

# THE EFFECT OF ONLINE GAME DOTA 2 IN STUDENTS' VOCABULARY

Hafidz Tresna Yudha<sup>1</sup>, Alvi Raihan Utami<sup>2</sup>  
English Education

[hafidz\\_yudha@yahoo.com](mailto:hafidz_yudha@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

In this digital era, a lot of people around the world especially young people play online games. DoTA (Defense of the Ancients) 2 is one of the most popular online games played by millions of people around the world. DoTA 2 is a MOBA (Multiple Online Battle Arena) game, so tactics and strategies are crucial things in this game. In order to have good tactics and strategies, players need to conduct a lot of interactions with their partners during playing. Players always play with foreigners in every game, so English is the main language they use to communicate. Having a lot of interactions using English makes DoTA 2 players acquire several language skills and/or components. So, this study is aimed to describe and interpret players' lived experience on how they acquire English vocabulary and how English affected their emotion.

**Key words:** Vocabulary, Online Games, DotA 2

---

## INTRODUCTION

That is the first line of the biography of DotA 2 hero called *Anti-Mage*. There are a lot of biographies, skills, and functions of items that we have to understand if we want to play DotA 2. Not all the words that contained in this game are familiar with us because most of the words are rarely use in our daily life. If we don't understand the meaning of those words, it is hard to play this game maximally because we need to know what kind hero that we use, what skills that we have to use in war and what items that compatible with our hero (Gunawan D, 2020; Vitianingsih, 2016).

The use of online games nowadays is rapidly increased among students. It begins to be part of daily routine, since it is considered as a fun and challenging activity which can be done only by sitting in front of a computer (Ardyanto & Pamungkas, 2018; Oktaviani & Desiarti, 2019; Yunara & Kardiansyah, 2017). Some important parts of online gaming are goals, rules, challenges, and interactions that occur within the game, as well as the support of internet network. Online games are a structured game that is used to gain pleasure, and it can also be an educational tool as well (Eva Tuckyta et al., 2021; Oktaviani, n.d.; Suryono & Subriadi, 2016a). There are some thoughts and studies examined that playing this kind of game could improve one's ability in mastering English vocabulary. Of course it refers to online games which use English as its medium of interaction.

As discussed previously, one that comes with English as its medium of interaction and recently is a very well-known is Defense of the Ancients 2 (DotA 2) game (Arpiansah et al., 2021; Oktaviani, 2017; Suryono & Subriadi, 2016b). DotA 2 is a free-to-play multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) video game developed and published by Valve Corporation. This game is played in matches between two teams that consist of five players, with both teams occupying their own separate base on the map. It is a common thing if the players choose their teammates or the opponents from overseas. It also happens to DotA 2 players in Indonesia who often communicate with other players overseas either as a team or as the opponent. Indonesian DotA 2 players need to use an alternative language in order to create a well communication with each other. The alternative language which is commonly used is English. For the fact that the game is not the only one that uses English as the medium of interaction, it is also one of the most played games which have no other languages choice to be set as language preferred (Dhiona Ayu Nani, 2021; Sari, n.d.; Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020). It means, the DotA 2 players should know English not only to communicate with foreign players but also to understand the game itself.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Since English is the medium of interaction in DotA 2, and Indonesian players commonly use English when they do chatting with players from other countries, the players indirectly will be pushed to enrich their English vocabulary (Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019; Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021; Pratama & Surahman, 2020). Beside they need to chat in English, they also have to know and understand names and functions of the game item itself which are instructed in English. If they don't, they will not be able to play the game properly (Borman & Purwanto, 2019; Permata & Rahmawati, 2018; Suryono & Subriadi, 2016a). Therefore, the enrichment process of English vocabulary can actually be done while playing DotA 2.

Considering that online games nowadays could help students in improving their English vocabulary, this study is aimed to identify students' perception towards English vocabulary learning through DotA 2 within the scope of a DotA 2 players community in Bandar Lampung (Agustin & Ayu, 2021; Ambarwati & Mandasari, 2020; Widodo & Ahmad, 2017). Moreover, this study focuses also on answering research question "What are students' perceptions toward the use of Defense of the Ancients 2 (DotA 2) game for English vocabulary learning?"

This study can be employed as a reference for English as foreign language learners and teachers. The readers especially language learners are expected to not just play game but also to look for the chance to acquire English vocabulary while playing online games so it does not have a role as entertaining tools only (Borman et al., 2018; Oktaviani, 2012; Rittenberry, 2005). Furthermore, this study hopefully could become an inspiration for next researchers who are interested in games and vocabulary learning. It is recommended for any researchers to dig deeper towards this issue by taking different subjects and using different instruments.

## **METHOD**

This research applied a hermeneutics phenomenological research. Chen et al. (2019); Lina & Permatasari (2020); Lubis et al. (2019) states that hermeneutics phenomenology studies how a person interprets a phenomenon that comes from everyday experiences in life. Moreover, Fauzi & Sukoco (2019); Pahdi et al. (2020); Suryono et al. (2020) said that phenomenology is used to deeply investigate insight someone's perception or reaction of a phenomenon. In other words phenomenology is an approach aims to understand the meanings and essences of someone's or some people experience. So, this research tried to find a deeper understanding of DoTA 2 players' experiences in acquiring English.

As we know DoTA 2 is one kind of MOBA (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena) game or also is known as Action Real-Time Strategy (ARTS) game which is not a serious game designed to learn English, we can say that it was a unique phenomenon happened to the players. Furthermore, this research was intended to find the essence or the meaning of playing DoTA 2 and its correlation to the improvement of their English mastery.

This research conducted purposive sampling because the researcher used personal judgment to choose the sample based on prior information and the researcher's believe that the participants were able to give any information that she needed (Baker & Edwards, 2012; Febrian & Fadly, 2021; Nani & Ali, 2020). The researcher's judgement was the higher their MMR the more experienced they were and how long they had been played would influence their feeling and opinion about the meaning of DoTA. The researcher's belief was those criteria might give in-depth information to answer the research question.

In collecting the data, this research conducted interview to participants. I drew up the questions for the instrument as follow:

1. Can you please describe as detailed as possible about DotA 2?
2. What are important aspects do you need to play this game? Why?
3. How long have you been played DotA 2?
4. How many hours do you spend your time to play this game in a week?
5. Do you have experience playing with foreigners? How often?
6. What language do you use to communicate with your foreigners partners?
7. Have you ever faced any difficulties in communicating with foreigners while playing? What did you do to solve it?
8. Do you think there is relationship between your ability levels in playing with your English mastery?
9. How important is interaction in this game?
10. How often do you need to interact with your partners during the game?
11. In what condition do you need to do interaction with your partners? What for?
12. Do you have any problem in interact with your foreign partner related to English mastery? How did you solve it? How do you feel about that?
13. What kind of interaction that you do? (spoken or written)
14. What kind of interaction is more dominant?
15. Do you think there is any improvement of your English since you play this game?
16. Can you please explain how this game affects your English?
17. Do you think your ability to pronounce words in English correctly is improved since you play this game? How?

In gathering the data, the researcher used an in-depth interview which was standardized open-ended interview. Standardized open-ended interview was one of interviewing strategies in which the interviewer asked exactly the same questions with same sequence to participants so the interviewer would easily see the patterns and compare their answer. Helmy et al. (2018); Sari & Wahyudin (2019) argues that this kind of interview uses same wording and order for all interviewees and questions are open-ended format. During the interview the researcher would record the process using digital recorder (smartphone) and take a note.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Becoming a Medium for Fun Learning**

A fun game like DotA 2 can create an atmosphere that decreases boredom. Making DotA 2 game as a medium for learning vocabulary could be a great way to revive participants' interest in learning and often also help them absorb and retain more information rather than have to study or doing assignments. Based on the data collected, it was found that 7 out of

the total 9 participants in this study revealed that the use of DotA 2 game could help them increase English vocabulary due to its fun activity.

### **Increasing Students' Motivation**

Playing game can increase participants' motivation to learn. DotA 2 has a number of information and instructions to be comprehended in English. As the players are eager to know each content, their motivation unconsciously increased. Motivation also raised when awards or good scores in the game drive the players to take an action. From the data collected, there were 5 out of the total 9 participants expressed that the DotA 2 game could be a motivation in learning vocabulary.

In accordance with the theory on language acquisition by Rido & Sari (2018) learners of languages need to be motivated in order to acquire language efficiently and motivation is best produced in low-stress environment. In, comparing to the theory and the participants' responses, DotA 2 might be one of the ways to increase learners' motivation in learning. It offers more challenging activities of vocabulary learning process since the game has various descriptions of the game items to be understood. When the learners have the ability to solve the problem but they are not motivated, they might not end up solving it. On the other side, when the learners are highly motivated even though they have limited ability, the motivation will assist them to find the means to accomplish a task and eventually enhance the ability (Skill, n.d.; Thornton & Houser, 2005). Thus, when the participants feel they are challenged by playing such game, they might give more effort to upgrade their account level that also means they were unconsciously will know more new word while playing the game.

### **Enriching Vocabulary**

DotA 2 provides words that the players rarely acquired in daily conversation. By finding the meaning of those words, the players would enhance their vocabulary bank. Based on the interview, all of the participants agreed that the game could assist in enriching vocabulary.

### **CONCLUSION**

Having analyzed the result of the study, finally the researcher arrived in several conclusions that will reveal the answer of the research question and the research goal. The

research question is “what is the lived experience of Defense of The Ancients 2 players in correlation to their English mastery?”. This study is aimed to describe and interpret how DoTA 2 affects the players’ English skills, English components, and emotion. Here are the conclusions of this study:

1. Players got exposure to English when conducting a lot of interaction during played DoTA 2 that they acquired English skills and components.
2. Players found several language difficulties when they communicated with their partners using English, such as lack of grammar and vocabulary, varied accents, and difficulties in understanding each other. However, the issue facilitates them to acquire second language.
3. Players’ English mastery affected their performance. The better they could communicate using English, the better teamwork they could build.
4. Players’ English mastery affected their emotion. Their confidence and pride would increase when they could communicate using good English so that they could manage the game well. Contrarily, they would feel upset when language problem caused the process of communication then destroy the result of the game (Febriantini et al., 2021).
5. Having good English motivated players in playing DoTA 2 since it facilitates them in communicating.

Based on the result of the study, DoTA 2 players conducted a lot of interaction using second language fluently. They could express their idea and emotion without anxiety. They just spoke and delivered their thought using English confidently. But then as the result they accidentally acquired English through interaction. So, for English teachers it is better to consider students’ emotion during the teaching and learning process so that students can absorb the knowledge language optimally.

Related with English in DoTA 2, participants believed that their vocabulary increased sharply, meanwhile grammar issue was the main problem during communication. So that for those who want to play online games involving interaction like DoTA 2, it is better to deepen the grammar in order to have better interaction.

Finally, for further studies in the future the researchers can try to conduct research related with SLA and online game besides of DoTA 2, such as MMORPGs (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Online Games) that contains varied English input for examples player need to read long instruction, task description, role and hero description, etc.

## REFERENCES

- Agustin, R. W., & Ayu, M. (2021). THE IMPACT OF USING INSTAGRAM FOR INCREASING VOCABULARY AND LISTENING SKILL. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 2(1), 1–7.
- Ambarwati, R., & Mandasari, B. (2020). THE INFLUENCE OF ONLINE CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY TOWARD STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION AND VOCABULARY MASTERY. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 50–55.
- Aminatun, D., & Oktaviani, L. (2019). USING “MEMRISE” TO BOOST ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS VOCABULARY MASTERY: STUDENTS' VIEWPOINT. *PROCEEDINGS UNIVERSITAS PAMULANG*, 1(1).
- Ardyanto, T., & Pamungkas, A. R. (2018). Pembuatan Game 2D Petualangan Hanoman Berbasis Android. *Jurnal Go Infotech*, 23(2), 14–17.  
<https://doi.org/10.36309/goi.v23i2.79>
- Arpiansah, R., Fernando, Y., & Fakhrurozi, J. (2021). GAME EDUKASI VR PENGENALAN DAN PENCEGAHAN VIRUS COVID-19 MENGGUNAKAN METODE MDLC UNTUK ANAK USIA DINI. *Jurnal Teknologi Dan Sistem Informasi*, 2(2), 88–93.
- Baker, S. E., & Edwards, R. (2012). How many qualitative interviews is enough ? *National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper*, 1–42.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>
- Borman, R. I., & Purwanto, Y. (2019). Impelementasi Multimedia Development Life Cycle pada Pengembangan Game Edukasi Pengenalan Bahaya Sampah pada Anak. *JEPIN (Jurnal Edukasi Dan Penelitian Informatika)*, 5(2), 119–124.
- Borman, R. I., Putra, Y. P., Fernando, Y., Kurniawan, D. E., Prasetyawan, P., & Ahmad, I. (2018). Designing an Android-based Space Travel Application Trough Virtual Reality for Teaching Media. *2018 International Conference on Applied Engineering (ICAIE)*, 1–5.
- Chen, H., Yao, L., & Fitri, A. (2019). The influence mechanism research of inflow temperature in different time scale on the water temperature structure. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 365(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/365/1/012058>
- Dhiona Ayu Nani, V. A. D. S. (2021). HOW DOES ECO-EFFICIENCY IMPROVE FIRM FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE? AN EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIAN SOEs. 4(1), 6.
- Eva Tuckyta, S. S., Nani, D., & Farida Ariyani, F. (2021). INVESTIGATION ON THE EFFECT OF USER'S EXPERIENCE TO MOTIVATE PLAYING ONLINE GAMES.
- Fauzi, A. H., & Sukoco, I. (2019). Konsep Design Thinking pada Lembaga Bimbingan Belajar Smartnesia Educa. *Organum: Jurnal Saintifik Manajemen Dan Akuntansi*, 2(1), 37–45. <https://doi.org/10.35138/organum.v2i1.50>
- Febrian, A., & Fadly, M. (2021). The Impact of Customer Satisfaction with EWOM and

- Brand Equity on E-Commerce Purchase IntentioFebrian, A., & Fadly, M. (2021). The Impact of Customer Satisfaction with EWOM and Brand Equity on E-Commerce Purchase Intention in Indonesia Moderated by Cultur. *Binus Business Review*, 12(1), 41–51. <https://doi.org/10.21512/bbr.v12i1.6419>
- Febriantini, W. A., Fitriati, R., & Oktaviani, L. (2021). AN ANALYSIS OF VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN AUTISTIC CHILDREN. *Journal of Research on Language Education*, 2(1), 53–56.
- Gunawan D. (2020). *Komparasi Algoritma Support Vector Machine Dan Naïve Bayes Dengan Algoritma Genetika Pada Analisis Sentimen Calon Gubernur Jabar 2018-2023*. V(1), 135–138. <https://doi.org/10.31294/jtk.v4i2>
- Helmy, N. F., Johar, R., & Abidin, Z. (2018). Student's understanding of numbers through the number sense strategy. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1088. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1088/1/012098>
- Lina, L. F., & Permatasari, B. (2020). Social Media Capabilities dalam Adopsi MediLina, L. F., & Permatasari, B. (2020). Social Media Capabilities dalam Adopsi Media Sosial Guna Meningkatkan Kinerja UMKM. *Jembatan : Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen*, 17(2), 227–238. <https://doi.org/10.29259/jmbt.v17i2.12455>
- Lubis, M., Khairiansyah, A., Jafar Adrian, Q., & Almaarif, A. (2019). Exploring the User Engagement Factors in Computer Mediated Communication. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1235(1). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1235/1/012040>
- Nani, D. A., & Ali, S. (2020). Determinants of Effective E-Procurement System: Empirical Evidence from Indonesian Local GovernmeNani, D. A., & Ali, S. (2020). Determinants of Effective E-Procurement System: Empirical Evidence from Indonesian Local Governments. *Jurnal Dinamika Akuntansi. Jurnal Dinamika Akuntansi Dan Bisnis*, 7(1), 33–50. <https://doi.org/10.24815/jdab.v7i1.15671>
- Novanti, E. A., & Suprayogi, S. (2021). WEBTOON'S POTENTIALS TO ENHANCE EFL STUDENTS' VOCABULARY. *Journal of Research on Language Education*, 2(2), 83–87.
- Oktaviani, L. (n.d.). ETHNIC SNAKE GAME: A STUDY ON THE USE OF MULTIMEDIA IN SPEAKING CLASS FOR ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING STUDENTS. *Section Editors*.
- Oktaviani, L. (2012). The use of media in teaching english at the first grade in SMP Al-Issah International Islamic Boarding School Batu. *Unpublished. Malang: University of Muhammadiyah Malang. Xiv*.
- Oktaviani, L. (2017). *Developing a multimedia-based ethnic snake game to promote speaking skills for university freshmen*. Universitas Negeri Malang.
- Oktaviani, L., & Desiarti, E. M. (2019). A lecturer's and students' perspective toward ethnic snake game in speaking class at Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang. *Teknosastik*, 15(2), 53–59.
- Pahdi, R., Mailizar, & Abidin, Z. (2020). Indonesian junior high school students' higher order thinking skills in solving mathematics problems. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1460(1). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1460/1/012031>
- Permata, P., & Rahmawati, W. D. (2018). Pengembangan Media Pembelajaran Berbasis Multimedia pada Materi Kalkulus. *UNION: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Matematika*, 6(3), 277–286.
- Pratama, R. R., & Surahman, A. (2020). PERANCANGAN APLIKASI GAME FIGHTING 2 DIMENSI DENGAN TEMA KARAKTER NUSANTARA BERBASIS ANDROID MENGGUNAKAN CONSTRUCT 2. *Jurnal Informatika Dan Rekayasa Perangkat Lunak*, 1(2), 234–244.



- Rido, A., & Sari, F. M. (2018). Characteristics of classroom interaction of english language teachers in Indonesia and Malaysia. *International Journal of Language Education*, 2(1), 40–50. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v2i1.5246>
- Rittenberry, R. (2005). Hands-On Technology. *Occupational Health & Safety*, 74(2), 24.
- Sari, F. M. (n.d.). UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WHATSAPP GROUP AS THEIR LEARNING MEDIA IN THE EFL CLASSROOM. *Section Editors*.
- Sari, F. M., & Wahyudin, A. Y. (2019). Undergraduate students' perceptions toward blended learning through instagram in english for business class. *International Journal of Language Education*, 3(1), 64–73. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v1i1.7064>
- Simamora, M. W. B., & Oktaviani, L. (2020). WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE?: A STRATEGY OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS TO IMPROVE ENGLISH VOCABULARY. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 44–49.
- Skill, T. E. (n.d.). 60TH TEFLIN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE Day 2: Wednesday, 28th August 2013.
- Suryono, R. R., Budi, I., & Purwandari, B. (2020). Challenges and trends of financial technology (Fintech): a systematic literature review. *Information*, 11(12), 590.
- Suryono, R. R., & Subriadi, A. P. (2016a). INVESTIGATION ON THE EFFECT OF USER'S EXPERIENCE TO MOTIVATE PLAYING ONLINE GAMES. *Journal of Theoretical & Applied Information Technology*, 86(1).
- Suryono, R. R., & Subriadi, A. P. (2016b). Investigation on the effect of user's experience to motivate playing online games. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology*, 86(1), 62–67. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.579892>
- Thornton, P., & Houser, C. (2005). Using mobile phones in English education in Japan. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 21(3), 217–228.
- Vitianingsih, A. V. (2016). Game Edukasi Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Ilmiah Bidang Teknologi Informasi Dan Komunikasi*, 1(1), 1–9.
- Widodo, W., & Ahmad, I. (2017). Penerapan algoritma A Star (A\*) pada game petualangan labirin berbasis android. *Khazanah Informatika: Jurnal Ilmu Komputer Dan Informatika*, 3(2), 57–63.
- Yunara, Y. Y., & Kardiansyah, M. Y. (2017). Animus Personality in Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire: A Game of Thrones. *Teknosastik*, 15(1), 7–13.