

# Students' Perceptions of Playing Online Games in Improving English Vocabulary

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## *Abstract*

This study investigates students' perceptions at Universitas Advent Indonesia regarding using online games to improve their English vocabulary. The research employs a quantitative design with purposive sampling, involving 120 students across different academic levels. A Likert-scale questionnaire was used to assess students' views on the effectiveness of online games as a learning tool. Results indicate that most students find online games an engaging and effective medium for vocabulary acquisition, mainly due to their interactive and immersive features. Both male and female students and students from all class levels consistently view online games as beneficial for enhancing their vocabulary. The findings suggest that online games can supplement traditional language learning methods, providing an enjoyable and motivational environment for vocabulary development. Future research could explore the comparative effectiveness of various online games and alternative learning strategies.

**Keywords:** English Vocabulary, Language Learning, Online Games, Perception, Real Time Strategy

## **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini menyelidiki persepsi mahasiswa di Universitas Advent Indonesia mengenai penggunaan permainan daring untuk meningkatkan kosakata bahasa Inggris mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuantitatif dengan pengambilan sampel yang bertujuan, yang melibatkan 120 mahasiswa dari berbagai tingkat akademik. Kuesioner skala Likert digunakan untuk menilai pandangan mahasiswa tentang efektivitas permainan daring sebagai alat pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa menganggap permainan daring sebagai media yang menarik dan efektif untuk perolehan kosakata, terutama karena fitur-fiturnya yang interaktif dan mendalam. Baik mahasiswa laki-laki maupun perempuan dan mahasiswa dari semua tingkat kelas secara konsisten memandang permainan daring sebagai sesuatu yang bermanfaat untuk meningkatkan kosakata mereka. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa permainan daring dapat melengkapi metode pembelajaran bahasa tradisional, menyediakan lingkungan yang menyenangkan dan memotivasi untuk pengembangan kosakata. Penelitian di masa mendatang dapat mengeksplorasi efektivitas komparatif dari berbagai permainan daring dan strategi pembelajaran alternatif.

**Kata Kunci:** Kosakata Bahasa Inggris, Pembelajaran Bahasa, Permainan Daring, Persepsi, Strategi Waktu Nyata

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Vocabulary is one of the language components that support the speaker in communicating. In other words, vocabulary is essential in developing four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Rini & Marpaung (2024) explain that vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of language, a match made in heaven up of many different types of words that serve distinct functions in communication. A person can speak effectively, comprehend a text, and convey ideas if they have a big enough vocabulary. We must master vocabulary to be able to use the language. In learning vocabulary, we must know the meaning of words and use them in sentences (Mansur, 2022).

Vocabulary is one of the components of English essential for foreign language learners. In all language teaching, vocabulary is one of the crucial factors, and students must continually learn words as they learn structure and practice sound systems. It is what makes the essence of a language. Without vocabulary, speakers cannot convey the meaning and communicate with each other in a particular language (Lyana, 2019).

Mastering vocabulary requires one to be happy to do without coercion, which makes one happy to do it and always want to do it. One of the things that is even fun for the needs of students today is a game (Buamona & Umasugi, 2021). Games are getting more and more popular, especially those played online. Drajat (2020) said that in this era, many children, especially teenagers, are starting to leave traditional games and prefer modern games. That is because modern games are much more fun. The online game has many English terms and playing it regularly can allow the player to remember the vocabulary.

Amara and Saberi (2018) said online games create an interactive and engaging environment, allowing students to learn without pressure from academic requirements. Games support independent learning, allowing students to follow their learning methods and times. In English language learning, online games are an effective tool for enriching students' vocabulary because games require vocabulary understanding to play agilely. Marpaung and Situmeang (2020) said that technology has changed and affected many things, including the English learning process. Based on the background above, this research aims to find out how students of Universitas Advent Indonesia behave in response to their habit of playing online games and whether playing online games is good for them even more regarding their knowledge of English and vocabulary online games they play.

This research is critical to do because currently, Dewi & Nurmina (2024) said that based on The We Are Social report as of January 2022, there are 94.5% numbers of online game players in Indonesia. This large number makes Indonesia the third country with the most prominent players in Southeast Asia. Previous studies indicated that lack of research leads to gender differences in the effectiveness of learning English vocabulary through online gaming activities. Based on that, with the increasing development of online games that use English, it should be able to develop the vocabulary of its users, and this research will find the differences between genders in learning English vocabulary through online games.

## **METHOD**

### ***Research Design***

This research uses a quantitative study that will be selected through a purposive sampling method by selecting competitive Real Time Strategy (RTS) online games spread among students from Universitas Advent Indonesia as the sample. Real-Time Strategy (RTS) games are a type of game where players direct units and manage resources in real time to accomplish objectives like defeating adversaries or finishing missions. Players gather materials, construct bases, generate units, and

partake in tactical skirmishes without pausing for turns. Achieving success necessitates finding a balance between attack, defense, and resource allocation, along with the capability to make rapid choices. Players oversee armies, assert control over territory, and outmaneuver their opponents through strategic thinking. RTS games challenge a player's ability to think swiftly, devise plans, and multitask effectively.

This technique will be utilized because the researchers require a particular characteristic or criterion from the respondents relevant to the variables under study. Purposive sampling will allow the researchers to select the respondents intentionally expected to yield specific and relevant data, as called for by the research objectives. In this respect, purposive sampling should be able to develop more focused results related to the sample of interest, particularly in cases where a deeper understanding of the studied variables is required.

### **Participants**

The participants in this research were students from Universitas Advent Indonesia, located in Bandung, West Java, who were selected with purposive sampling. The researchers distributed the questionnaire to the students, and the questions could be answered using the choices listed in the questionnaire. The respondents in this study are 120 students from Universitas Advent Indonesia of the following student class levels: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior.

### **Instrument**

This study's instrument is a questionnaire on a Likert scale. This questionnaire is a tool to explain respondents' circumstances regarding the variables in the survey, which are that playing online games enhances the vocabulary skills of Universitas Advent Indonesia students. The questionnaire in this study adapts from Silaban and Marpaung (2024), Tram et al. (2023), and Carmelia et al. (2024) and will be distributed using WhatsApp and Google Forms to the students' of Universitas Advent Indonesia.

Based on the Likert scale design, students of Universitas Advent Indonesia would fill out a questionnaire distributed to scale with strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1), consistent with the experience they experienced when playing online games. It affects the vocabulary of online games.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Results***

The findings indicate that a 30-item research questionnaire was developed and utilized to explore three primary research issues. Each research question was addressed by ten targeted questionnaire items, allowing for a detailed investigation into each area of interest. This structure was designed to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research topics, with each question set providing specific information relevant to the corresponding research issue. By segmenting the questionnaire in

this way, the study aimed to generate focused insights while maintaining a clear and organized approach to data collection:

Table 1. The response to the use of Online Games in Mastering English Vocabulary

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Memorizing vocabulary through online games has made me more confident in using English.	35%	48%	15%	2%	1%
2	Online games have helped me to learn new English vocabulary.	38%	52%	8%	1%	1%
3	I use online games to learn English vocabulary as my second language.	30%	37%	23%	10%	1%
4	I can hear English vocabulary well when playing games online.	33%	39%	23%	3%	1%
5	I could clearly understand the English vocabulary I heard while playing games online.	30%	49%	19%	2%	0%
6	I was able to write my English vocabulary because of online games.	29%	43%	23%	3%	1%
7	When playing games online, I indirectly learned the meaning of English vocabulary.	35%	48%	15%	2%	0%
8	My English vocabulary grew because of playing games online.	26%	52%	20%	3%	0%
9	It has made speaking English easier every day because online games have developed my English vocabulary.	29%	43%	19%	8%	2%
10	Studying English vocabulary by playing online games is more engaging than traditional.	32%	42%	23%	3%	2%
	<b>Average Percentage</b>	32%	45%	19%	4%	1%

This study focuses on examining participants' responses regarding using online games as a tool for mastering English vocabulary. According to the data in the table above, 45% of respondents agreed that engaging with online games has positively impacted their vocabulary development. Furthermore, 52% of respondents indicated that playing online games has helped them learn new English vocabulary, leading to noticeable vocabulary growth. These findings suggest that interactive and immersive experiences in online gaming can serve as an effective, engaging medium for vocabulary acquisition, allowing learners to expand their vocabulary in an enjoyable, practical context.

Playing games can enhance participants' learning motivation, especially regarding language acquisition. Online games often contain instructions, storylines, and information that must be understood in English. As players become eager to follow the content and progress within the game, their motivation to comprehend English increases naturally and often without conscious effort. Additionally, the presence of awards, achievements, or high scores motivates players to engage more deeply with the language to advance in the game. Data collected from the study revealed that 5 out of 9 participants reported that online games provided significant motivation for learning new vocabulary, highlighting the potential of gaming as an effective tool for language learning (Yudha & Utami, 2022).

Table 2. The perceptions of learning English vocabulary through online games

No	Statement	Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
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		Agree				Disagree
1	Online games make learning vocabulary more fun dan interesting.	44%	36%	19%	0%	1%
2	Online games help me better understand the differences in English vocabulary from various countries by allowing me to get to know other players from other countries.	29%	48%	21%	3%	0%
3	Online games help me to understand my English vocabulary better.	28%	52%	19%	2%	0%
4	Online games help me to develop better memorizing English vocabulary.	27%	52%	19%	2%	1%
5	Online games can help me increase my confidence in using English.	29%	45%	24%	0%	2%
6	Online games provide more ways to memorise English vocabulary.	25%	44%	27%	3%	1%
7	Online games create an enjoyable and amusing feel to improve my English vocabulary.	38%	40%	19%	2%	1%
8	Learning understanding through online games seems more relevant to my daily existence.	24%	48%	22%	5%	2%
9	I adore the audiovisual components of online games to help in vocabulary acquisition.	28%	50%	19%	2%	1%
10	I am satisfied with my online games' vocabulary learning experience overall.	28%	46%	23%	3%	1%
	Average Percentage	30%	46%	21%	2%	1%

This study focuses on participants' perceptions regarding using online games as a tool for mastering English vocabulary. According to the data presented in the table above, 46% of respondents agreed, and 30% strongly agreed, that using online games for learning vocabulary has enhanced their understanding. Respondents indicated online games make vocabulary learning more engaging, enjoyable, and accessible. Additionally, the audiovisual elements of online games—such as interactive visuals and sounds—were highlighted as valuable aids for vocabulary acquisition, with 50% of participants agreeing that these features helped them better retain new words. These findings suggest that the immersive and multimedia aspects of online gaming play an essential role in making vocabulary learning more effective and enjoyable.

Based on the previous research by Octoberlina (2021), online games have shown positive effects on participants, as they provide students with engaging and innovative methods for vocabulary acquisition. Students reported that they could learn new words quickly within a single game session, suggesting that repeated gameplay would further enhance their vocabulary skills, mainly when supported by clear directions and instructions. Additionally, the game's design and user-friendly interface captured students' interest, with many noting that the simple, appealing layout made learning more enjoyable.

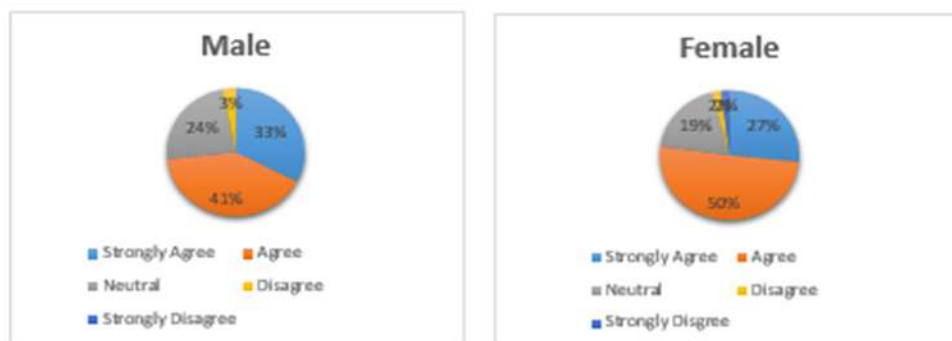
Table 3. The effectiveness of using online games in learning English vocabulary

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I feel that online games are an effective medium for learning English vocabulary.	30%	43%	23%	3%	2%
2	I feel that online games can be used	25%	49%	20%	4%	2%

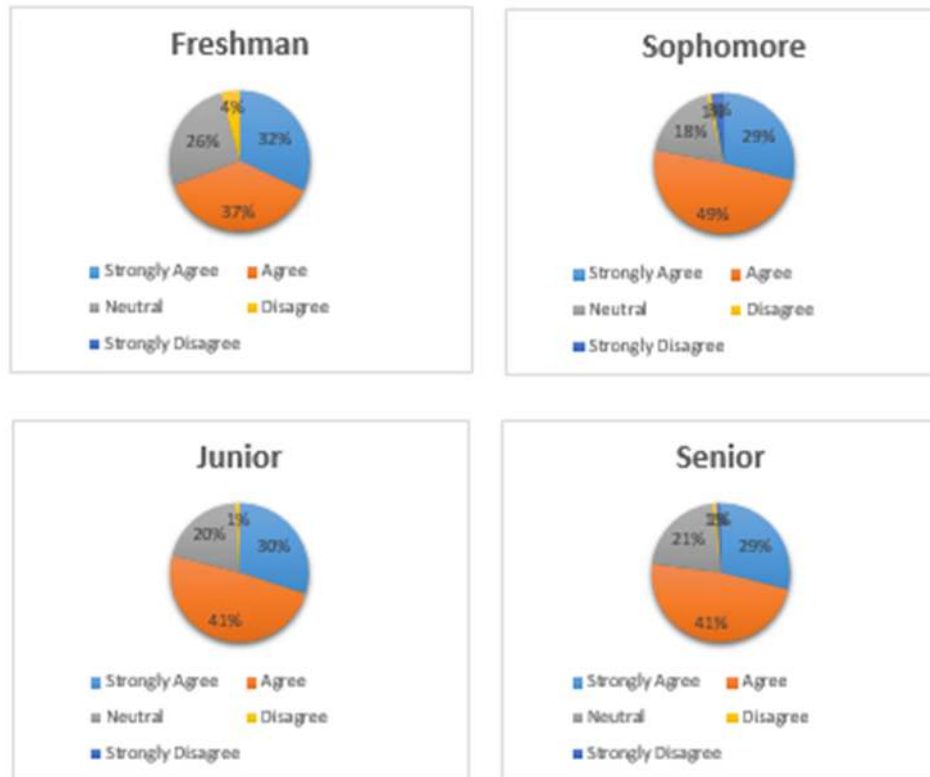
	to improve students' English Vocabulary memorizing skills at all levels.					
3	Online games can improve students' English vocabulary and memorizing skills in many ways.	28%	48%	14%	7%	3%
4	Online games can be an effective tool for improving English vocabulary.	27%	53%	15%	3%	2%
5	I have been playing online games for about 2 years.	36%	41%	14%	6%	3%
6	I can learn educational things from online games.	20%	53%	20%	4%	3%
7	It is easy to find high-quality English vocabulary learning tools in online games.	24%	42%	28%	4%	3%
8	I trust the accuracy of the English vocabulary presented in online games.	18%	53%	26%	3%	1%
9	The amount of time I spend playing online games connects positively with my vocabulary.	23%	43%	23%	9%	3%
10	Practical online games are used to acquire vocabulary outside of the classroom.	25%	56%	16%	3%	1%
	<b>Average Percentage</b>	26%	48%	20%	5%	2%

The survey results reveal several positive perspectives on using online games to learn English vocabulary, especially in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among Universitas Advent Indonesia students. A significant portion of respondents found online games to be an effective tool for vocabulary learning, with 26% of participants agreeing and 48% agreeing that online games serve as a valuable and engaging medium for building English vocabulary. This feedback highlights the potential of online games to support language learning in an interactive and motivating way.

As explained by Alfadil (2020), the outcomes suggest that using online games to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) presents a promising strategy that may surpass traditional learning methods regarding vocabulary acquisition. Online games' interactive and immersive nature engages learners more effectively, enhancing their motivation and retention of new vocabulary. This approach provides contextual learning and fosters active participation, making it a potentially more successful tool for building vocabulary compared to conventional methods.



The chart above summarises the differences in male and female perceptions regarding the use of online games for learning English vocabulary. According to the data, 27% of females strongly agree, and 50% agree that online games are effective for vocabulary learning, while 33% of males strongly agree, and 41% agree with the same statement. These figures suggest that males and females generally perceive online games as valuable for learning English vocabulary. Furthermore, the study indicates that regardless of gender, participants share a similar perception of online games, with both groups feeling that these games help build confidence in using English.



The chart above summarises the differences in freshman, sophomore, junior and senior perceptions regarding the use of online games for learning English vocabulary. Based on the results above, the data reveals that 32% of freshmen, 29% of sophomores, 30% of juniors, and 29% of seniors strongly agree that online games are an effective tool for learning English vocabulary. Additionally, 37% of freshmen, 49% of sophomores, 49% of juniors, and 48% of seniors agree with this statement. These findings indicate that students across all academic levels—whether freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors—perceive online games as a valuable and effective medium for learning English vocabulary. The overall consistency in the responses across different class levels suggests broad acceptance of online games as a helpful tool for vocabulary acquisition.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study explores students' perceptions of using online games as a tool for mastering English vocabulary. The findings consistently show that many participants across various demographics perceive online games as an effective and engaging method for vocabulary learning.

Online games have enhanced their understanding of English vocabulary. These findings suggest that online games provide an immersive and interactive learning environment that makes vocabulary acquisition more enjoyable and effective.

Regarding gender, the study revealed that both males and females share similar perceptions regarding the effectiveness of online games for vocabulary learning. Expressly, 27% of females and 33% of males strongly agree that online games support vocabulary learning, while 50% of females and 41% of males agree with this statement. Both genders also indicated that these games help build confidence in using English, highlighting the broad acceptance of online games as a valuable tool for language development.

Moreover, the study examined students' perceptions from different academic levels—freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The results showed that students from all levels of study view online games positively as a tool for learning English vocabulary. Approximately 32% of freshmen, 29% of sophomores, 30% of juniors, and 29% of seniors strongly agreed that online games are effective for vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, many students across all levels agreed that online games are a valuable medium for language learning, ranging from 37% in freshmen to 48% in seniors.

Further research could expand on understanding the role of online games in language learning. Future studies could explore different types of online games. This study focuses on online games in general, but the research could compare the effectiveness of different types of games in enhancing vocabulary learning. Further research can compare online games with other learning methods. It could compare the effectiveness of online games against other language learning methods, such as traditional classroom teaching, flashcards, or language apps.

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