

Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games to Enrich Vocabulary to Foreign Language Learners: The Implementation

Damar Miftahuddin¹, Noor Malihah²

^{1,2} Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, UIN Salatiga, Indonesia

Contact:	Damar Miftahuddin		mifta.einz@gmail.com
----------	-------------------	---	----------------------

ABSTRACT

Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) are increasingly used to improve language learning. Many games have been created as products to help players improve their learning abilities. This research explores the execution of the MMORPGs to improve their vocabulary. The information was gathered through observation, documentation, and interview. There are seven chosen experienced players of MMORPG in worldwide servers who meet the requirements. Results demonstrated that implementing MMORPG can assist the EFL learners with acquiring new vocabulary from the aspect of the game like socializing, guild, mission, storyline, trading market, and things depiction assist the EFL learners with learning new vocabulary. The results of the study were expected to help the EFL learner gamer learn English, especially vocabulary, since the game has many aspects that help the EFL learners who play this game to enrich their vocabulary.

KEYWORDS:

MMORPG;
vocabulary;
online role play;
online game;
EFL learners

ARTICLE HISTORY:

Received
21 October 2022
Accepted
22 November 2022

Introduction

Vocabulary is the core of languages. Various methods and strategies have been examined by scholars seeking to propose an appropriate way to facilitate vocabulary acquisition for foreign language learners (Lestari, 2015). According to Hornby (2006), a person's vocabulary is made up of all the words he or she knows, as well as all the terms in a specific language. By mastering vocabulary, a foreign language learner can communicate in the target language and find it easier to study other aspects of the language, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. We can deduct from this definition that learning vocabulary is more important than learning other aspects of the language. There are a variety of approaches of acquiring new vocabulary, including the use of passive media; on the other hand, the consumption of passive media is on the decline, while the consumption of interactive media (digital or online games) is on the increase (Williams et al., 2008).

Nowadays, foreign language learner seeks different and new ways of learning language, such as using interactive media. One interactive media is video games. Learners of a language may benefit from learning the language more as a tool for communication rather than as a collection of rules when they use video games as a learning medium. The motivation of language learners is increased, and they develop more favourable attitudes and feelings toward others who are learning a foreign language when they are in a setting that is pleasant for them (Nadia et al., 2021). Online games offer a suitable safe environment for EFL learners to practice language skills and transfer knowledge (Smeets, 2005). Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) are increasingly used to improve language. Many games have been created as products to help players improve their learning abilities. Learning new vocabulary occurs in a relaxed, motivating and enjoyable environment where the learner is comfortable and concentrates on the new word and how to use it in a particular context. Online games offer a suitable safe environment for EFL learners to practice drill skills and transfer knowledge (Smeets, 2005). MMORPGs are increasingly used to improve language learning. Many games have been created as products to help players improve their learning abilities.

Modern MMORPG incorporates some aspects made by advanced technology. The usage of chat is the major method through which players communicate with one another while they are engaged in the game. The use of MMORPGs allows for players in the same guild to speak with one another directly. This kind of communication needs active negotiation of EFL learners to improve their language skills, especially vocabulary. Peterson (2012) said that, nowadays, Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) are large-scale permanent virtual fantasy worlds that provide high-quality 3D visual interfaces that are distinguished by high levels of realism and immersion. MMORPG needs communication between the players to form a group or party to complete a quest. MMORPG in this era provides some symbolic features such as (1) virtual worlds based on a fantasy and narrative plot, (2) a chat and voice chat; (3) controllable avatars, goal-based communication environment; (4) the ability to customize many parts of the game (modding); and (5) participation in a game-based social group or Clan.

The learning potential of MMORPGs is enormous because they allow players to practice real-world communication skills in an interactive and immersive setting while also requiring them to read, write, speak, and listen in the target language with other people. Using technology as a media to assist language learning is helpful to make foreign language learners enjoy learning some language. If those conditions support our language learning process, it is expected to improve foreign language learners' performance and objective learning. One of the technologies that the learner can use is online games. Based on the explanation above,

this research aims to learn about the implementation of MMORPGs to enrich the vocabulary of foreign language learners.

Method

This research method is qualitative which relates with the phenomenon. In this qualitative method, we use the collection of material variety, personal experience, life story, and interview throughout the length of observational, interactional, and visual text which describe problematic moments and meaning in individual lives. Each individual has a unique perspective on life, and in order for the researcher to appreciate this fact, she or he has to dig deeper and make an effort to really analyse and comprehend the users' perspectives (Creswell, 2009). Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that focuses on the analysis of phenomena as they are experienced by real people in their everyday lives. The unit of analysis is comprised of a phenomenon's intended interpretation, or meaning (Vagle, 2018). The researcher used phenomenology to investigate the phenomenon that happened in MMORPGs, which is the vocabulary acquisition in the game and describe it to explain the results.

Concerning the research objective, the researcher conducted interviews, observations, and documentation with the participants to identify their English proficiency and experiences while playing MMORPG using a global server. The researcher performed the interview in order to provide a comprehensive answer. Qualitative interview is done when the researcher conduct interview with participants face to face by telephone, internet, or in a group interview with six to eight participants in each group (Creswell, 2014). Sugiyono (2015) said that interviewing provides the researcher deeper understanding of the participant that interpret situation and phenomenon which can be obtained through observation. The interview was conducted after the observation to figure out how the implementation of MMORPGs affects their vocabulary.

The researcher used triangulation to verify the data in this research. Researchers use different sources, methods, investigator and theories to make provision of corroborating evidence to validate the study's accuracy (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, when the researcher discovers evidence to document a pattern in different data resources, the researcher triangulates information to provide validity to the result.

Result

The first is about the implementation of MMORPG with various benefits based on EFL learners' feelings. In this research, there are eleven questions given to respondents to answer. According to the interview results, most EFL learners thought implementing MMORPG as a tool to enrich vocabulary was fascinating.

All respondents said that they enjoyed learning English because of playing, having fun, and easy to learn vocabulary from the game. All respondents said that almost every aspect in the game help them to learn a new vocabulary because there was a new vocabulary they can learn while playing the game. The EFL learner's responses prove that implementing MMORPG can enrich their vocabulary. They mentioned that MMORPG has many vocabularies that he did not know before.

"MMORPG has a lot of vocabulary which can enrich our vocabulary that we didn't know before. This is a brand-new method for students to learn English. I personally did the same way in learning new English vocabulary" (R7 001, July 2022)

"Yes, for some reasons. Because there are a lot of item names, jobs, descriptions, and many more. Actually, it is similar to our daily lives' vocabularies" (R6 001, July 2022)

The researcher also finds that MMORPG helps the EFL learners' study not only vocabulary but also accent, slang, and writing.

"It is helping to learn new vocabulary, some can be applied to real life, either the game and dialogues or the online community's slangs" (R1 001, July 2022)

"Yes, it helps people at least learn English vocabulary. In my few years of playing MMORPG, I'd encounter different tones and writings of English. Also, one of the essences of MMORPG is social interaction which means socializing is inevitable in this game whether it's player or NPC where I have to understand what that person or NPC just said" (R2 001, July 2022)

Based on the observation, interview, and documentation of the MMORG which is used to enrich EFL learners' vocabulary, the researcher answered the research questions. From the interview, seven players responded to the researcher's questionnaire. The findings from these interviews and observations have shown that there are five different methods by which a player might increase the amount of vocabulary they have via the use of the game.

The socializing and guild

This photograph, which the researcher shot while monitoring one of the participants, demonstrates that the EFL learners were engaged in discussion with another player at the same party as the EFL learners. They were discussing the strategy to defeat particular monsters.

Questing and NPC instruction



Figure 4.7 Screenshot of a player when she got instruction from NPC

In the picture above, the researcher found that NPC instruction contains many vocabularies that are easy to learn by EFL learners, by this communication with NPC the EFL is able to learn new vocabulary and when they do not understand the meaning of the words, they can search it on the dictionary or translate it. R2 (004) and R3 (004) mentioned that the instruction from NPC helped respondents get a new vocabulary and also helped them know where they should go next to finish the quest.

“Well yeah. I mean sometimes I skip the instructions from the tutorial. I learn Vocabulary in the language of the game, like in every MMO games, there are names of the map/zone/area with different languages from other races. Well I also learn some terms in the instructions, Like Targeted attack, AOE, slash attack and so on, Oh Aillments too. I did say I learn new vocabulary from the NPC instructions” (R2 004 July 2022)

“Well it helps me to understand the story and helps me what should I do next by searching on it meaning of this and that” (R3 004, July 2022)

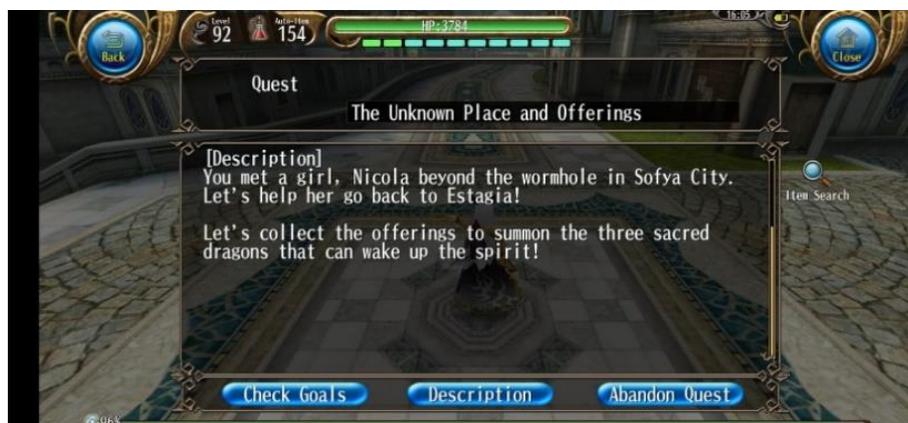


Figure 4.8 Screenshot of Quest/Mission

To complete the quest in MMORPG EFL, you need to read the description given by NPC and read it to understand how to finish the quest. R4 and R6 (004) Mentioned that NPC's instruction helped respondents get a new vocabulary. Quest usually gets from the NPC or Non-Playable Character. By reading the instruction given by NPC. EFL players must read it to understand the description, goal and what the player had to do to finish the quest; EFL players get the chance to learn vocabulary from it by reading the description.

“Most of the time, yeah. There are new words I learn especially those related to quest, like sometimes there's a story in a quest and I might find a new word in it I learn the word of "devastation" from MMORPG” (R4 004 July 2022)

“Yes, it does. There are some instructions or step to follow. Sometimes they use various vocabularies to increase the quality of language as NPC. And of course, to increase our vocabularies” (R6 004, July 2022)

From those opinions, the researcher finds out that the quest in MMORPG gives them opportunities to learn new vocabulary.

Trading market



Figure 4.9 Screenshot of players in the trading market

In the picture above, the researcher found the communication between players in bargaining some items, there is dedicated chatting for trading, where the player can announce buying and selling. There are many opportunities for learning new vocabulary in this system when players socialize, and interaction opens when they negotiate the item they want to buy or sell. R2 and R1 (003) mention the marketplace.

“Yes, well I need to talk to other people when it's needed, like for party or in the market” (R2 003, July 2022)

“I used to chat a lot with other players because the more you use the language to chat, the more you learn new vocabulary” (R1 003, July 2022)

There is an MMORPG that offer a chatting channel for trading, where players could make the announcement for buying and selling, it's only appeared when players come to specific area/town. The opportunity for language learning in interaction available when players read the announcement and negotiate the price of the item they are buying or selling.

Storyline

The storyline which appears in the game became an important thing to EFL learners who study vocabulary in MMORPG.

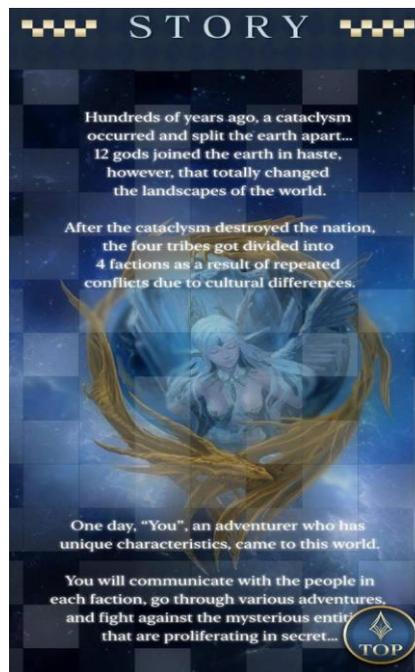


Figure 4.10 The Screenshot of the storyline in Toram Online MMORPG.

The storyline contains many vocabularies and EFL must read it to understand the story in-game. R7 (005) mentioned about the storyline and that it was helpful.

“Those are very helpful to us in studying English, so we know how to pronounce this word. Because learning English while playing the game in my opinion is fascinating. You just need notes, a pen, and a dictionary to write down the vocabulary and find out the meaning of each vocabulary” (R7 005 July 2022)

Some of the stories also hint at the quest the player wants to finish, which is why reading the storyline is helpful to the player in completing the quest and at the same time, they learn vocabulary as well.



Figure 4.11 Screenshot of storyline within the game

“Well it helps me to understand the story and helps me what should I do next by Searching on it meaning of this and that” (R3 005, July 2022)

According to R3-005, it was said that if a responder had a solid grasp of the narrative, it would be easier for them to figure out what actions they should do next in the game.

Items description

The item description also helps the EFL to learn a new vocabulary, different from the quest and storyline that have a hint to finish the quest, the item description does not have much vocabulary, usually the player who reads the description of the items.



Figure 4.12 Screenshot of items description



Figure 4.13 Screenshot of item description

R6 (008) Mentioned that the items' description help respondents learn new vocabulary and pick the best item and build a strategy to fight the enemy to get a special drop item from a specific monster.

“The description of items, weapons, tools, and armour. It helps me so much to know my profile game. What must I need to do in the game? How to fight the enemies with special items. The description helps me so much” (R6 008, July 2022)

Discussion

Based on the results above, as well as the observation and interviews, it demonstrated that there are five ways for the EFL learner to enrich their vocabulary within the game; the socializing and guild, questing and non-player character (NPC) instruction, trading market, storyline and items description.

When observing one of the participants who were active in the guild and making a conversation with another player who was in the same party. They were discussing the strategy to defeat particular monsters. Through the interaction, language learners would be exposed to the language forms and functions in communication. MMORPGs are designed to make social interaction and collaboration easier; players commonly develop communities based on their interactions inside the game.

The explanation above is in accordance with Griffiths et al. (2011), which stated that the interaction between EFL and the games would increase their language competence, like language vocabulary and mechanics like grammar. Nevertheless, aspects of the language function and usage of the language in the social context, such as language performance, are rarely taught in those single-player games. However, in MMORPG, the interactions happen at two distinct levels: between players and the game and between players and other players.

Nevertheless, the aspects of language function and usage in the social context, such as language performance are rarely taught in those single-player games. However, in

MMORPG, interactions happen at two distinct levels: between players and the game and between players and other players. According to Peterson (2010), The usage of fantasy elements is maintained in MMORPGs via the use of character role-play, real-time conversation with other players, interaction with non-player characters, and advancement through the fulfilment of missions. Similar to older forms of networked gaming, MMORPGs demand players to collaborate and communicate with one another as they establish alliances essential to fulfil required tasks.

The communication between players in bargaining some items is also giving the EFL learner chance to gain a new vocabulary; there is dedicated chatting for trading, where the player can announce buying and selling. There are many opportunities for learning new vocabularies in this system when players socialize, and interaction opens when they negotiate the item they want to buy or sell. The explanation above is the same as Suznjevic (2013) found that trading happened between players and game shops or between players and players. A particular item could be traded with in-game money or be traded with another item. MMORPG offers a chatting channel for trading, where players could make announcements for buying and selling. It only appears when players come to a specific area/town. The opportunity for language learning in interaction is available when players read the announcement and negotiate the price of the item they buy or sell.

Quest usually gets from the NPC or Non-Playable Character by reading the instruction given by NPC. EFL players must read it to comprehend the description, objective, and what they must do to complete the quest; by communicating with NPCs, EFL players will be able to acquire new terminology, and if they do not even understand a word, they may look it up in a dictionary or translate it.

The explanation above is in accordance with Suznjevic (2013) that questing involves extra assignments in reciprocation with rewards. In the matter of MMORPG, almost all quests are done to obtain in-game money, experiences point, rare equipment, rare items, specific skills, or access to special maps that offer many more benefits. Simple quests might be done alone, meanwhile, more difficult quests need more players to unite in groups or parties that are made up of players with different skills and classes in order to finish the quest.

The opportunity for language learning unveils via interaction within the game and interaction between players in that group/party when they propose to form a party and discuss the strategy to complete the special quest. According to Peterson (2010), MMORPGs continue to incorporate fantasy themes focused on character role-play, real-time connection with other players, interaction with non-player characters, and growth in the game via completing missions. As with previous networked games, MMORPGs need communication and

coordination between players in order to establish the alliances necessary to accomplish essential missions.

The storyline appearing in the game became essential to EFL learners who enriched their vocabulary in MMORPG. The storyline contains many vocabularies, and EFL must read it to understand the story in-game. Some of the stories also hint at the quest the player wants to finish. The amount of motivation shown by pupils is a key factor in the effective acquisition of new language. They also presumed that students would find it simpler to acquire vocabulary if the learning media were more attractive and inventive, and that students would be more driven to study the material if the media were more fascinating if it was (Rahman & Angraeni, 2020). That is why reading the storyline is helpful to the player in completing the quest. At the same time, they learned vocabulary as well. The item description also allows helping EFL learners not only to learn new vocabulary but also to pick the best item and build a strategy to fight the enemy to get a special drop item from the specific monster.

Conclusion

Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) help the EFL to enrich their vocabulary. This is in line with the research results that MMORPG provides the vocabulary acquisition environment where the EFL can enrich their vocabulary while playing this game. Aspects such as socializing, NPC instructions, quests, trading market and items description become essential to learning new vocabulary in the game. All respondents agreed that learning vocabulary through MMORPG is helpful and fun because they were learning and playing at the same time, and most of the participants preferred the storyline in the game because it contains many vocabularies they had never heard or read before.

Acknowledgment

This research and the paper would not have been possible without the massive support of my supervisor, Mrs. Noor Malihah., M.Hum., Ph.D., who always gave suggestion, and personal guidance from the first encounter of the title until the end and taught me a lot about scientific research.

References

- Creswell, J. . (2009). *Research designs: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach (3rd ed.)*. CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. . (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.)*. CA: Sage.
<https://opac.perpusnas.go.id/DetailOpac.aspx?id=908773>
- Griffiths., M. D., Gortari, O. de, B., A., & Aronsson, K. (2011). Game transfer phenomena in video game playing: a qualitative interview study. *International Journal of Cyber Behavior, Psychology, and Learning*, 1.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235683838_Game_Transfer_Phenomena_in

_Video_Game_Playing_A_Qualitative_Interview_Study

- Hornby, A. S. (2006). *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1108523>
- Lestari, A. N. (2015). The effectiveness of using Hangaroo game (An experimental research at seventh grade students of SMPN 3 Sokaraja in academic year 2014/2015). (*Doctoral Dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto*)., 5–15. <https://repository.ump.ac.id:80/id/eprint/196>
- Nadia, H., Yansyah, Y., & Rafidiyah, D. (2021). Designing an online work-related language skill for nursing students: a developmental research. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)*, 6(1), 163–170. <https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v6i1.1112>
- Peterson, M. (2010). Massively multiplayer online role-playing games as arenas for second language learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 23(5), 429–439. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2010.520673>
- Peterson, M. (2012). Learner interaction in a massively multiplayer online role playing game (MMORPG): a sociocultural discourse analysis. *ReCALL*, 24(3), 361–380. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0958344012000195>
- Rahman, A. A., & Angraeni, A. (2020). Empowering learners with role-playing game for vocabulary mastery. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 19. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.1.4>
- Smeets, E. (2005). Does ICT contribute to powerful learning environments in primary education? *Computers & Education*, 44(3), 343–335. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2004.04.003>
- Sugiyono. (2015). *Metode penelitian pendidikan*. Alfabeta. <https://inlislite.uin-suska.ac.id/opac/detail-opac?id=20670>
- Suznjevic, M., & Matijasevic, M. (2013). Player behavior and traffic characterization for MMORPGs: A survey. *Multimedia Systems*, 19(3), 199–220. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00530-012-0270-4>
- Valentine, K. D., Kopcha, T. J., & Vagle, M. D. (2018). Phenomenological methodologies in the field of educational communications and technology. *TechTrends*, 62(5), 462–472. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-018-0317-2>
- Williams, D., Yee, N., & Caplan, S. E. (2008). Who plays, how much, and why? debunking the stereotypical gamer profile. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(4), 993–1018. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2008.00428.x>

This page intentionally left blank