

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Having English language skills in the process of learning English is an important aspect of achieving effective communication. English is not only taught as a school subject but also functions as an international language that enables people to communicate, exchange information, and participate in academic, professional, and social activities across different countries. Therefore, developing English language skills helps learners understand and use the language appropriately in various contexts.

According to H. Douglas Brown (2007), the primary goal of language learning is to develop communicative competence, which refers to the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in real communication. Likewise, Jack C. Richards (2006) explains that successful language learning emphasizes meaningful communication rather than merely mastering grammatical rules. Therefore, mastering English language skills is essential because it enables learners to communicate effectively, understand messages accurately, and participate confidently in various communicative situations both inside and outside the classroom.

English language skills are reflected not only in the ability to understand grammatical rules but also in the ability to use appropriate expressions in communication. One important aspect of communication is the use of English

expressions, which enable speakers to express ideas, feelings, opinions, requests, and responses effectively according to the situation.

According to George Yule (2020), the interpretation of language depends on how expressions are used in particular contexts and how speakers convey their intended meanings during communication. In addition, Jack C. Richards and Renandya (2002) explain that language expressions are essential components of communicative competence because they enable learners to use language naturally and appropriately in real-life interactions. Therefore, understanding English expressions is important for English learners because it helps them communicate more effectively and interpret language appropriately in various communicative situations.

Although English expressions play an important role in communication, their meanings cannot always be understood literally because they are often influenced by the context in which they are used. This concept is known as contextual meaning, which refers to the meaning of a word or expression as interpreted within a particular situation. Thus, understanding contextual meaning is essential for English learners to accurately interpret expressions and understand the intended meaning conveyed by speakers in different communicative contexts.

According to Geoffrey Leech (1981), contextual meaning is determined by the relationship between language and the context in which it is used, rather than by the dictionary meaning of individual words alone. Similarly, George Yule (2020) explains that understanding meaning requires consideration of the speaker's intention, the listener's interpretation, and the context of communication. Therefore,

understanding contextual meaning is essential because it enables language users to interpret English expressions accurately and avoid misunderstandings in authentic communication.

The process of learning English is not limited to formal classroom instruction. Learners can also develop their language skills through various authentic learning environments where English is used naturally in everyday communication. According to Stephen D. Krashen (1982), language acquisition occurs more effectively when learners are exposed to meaningful language input in natural communication rather than relying solely on formal instruction. Likewise, Lev Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that social interaction plays an important role in cognitive and language development because learners construct knowledge through communication and collaboration with others.

Therefore, learning English can take place not only in classrooms but also through various social and digital environments where learners actively interact using the language. One example of such an environment is the online gaming community, where communication frequently occurs during gameplay.

One of the authentic environments where English can be learned and practiced outside the classroom is the online gaming community. Online games provide opportunities for players from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems together through the use of language. According to David Crystal (2006), digital communication has created new forms of language use in which people interact through technology in meaningful and context-dependent ways. Similarly, James Paul Gee (2007) argues

that video games provide meaningful learning environments because players develop communication, problem-solving, and collaboration skills while interacting with others.

In online gaming communities, English is frequently used in the form of commands, requests, responses, and other expressions that help players coordinate their actions during gameplay. Consequently, online gaming has become not only a form of entertainment but also a social environment where English is naturally used in authentic communication.

Communication within online gaming communities has become an important part of players' interactions during gameplay. Members of these communities frequently use English expressions to give instructions, respond to teammates, express emotions, and coordinate strategies in real time. The meanings of these expressions are often determined by the situations in which they are used rather than by their literal meanings. According to George Yule (2020), the interpretation of an utterance depends on the context in which it is produced and understood by the participants in communication. Likewise, David Crystal (2006) states that communication in digital environments has developed distinctive language practices that are shaped by users' communicative needs and social interactions.

Therefore, online gaming communities provide an authentic setting for investigating how English expressions are used and how their contextual meanings are interpreted by community members in everyday digital communication. Through interactions within online games, community members frequently use various English expressions to communicate, coordinate, and respond to different

situations, making online gaming environments relevant contexts for examining the relationship between language use and contextual meaning.

Previous studies have examined the use of English in digital communication and online gaming from various perspectives, including gaming vocabulary, communication strategies, language learning, and interaction among players. These studies have shown that online games provide opportunities for learners to use English in authentic communication. However, limited attention has been given to how members of online gaming communities interpret the contextual meanings of English expressions used during their interactions. In addition, studies focusing on this phenomenon within the context of an online gaming community at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Lubuk Lintah, remain limited. This gap highlights the need to investigate how English expressions are understood according to the specific contexts in which they are used within the community.

Although previous studies have examined language use in online gaming from various perspectives, there is still a need to examine how gamers construct and interpret meaning through expressions that combine English gaming terms with Indonesian communication. In Mobile Legends interactions, expressions are often shortened, mixed, or adapted to the immediate needs of the players. Their meanings may therefore extend beyond the literal meanings of the words because players rely on shared knowledge of the game, previous experiences, and the ongoing situation. This phenomenon is particularly relevant among university students who use English gaming expressions as part of their spontaneous communication. Therefore,

examining contextual meaning can provide a closer understanding of how English expressions are interpreted within a particular local gaming community.

The local setting of the study also provides an important consideration in understanding gaming communication. Members of a university-based gaming community do not communicate only through standard English or Indonesian, but may combine both languages according to the demands of gameplay. Expressions such as “Farming dulu,” “Push lah,” and “Santai, kita late game” illustrate how English gaming vocabulary can be integrated into Indonesian utterances without preventing communication. The meaning of these expressions is supported by shared knowledge among the players and by the particular circumstances occurring during the match. For this reason, investigating contextual meaning in this setting is useful for showing how language is adapted and understood in naturally occurring digital communication.

Therefore further research is needed to analyze how English expressions are interpreted based on their communicative contexts. Such an investigation can provide a deeper understanding of authentic language use in online gaming communities, particularly in relation to how community members understand and respond to expressions according to the situations in which they are used.

Based on the explanations above, the use of English expressions in online gaming communities represents an authentic form of communication in which contextual meaning plays an important role in facilitating mutual understanding among community members during interactions. Investigating how these expressions are interpreted within their communicative contexts is expected to

contribute to a better understanding of language use in digital communication and enrich discussions of authentic English language learning beyond the classroom.

Therefore, this study is conducted to analyze the contextual meanings of English expressions used by online gaming community members at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Lubuk Lintah, in order to provide a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed and interpreted within online gaming interactions.

B. Focus of the Study

This study focuses on analyzing the contextual meanings of English expressions used by members of the online gaming community at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Lubuk Lintah. The study is limited to English expressions that are frequently used during communication among community members in online gaming activities. Furthermore, it examines how these expressions are interpreted based on the contexts in which they are used during interaction.

This study does not investigate grammatical accuracy, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, or other aspects of English language proficiency. Instead, it concentrates on understanding the contextual meanings of English expressions as they naturally occur in communication among members of the online gaming community.

C. Formulation of The Study

1. What English expressions are commonly used by members of the online gaming community at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Lubuk Lintah?
2. What are the contextual meanings of the English expressions used by members of the online gaming community at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Lubuk Lintah?

D. Purpose of The Study

Based on the formulation of the research problems, this study aims to:

1. To identify the English expressions commonly used by members of the online gaming community at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Lubuk Lintah.
2. To analyze the contextual meanings of the English expressions used by members of the online gaming community at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Lubuk Lintah.

E. Significance of The Study

1. Theoretical Significance

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of linguistic studies, particularly in the areas of pragmatics and contextual meaning. In addition, this study is expected to enrich the existing literature on the use of English expressions in digital communication, especially within online gaming communities.

2. Practical Significance

a. For English Students

This study is expected to help English students understand how English expressions are used and interpreted in authentic communication, particularly in online gaming communities. It may also enhance their awareness of the importance of contextual meaning in understanding language appropriately.

b. For Members of Online Gaming Communities

The findings of this study are expected to increase community members' awareness of how English expressions are used in communication and how their

meanings may vary depending on different contexts during online gaming interactions.

c. For Future Researchers

This study is expected to serve as a useful reference for future researchers who are interested in investigating contextual meaning, English expressions, digital communication, or language use in online gaming communities from different perspectives.

F. Definition of Keyterm

1. Analysis

Analysis refers to a systematic examination of data in order to understand, interpret, and explain a particular phenomenon. In this study, analysis refers to the systematic process of examining the English expressions used by members of the online gaming community and interpreting their meanings based on the contexts in which the expressions occurred. The analysis was conducted in two stages. First, the selected expressions were classified according to their communicative functions. Second, their contextual meanings were interpreted by considering the linguistic, situational, social, and cultural information surrounding their use during gameplay.

2. Contextual Meaning

Contextual meaning refers to the meaning of a word, phrase, or expression as determined by the context in which it is used rather than by its literal or dictionary meaning. According to Geoffrey Leech (1981), contextual meaning is understood through the relationship between language and the situation in which

communication occurs. In this study, contextual meaning refers to the meanings of English expressions as interpreted by members of the online gaming community based on the contexts of their communication during online gaming activities.

3. English Expressions

English expressions refer to words, phrases, or utterances that are used to convey particular meanings and communicative functions in different situations. According to Jack C. Richards and Schmidt (2010), English expressions are language forms that speakers use to perform communicative functions such as giving opinions, making requests, expressing agreement, or responding to others in daily communication. In this study, English expressions refer to the English words, phrases, or utterances commonly used by members of the online gaming community during their interactions.

4. Communicative Functions

Communicative functions refer to the purposes that speakers accomplish through language in communication. Brown (2007) explains that language functions represent the purposes achieved through linguistic forms, such as stating, requesting, responding, and greeting. In this study, communicative functions are used as the basis for classifying the English expressions found during Mobile Legends gameplay. The researcher operationalizes the observed expressions into five categories: greeting, requesting, command, giving information, and expressing feeling. These categories are used as analytical categories to identify the communicative purposes of the expressions found in the research data.

5. Online Gaming Community

An online gaming community is a group of individuals who interact regularly through online games to communicate, collaborate, exchange information, and participate in gaming activities. According to David Crystal (2006), digital communication has created online communities in which language is used as a tool for social interaction and collaboration. In this study, the online gaming community refers to the community members at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Lubuk Lintah, who actively participate in online gaming activities and serve as the source of research data.

