Digital Game-based Learning: Exploring the Use of Mobile Legends in Arabic Language Skills

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Abstract
Among the negative impacts of Mobile Legends are dependence, loss of productivity, and health degradation. This research explored the other side of Mobile Legends, focusing on their positive impacts on learning. This study aims to explore the benefits of Mobile Legends digital games in Arabic language skills and analyze the use of Arabic in Mobile Legends games. The approach in this study is qualitative descriptive. The research sample was Arabic Language Education students of UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. The results showed: 1) the game used Arabic and players could improve listening to the Arabic vocabulary used in the game; 2) this game used Arabic in communication interactions between teams and opponents so that communication between players using Arabic-supported speaking skills; 3) this game helped users understand words and phrases used in the context of specific situations and team interactions; 4) besides the language aspect, the cultural aspect also influenced this game, Khaleed's character is identified as Khaled bin Walid the valiant hero of Islam from Arabia. This research outlines that the Mobile Legends application can improve students' Arabic skills, especially listening, speaking, and reading.

Keywords: Digital game-based learning, creative thinking, Mobile Legends, Arabic language skills

Abstrak
Di antara dampak negatif Mobile Legends adalah ketergantungan, kehilangan produktivitas dan gangguan kesehatan. Penelitian ini akan menggali sisi lain dari Mobile Legends, yaitu dampak positifnya dalam pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi manfaat game digital Mobile Legends dalam keterampilan bahasa Arab dan menganalisis penggunaan bahasa Arab dalam permainan Mobile Legends. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif terhadap game Mobile Legends. Sampel penelitian adalah mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Arab UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan; 1) Permainan ini menggunakan bahasa Arab dan pemain dapat terbiasa menyimak kosakata dalam bahasa Arab yang digunakan dalam
permainan, 2). Permainan ini menggunakan bahasa Arab dalam interaksi komunikasi antar tim dan lawan, sehingga adanya komunikasi antar pemain menggunakan bahasa Arab yang dapat menunjang keterampilan berbicara, 3). Permainan ini membantu pengguna memahami kata dan frasa yang digunakan dalam konteks situasi tertentu dan dalam interaksi tim, 4). Disamping aspek bahasa, aspek budaya juga mempengaruhi permainan ini, karakter Khalid diidentikkan sebagai Khalid bin Walid pahlawan gagah berani Islam dari Arab. Penelitian ini menguraikan bahwa aplikasi Mobile Legends mampu meningkatkan keterampilan mahasiswa dalam berbahasa Arab, yaitu pada keterampilan menyimak, berbicara dan membaca.

**Keywords:** Digital game-based learning, creative thinking, Mobile Legends, Arabic language skills

**INTRODUCTION**

Mobile Legends have an essential role in learning, especially in language learning. It is in line with the characteristics of 21st-century learning, which requires learners to master information and communication technology (Syahputra, 2018) (Komara, 2018). In line with this, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has a superior program in digitalization transformation to respond to the times’ challenges, especially in religious higher education (Efendi, 2023). It is one of the efforts to help students and alumni of religious universities compete in their work in society, especially in the era of Society 5.0.

Digitalization of learning is using digital technology to improve and modernize the learning process. It includes integrating information and technology into education to improve accessibility, efficiency, and learning effectiveness (Andita & Rafaela, 2023). In addition, it can create a more interactive learning environment and support the development of learners’ competencies.

In its development, digitalization of learning includes digital game-based learning, such as learning using the Quizizz application (Lim & Yunus, 2021), kahoot (Wang & Tahir, 2020), word-wall (D. Safitri et al., 2022) and other digital apps like Mobile Legends. The public, especially young people, love Mobile Legends. This game was developed by Moonton and is categorized as a Multiplayer Online Battle Area (MOBA) game (Diantoro et al., 2020). This game is designed to be playable on mobile platforms such as tablets and smartphones.

Several studies have concluded that Mobile Legends have a dependency impact on players (Putri et al., 2021). Health problems, both physical and psychic, can be caused by dependence on playing online games (Arif & Aditya, 2022). In addition, playing too many online games will increase conflict and social isolation (N. S. Ramadhan & Ramdan, 2023) (R. F. Ramadhan et al., 2023). Furthermore, Irwanto explained that experiences between individuals influence communication patterns between gamers. The language style used tends to be influenced by the player characters in the Mobile Legends game (Irwanto, 2023).

However, although Mobile Legends have various negative impacts and are not specifically designed for learning, some elements can be used as a learning tool. Strategy and problem-solving in the game can improve critical thinking and analytical skills. In addition, the use of various languages also significantly impacts
the use of this Mobile Legends game. Especially the mastery of Arabic skills Mobile Legends give a vast space for mastering Arabic skills. The game has various features, hints, instructions, and interactions, all of which use Arabic. It will indirectly influence listening, speaking, and reading skills in Arabic for Mobile Legends game players. In addition, the collaboration concept offered by Mobile Legends provides a new nuance in acquiring language skills.

Mobile Legends require interaction between players, both friends and foes. Interactions that use Arabic affect the listening and speaking skills of players. Likewise, the features, instructions, and information in the form of words and phrases in the game affect their reading skills. From the description above, this study aims to explore the use of Mobile Legends games in Arabic language skills, so this research has implications for digital-based Arabic language skills learning resources.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative research design to explore the benefits of Mobile Legends digital games in Arabic language skills and analyze the use of Arabic in Mobile Legends games. Meanwhile, qualitative-based research in the form of game analysis studies is related to student interaction using Arabic in this game.

Data Collection Technique

Researchers used data from interviews with 10 Arabic Language Education students, observations of playing legend car games, and a documentation review on the Mobile Legends application. Data collection techniques include interviews with students who participated in mobile legend games with Arabic as the language of instruction. Researchers observed the activities of this Mobile Legends game using Arabic interactions. The researchers identified documents against the mobile legend application and identified student interactions in the game. The student is a fifth-semester student studying Arabic in the Arabic Language Education study program.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis uses data triangulation techniques by identifying the data source obtained (Febriani et al., 2022); (Annova et al., 2023). The data analysis stages are based on Milles and Huberman's theory (Thalib, 2022), which shows the following four stages. First, researchers collect data through a variety of sources. Second, researchers classify data based on the specified problem formulation. Third, the researchers present the data that has been obtained. Finally, researchers conclude from the data analysis carried out.

The researchers used Miles and Huberman’s theory to analyze the data, as shown in the following picture.

Diagram 1: The procedures of research
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Mobile Legends Games

Mobile Legends is a game that has been loved by many people lately—various walks of life like it, from children to adults. Even the government has accommodated the penchant for playing digital games through regulations regulated in the draft revision of Law No. 3 of 2005 concerning the National Sports System. This regulation accommodates E-Sport as one of the sports and the facilities and infrastructure for coaching national athletes in sports (Hasibuan et al., 2023).

The approach that uses games or games is called digital game-based learning. Digitalization is used as the leading platform that functions in this approach (Alam, 2022). This approach combines several play elements in a learning context to increase understanding, skills, and motivation in learning. Digital games are designed to develop skills, increasing learning motivation. Games often offer challenges, rewards, and scenarios (Lim & Yunus, 2021). Besides that, it can also develop character, critical skills, and problem-solving. Lim explained that games often demand creative thinking, problem-solving, and the right decisions to be made (Hoyng, 2022).

Besides the many Mobile Legends users, it has a negative impact. Among the negative impacts is the tendency of players to focus on themselves and socialize less with the surrounding environment (Melvin & Suwarno, 2023). Another negative impact is the tendency to say rude words in the game process (Irawan et al., 2023). Furthermore, Mawalia explained that, like other mobile technologies, Mobile Legends have eroded individuals' sensitivity and sociocultural side in society (Mawalia, 2020).

Nevertheless, the Mobile Legends game scheme that uses Arabic as the language of instruction will be a new experience for players. Players interested in Arabic, especially in this case, are students of Arabic study programs who have learned Arabic as a foreign language they want to master. Of course, Mobile Legends games that use Arabic are a supporting medium for them to increase their Arabic skills.

Figure 1: Mobile Legends front page view
The picture above explains that digital games display exciting pages. Mobile Legends games accommodate the display style of today’s digital games, giving an aesthetic appearance to attract players. This application also pays attention to the age of users, who are the majority of young people, so that the appearance adjusts to the age of the user.

Ozlem Vatansever’s research shows that Mobile Legends have transformed from computer games into ideological devices (Vatansever, 2021). The exchange of ideas, discussion, and the formation of social norms in the gaming community can be tools that can spread and change certain ideologies. It is due to the efforts of some online games to replicate and simulate the real world (Prabowo, 2020). This real-world replica and simulation supports players or application users in placing themselves in the game, coupled with using Arabic as the language of instruction. It has a positive impact because of the direct interaction between players using Arabic. This phenomenon will increase the user’s ability in Arabic language skills, especially in speaking skills.

This research was conducted on ten students who like to play Mobile Legends at the Arabic Education Program UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. The choice of informants is only for male students because men dominate those who like to play Mobile Legends. Informants were randomly drawn from first---, third---, and fifth-semester students of the odd academic year 2023. Mobile Legends digital games can be accessed via tablet or smartphone software. Like other online games, Mobile Legends also provides language options for its users, including Arabic. The game uses Arabic subtitles for character names, skills, instructions, and communication between players. Every feature in this game is in Arabic. It makes it possible for users to master Arabic vocabulary.

Digital Game-based Learning

Digital technology can be in the form of computers, the internet, mobile devices, and applications in the learning process (Colemen & Money, 2020); (Husna et al., 2023). Learning in the 21st-century era accommodates the application of learning using digital technology (Chen et al., 2020). The 5.0th century requires students to be critical-minded, innovative, communicative, collaborative, and problem-solving (Behnamnia et al., 2020). The features of digital games allow intense and controlled interaction between educators and students (Hussein et al., 2021).

Figure 2: Mobile Legends Features Display
Mobile Legends is a game application accessed via iPhone and Android. This application accommodates the needs of the digital era, which can be accessed via the internet. Digital games enhance active, creative, and innovative thinking, keeping up with 21st-century learning. As the picture above shows, this application provides language options according to the user's wishes.

In addition, this digital game allows for personalized learning according to the needs of students (Alam, 2022). Diagnostic tools can be used to determine the trend of learning methods for students (All et al., 2021). This tool can also be used to find out the weaknesses and tendencies of students (Zin et al., 2009). This digital learning also accommodates global learning so that students can interact globally (Hussein et al., 2019), and it allows learners to know different perspectives on collaborative skills (Sykes, 2018) (Hughes-Roberts et al., 2020).

This game accommodates interaction and collaboration. Some rules and instructions are also in Arabic in the Mobile Legends game. The instructions and rules that use Arabic help players understand the meaning and usefulness of each of these instructions so they can understand Arabic vocabulary well.

Figure 3. Mobile Legends game view

Figure 3 shows the direct communication interaction between players. Players often interact with other players during the game through the Arabic language. It provides context for Arabic usage and everyday communication situations that are limited to the context of Mobile Legends. Active interaction in digital games gives more points for the benefit of Mobile Legends. Users can continue to participate and actively interact in the series of games. This active interaction is followed by decision-making skills and getting feedback (Breien & Wasson, 2021).

The continuous interaction is expected to have an impact on players. The expected impact is undoubtedly positive. The results showed that the high intensity of using this application in playing had a positive influence, although previous studies indicated a negative attitude. It was seen in Mobile Legends players who tended to socialize less with the surrounding environment.
Stimulation of Arabic Language Skills

There are four Arabic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Bahruddin et al., 12 C.E.)(Prihatini & Wahyudi, 2018). Listening and reading skills are receptive, while speaking and writing skills are productive—various learning strategies in producing speaking skills, including singing methods (L. Safitri & Munafiah, 2024). In addition to the singing method, there is also a game method. This game method has been developed into a digital game today (Onur & Kozikoglu, 2020).

Figure 4. Display of features in the Arabic language Mobile Legends game

Besides textbooks, digital games can be a learning resource (Husna et al., 13 C.E.). You can see the Mobile Legends game display page in the image above. There are several Arabic vocabulary and expressions such as: Yawmi, abriz al-ahdath, sundug da'm bûtûlah, makáfât tasîf al-dukhul li-bûtûlah, istíd'â' mazhar al-nûr al-nuhâsî, al-mawârid al-mumayyizah li-mahrajân al-'udwiyyah al-mumayyizah, mutâbâ'ah, asbaḥat mutawaffirâh al-ân, and other Arabic vocabulary. Arabic vocabulary and expressions will help users understand the game’s meaning and significance.

The written vocabulary is visible in this Mobile Legends application. The written font is also quite legible for players. Reading the vocabulary and instructions in this application can increase the player’s understanding of Arabic. Players can learn the new vocabulary in the Mobile Legends game and read the new vocabulary well. Reading these texts and expressions can give players clues about the game’s rules, the story, and the characters and background of the game.

Twenty-first-century learning has characteristics that must be understood (Soderlund, 2020) (Orak & Inozu, 2021). First, 21st-century learning must be able to prepare students who can compete in the future, so education must provide them with the provisions to compete and survive (Sulaiman & Ismail, 2020). Second, 21st-century skills focus on students being able to think critically. Third, the emphasis is on developing collaborative skills and being able to work in teams.
through social interaction. Fourth, learning must utilize technology and digital media to facilitate active and interactive learning. Fifth, 21st-century learning emphasizes the ability to learn throughout life so that students acquire new knowledge and skills throughout their lives (Kennedy & Sundberg, 2020) (Maulana, 2023).

**Figure 5. 21st-century skills flowchart**

![21st-century skills flowchart](image)

The chart above summarizes that 21st-century skills have their characteristics. These characteristics are divided into four parts, namely, 1) critical thinking skills, 2) collaboration, 3) creativity, and 4) communication. These skills support continuity and survival in the 21st century. A person must have these four skills to survive in this era.

Based on the characteristics of 21st-century skills, communicative, creative, collaborative, and critical thinking skills are desired in this era. It can be analogous to the world of learning, that learning in the 21st century allows students to collaborate and establish excellent and creative communication to think critically about an existing phenomenon. Digital games like Mobile Legends provide space for users to collaborate and communicate. The intense collaboration will give rise to innovation in playing style. It is in line with learning skills in the 21st century.
Figure 6 explains the settings available in the Mobile Legends game. The results of interviews conducted with informants show that this vocabulary adds to their vocabulary collection in Arabic. They can also use this vocabulary in everyday life outside of playing. Mobile Legends at this stage present new and varied vocabulary. This presentation of new and varied words and phrases can increase players’ tendency to improve their skills in mastering new Arabic vocabulary. Intense and continuous interaction can make players understand and remember Arabic vocabulary relevant to the Mobile Legends game.


In this context, players will be actively involved in game situations presented in various conditions and conversations. It allows for an increased understanding of context and the use of relevant words. Using new words and phrases can improve the user’s language skills, which can be practiced in the real world.

Although the aim of this game is not specifically for learning Arabic, various aspects can support Arabic language skills. Players can hear bunti and fluent pronunciation of Arabic words in listening because this game uses fusha Arabic. Indirectly, this will improve the correct pronunciation of vocabulary. Furthermore, in terms of speaking skills, players get the opportunity to interact with other players using Arabic. Although this is moderate, it can train their ability to speak Arabic. Then, in the aspect of reading skills, there are various features, settings, instructions, and directions in the form of Arabic words and phrases, which can help users understand the meaning of these words and phrases. A great desire to play Mobile Legends will increase the intensity of using them in games, mainly if they use Arabic. It will help users' knowledge in mastering Arabic language skills.
Apart from mastering Arabic language skills, this game also presents Arabic culture, which is introduced to us by a character named Khaleed. Khaleed's character is one of several hero characters in this Mobile Legends game. This character can be selected according to the player's interests. Khaleed is a hero in the game who is depicted as an Arab hero. This character's name is taken from an Islamic warlord named Khaleed bin Walid. This character wears a large white robe with a white and green combination turban typical of Middle Eastern colors. This character also wears Aladdin shoes, which are pointed at the front. The background in the image above also shows a typical Middle Eastern desert atmosphere. Indirectly, the picture above shows and introduces Arab culture.

Interviews with several respondents show that Khaleed's character is a favorite character. If the opposing party has this character, we will not obtain it on our team. Khaleed is taken from a famous Muslim warrior and friend of the Prophet, whose full name was Khaleed bin Walid. Khaleed bin Walid was
nicknamed Say Allah al-Maslul or the Unsheathed Sword of Allah. Khaleed bin Walid was a military expert and one of the undefeated Islamic warlords throughout history and his career.

In the Mobile Legends game terms, this character is referred to as O.P. or offers power, meaning that this character helps us fight the enemy. It indicates that this character was taken from Khaleed bin Walid, who was brave and invincible. In the Mobile Legends game, this character can be obtained by collecting coins from games that have been played. He has the nickname خنجر الليل (night dagger).

The information above explains that the use of Arab Muslim warrior characters indicates that this game uses Arab culture. The use of this character is also to introduce Arab culture indirectly. Apart from introducing Arab culture, Islamic culture is also reflected in the attitude and personality of Khaleed bin Walid as a brave Islamic warlord.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that: 1). This game uses Arabic, and players can get used to listening to the Arabic vocabulary used in the game; 2). This game uses Arabic in communication interactions between teams and opponents so that communication between players uses Arabic, which can support speaking skills; 3). These games help users understand words and phrases used in the context of certain situations and team interactions; 4). Apart from the language aspect, the cultural aspect also influences this game, and there is a character named Khaleed who is depicted as an Arab hero with typical Arab clothing and attributes, namely the Islamic warlord Khaleed bin Walid. The novelty contained in this study is the existence of new facilities in the form of digital games to improve listening, speaking, and reading skills in Arabic. This research explains that the Mobile Legends application can improve students' skills in Arabic, namely listening, speaking, and reading. This research is still limited to the research sample, so the researcher recommends further research to increase the research sample and test its effectiveness.

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