

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter discusses the introduction of the research, which involves the background of the study and the statement of the study. This study also contains a research question that aligns with the research problem and objectives of answering research questions. The significance of the study in this chapter shows why the research is conducted. Further, the research outline explains every chapter in this research.

Background of the Study

Technology and education are a harmonious combination in this modern era. Sophistication, convenience, and practicality obtained from technology can help improve the quality of education for successful and modern human resources in the future. Rivai (2010) said that the combination of technology and education has the advantage of helping students become more individual and stimulates student learning motivation in doing the tasks given by the teacher. These advantages can have a good impact on improving student learning outcomes.

Recently, there are many advances in technology that have produced new things and processes for learning in the context of education (Reynolds & Anderson 2015; Shadiev et al., 2018). Nowadays, the learning process has begun to be upgraded to be more modern. Students can determine to study anywhere and whenever they want (Dhawan, 2020). The application of technology in education is

an effective and efficient breakthrough in the context of achieving goals by saving costs, labor, and time in learning.

To provide convenience and practicality, technology also has many features that can help students do many things and learn about many subjects—one of the application's features. According to Pramana (2012), an application is software created with a specific purpose to meet the needs of various aspects of daily activities and work. For example, communication, community services, commercial activities, advertising, games, and other activities offered. Types of applications both on computers and mobile are social medium, word processing applications (Microsoft Word), multimediam, games, and others.

Nowadays, one of the popular applications among the majority of all ages is games. Students are more familiar and comfortable with some common technologies such as smartphones, PCs, and laptops in the education field. This can support teachers in proving their role and character as professionals and part of the active educative community (Rahadian, 2015). This can support students in learning English using digital medium games as an alternative. One of the most popular digital medium games used to help students learn languages is video games. According to Klein (2013), playing video games or digital games can be helpful for people who are learning a new language. This makes digital games a fun language learning innovation.

Several types of games have respective functions and characteristics that could be used in learning a language. According to the study from Chiu, Kao, and Reynolds (2012), there are two types of games, namely flashcard games and

simulation games. The previous researcher also explains flashcard game types' characteristics, namely form-focused, discrete skills, and repetition. Game-type simulation games' characteristics are meaning-focused, interactive, narrative fantasy, and integrated skills. The researcher gave several examples of games from the two types of games; flashcard games are Quizlet, Alc Net Academy, Dyn ed, Hot Potatoes, and Suite. In addition, the examples of types of simulation games are 3rd world, Farmer, Energy city, Pandemic, World of Warcraft, and The Sims.

One of the games that are widely used is The Sims. According to Griebel (2006), The Sims is a digital game that has a unique and tangible advantage that allows players to create and control the households and lives of their own "sims" or virtual families. Players control almost everything in their sim's daily life, from meals, career, and education. The Sims game was developed by Maxis and published by Electronic Arts in 2000. This game developer is an American video game designer and former co-founder of Maxis Company and part of Electronic Arts, Will Wright. The Sims games also tend to have benefits in language learning for the use of English for the players with all components in the game using English. In using it, The Sims chooses simple vocabulary found in the context of daily vocabulary both in terms of meaning and action as visualized in The Sims simulation game (Ranalli, 2008).

A study by Miller and Hegelheimer (2006) found that the simulation game The Sims can enable English L2 learners to be used for fun and improve students' grammar knowledge and vocabulary. The results of the study also found that one of the advantages of The Sims games that offered role playing games so that there are

many interactions of various characters in the game with conversations and various interactive missions that can add new vocabulary to help players learn meaningful vocabulary or vocabulary learning by using and seeing a word more real or visually. The Sims offered almost life-like visual animations and cinema inherent in every graphic in the game session.

A Game, which is originally created for the purpose of entertainment, possibly impacts English learning, especially vocabulary, for its English content of the game. Hence, the researcher is interested in investigating this case in real situations, particularly The Sims, as one of the games with these characteristics. This research was carried out on several participants from a Private University majoring in English Language Education who have used the digital simulation game The Sims previously. Previous research talked more about how The Sims can improve students' vocabulary test results with additional material in a short time or while research is being carried out. In contrast, this research focused on how students who have been users of The Sims game for a long time feel a meaningful learning experience from the vocabulary in The Sims in more depth and whether it is effective or not. The researcher wants to know more about the experiences of the participants in using The Sims as foreign language learning indirectly and experience in learning vocabulary in The Sims game.

Statement of the Problem

In learning vocabulary for EFL students, there are many ways that students can use it according to their interests. One of them is learning vocabulary using digital games. The Sims game is a digital simulation game that can be included in the

game category for learning vocabulary about everyday life. However, there is still little research on the effectiveness of digital simulation games as a medium for learning vocabulary. The Sims game has drawbacks such as vocabulary categories that are too broad and only in the form of writing and pictures or cannot make sounds to pronounce vocabulary so that students can only learn receptive vocabulary.

Those problems stated before are based on the phenomena around the researcher in using The Sims as a medium for learning vocabulary. The researcher also observed fellow users of The Sims in learning vocabulary. There are many previous studies that have been carried out on digital simulation-based games as an alternative language learning medium, but very few have researched one type of digital simulation-based game The Sims for language learning.

Previous research has not specifically discussed the benefits of digital simulation-based games in studying vocabulary independently and relating to real life. This makes the researcher interested to search deeper about digital simulation based on The Sims game in learning vocabulary based on existing phenomena and from the participant's point of view in a research study entitled "Digital Simulation-based Game on Vocabulary Learning: A Study of Meaningful Vocabulary Input in The Sims."

Delimitation of the Problem

The research focuses on investigating the effect of The Sims for vocabulary meaningful learning on participants who are four students majoring in English education at one Private University in Yogyakarta and their experiences. Although

The Sims can be useful in several aspects of language, such as reading, because there is a lot of written language in teaching and grammatical forms in each command or game scenario, this study only limits the effect of The Sims simulation-based game on vocabulary, especially vocabulary meaning.

Research Questions

After knowing the background of the problem and to find out students' experience on The Digital Simulation-based game The Sims by answering the following research question:

1. How does a digital simulation game give students the experience to learn vocabulary meaningfully?
2. What are the student's perception towards the use of digital simulation game "The Sims" for vocabulary learning?

Purpose of the Research

Based on the research questions, this research has two objectives which are:

1. To find out students' experiences in learning meaningful vocabulary through The Sims game.
2. To find out students' perceptions in using The Sims as a medium for learning vocabulary.

Significance of the Problem

This research is expected to provide some positive information to other parties in digital simulation-based game learning and learning English vocabularies, such as EFL teachers, students, and other researchers. The researcher hopes this research can be a teacher's reference in teaching vocabulary and answer the research questions.

EFL Teachers. For EFL teachers, the teacher will get information about digital simulation-based game learning mediums, making the teaching and learning process more fun. It can be used as guidance in whether this digital simulation game can be implemented in the curriculum in the future and as a new insight in teaching vocabulary with a real-life simulation approach.

The Students. For students, students can have digital simulation-based game learning references to assist in understanding the meaningful vocabulary that is easier to understand with a simulation display that is close to real life. Students can also use this study results to become more aware of the ineffectiveness that they might face when it comes to using The Sims game.

Other Researchers. This study is expected to be a source of ideas or references for other researchers in conducting research on the same subject with deeper exploration. Other researchers can also place this study as comparisons in their previous studies related to meaningful vocabulary learning in digital simulation games or related to The Sims or even any research that contains vocabulary learning in general.

Game Developers. This research will provide an insight of the digital simulation game in vocabulary learning that might help the game developers to create and develop digital games in order to become meaningful vocabulary learning media and to become innovative language learning game media.