Legends Bang Bang (MLBB) as a Game-Based Learning (GBL) media in teaching English vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at a junior high school in Padalarang. The study addresses students' difficulties in learning vocabulary through conventional methods, which often lack engagement and contextual relevance. MLBB, as a popular digital game among adolescents, was utilized to provide a more meaningful and motivating learning experience. A qualitative descriptive method was applied, and data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of open-ended and close-ended items. Thirty eighth-grade students participated in the study after experiencing vocabulary learning activities that incorporated MLBB. The questionnaire responses were analyzed to identify students' perceptions and attitudes. The findings show that students responded positively to the use of MLBB in vocabulary learning. They stated that the game helped them understand vocabulary in context, increased their motivation, and made learning more enjoyable. Students also felt more confident and engaged during the learning process.

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Introduction

One of the most difficult parts of learning the target language for English learners is vocabulary acquisition, as English is a compulsory subject in junior high school, English is still considered a foreign language that is learned and acquired in formal education. However, people should realize that before they acquire a language, they must first learn vocabulary. Therefore, it is important to teach vocabulary to students, because mastering sufficient vocabulary will make it easier for children to communicate (Handayani, 2024). In addition, vocabulary mastery allows people to speak, write, listen and read properly. Vocabulary is a core component of language learning and has a huge impact on communication skills. Without adequate vocabulary, students cannot understand texts or express ideas. Even if the structure is correct, students can still misinterpret it (Rashid et al., 2022). Vocabulary can play a role in strengthening all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) because words form the connecting links between these skills. Vocabulary mastery is also needed to express our ideas and understand what others are saying. Vocabulary acquisition is widely recognized as one of the most challenging aspects of learning English as a foreign language, particularly for junior high school students in Indonesia, where English is taught primarily in formal educational settings (Utomo & Bastiar, 2020).

In the context of West Java, students often experience limited exposure to English beyond the classroom, which contributes to insufficient vocabulary mastery. As a result, many learners struggle to comprehend texts, express ideas, and engage in meaningful communication in English. But all of that can be avoided with some methods that can entertain students, one of which is the application of English vocabulary through digital games. Despite its importance, vocabulary instruction in many junior high schools still relies heavily on conventional methods, such as memorization and text-based activities. These approaches are often perceived as monotonous and fail to engage students actively. Consequently, learners tend to lose interest and motivation, which negatively affects vocabulary retention. To address this issue, alternative instructional strategies that are more interactive and engaging are needed.

In today's digital era, the development of information technology has had a significant impact on various aspects of life, including education. According to Yani (2023), technological transformation in learning has presented a great opportunity to enhance students' learning experience and prepare them for an increasingly digitally connected future. One pedagogical approach that has gained increasing attention is game-based learning (GBL). Games have been shown to create enjoyable learning environments that promote student engagement, motivation, and active participation. Through technological developments in the learning process will be able to help students to face these challenges. According to Taheri as cited in Realo et al. (2022), playing games is one of the best ways to teach and improve pupils' language abilities. Games are very important to kids and teens nowadays, and they may also be used to help students learn new words. Language games are a good way to help pupils remember vocabulary and build their long-term recall of English terminology. Using games could also help kids remember words they don't know, connect new material to their surroundings, and get

better at speaking and writing. This statement aligns in Hariadi et al. (2023) that games can serve as an effective alternative for acquiring English noun vocabulary. Incorporating games into English courses can enhance student enthusiasm, promote active participation, and facilitate vocabulary acquisition.

Game-based media fosters an engaging learning environment, enhancing students' comprehension of the material and increasing their motivation in learning English. Furthermore, Videnovik et al. (2023), stated Game Based Learning (GBL) is considered one of the most innovative educational methodologies utilizing games. This study examines the utilization of games as an educational instrument to enhance learning and engagement, aiming to identify the most successful methods for employing gaming in educational contexts. Contemporary technology is significantly integrated into students' daily life, rendering digital tools and games familiar to them. The two subjects are intricately linked; technology provides the foundation, whereas games create enjoyable and engaging experiences. Collectively, they establish an educational atmosphere that inspires pupils and facilitates their comprehension of English language.

Previous studies on game-based learning have predominantly focused on educational or instructional games designed specifically for classroom use. However, recent literature suggests that commercial or entertainment-based digital games may also offer significant potential for language learning due to their popularity, rich language content, and sustained learner engagement (Katemba, 2020). Mobile game-based learning allows students to access learning opportunities anytime and anywhere through smartphones, making it particularly relevant for today's learners. An instance is mobile game-based learning, enabling students to acquire knowledge at any time and from any location using their smartphones. Using modern technologies and games to learn vocabulary is a new technique to make it more fun for students. Text-based methods can be boring, but pictures and games can get pupils interested and help them learn the topic better.

One popular commercial digital game among Indonesian students is Mobile Legends. The game exposes players to a wide range of English vocabulary through menus, item descriptions, hero names, skills, and in-game communication among team members. Its interactive and collaborative nature encourages repeated exposure to English terms in meaningful contexts. As game-based learning gains prominence, selecting a game that effectively facilitates student learning is crucial. Mobile Legends becomes a useful and fun way for junior high school children to learn English vocabulary better by integrating both parts. In the context of junior high school students in West Java, where learners tend to prefer visual and interactive activities over traditional text-based instruction, the integration of a familiar and engaging digital game may help address vocabulary learning challenges. However, empirical research examining the effectiveness of Mobile Legends as a vocabulary learning medium in formal educational contexts remains limited. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into how commercial digital games can be pedagogically utilized to support English vocabulary acquisition. As the result of the Field Experience Practice (PPL) at SMK

Darma Sakti Rajamandala Kulon, students tend to find it difficult to understand material that is given in writing, either on the blackboard or in books. But after the author understands, the author tries to find other ways so that students are willing and motivated to learn English vocabulary, students also get learning that is easier to understand, namely by using visuals in videos, music and games.

Mobile Legends presents a viable choice as it is popular among students and incorporates a substantial amount of beneficial English vocabulary. Its engaging and dynamic attributes enhance student motivation and facilitate the retention of new vocabulary. Therefore, Mobile Legends can be a potential media to introduce and enrich English vocabulary in a contextual and fun way. Previous research indicates that playing Mobile Legends can contribute positively to English vocabulary development, as players frequently encounter and use new words during gameplay (Santi & Khatimah, 2024; Arianto et al., 2024). Mobile Legends Bang Bang (MLBB) is a game where the user goes straight into the game in the main menu. The game itself is multiplayer (five people) which can be played with others online or with peers through the add friends features. A player can choose a role for online team battles with the aim of destroying the other team's main tower. From its initial release until 2025, Mobile Legends is still one of the most popular competitive games in Indonesia, and of course there are still many who play it (Nareswara & Isnaini, 2023). Mobile Legends can be an innovative idea by combining game-based learning and technology utilization in language learning, especially in the context of English vocabulary learning. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the use of Mobile Legends as a game-based learning medium for enhancing English vocabulary mastery among junior high school students in West Java. By examining its potential instructional value, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on digital game-based learning and the use of commercial games in English language education.

Method

Research design

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive research design to examine students' perceptions of the use of Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) as a game-based learning medium for improving English vocabulary mastery. A quantitative approach was chosen because the data were collected using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire, allowing students' responses to be measured numerically and analyzed descriptively. According to Creswell (2018), descriptive quantitative research is appropriate for identifying trends, attitudes, and perceptions within a specific population.

Research sample

The study was conducted at SMPN 4 Padalarang, West Bandung Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 30 eighth-grade students from class VIII-G in the

academic year 2024/2025. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, as they met the criteria of being active English learners and familiar with digital games, particularly Mobile Legends: Bang Bang.

Research procedure

The research procedures were conducted in several stages. First, the researcher obtained formal permission from the school and coordinated with the English teacher regarding the implementation of the learning activities. Second, the students participated in English vocabulary learning activities that integrated Mobile Legends: Bang Bang as a game-based learning medium. The treatment was implemented during regular English class sessions. Students were guided to identify and explore English vocabulary found in the game, including hero names, item names, skill descriptions, and in-game instructions. Learning activities included guided discussion, vocabulary listing, and short exercises based on words encountered during gameplay. This process was intended to provide students with direct experience of game-based learning before data collection. After completing the treatment sessions, students were asked to respond to a questionnaire to capture their perceptions and experiences regarding the use of MLBB in vocabulary learning.

Data analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Students' responses were calculated in terms of frequencies, percentages, and mean scores to describe overall trends in students' perceptions toward the use of Mobile Legends: Bang Bang as a vocabulary learning medium. The results were then interpreted to determine the perceived effectiveness and practicality of the game-based learning approach. Johnson & Christensen as cited in Syamil (2023), questionnaire is an instrument containing a series of questions that must be answered by the respondent, this technique allows researchers to collect large amounts of data efficiently. It is important for researchers to design valid, reliable, and clear questionnaires, and to pay attention to the organization of questions, rating scales, and instructions to respondents. The questionnaire in this research consisted of closed-ended items using a likert scale, allowing students to indicate their level of agreement or experience regarding various aspects of teaching vocabulary mastery. It used a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Results and Discussion

Results

The main aim of this study is to examine how far the student's responses of Game Based Learning (GBL) using Mobile Legends Bang Bang as a media for classroom activity can enhance the comprehension of vocabulary skills among eighth-grade students at SMPN 4 Padalarang. A

total of 30 students took part in the research, completing questionnaires to assess their vocabulary mastery. The data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for descriptive statistic of result questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed to identify the students' obstacles regarding their experience in learning vocabulary using the Game-Based Learning method with the Mobile Legends Bang Bang game as the medium. The descriptive statistics below are presented to show the minimum, maximum, and average scores of students in completing the questionnaire.

Table 1. Questionnaires Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	30	2	5	4,37	,928
Q2	30	4	5	4,87	,346
Q3	30	2	5	4,50	,820
Q4	30	1	5	4,40	,968
Q5	30	3	5	4,77	,568
Q6	30	2	5	4,63	,718
Q7	30	1	5	3,97	1,245
Q8	30	3	5	4,83	,461
Q9	30	4	5	4,90	,305
Q10	30	4	5	4,90	,305
Valid N (listwise)	30				

The function of descriptive statistical questionnaires is to collect primary data from respondents. The results shown in Table 1. indicate that the minimum score for each questionnaire varies, with a maximum score of 5. The average score is above 4 for all questionnaires, indicating that they have a significant impact and are worthy of further analysis.

It was conducted to assess the obstacles by students through Mobile Legends Bang Bang media in teaching vocabulary mastery from their own perspective. The researcher instructed the students to check the collums based on their opinion. A likert scale was used to measure students responses to the statements in the questionnaires. The point scale used for measuring their responses is as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (DA) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SDA) = 1

Table 2. Students Responses to the Statements in the Questionnaires

No.	Questions	Selection Answer				
		SDA	DA	N	A	SA
1.	Vocabulary learning in English is difficult.	0%	6,67%	10%	23,33%	60%
2.	The explanation given by the teacher is understandable and clear enough.	0%	0%	0%	13,33%	86,67%

3.	Learning using MLBB game media makes it easy for me to understand vocabulary mastery material.	0%	3,33%	10%	20%	66,67%
4.	During vocabulary learning using MLBB game media, I can easily remember English sentences.	3,33%	3,33%	3,33%	30%	60%
5.	Learning using MLBB media helps me improve my creativity in memorizing English vocabulary.	0%	0%	6,67%	10%	83,33%
6.	Learning vocabulary using MLBB media makes it easier for me to construct a sentence.	0%	3,33%	3,33%	20%	73,33%
7.	I find it difficult when learning vocabulary.	6,67%	10%	6,67%	33,33%	43,33%
8.	The learning methods used can motivate me to be active and brave during the learning process.	0%	0%	3,33%	10%	86,67%
9.	After the learning process using MLBB media, my vocabulary skills increased.	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%
10.	Learning vocabulary with MLBB game media provides a fun and meaningful learning experience.	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%

The first question “*Learning vocabulary in English is difficult,*” received mostly agreement from the students. A total of 83.33% of participants agreed with the statement, with 60% strongly agree and 23.33% agree. Meanwhile, 16.67% of participants disagreed with the statement, with 10% neutral and 6.67% disagree. Participants chose to agree statements because before the researcher given the treatment, they still found it difficult to understand English vocabulary, as English is not their primary language. As for those who disagreed, it was because before the intervention, they already understood how to acquire new English vocabulary. They could obtain it from other activities such as reading texts, listening to songs, and watching films with English audio.

In the second question, which stated “*The explanation given by the teacher is understandable and clear enough,*” received mostly agreement from the students. A total of 100% of participants agreed with this statement, with 86.67% strongly agree and 13.33% agree. Participants chose the agree statements because they gained sufficient understanding. The explanations provided by the researcher during the lesson were not rushed and were easy to understand. It can be concluded that the second question had a positive impact on all participants.

The third question is “*Learning using MLBB game media makes it easy for me to understand vocabulary mastery material,*” received mostly agreement from the participants. A total of 86,67% of students agreed with this statement, with 66,67% strongly agree and 20% agree. Meanwhile, 13,33% of students disagree with this statements, with 10% neutral and 3,33% disagree. Some participants agreed with the statement because using the Mobile Legends Bang Bang game made vocabulary learning more enjoyable and easier for participants to accept. For those who disagreed, they still found it difficult to acquire new vocabulary.

Because with the game medium, participants became unfocused on learning and tended to be distracted by the game content.

Regarding the fourth question *“During vocabulary learning using MLBB game media, I can easily remember English sentences,”* received mostly agreement from the participants. A total of 90% of participants agreed with this statement, with 60% strongly agree and 30% agree. Meanwhile, 10% of students disagree with this statements, with 3,33% neutral, 3,33% disagree and 3,34% strongly disagree. Participants experienced positive effects from using the Mobile Legends Bang Bang game in mastering English vocabulary. The game makes it easier for participants to remember English sentences, as English is the primary language used in every match played in the Mobile Legends Bang Bang game. The repetition of English language in the game helps participants easily remember the sentences. As for participants who disagree with the statement above, they are not accustomed to using English in the Mobile Legends Bang Bang game they play, so the vocabulary taught in the learning process is sometimes difficult to remember.

For the fifth question *“Learning using MLBB media helps me improve my creativity in memorizing English vocabulary,”* received mostly agreement from the participants. A total of 93,33% of participants agreed with this statement, with 83,33% strongly agree and 10% agree. Meanwhile, 6,67% of participants choose to remain neutral with this statement. Most participants agreed because with Mobile Legends Bang Bang media, students can apply the vocabulary found in the game to sentences used in learning activities or daily life. As for those who chose to remain neutral, they are still unsure about how to apply vocabulary from the game, particularly which sentences to use for that vocabulary.

In the sixth question *“Learning vocabulary using MLBB media makes it easier for me to construct a sentence,”* received mostly agreement from the participants. A total of 93,33% of participants agreed with this statement, with 73,33% strongly agree and 20% agree. Meanwhile, 6,67% of participants disagree with this statements, with 3,33% neutral and 3,34% disagree. Participants agreed with this statement because they prefer to construct sentences using words they frequently hear. As participants frequently hear these words from the game media, it becomes easier for them to construct sentences. For participants who disagree, they feel that using music or film media could be more helpful in constructing sentences, as the vocabulary in the Mobile Legends Bang Bang game is extensive, making it difficult for them to select more relevant words to form clear and easily understandable sentences

The seventh question *“I find it difficult when learning vocabulary,”* received. A total of 76,66% of participants agreed with this statement, with 43,33% strongly agree and 33,33% agree. Meanwhile, 23,34% of students disagree with this statements, with 6,67% neutral, 10% disagree and 6,67% strongly disagree. Participants chose to agree with the statement because before the researcher conducted the treatment, they had difficulty learning English. English has a fairly complex linguistic structure, so students who are not accustomed to hearing English will certainly find it difficult to learn. However, after the treatment was conducted, they showed a significant increase, indicating that the students experienced a positive impact from the use of the Mobile Legends Bang Bang media in learning English vocabulary. On the other hand,

those who disagreed did so because, before the treatment was conducted, they already understood how to acquire new English vocabulary. Therefore, they did not feel any difficulty in learning vocabulary, as they had already engaged in regular activities to improve their English vocabulary.

For the eighth question *“The learning methods used can motivate me to be active and brave during the learning process,”* received mostly agreement from the participants. A total of 96,67% of participants agreed with this statement, with 86,67% strongly agree and 10% agree. Meanwhile, 3,33% of participants choose to remain neutral with this statement. Participants agreed with the statement because the method presented by the researcher is a flexible learning method, where the Mobile Legends Bang Bang platform can be used in any situation, both during learning activities and outside of classroom learning. As a result, participants felt motivated by this method. As for participants who chose to remain neutral, they did not consider the learning motivation provided by the Mobile Legends Bang Bang media, as they felt there were other methods that could be more motivating.

The ninth question, which addressed *“After the learning process using MLBB media, my vocabulary skills increased,”* received mostly agreement from the students. A total of 100% of participants agreed with this statement, with 90% strongly agree and 10% agree. Participants experienced improvement after receiving treatment from the researcher. This can be seen from the test results, where participants achieved less than optimal scores in the pre-test, with a maximum score of 72 among all participants. However, after the treatment was implemented, the post-test results of all students showed a significant increase in scores, with a maximum score of 100 among all participants. It can be concluded that the ninth question had a positive impact and resulted in an improvement in English vocabulary for all participants.

The last question *“Learning vocabulary with MLBB game media provides a fun and meaningful learning experience,”* received mostly agreement from the students. A total of 100% of participants agreed with this statement, with 90% strongly agree and 10% agree. All participants agreed with the statements given in the questionnaire. Participants had an enjoyable learning experience because the game-based learning method is highly favored by all children, especially the students the researcher taught in class. Participants also gained new insights, such as the realization that learning vocabulary does not have to be confined to classroom instruction but can be done anytime and anywhere. Students also understood that mastering English vocabulary does not have to be obtained solely from textbooks provided at school but can be acquired through even the smallest activities, such as learning using the Mobile Legends Bang Bang game method. It can be concluded that the tenth question had a positive impact in English vocabulary for all participants.

Discussion

The questionnaire results indicated that utilizing Mobile Legends Bang Bang as a game-based learning media positively influences the English vocabulary acquisition of eighth-grade pupils. Thirty students filled out questionnaires, and most of them gave this strategy very positive feedback. The average score for all of the Likert scale questions was over 4, which

means that students felt like the game helped them remember, interpret, and make sentences with the English words they learned. Some students said that learning new words is hard, but they still thought that the game-based strategy made it easier, more fun, and more interesting. This statement aligns with Kobis & Tomatala (2020), this game is considered capable of practicing various language skills, such as vocabulary, listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The questionnaire results indicate that students derive enjoyment from learning through game-based media and perceive an enhancement in their vocabulary skills. Students who engaged with Mobile Legends: Bang Bang reported enhancements in their vocabulary skills. Furthermore, students exhibit increased motivation, confidence, and engagement in the learning process. They indicated that this approach offers an engaging and meaningful learning experience and demonstrates that vocabulary acquisition need not be confined to textbooks. It can be accomplished at any time through engaging in activities they find enjoyable. Gazam et al. (2022) mentioned that the study revealed that involvement in Mobile Legends can increase students' confidence in using new vocabulary and encourage them to actively learn through independent exploration. It was found that some students tended to have a strong interest in English and were accustomed to discovering new vocabulary through entertainment media, such as games, songs, and social media. They believed that using games to learn made it easier for them to remember and understand vocabulary because they were already accustomed to English in their daily lives. Besides that, there are students with some difficulties in understanding words with multiple meanings or pronunciations that differ from their spelling. They still felt the benefits of this learning experience, even though it took them longer to understand certain structures or meanings. As for students with low grades, they were initially unfamiliar with the use of English in the game because they were using Indonesian language settings. However, after receiving guidance in class, they began to realize that games can also be an effective and engaging learning resource.

These findings align with the previous study such as those conducted by Sinaga et al. (2025), both of which examined the use of Mobile Legends Bang Bang in teaching junior high school students' English vocabulary. Santi and Khatimah concluded that students significantly improved their vocabulary mastery after using the game in their learning process. Sinaga's study indicates that over 69% of students reported improvements in their English language skills, particularly in vocabulary enrichment and learning motivation, through Mobile Legends Bang Bang media. These results suggest that Mobile Legends Bang Bang has great potential as an effective, creative, and relevant learning tool that aligns with students' interests.

In addition, Akrima et al. (2023), states that the use of the Mobile Legends Bang Bang game can significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery. Through an experimental design involving control and experimental groups, the study demonstrated that students who learned through the game medium achieved higher learning outcomes compared to those using conventional teaching methods. This aligns with the post-test results in this study, where students showed a significant improvement in scores after participating in game-based learning.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that using Mobile Legends Bang Bang as a game-based learning media has proven effective in improving the English vocabulary of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Padalarang. The findings of this study indicate that students have increased confidence and comfort when learning through games, as this method is enjoyable and easily comprehensible. Mobile Legends Bang Bang is a way for students to study and also a way for them to improve their writing, listening, reading, and speaking skills. Students can understand the English language context used in the game, which is subsequently employed in lessons and activities in the classroom. This method encourages students to learn together and compete with each other, which makes the classroom a more exciting and interactive place to learn. So, kids don't just memorize language; they also apply it in everyday circumstances, including talking to friends or going about their daily lives. Teachers can also be more creative when they come up with tech-based ways for pupils to learn that are right for them. Using Mobile Legends Bang Bang in school has been shown to help kids connect their digital lives with their academic lives in a good way. This study underscores the significance of innovation in English pedagogical approaches, particularly with vocabulary development. Mobile Legends serves not only as an entertainment medium but also possesses considerable instructional merit when utilized effectively by educators. These findings corroborate earlier research indicating that digital games significantly improve pupils' linguistic skills. Game-based learning methodologies enable students to engage in autonomous learning, interact with foreign language material in real time, and cultivate contextual learning skills.

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