LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE SIMS 4 IN BOOSTING THEIR ENGLISH VOCABULARY MASTERY

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Abstract

This study investigates Indonesian learners' attitudes toward using The Sims 4 to boost English vocabulary mastery, aiming to identify learners' vocabulary learning challenges and examining how digital simulation games influence motivation and contextual vocabulary acquisition among English as a foreign language learners aged 18–25. The study employed a mixed-method explanatory sequential design, collecting quantitative data from 99 respondents through a Likert-scale questionnaire followed by semi-structured interviews with selected participants. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to analyze learners' perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to vocabulary learning through gameplay. The findings reveal that learners generally perceive The Sims 4 as motivating, enjoyable, and effective in supporting contextual and daily-life vocabulary learning, particularly by providing meaningful exposure through simulated real-life activities. Therefore, while The Sims 4 enhances learners' engagement, motivation, and incidental vocabulary acquisition, it should be used as a supplementary learning tool to boost students' vocabulary mastery. It is recommended that educators combine digital games with traditional vocabulary teaching strategies to maximize meaningful learning activities.

Keywords: game-based learning, The Sims 4, vocabulary acquisition

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Introduction

The fast-changing technology in the digital age has transformed the manner in which human beings learn, language

learning being one of these areas. Game-based learning (GBL) has become one of the most active innovations that integrates educational materials with the interactive nature of games to establish a motivating, stimulating, and productive learning experience (Adipat et al., 2021). GBL empowers students to learn sophisticated ideas, train competencies, and to get instant feedback in a staged environment that facilitates learner engagement.

Games may offer consistent exposure to vocabulary and language patterns and structures without boredom in English language learning, and develop problem-solving strategies, teamwork, and thought processes. According to Kühn et al. (2019), resources, problem-solving, and determination are identified as key to success in playing video games. In the case of a game, when the players start playing, they are well aware that they will do some based on how the game is; they will need a certain level of perseverance in order to negotiate the challenging levels, and they might have to replay the same level several times before they can successfully overcome it.

Moreover, the dimension of immersion inherent in the GBL promotes the ability of the learners to tie the in-game situations to the real-life ones, thus profoundly increasing the intellectual and emotional involvement that the students may have in the given language. This combination of learning and fun makes game-based learning one of the best tools for learning English communication in a manner that can be enjoyable and also pedagogically effective.

One of the fundamental aspects of learning English is vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary serves as the primary foundation that supports all language skills, both receptive skills, such as listening and reading, and productive skills, such as speaking and writing. Vocabulary is essential knowledge in any language learning; new words learned are new vocabulary obtained in the targeted language. When learning English as a second language, getting vocabulary first is more important than mastering other language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) the learners also expanded other language skills (Lukas et al., 2020). Adequate vocabulary knowledge enables learners to comprehend messages in the target language and to express their ideas accurately. Without sufficient vocabulary, communication becomes hindered, even if learners possess strong grammatical competence.

Vocabulary mastery is a big problem among English language learners, especially for non-native speakers. Most students have difficulty in recognizing, understanding, and successfully applying English words, which eventually affects their language proficiency level (Lorenset & Tumolo,

2019). Andersson (2023) has highlighted the relative advantages of playing and watching real-time strategy games in the context of language learning, which is provided by physical interactivity. On the same note, Hady (2023) has observed that the conventional approaches to vocabulary learning, including rote learning, do not always engage the learners and do not always lead to full retention. Thus, utilizing game-based learning media, such as The SIMS 4, is seen to be a thoughtful solution in this current digital era in order to improve both learners' engagement and learning motivation.

As deduced by Magasvaran et al. (2022), interactive online education games may be useful in the development of English vocabulary, especially in young learners. Their study revealed that the incorporation of game-based platforms like Wordwall in conjunction with organized learning modules can be of great motivational value to a student and help them maintain their attention and interest in the learning process. The pre-test and post-test results showed significant changes in students' vocabulary knowledge after the introduction of the game-based learning strategy, demonstrating that well-designed educational games can be not only entertaining but also effective in promoting vocabulary mastery.

Although these findings are encouraging, the use of digital games in the educational process remains underutilized, despite their significant potential for vocabulary development (Warren et al., 2021). As an example, Safura & Helmanda (2022) had observed that few studies have been conducted to understand the potential of games such as The Sims, which offer some immersive worlds that could help vocabulary learning through contextual use. Align with this, a study conducted by Kazu & Kuvvetli (2023) on Quizlet, a digital gaming application, gave a huge increase in vocabulary mastery among the students and argued that similar platforms could be used more extensively to attract learners and improve their language knowledge (Peterson, 2023). Due to the scarcity of prior studies on exploring The Sims further, this research filled this gap.

The platform of the Sims provides a business with a distinct opportunity to learn a language because of the immersion and real-life situations presented in the game. Players develop and control virtual characters, conduct a dialogue, and cope with different social scenarios, and all of that involves the use of vocabulary and language abilities. The Sims would have a chance to provide a contextualized and meaningful use of language education by adding an element of play to the learning process to help students learn and practice using English vocabulary.

Knowledge of the effectiveness of The Sims to improve English vocabulary and motivation may be important in education (Lorenset &

Tumolo, 2019). The educators can create language programs that are more interesting and efficient by figuring out what in the game students find to be engaging and stimulate their interest in learning (Jaiswal, 2024). According to Govender & Moreno (2021), The Sims, as a life simulation game, offers contextual and immersive environments in which players can be exposed to a variety of vocabulary that is used in everyday life, when they prepare food, people shop, and socialize.

In accordance with the above statements, earlier investigators concluded that digital games could be an effective approach to learning vocabulary. Digital games as a means of acquiring vocabulary can serve as a source of motivation to students and make the process of learning more entertaining. One of them is The Sims, which is a computerized game aimed at teaching vocabulary, and it provides action vocabulary that is applicable to everyday routines. The Sims game engulfs the user into a fictitious virtual world, where the user can develop characters, also known as avatars, that are a representation of real-life characters in terms of their occupational, academic, social, and personal lives, as well as habits and goals in life. This game is a good example of the use of digital games in the specific application of vocabulary learning in a way that is engaging and contextually oriented. The reason why the researcher selected The Sims game as a test material is due to their experience, since the game assisted them in uncovering numerous words used by native speakers. The Sims is one of the high-quality games that has enjoyed popularity among the youth in learning the English language.

From the problems above, the researcher intended to investigate "Learners' Attitude Towards The Sims 4 In Boosting Students' English Vocabulary Mastery".

Research Methods

Design

The current study is a mixed-methods research since it employed both quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis to have an overall idea of the efficacy, possibilities, and obstacles of applying The Sims 4 as a means of improving English vocabulary knowledge among Indonesian students. The quantitative stage used a Likert-scale questionnaire to quantify the perceptions of the learners, whereas the qualitative one involved the use of open-ended responses and semi-structured interviews in order to investigate the experiences of the participants in more detail.

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, in a six-phase approach (Braun & Clarke, 2021). In order to have varied views, purposive

sampling was used, whereby one individual who favors the integration of The Sims 4 in vocabulary learning and one who does not will be selected. The entire process of data collection was held online through the use of Google Forms, Discord, and Facebook during the period of June 14th, 2025, until January 4th, 2026. Although the findings are meant to provide useful information, they are not expected to represent any English learners, but the specific sampled population and situation.

Participants

The target population was the Indonesian learners aged 18-25 years who were members of The Sims Indonesia Community. Out of this population, ninety-nine learners were chosen to take part in the research. The sample was selected to understand the process of vocabulary mastering among the learners who might not have a good background in mastering English vocabulary. The participants were contacted and communicated with the online tools and social media, including Google Forms, Discord, and Facebook.

Data Collection

The data for this study were gathered using a mixed-methods approach, combining Likert-scale questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. According to Creswell (2022), a questionnaire is a research instrument, a set of questions that are offered to collect information about respondents in a methodical way. A research instrument, which in this case was a questionnaire, is a structured instrument, composed of a sequence of questions, designed to gather a set of standardized data about respondents regarding their thoughts, behaviors, or experiences.

Semi-structured interviews are a common approach to collecting qualitative data since they are more flexible than structured, and vice-versa. Creswell & Creswell (2018) claim that this method gives the researcher the opportunity to draft the guiding questions but leave space to enable the participants explore their experiences in their own words. Semi-structured interviews are especially useful when conducting an exploratory study because, in addition to being consistent throughout the interviews, they are flexible in individual situations, which is a fundamental feature of a qualitative research design.

Data analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. The analysis of

questionnaires were conducted using the method of descriptive analysis to determine the perceptions of learners on the effectiveness of The Sims in developing mastery of English vocabulary. Alkharusi (2022) explained that descriptive analysis is performed through calculating frequencies, percentages, and mean scores of each item, and it will give a clear picture of the level of agreement, satisfaction, or perception of the use of the game as a learning tool by the learners.

The qualitative data were gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews with two learners chosen as the representatives of two sides of the pro and con positions on the use of The Sims as a means of learning vocabulary. As suggested by Clarke & Braun (2021), thematic analysis is applied to identify, examine, and report patterns or themes in the interview data systematically. This will enable the researcher to get first-hand experiences, perceptions, and insights of the learners about the challenges and benefits of using the game to learn English vocabulary.

The combination of the two approaches gave a holistic perspective of the phenomenon, tying the numerical patterns observed as a result of the Likert-scale data with the deep qualitative stories through the interviews. This combination ensured that this study did not just quantify the perceptions of the learners, but also discussed the reasons and experiences that motivated them to have such perceptions.

Results and Discussion

Results

This section presents and discusses the findings derived from the descriptive analysis of respondents' perceptions toward The Sims 4 as an English vocabulary learning tool. The data were obtained from 99 respondents through a Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of fifteen statements grouped into five categories: Vocabulary Acquisition, Motivation, Digital Game-Based Learning, Learning Attitude, and Challenge. The analysis as table 1 showed, focuses on frequencies and percentages to capture general tendencies in respondents' perceptions.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution and Mean Scores of Respondents' Perceptions toward the Sims 4 as a Vocabulary Learning Tool (N=99)

No	Statement	SD n (%)	D n (%)	N n (%)	A n (%)	SA n (%)	Mean
1	Playing The Sims 4 helps me acquire new English vocabulary in a meaningful way.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	19 (19.19)	61 (61.62)	19 (19.19)	4.00
2	The contextual situations in The Sims	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	24 (24.24)	59 (59.60)	16 (16.16)	3.92

	4 make it easier for me to understand the meaning of English vocabulary.						
3	I can recall and use English vocabulary better after playing The Sims 4.	0 (0.00)	3 (3.03)	15 (15.15)	63 (63.64)	18 (18.18)	3.97
4	I learn everyday English expressions naturally while playing The Sims 4.	0 (0.00)	5 (5.05)	32 (32.32)	50 (50.51)	12 (12.12)	3.70
5	The Sims 4 motivates me to practice English vocabulary more frequently.	1 (1.01)	2 (2.02)	20 (20.20)	61 (61.62)	15 (15.15)	3.87
6	The game increases my interest in learning English vocabulary.	0 (0.00)	2 (2.02)	15 (15.15)	63 (63.64)	19 (19.19)	4.00
7	I feel more confident using English vocabulary after playing The Sims 4.	0 (0.00)	2 (2.02)	27 (27.27)	58 (58.59)	12 (12.12)	3.81
8	The Sims 4 encourages me to explore and use new English vocabulary.	0 (0.00)	4 (4.04)	14 (14.14)	66 (66.67)	15 (15.15)	3.93
9	The visual and interactive elements of The Sims 4 support my vocabulary learning.	0 (0.00)	1 (1.01)	6 (6.06)	69 (69.70)	23 (23.23)	4.15
10	The game provides opportunities to learn English vocabulary related to daily life activities.	0 (0.00)	1 (1.01)	6 (6.06)	73 (73.74)	19 (19.19)	4.11
11	Learning English vocabulary through The Sims 4 feels enjoyable.	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	5 (5.05)	66 (66.67)	28 (28.28)	4.23
12	I would recommend The Sims 4 as a useful tool for learning English vocabulary.	0 (0.00)	3 (3.03)	13 (13.13)	69 (69.70)	14 (14.14)	3.95
13	Playing The Sims 4 does not significantly improve my English vocabulary.	7 (7.07)	64 (64.65)	12 (12.12)	14 (14.14)	2 (2.02)	2.29
14	It is difficult to concentrate on learning English vocabulary while playing The Sims 4.	13 (13.13)	61 (61.62)	13 (13.13)	10 (10.10)	2 (2.02)	2.16

15	Traditional methods such as textbooks or memorization are more effective than The Sims 4 in learning vocabulary.	3 (3.03)	14 (14.14)	63 (63.64)	18 (18.18)	1 (1.01)	2.97

In accordance with Table 1, the respondents mostly shared their positive attitudes towards The Sims 4 as an English vocabulary learning resource. In most of the statements, the concentration of responses was in the Agree and Strongly Agree responses category, with Disagree and Strongly Disagree being very sparse. The mean scores of positive statements were in the interval 3.70 4.23, which showed the general positive tendency towards the use of the game in learning vocabulary.

In the Vocabulary Acquisition category, there was an evident tendency of agreement among the respondents. In Statement 1, 61.62% of the respondents picked Agree, and 19.19% Strongly Agree, with a mean of 4.00. On the same note, on Statement 2, 59.60 percent said they agree, and 16.16 percent strongly agree that the meaning of words in the context of the game becomes easier to understand, and the mean score was 3.92. The same was also shown in the responses to Statement 3 (positive perceptions), where 63.64% give responses to Agree, and 18.18% gave responses to Strongly Agree (M = 3.97). Nevertheless, it can be concluded that not all respondents viewed vocabulary learning as deliberate because the neutral responses were relatively high (especially Statement 4, 32.32%).

Regarding Motivation, it was found that the response was rather positive. In Statement 5, 61.62% of the respondents agreed, and 15.15% strongly agreed that The Sims 4 encouraged them to use English vocabulary more often, and the mean score was 3.87. Even closer agreement is indicated in Statement 6, with 63.64 per cent. choosing Agree and 19.19 per cent. choosing Strongly Agree (M = 4.00). Likewise, in Statement 7, 58.59% of the respondents attested that they are confident when using English words after playing the game, and 12.12% of respondents strongly agreed, and 27.27% were neutral.

The best positive responses were received in the Digital Game-Based Learning category. In Statement 9, 69.70% of the respondents were able to choose Agree, and 23.23% Strongly Agree, resulting in a mean score of 4.15. Similarly, in Statement 10, the agreement was 73.74%, and strong agreement 19.19% (M = 4.11). These findings suggested that the visual, interactive, and simulation-related aspects of the game were highly correlated by the respondents with the meaningful exposure to vocabulary.

In terms of Learning Attitude, the respondents usually found the vocabulary learning using the game to be enjoyable. Table 4.1 demonstrated that Statement 11 had the greatest response of agree with 66.67% and strongly agree with 28.28%, creating the highest mean score of 4.23. In Statement 12.69.70% were in agreement with the statement 12 and 14.14% strongly in agreement with the statement 12, an outcome of giving a mean of

3.95, a significant percentage (13.13) of respondents were in the Neutral category.

The category of Challenge demonstrated more diverse perceptions. In the minimally phrased Statement 13, most of the respondents chose Disagree (64.65) or Strongly Disagree (7.07), so the mean score of 2.29, which implied the nullification of the negative statement. In the same regard, 61.62 percent disagreed and 13.13 percent strongly disagreed with Statement 14 that it is hard to focus on vocabulary when playing (M = 2.16). In Statement 15, the distribution was more balanced as 63.64% of the respondents stated that they were neutral, and the mean value was 2.97, indicating that The Sims 4 is not seen as a substitute to traditional methods of vocabulary learning (although it was said to be a supportive one).

As a whole, in line with the argument of Safura & Helmanda (2022), the results of this current study indicated that The Sims 4 was viewed favourably as an effective and involving tool in learning English vocabulary, especially in the areas of motivation and contextual exposure as the agreement percentages were high and the average scores were above the 4.00 mark in a number of categories. Nevertheless, the outcomes also indicated the constraints, in particular, the knowledge of vocabulary acquisition processed by the learners, as well as the chance of being distracted in the process of playing the game.

Along with the data from the questionnaire, the qualitative data were gathered in the form of semi-structured interviews with six respondents. The data from the interview were interpreted in a thematic way to address the experiences, impressions, and difficulties that learners face when using The Sims 4 as an instrument of learning English vocabulary. The data showed several common themes that mostly strengthen the findings of the quantitative analysis and add extra layers to them.

Table 2. Summary of Themes and Sample Interview Experts

Theme	Description	Sample Excerpts
Difficulties in Vocabulary Learning	Participants reported challenges in learning English vocabulary through traditional methods, particularly memorization, lack of context, and limited daily exposure.	*"Kalau aku orangnya susah buat ngapalin… vocabulary-nya tuh kurang karena lingkungannya kurang mendukung." (FE)* *"Kalau ada kosa kata baru, tapi jarang dipakai, beberapa hari kemudian hilang dari ingatan." (AF)*
Games as a Motivating Learning Medium	Learning through games was perceived as more enjoyable, less stressful, and more motivating compared to conventional learning methods.	*"Main game itu lebih masuk otak dibandingkan ngafal… belajar sambil having fun." (FE)* *"Belajar itu biasanya boring, tapi lewat game rasa bosannya dibuang." (RF)*
Contextual and Daily-Life	The Sims 4 was valued for	*"The Sims 4 itu tentang*

Vocabulary Exposure	presenting vocabulary related to everyday activities, making learning more meaningful and applicable.	*kehidupan sehari-hari… kosa katanya bener-bener useful.” (RF)* *“Kosa kata muncul dalam situasi nyata seperti memasak atau bersosialisasi.” (AF)*
Limitations of The Sims 4 as a Learning Tool	Participants acknowledged that the game lacks explicit explanations, pronunciation feedback, and structured learning design.	*“Game hanya menampilkan kata tanpa penjelasan arti, jadi harus cari sendiri.” (AF)* *“Listening dan grammar masih kurang karena lebih ke reading.” (AAR)*
The Sims 4 as a Supplementary Tool	The game was viewed as a supportive medium rather than a replacement for formal instruction.	*“Efektif sebagai media pendukung, bukan metode pembelajaran utama.” (AAR)* *“Ini game, bukan game edukasi, tapi kita bisa ambil pembelajarannya.” (RF)*

Thematic analysis of the interview data revealed the key themes, which were summarized in Table 2 and illustrated with the help of some participants who shared their views on how The Sims 4 was used as an English vocabulary-teaching tool. One of the themes was the troubles in learning vocabulary before using a game. The majority of the participants mentioned the difficulties associated with memorization, the absence of contextual exposure, and the limited chance of applying the English language to daily life. As an example, there were some participants who said that vocabulary acquired in traditional ways was easy to forget, as it was hardly practiced in practical discussions. Other people noted that they had problems with spelling, pronunciation, or grammar, and vocabulary acquisition seemed abstract and discouraging. These experiences contributed to the reason why the respondents in the questionnaire indicated quite high levels of agreement with statements that talked of contextual and meaningful vocabulary learning since the game seems to fill gaps that the traditional methods leave.

A second theme revolved around games as an inspirational and fun way of learning. In multiple interviews, participants always explained learning in games as more interesting compared to traditional learning like cramming or taking written tests. Some of the respondents stated that games could alleviate boredom and create motivation since learning happens by chance during the process of playing. The existence of fun, which was termed as learning fun, was highlighted several times. This theme, as the questionnaire results indicated high percentages of agreement of the

question items that dealt with motivation, enjoyment, and the desire to learn English vocabulary more. The data of the interview indicated that motivation was not only viewed as an emotional reaction, but as one of the important factors supporting similar exposure to English vocabulary in the long run.

One more powerful theme is concerned with the contextual and everyday-life vocabulary exposure. It was often observed that in The Sims 4, vocabulary is presented in the form of everyday routines, like cooking, trying to work, socializing, and even housekeeping. This was regarded as an especially useful feature since the vocabulary that was being studied appeared applicable and applicable in reality, as opposed to academic or specialist. Other participants compared The Sims 4 to other games, which are narrow-based and have limited vocabulary, like combat games. This observation promotes the quantitative result in which respondents had a strong agreement that the game offers opportunities to study daily-life vocabulary, and the visual and interactive features of the game help in learning. As explained by the interviews, the context contributes immensely to the viability of vocabulary comprehension and retention of meaning.

Although these are positive perceptions, one aspect that comes out repeatedly is the restriction of The Sims 4 as a learning tool. Players were always willing to admit that the game does not aspire to be an educational platform. Some of them pointed out that vocabulary is expressed in the form of written language in menu options or bubble chats with little interaction being verbal. Consequently, the practice of listening and feedback on pronunciation is mostly not affected. Some others stated that vocabulary is presented without clear explanations, and it is the duty of the learners to refer to dictionaries or the internet on their own. This is also reflected by the results of the questionnaires about challenge-related items, in which the results of neutral and disagreeing indicated that the game is limiting in facilitating focused or structured learning.

Tightly connected is the theme of The Sims 4 as an additional, rather than a leading learning aid. A significant number of participants made it clear that the game is an effective tool in increasing interest and exposure but should not be used to substitute formal ways of learning. Even the traditional methods were considered significant in learning grammar, structure, and systematic study of vocabulary. Nonetheless, the participants stressed that an integration of The Sims 4 with other learning elements, e.g., taking notes, discussing, or formal instruction, may positively affect the overall learning. This would be a more nuanced understanding of the quantitative findings, especially on items that involve the comparison of the game against traditional ways, in which the neutral answers were comparatively high. This

implies that playing the game consciously, i.e., without distraction by the entertainment factor, might not occur in the case of some players. Instead of shunning conventional education, the participants seem to prefer assimilation.

In general, the thematic analysis helped to substantiate the findings of the questionnaire, being more comprehensive and explanatory. Though the quantitative data proved that the perceptions of The Sims 4 as a vocabulary learning tool were generally positive, the interview data showed why opinions were so and what the limits of such perceptions. Collectively, the two sources of data indicate d that The Sims 4 was a properly informal, motivational, and contextual learning tool, particularly in terms of vocabulary exposure, although its effects were more beneficial when employed alongside more formal instruction methods.

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Tightly connected is the theme of The Sims 4 as an additional, rather than a leading learning aid. A significant number of participants made it clear that the game is an effective tool in increasing interest and exposure but should not be used to substitute formal ways of learning. Even the traditional methods were considered significant in learning grammar, structure, and systematic study of vocabulary. Nonetheless, the participants stressed that an integration of The Sims 4 with other learning elements, e.g., taking notes, discussing, or formal instruction, may positively affect the overall learning. This would be a more nuanced understanding of the quantitative findings, especially on items that involve the comparison of the game against traditional ways, in which the neutral answers were comparatively high. This implies that playing the game consciously, i.e., without distraction by the entertainment factor, might not occur in the case of some players. Instead of shunning conventional education, the participants seem to prefer assimilation.

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Discussion

This research paper aimed to analyze the perception of learners with regard to The Sims 4 as an English vocabulary learning aid with respect to perceived effectiveness, motivational influence, and challenges. The discussion also combined quantitative results in Table 4.1 along with qualitative insight to explain how the game was used as a learning tool as on Table 2.

According to the results of the questionnaires, the learners, as a whole, showed that The Sims 4 was effective in vocabulary acquisition, especially in contextual exposure. The large numbers of Agree and Strongly Agree responses to Statements 1 through 3, with a range of means of between 3.92 and 4.00, indicated that the learners appreciated being subjected to vocabulary through meaningful in-game contexts. The interview data confirmed this perception, whereby participants said they were learning new words during their normal activities like cooking, working, or even when playing with other characters. The interviewees made a number of observations, such as that vocabulary was less challenging to learn when presented in the context of visual images and known behavior, which led to the perception that learning took place in the context of the environment as opposed to being taught.

Nevertheless, the data provided in the interview process were used to justify the reason why the neutral responses were quite high in Statement 4 as well. Certain participants said that they were not sure whether they were learning vocabulary since no clear definitions or learning objectives were explicitly stated in the game. This implied that vocabulary acquisition in The Sims 4 was incidental to a large extent, and this could minimize the ability of learners to be aware of their learning progress despite frequent exposure.

The driving value of The Sims 4 was highly evident in the questionnaire results, especially in the fifth and sixth statements, where more than 60% of the answers showed Agree and almost 20% Strongly

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Agree. The mean scores near 4.00 explained that the game was considered to be motivating and engaging. This trend was explained by the findings of the interviews because, in most cases, the participants referred to the process of learning the game as being fun, relaxing, and less stressful than the conventional approach to learning. A number of interviewees pointed out that they did not feel compelled to memorize vocabulary and they were more inclined to interact with English in longer periods of time.

However, the presence of neutral responses to Statement 7 was consistent with the stories in the interviews in the variation of confidence gains. According to some participants, they felt more confident with familiar words, whereas others claimed that they did not gain much confidence because the game did not provide the opportunity to have verbal communication. This implies that motivational influences can be determined by the personal interaction of the learners with the features of the game language.

The highest level of agreement was obtained with Statements 9 and 10 (Statements pertaining to visual and interactive aspects of The Sims 4), the mean score of which was greater than 4.10. These findings demonstrated the significance of game design when it came to influencing the perceptions of the learners. This finding was supported by the data of the interview, where the participants often noted the usefulness of visuals, icons, and animations in terms of assisting them in the inference of the meaning of words even without translation. Recreation of realistic situations was also recognized as one of the essential elements that led to making vocabulary look relevant and pragmatic instead of abstract.

Simultaneously, the interviewees of the game admitted that the game lacks systematic vocabulary practice and an organized order of progression. This shortcoming could be used to understand why the learners found the game to be supportive, and not enough to master the vocabulary in a comprehensive way.

The mean value of Statement 11 (4.23) was high, which implied that learners find learning vocabulary via the game and enjoy it overwhelmingly. This observation is supported by the responses given during the interview, as participants indicated that the game was fun, relaxing, and not tiring as compared to traditional ways of studying. It seemed that enjoyment served as an affective influence, which promoted long-term involvement in English even in the absence of learning as the main purpose.

Nevertheless, interview information also brought some innuendo to the somewhat favorable answers to Statement 12. Although a considerable number of participants indicated that they would recommend the game,

some of them added conditions to the recommendations by stressing that the game should be incorporated with other tools of learning. This could be used to understand why there were neutral responses in the questionnaire and indicated a cautious support, and not an unquestioning support.

The responses to Statements 13-15 in the questionnaire showed significant perceived limitations. High disagreement with negative statements (low means scores of Statements 13 and 14) led to the conclusion that the majority of the learners did not perceive the game as ineffective or too distracting. Nonetheless, the results of the interviews presented a bigger picture. Some of the participants also acknowledged that they sometimes prioritized goals in the game more than language, and this could inhibit the learning of vocabulary carefully.

Answers to Statement 15, whose mean score was near the neutral one, were consistent with the results of the interviews. The respondents always referred to The Sims 4 as an auxiliary tool and not a substitute to traditional learning. Systematic explanations, pronunciation training, and grammar teaching were found to be features that the students continued to relate with the formal learning set-ups.

Putting together the findings of the questionnaires and the interview, the present study demonstrated that The Sims 4 was regarded as a positive and interactive place of accidental vocabulary exposure, especially when played in the form of contextualized and fun games. Nevertheless, these two data sources showed that there were evident drawbacks in terms of structure, learning awareness, and focus. These results indicated that although the game had a useful motivation and support function, its educational capacity was optimized through application with other more organized lessons on vocabulary. These findings supported the studies of Govender and Moreno (2021) and Safura & Helmanda (2022).

Conclusion

This research paper explored the perception of Indonesian learners about The Sims 4 as a tool for improving their mastery of English vocabulary, especially those associated with everyday activities and work-related activities. The study was designed by using a combination of questionnaire and interview results of the members of two online gaming communities to determine the perceived vocabulary learning challenges as well as to determine the attitudes of the learners towards using the game as an English as a foreign language environment.

To answer the former research problem, the evidence showed that the learners had a number of challenges in vocabulary learning, especially in the

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aspect of structure, awareness of learning and focus. Most of the respondents disproved the notion that The Sims 4 does not help one learning vocabulary; however, quantitative and qualitative data indicated that vocabulary learning in the game was incidental. New words were often introduced to the learners without giving clear explanations or involving them in the pronunciation or offering them a systemic exercise. Interview data also pointed to the fact that there were also the learners who had problems focusing on vocabulary when playing the game since the objectives of the game could be a priority over language learning. These difficulties demonstrated general problems that EFL students usually faced, including inadequate contextualized but systematic vocabulary practice. These problems can be investigated further by future studies on how to maximize the utilization of digital-game-based learning media on vocabulary acquisition effectively while keeping the focus of the students.

In the framework of the second research problem, the results showed that learners had positive attitudes toward the use of The Sims 4 as a tool to improve English vocabulary. The questionnaire results revealed that a lot of participants agreed with the statements associated with motivation, enjoyment, and contextual exposure, and these statements were proven by the mean scores above the neutral level. These results were supported by the data of the interview, as the learners said that this game was as something engaging and entertaining and less stressful compared to the traditional way of learning. The simulation of daily life activities and jobs in the game enabled the learners to be exposed to the vocabulary in a natural and context-related manner, and this led to a positive affective response to learning the English language.

To sum up, The Sims 4 was considered by the learners as a helpful additional instrument that stimulated motivation and caused the contextual exposure to the English language with significant meaning, yet the limitations that were presented by the learning structure and focus were also discussed. These results indicated that the game could be used to complete and supplement more formal methods of language learning, as opposed to substituting a formal instruction in language learning. By referring to the findings of this study, this research suggested future research to explore further and or develop a vocabulary learning approach by using well-structured and well-managed digital game-based media in order to maintain students' focus and maximize their vocabulary learning interests.

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