Senior High School Students' Perception on Playing DotA 2 towards their English Learning

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Approval Sheet

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Learning

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Abstract

In language learning process, there are many media that can be used as supporting tool in learning language, especially English. One of the media that could be used for language learning is online game that has been played by a lot of people or can be called Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing (MMORPG). This study is aimed to find out the benefit of DotA 2, one of the famous and massive MMORPG, as language learning media and the difficulty that is faced by L2 learner while learning language using this game. The data for this research were collected from three Senior High School students as the participants. The participants were selected based on their experiences in learning English through playing DotA2. The researcher used descriptive qualitative to describe the data. To gather the data, the researcher used interview. The data were analyzed in three steps: data collection, data reduction, and data presentation. This research had two findings. The first finding revealed the benefits of DotA 2 as one of language learning media that can be used for language teaching and learning activity. They were learning vocabulary through game, learning to communicate using English, facilitating direct English practice, and providing safe environment to practice English. It also revealed the difficulties that were faced by students when they tried to practice English using DotA 2. They were inadequate number of vocabulary and hard to understand English accents.

Keywords: language learning, online game, DotA 2, digital media, English for communication.

Background of the Study

English, as one of the many foreign languages, is a language which is usually spoken in international community. English can be used in all situations to connect people, plays a crucial role in communication, and is no doubt the foremost and most important tool of communication all over the world (Ahmed, 2016). People can learn English almost everywhere, whether it is inside or outside of the classroom. It means that English can be learnt from the book, conversation with foreigner or friends, computer, game, and any other media (Merisotis & Philip, 1998).

In learning English as a foreign language (EFL), understanding the vocabulary is important. It is needed to make English learners understand and develop a better English skill. It is irreplaceable, and it can affect four language skills, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In order to be able to communicate well using a foreign language, people must acquire an adequate number of words. People should know, learn, and understand how to use those words accurately. The acquisition of vocabulary could help people in gaining, understanding, and enhancing the learning process.

The success of language learning process depends on several factors. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said the most important things in the virtualization of language learning process is the learner knowledge, motivation, and strategy. In addition, in order to make the language learning process effective, the needs of media is very important to develop learner' skill. Therefore, it is suggested to use media in conducting language learning process

There are a lot of media which can help people learn English, such as English movie, song, and game (Chang & Meng, 2011). By using those media, people who are willing to learn English can enjoy the process of learning, and can improve their own ability through material which they enjoy most in the process of learning (Chan & Wai Meng, 2011). Media are physical form that can stimulate and convey knowledge to be learnt (Richard and Morison, 2014). In this term, media is tools to learn English as a foreign language. Many of the English as foreign language (EFL) learners may choose to use any other alternative learning media as option. Learning English as a foreign language can be done in informal education, through game and training simulation as an example (Orkin & Roy, 2007).

Game is one of the media that can be used for learning English. When people are playing game, both online and offline, they use all of their senses to gather information they need or important for themselves. Tedjasaputra (2001) stated that playing is the most important process in enhancing people to learn English, and through playing game, people who wish to learn something can gain many experiences. It can be defined that in learning English, learner needs to be involved directly in a situation where English is used.

There are many studies that have been conducted related to language learning using game, such as the studies that were conducted by Febriyansyah (2014) and Habidah (2015). In their research, they did a research about language learning through computer-based game and the result was unexpected. They found that learning language using computer-

based game could enhance learners communication' skill better. By using game as the alternative or optional choice, learner is hoped to enjoy their time to gain some experiences in learning English (Prensky, 2001). Although there are some researchers who have conducted research about learning through game, yet there are still few researchers who conduct the research using online game Defend of the Ancient 2 (DotA2) as a learning tool in language learning.

DotA 2 is a game which is developed by VALVE, one of the biggest game industries. It is a role playing game (RPG). RPG helps gamer or people who are willing to play RPG develop their ability in many aspects. It has many features, and is very exciting game which can be used as educational tool, especially language subject (Ahn, 2004). Researcher chooses DotA 2 as the topic for the research because people from around the world get connected in this game and most of the players use English as the main language to communicate with each other. In playing DotA 2, people may learn how to use English when they play the game.

Based on the researcher' experiences in learning languages, people who learn languages must get in touch with others, and practice the language in real life situation. By practicing the language skill in real life, the learning process will become easier and very effective (Ahmed, 2016). Practicing language skill in this case means that the learner can communicate with other players by using written chat or voice chat. In this case, the researcher will investigate the benefits and challenges of learning English by using game as the learning media. Therefore, in this research, the

researcher will find out the perception of senior high school student in

playing DotA 2 towards their English learning.

Finding and Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher showed the findings and discussion of the research. The finding described the result of the two research questions. Then, the discussion also described the findings with detailed explanation about students' perception on playing DotA 2 towards their English Learning.

Research Findings

The research finding was based on Senior High School students' perception on playing DotA 2 towards their English learning. In analyzing the data, the researcher used interview to get the result of the perception on learning English through DotA 2. The researcher interviewed three Senior High School students at internet café in Klaten, Central Java. The stdents' perceptions were based on their experiences in learning English through DotA 2. All the participants used pseudonyms such as participant one as Ahjusii, participant two as Noona and participant three as Minaa. T finding divided into the advantages and problems in learning English through DotA 2.

Benefits on playing DotA 2 towards Senior High School students English Learning

After conducting interviews, there were four benefits on playing DotA 2 towards Senior High School students' English learning. These benefits were found in the interview during the research. The benefits on playing DotA 2 towards Senior High School students' English learning were increasing vocabulary size,

learning to communicate using English, facilitating direct English practice, and providing safe environment to practice English.

Learning Vocabulary through Game. The first benefit on playing DotA 2 was learning vocabulary through game. Student who played DotA 2 could develop their ability in gaining vocabulary.

Ahjusii stated:

"yup, most of the games used English so I also learnt the vocabulary, especially DotA2. All the words in the DotA2 game use English if you know. I mean the dictionary was from google translate application, but I still needed help to translate some words that I do not understand" (P1.1).

Noona also argued:

"Yes, I learnt from the language in the game. For example, I played DotA2. In the game, there are lots of English words and I may not understand all the words. The easiest way to understand is to look at google translates" (P2.1).

Minaa also added "The point was that I was helped by this game to learn English, many words that I can remember like attacks, enemy and many more" (P3.7). All the participants stated that their vocabulary sizes are increasing by playing DotA 2.

Based on the research that had been done by Prensky (2001), DOTA 2 as an online game itself could be used to improve learning activity. Through DOTA 2 as learning media, learner improved their English vocabulary mastery. By increasing the vocabulary size, English learners could interact with foreigners easily. Learners communicated with foreign players, so they

could tell what they need to do in playing DOTA 2 without feeling shy. According to Orlick (2006) game online also helps students to know words through playing it. Kamra (2010) also concluded that using games is an efficient way to teach English is very important at classroom for learners.

Learning to Communicate Using English. The second benefit was about interacting or learning to communicate with others using English.

Ahjusii stated:

"I learnt English from the interaction with other players in the game. Wee could not just keep silent in the game. If we met players from the same country, fellow players from Indonesia, it might be easier but it is a random system. If we played solo or ourselves, we also could not decide if there will be friends from which country. I sometimes also played on Europe server so they will speak in English as well" (P1.2)

He also added:

"and from that moment, I tried learning to communicate with those foreign players. It all began when I said *"what do you mean"* to those players, I learnt how to communicate with foreign players. Now that is where I slowly learn and reply to their words from what I said "what you mean "that I learn to interact with other player" (P1.3).

Minaa argued "English is being used in this game. It is very common to see English in every massive game like DotA 2. Communication is the first thing that needs to be considered because this game is strategy-based game. We need to communicate frequently." (P3.4). Both of the participants had the same thought.

Through a game online, learners could also interact with others so they can know other world player. According to Costikyan (2002) a good gameplay keeps a player motivated and participated throughout an entire game with their game mate or friends. It makes them have bonds to play again in a group. By interacting with others, they could also have friends from different countries which make them need to understand foreign language especially English.

Facilitating Direct English Practice. The next benefit was facilitating direct English practice. Both of the participants argued that on playing DotA 2 had good benefit. In direct practicing, they could communicate directly with other player. It could be used as direct exercise for them. Noona said "It was better using the game. I enjoyed and got more relax when I understand English through games. We can immediately practice with other people. It was direct communication" (P2.5). Minaa also added, "I think in simple way. I did not want to make it hard. It was better when players learnt English vocabulary to immediately hit the point. I could practice it immediately. If you enjoyed it, learning English felt like without pressure" (P3.2).

Learners tended to use spoken chat English directly to other foreign player rather than written chat in playing DOTA 2. According to Prensky (2001), using game and technology as a tool in language learning process is a good approach in introducing the language itself by doing it directly. This meant that game could help learners learning something by doing it. Van Eck (2006) stated that game can also be defined as interactive play that

teaches goals, rules, problem solving, interaction, adaptations, and all represented as a story. It meant that game provides activities in developing students' vocabulary mastery too. Another argument about games came from Kamra (2010) argued that using games is an efficient way for learners to improve their English by communicating with foreigner directly. This makes learners will get the best results in mastering vocabulary. It arouses students' motivation.

Providing Safe Environment to Practice English. The last benefit was providing a safe environment to practice English. Students who enjoyed on playing DotA 2 would not be ashamed to speak to communicate. Students might consider on their most enjoyable way to practice English. Minaa argued "You did not have to directly follow the formulas given by the teacher at school. You did not have to be ashamed if you spoke loudly and you did not have to be shy if you mistype the vocabulary" (P3.3).

In this sense, according to Noviani (2009) learners also need a game or other activities that help them feel comfortable and innocent children into new languages without fear made a mistake. It means that game can help people feel relax by doing it. Using game and technology as medium in language learning process is a way to make learners feel enjoy in learning the language itself. Game can also be an alternative as interactive play for learners to solve problem, do interaction, and adaptations (Van Eck, 2006). It arouses students' motivation to study English vocabulary because they feel comfort and enjoy. From those statements, it was true that game can increase students' motivation in the language learning process. It was

because the characteristic of game. It gave students excitement and pleasure so that the students were imperceptible when they were learning.

Difficulties on Practicing English Using DotA 2

After conducting interviews, there were two problems faced by students when practicing English using DotA 2. The first was inadequate number of vocabulary, and the other was hard to understand English accents. The difficulties are described below.

Inadequate Number of Vocabulary. Although there were many benefits for enhancing vocabulary through playing DotA 2, the number of fancy words that needed to be responded by students still became a difficulty for English learners. All the participants stated that limitation of English words is serious a problem when they tried to communicate with other player. Ahjusii stated "I often faced a problem that is the limitation of my English words. If we wanted to have a chat, we sometimes still confused. I sometime wanted to reply but I did not know how to say it (P1.5)." Noona also stated "I had a limited vocabulary to communicate with them (P2.3)." Noona added "The difficulty was to communicate fluently because you have to speak English. When I had to communicate with English, there are some words that I might not understand (P2.4)." Minaa stated "the obstacles were my limited vocabulary constraints and my listening skills are bad, so I still had to open google translate or ask for friends near me to know the word meaning (P3.6)."

According to Kamra (2010) one of the difficulties which is often faced by L2 learner while playing game online is the number vocabulary they have learned. People often found many new words and they did not how to

put the words in responding other foreign player. Moreover, vocabulary was the most important thing to be used to communicate. The reason of this importance was because English words could be defined into more than one meaning. Without knowing a lot of words, people were hard to make a purposeful meaning. According to Costikyan (2002) Students who have much vocabulary, good grammar and understanding in language will have no problem in communicating. It means that learners need to increase their vocabulary size and learn more grammatical knowledge.

Hard to understand English accent. Students sometimes found it hard to understand English accent. In playing DotA 2, player could not choose who will be their game friends, so they will get friends randomly. It would be good if they meet friends with the same language, but it sometimes cannot be arranged with whom you will play. With different accent, students can be confused in interpreting the words. It can be a problem if the communication does not go well because of someone' accent. Noona stated "Now, the problem that makes it difficult for me is when I must interact with players from Singapore or other nation abroad because the English I heard was strange in my ears (P2.2)."

She also added "When it comes to voice chat, it is also unclear what to say in speaking English vocabulary and I do not understand the meaning. It is because the English I have heard is different from American (P2.5)." Sukrina (2013) stated that language accent will give negative or positive effects to the non-native speaker. He also added that sometime it could make a misunderstanding in communication.

Conclusion

The result of this research results were divided in to two, namely the benefit of playing DotA 2 towards English learning, and the difficulty that learner face while using this game as one of the language learning media. The first result of this research covers the senior high school students' perception on the benefits of playing DotA 2.

This research aimed to find out the out senior high school students' perception on the benefits of playing DotA 2 towards their English learning process. Data collection method used Interview as the instrument to gain the data while the entire question related to interview was compiled in interview guidelines. According to the research data, there are four benefits of playing DotA 2 such as increasing vocabulary size, learning to communicate using English, facilitating direct English practice, and providing safe environment to practice English.

The second result of this research also found the difficulties that students faced when they learn English through DotA 2. The researcher found that there there were two problems faced by students when they practicing English using DotA 2. The first was inadequate number of vocabulary, and the other was hard to understand English accents.

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