



An Analysis of PUBG's Effects on Students' Motivation And Comprehension on English Language Learning

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of playing PUBG (Player Unknown's Battlegrounds) on students' motivation and comprehension in foreign language learning. With the rising popularity of digital games, their potential role in education has become a subject of academic interest. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, involving 16 students from the English Department at Universitas Serambi Mekkah who actively play PUBG and have a minimum of one semester of foreign language learning experience. Data were collected through an online questionnaire comprising two sections: motivation and comprehension. The results revealed that while PUBG enhances listening skills (73.5%) and reading skills (82%), its influence on vocabulary and grammar acquisition remains limited (30%). Additionally, the game fosters interest in language classes (57.5%) but does not significantly improve cultural understanding (33.3%). The study concluded that PUBG can serve as a supplementary tool to increase engagement in foreign language learning, although its educational potential is highly dependent on the game's content and player interaction. Further integration with structured language instruction is recommended to maximize its benefits.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, technological developments and digitalization have changed the way we interact, learn and play. One striking phenomenon is the popularity of video games, particularly battle royale games like PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG). PUBG stands for PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds, a battle royale game that 100

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players play simultaneously and online. Since its release on December 20, 2017, PUBG has become one of the best-selling battle royale games in the world. One of PUBG's 'derivative' products, PUBG Mobile, was released for Android and iOS users in 2018. Meanwhile, the stadia version (cloud gaming service) was released in April 2020, and the Xbox Series X / S and PlayStation versions were released in November 2020. At the end of 2021, PUBG successfully held the title of the fifth best-selling video game in history, and managed to sell up to 75 copies for computer and game console users. After knowing what PUBG Mobile stands for, Info Sport will explain its various positions.

Game-based learning has gained increasing popularity as an innovative approach in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. This trend stems from the limitations of traditional methods, which often fail to produce desirable learning outcomes (Almusharraf, 2021; Wang & Tahir, 2023). Conventional teaching approaches tend to emphasize rote memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary, overlooking the dynamic nature of language acquisition that requires more than just cognitive understanding (Huang, 2022). EFL learning is inherently a multifaceted process, involving not only the mastery of linguistic elements but also the cultivation of motivation and active participation from learners (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Dörnyei, 2005). Both motivation and engagement are critical factors that significantly influence learning outcomes, as motivated students are more likely to persist in their learning efforts, take risks, and seek out additional practice opportunities (Alrabai, 2016; Turgut & Irgin, 2023).

Recognizing the need to foster these aspects, game-integrated learning has emerged as a promising pedagogical strategy that blends entertainment with education (Reinders & Wattana, 2015; Almusharraf, 2021). Various digital games have been proposed as tools to create more interactive, engaging, and enjoyable learning environments in EFL classrooms (Prensky, 2001; Wang & Tahir, 2023). However, despite the growing body of research on the use of digital games in language learning, limited studies have specifically explored the impact of popular games such as PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) on students' motivation and comprehension in EFL learning (Fithriani, 2023; Kurniawan, 2024). As a widely played multiplayer online game with immersive and interactive features, PUBG offers authentic communication opportunities in a virtual environment, making it a potentially effective tool for enhancing language learning (Gee, 2007; Peterson, 2016). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effects of PUBG on students' motivation and comprehension in EFL learning. The central question guiding this research is: How does the integration of PUBG in EFL learning contexts affect students' motivation and language comprehension?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have explored the role of digital games in foreign language learning. According to Gee (2003), video games offer immersive environments where players are required to solve problems, interact with others, and comprehend instructions, all of which can enhance language acquisition. Games like PUBG, which



involve real-time communication and collaboration among players, can create authentic language-use scenarios that foster communicative competence (Peterson, 2010).

Rankin et al. (2006) argue that multiplayer online games provide opportunities for contextual vocabulary learning as players engage with in-game texts, dialogues, and instructions. Similarly, Reinders and Wattana (2015) found that digital games can increase learners' willingness to communicate in the target language, especially when the game requires cooperation and interaction with other players.

However, the impact of digital games on language learning is not entirely positive. Kuppens (2010) notes that while games can facilitate incidental vocabulary learning, they may not always promote deep understanding or long-term retention. Furthermore, games that lack structured language input may fail to provide the comprehensive linguistic exposure necessary for language acquisition (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016).

3. METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to figure out the effect of PUBG game on students' motivation and understanding. The population was all students enrolled in the English Department of Universitas Serambi Mekkah while the sample involved consisted of 16 respondents who actively play PUBG and have had a minimum of one semester of foreign language learning experience. The data collection instrument used was a questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part measured students' motivation in foreign language learning, while the second part measured students' understanding of foreign languages. The questionnaire was designed using a 4-point Likert scale. Data were collected through an online survey and analyzed descriptively.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Effect of PUBG on Students' Motivation in Foreign Language Learning

The following table presents the results of a survey examining the influence of playing PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) on learners' motivation and engagement in learning foreign languages. The questions were designed to assess various aspects, including motivation to learn a new language, vocabulary acquisition, speaking practice, confidence in language use, and interest in formal language learning environments. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The percentages reflect the distribution of responses for each item,

offering insights into how gaming—specifically PUBG—may impact language learning behaviors and attitudes

Table 1. Questionnaire Responses on the Effect of PUBG on Students' Motivation in Foreign Language Learning.

No.	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I am motivated to learn a foreign language after playing PUBG	20.5	24.5	32%	23%
2.	Playing PUBG increases my motivation to learning new vocabulary in a foreign language	0%	0%	67%	33%
3.	I practice speaking in a foreign language more often after playing PUBG	12%	47%	13.5%	27.5%
4.	I feel more confident in using foreign languages after playing PUBG	10%	33.3%	35.7%	21%
5.	Playing PUBG makes me more interested in attending foreign language classes	27%	30.5%	30%	12.5%

From Table 1, it is evident that PUBG has a mixed impact on students' motivation in foreign language learning.

3.1.1 General Motivation

A combined 44% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that PUBG motivates them to learn a foreign language, while 55% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This aligns with the study by Reinders and Wattana (2015), which found that digital games can increase motivation through immersive environments, although the motivation is often context-dependent.

3.1.2 Vocabulary Acquisition

No respondents reported that PUBG helps them learn new vocabulary, while 100% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. This contrasts with previous research by Peterson (2010), which highlights the potential of multiplayer games to enhance vocabulary acquisition through interaction. The discrepancy may be due to PUBG's action-oriented gameplay, which offers limited linguistic exposure compared to more narrative-based games.

3.1.3 Speaking Practice and Confidence



A majority of respondents (59%) agreed that PUBG encourages speaking practice, supporting Thorne et al. (2009), who argued that voice chat in online games promotes oral communication. However, confidence in using foreign languages remains moderate, with only 43.3% of participants reporting increased confidence. This suggests that while PUBG facilitates communication, the lack of structured language practice may limit confidence gains.

3.1.4 Interest in Language Classes

Interest in attending language classes is the most positively rated aspect, with 57.5% of respondents expressing increased interest. This finding echoes Rankin et al. (2008), who observed that digital games can serve as motivational tools to encourage classroom participation.

3.2 The Effect of PUBG on Students' Comprehension in Foreign Language Learning

Table 2 provides insights into the effect of playing PUBG on students' comprehension in foreign language learning across five aspects: general language comprehension, vocabulary and grammar acquisition, listening skills, reading skills, and cultural understanding. This table is part of a broader investigation into game-based learning and its relevance in modern educational contexts. Understanding students' experiences through games like PUBG can provide valuable insights into how digital platforms might complement formal instruction. The findings also point to the importance of integrating engaging, real-world contexts into language learning strategies to enhance student motivation and comprehension.

Table 2. Questionnaire Responses on the Effect of PUBG on Students' Comprehension in Foreign Language Learning.

No.	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I feel that my comprehension of foreign languages has increased after playing PUBG	22.5%	30%	37%	10.5%
2.	Playing PUBG helps me understand new vocabulary and grammar.	12.75%	17.25%	49.5%	20.5%
3.	Playing PUBG helps me improve my foreign language listening skills	18%	55.5%	20%	24.5%
4.	I feel better able to read texts in a foreign language after playing PUBG	15%	67%	10%	8%

5.	The experience of playing PUBG helped me understand the culture associated with the foreign language	0%	33.3	57.7%	9%
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From Table 2, some key findings can be described as follows:

3.2.1. Overall Foreign Language Comprehension

The first question revealed that 52.5% of students (22.5% strongly agree, 30% agree) felt that their overall foreign language comprehension increased after playing PUBG. However, a significant 47.5% (37% disagreed, 10.5% strongly disagreed) did not perceive any improvement. This indicates that while more than half of the respondents acknowledge some positive influence, almost half of the students find little to no benefit. This result aligns with previous studies by De Freitas and Griffiths (2007), which argued that game-based learning can improve language comprehension but is largely dependent on player engagement and motivation.

3.2.2. Vocabulary and Grammar Acquisition

Only 30% of participants agreed that PUBG helped them understand new vocabulary and grammar, while 70% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that although the game environment exposes players to some new terms, the lack of structured vocabulary teaching limits its effectiveness in this area. This finding echoes the study by Rankin et al. (2006), which stated that online games provide contextual vocabulary exposure but may not significantly contribute to deep language acquisition without supplementary language instruction.

3.2.3. Listening Skills Improvement

The third item showed a more positive result, with 73.5% (18% strongly agreed, 55.5% agreed) of respondents believing that PUBG helped them improve their foreign language listening skills. This result highlights that the game's audio-based communication, particularly through voice chats with international players, provides an immersive listening experience. This supports the findings of Peterson (2010), who concluded that online multiplayer games create authentic listening environments that promote communicative competence.

3.2.4. Reading Skills Enhancement

Regarding reading skills, 82% of participants (15% strongly agreed, 67% agreed) felt better able to read texts in a foreign language after playing PUBG. The in-game interface, instructions, and chats likely contributed to this improvement, consistent with previous research by Reinders and Wattana (2015), which found that digital games foster reading comprehension through incidental learning.



3.2.5. Cultural Understanding

The lowest positive response was related to cultural understanding, with only 33.3% of participants agreeing that PUBG helped them understand the culture associated with the foreign language, while 66.7% disagreed. This finding reflects that while PUBG may offer interaction with diverse players, it does not necessarily provide cultural knowledge — a gap also observed in studies by Thorne et al. (2009).

5. CONCLUSION

Conclusion is a brief answer to the problems discussed. Conclusion is not made. The findings of this study indicate that PUBG has a mixed impact on students' motivation and comprehension in foreign language learning. The game shows promise in enhancing listening and reading skills, as well as fostering interest in language classes. However, its contribution to vocabulary acquisition and cultural understanding is limited. The results suggest that while digital games like PUBG can create immersive environments conducive to language learning, they should not be relied upon as primary language learning tools without complementary structured instruction. Incorporating educational elements into digital games or combining them with classroom-based activities may optimize their benefits in language education.

This study was subject to several limitations. Firstly, the small sample size of 16 respondents might not fully represent the broader student population. Secondly, the research also focuses solely on one game, PUBG, without comparing its impact with other digital games that may offer different linguistic experiences.

Future research should consider larger sample sizes to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Comparative studies involving different digital games with varying genres could provide a broader perspective on their educational potential. Additionally, combining qualitative data with quantitative performance assessments may yield more comprehensive insights into the effects of digital games on language learning. Collaboration between game developers and educators to design language-learning-oriented game features could further enhance the effectiveness of digital games as supplementary language learning tools.

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