CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

As a global language, English was vital for effective communication across borders. It was widely acknowledged that English was included in the curriculum from junior high school to university level. However, English was categorized as an Intermediate level subject in senior high school. Consequently, students were required to demonstrate proficiency in four key areas of English: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. To enhance these skills, students were encouraged to broaden their vocabulary to the fullest extent possible. Proficiency in English became an increasingly important topic of discussion in Indonesia. It was evident that Indonesian students faced difficulties in using English in their everyday lives. Since English is considered a foreign language in Indonesia, students often limit its usage to their English classes. English language education was mandated from elementary school to university level, and at the tertiary level, it was sometimes implemented as a general subject. Creating suitable English classes posed a challenge for English teachers in Indonesia, aiming to enable students to understand English words. Consequently, English teachers should make the most of the teaching and learning process in the classroom to address this issue effectively.

Through English, you can discover entertainment from around the world (Zuparova et al., 2020); also, English is an important step forward to all of your goals (Waluyanti et al., 2018) whether you want to work for an international business or pursue a career in tourism industry in Indonesia as (Widiastuti et al., 2021) stated that the tourism business in Indonesia has demonstrated its ability to bolster the national economy, and as one of the key industries for generating foreign exchange and boosting government revenue, maintaining its presence is essential. Although English in Indonesia is introduced in elementary schools, most students rarely use it to communicate with their teachers or classmates. As Khan (2018) stated, a lack of vocabulary is one of the major factors in students' inability to speaking English; Noviyanti

(2022) have related finding that 32 students of 86 students answered that the factor of their anxiety is because of lack of vocabulary, Nurkhasanah (2023) also mention that teachers who teach English are not graduates of English. Another obstacle students face that limits them to only studying English in a classroom is their different learning paces and motivation.

Due to its engaging and motivating traits, learning through games has gained popularity in recent years. Games can be one of the ways in enabling a fun learning process (Nurchintyawati, 2022) and make learning English enjoyable rather than being forced to learn. Using English as the principal or standard language in online games has historically been a prevalent practice, primarily to ensure adequate comprehension of the in-game content. By exposing players to intricate plots, character relationships, and specialist terminology, RPGs, especially those that are story-driven, offer immersive language learning experiences that can improve vocabulary acquisition. Players come across words in context while completing missions, figuring out puzzles, and interacting with NPCs, which helps students comprehend and remember meanings better than rote memorization. RPG dialogue also frequently uses various words, from formal speech to slang and technical terms, which allows players to expand their vocabulary in a context-rich, organic setting.

There are many research to study video games as an alternative media to learn English, especially vocabulary mastery such as Fakhrurriana (2024) research the study found that 70% of the respondents agreed that using Duolingo positively impacts their vocabulary proficiency in English. Then, in Balqish (2023) research, many students in their study noted that they encountered new words while playing, which they could learn and use in their language skills. Additionally, the repetitive interactions players have with the English language during gameplay reinforce their understanding and retention of new vocabulary, making gaming a valuable tool for language learning was found in the research by Rachmad (2022).

The researcher posits that the studies mentioned earlier resemble their gameplay, particularly in the repetitive vocabulary utilized by the students in the games they played. Additionally, the researcher notes that there needs to be more research focusing on story-driven online RPGs, which employ many unexpected words and phrases within the game interface, narration, and characters' dialogue. The objective of this study is to use a quantitative methodology to ascertain whether the utilization of online RPGs can facilitate an expansion in student vocabulary mastery.

This research demonstrates how to integrate English language learning into students' daily lives, aligning with their preferred modes of engagement. By extending the learning environment beyond the traditional classroom, students can acquire a greater breadth of vocabulary. This approach allows for a more diverse and personalized learning experience, which can enhance vocabulary acquisition.

1.2. Research Problems

Drawing from the Research Background, the researcher will identify a few problems that the study reveals, such as:

1. How do students perceive the influence of playing online RPGs on their vocabulary mastery?

1.3. Research Objectives

Drawing from the Research problems, the researcher will conduct a few objectives that the study reveals, such as:

1. To investigate the impact of vocabulary mastery on students' ability to communicate and express themselves in English.

1.4. Research Hypothesis

Students who engage in regular gameplay of online RPGs will exhibit a notable enhancement in their English language abilities, particularly in the domain of vocabulary mastery, when compared to those who do not engage in such gameplay.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

This study aims to examine how students perceive the online RPGs in relation to vocabulary mastery. By employing this methodology, students were able to enhance their vocabulary skills through the use of online gaming. The present study will focus exclusively on students' perceptions regarding using online RPGs for vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, this study will be limited to students from the English Language Education Department at Muhammadiyah Malang University who engage with RPG for at least five days.

1.6. Research Significance

This research is significant as it bridges traditional language learning and modern technology by examining online RPGs for vocabulary mastery.

1. Theoretical

   The findings of this study will prove helpful to other researchers engaged in developing studies related to video games and online games. Furthermore, investigating the potential of online games for vocabulary enhancement offers a novel perspective on integrating technology with traditional educational methods, possibly informing future theories on effective language teaching strategies.

2. Practical

   Practically,

   a. For Researchers

      Can add value knowledge and experience on how to conduct research. Also, the result of the study will help the writer consider how to teach students if the writer passes the test as a teacher at some school.

   b. For Students

      Overall, Video games and online games can be used to improve comprehension when learning a language.

c. For Teacher

Considering the research was done from the student's viewpoint, the teacher may summarize the students' opinions about video games as an additional English activity.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the researcher gives definitions and key terms. There are some key terms related to this study, those are:

1. Online Games

An online game is a multiplayer game that involves players connected through a network (Chen, 2014).

2. Vocabulary Mastery

To acquire words is to integrate them into one's mental lexicon – which belongs, following Van Patten's model, to the abstract, implicit and underlying domain of the language that is called mental representation (García, 2024).

3. Students' Perception

An autonomous mode of acquisition for knowledge of particular matters of fact, in virtue of its de facto status as special kind of reliable source of true beliefs (Brewer & Sosa, 2001).

4. Role Playing Games (RPGs)

Can be thought of as tabletop games where players log in to a computer who handles all of the usual referee responsibilities. (Zagal & Deterding, 2018)