CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1. 1   Background of the Study

In this digital era, a lot of people around the world know and play online games. The online games released day by day are varied and expanding from each different platform. The online games themselves are popular in any age category. Some important elements of online games are challenges, goals, and interaction between characters or people that occurs within the game.

Online games are usually played or used to gain pleasure or relax the body and mind, but with the passage of time, they can be used as learning media tools as well. (Yudha & Utami, 2022). It was strengthened by a study conducted by Acquah & Katz (2019), which talked about L2 learning outcomes through digital game. In his study, the online game is mentioned as one of the digital games. The study found that digital game-based learning produces outcomes such as language acquisition, knowledge acquisition, contemporary competencies, affective/psychological states, and participatory behavior with most of positive results. Which is in line with Hadi et al. (2022), where the learners learn in a fun and relaxing environment, they can acquire a lot of information and opportunities to practice or acquire vocabulary in contexts.

The importance of investigating Honkai Star Rail on Indonesian higher student is lies in phenomenon involving a student from the Islamic University in Jakarta. An English Department student, Fadly Al-Hafiz Yonnata, He plays the game and uses it as a medium for learning vocabulary. He enjoys playing the game because he is engaged with its storyline, where each chapter gives him a goosebump. Through the game, he sometimes encounters new or rarely used words, which helps him remember the forgotten English words. Although he learns through the game features, he is aware that sometimes reading the story can be challenging if encountered with unfamiliar words. In order to overcome the situation, he translated the word into L1 to fully understand the meaning. This

way, by playing the game not only helps him to relax but also enhances his English vocabulary.

A lot of research has been done investigating English vocabulary learning in the last few decades. The study conducted by Ulashevna & Bakhtiyorovna (2022) sees vocabulary knowledge as a key skill for second language learners, because a lack of vocabulary mastery impedes successful communication. Meaning the narrower the vocabulary bank an individual had, the more difficult it was to make a communication. On the other hand, the broader, the easier to understand and make a communication. Thus, a learning strategy is needed to help the learner improve the efficiency of their vocabulary learning (Bai, 2018).

Although vocabulary learning is important, the learning method has evolved in few decades. In this day, people could learn one's language vocabulary through digital media or even gamification, which learning through games. An experimental study conducted by Dindar & Järvenoja (2021) investigating the task effort, learning achievement, motivational, and social outcomes associated with gamified vocabulary learning in cooperative or competitive conditions using mobile phones shows significant motivation toward vocabulary learning. Another gamified study conducted by Aulia et. al. (2020) and Hernadijaya (2020) in their study found that it could significantly increase student vocabulary mastery and their motivation in learning English.

Furthermore, previous study conducted by Azizah and Warni (2023) highlighted that the chat feature in "Genshin Impact," a game titled produced under the same developer as "Honkai Star Rail, shows positive impacts towards students' motivation to improve their English communication skills. However, although there has been much research on English vocabulary learning through games, little is known about the scrutiny of English vocabulary learning through Honkai Star Rail. Even so, none of the research has been conducted in the Indonesian EFL context, particularly in tertiary educational level. Therefore, this study aims to fill the void.

1. 2 Formulation of the Problem

From the background study described above, the researcher's question is "How do Indonesian higher student learn English vocabulary through Honkai Star Rail?" to find out vocabulary learning process besides using the chat feature alone that was developed under the same company.

1. 3 Operational Definitions

1. 3. 1 Online Game

Online games can serve as a method to acquire new words. Online games provide extensive interaction without walls to interact with the outside world. Which makes the player able to absorb new vocabulary from their peers.

1. 3. 2 The Use of Online Game

Online games are popular forms of entertainment among many individuals. Though, its use is not limited to that. The use of online games can also be used for educational purposes.

1. 3. 3 Honkai Star Rail

Honkai Star Rail is a game used in this study as a means by which participants learn English vocabulary. The storytelling of the game with the visual given can be used in this game to support vocabulary learning.

1. 3. 4 Learning Vocabulary

Learning vocabulary is crucial for building a strong foundation in English. It involves acquiring, mastering, and using new words through various activities. Outside the classroom, students can now use technology to learn anywhere. Online games serve as effective learning tools. For instance, a participant learned rarely used vocabulary through the game.

1. 3. 5 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is the research method chosen in this study to explore participants' experience. This method is suitable for discovering participants' experience, such as vocabulary learning with Honkai Star Rail.

1. 4 Aim of the Study

Aim of this is study is to find out how does the participant learn vocabulary by playing an online game, in this case is Honkai Star Rail.

1. 5 Significance of the Study

1. 5. 1 Theoretical Significance

This study contributes in exploring the uses of Honkai Star Rail in vocabulary learning. Demonstrating how the learners' could enrich and learn a new word through game features.

1. 5. 2 Practical Significance

The aim of this study is to investigate how the player gains English vocabulary improvement after playing Honkai: Star Rail. And this study is expected to be used as a reference for students or future researchers in finding out if playing online games, especially the game titled Honkai Star Rail, may improve their English vocabulary.

1. 5. 3 Empirical Significance

This study provides evidence that Honkai Star Rail could be used as a medium in learning English vocabulary. Provides with interesting storytelling and stunning visuals, in which the learner could learn in contextualized way.