



Children's Involvement in War Simulation Games: Language and Communication Challenges

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ABSTRACT

In an increasingly advanced digital era, online games, particularly war simulation games, have become a popular form of entertainment among children. While these games offer enjoyment and social engagement, negative consequences need to be addressed, particularly regarding language use and aggressive behavior. This study aims to explore the impact of children's involvement in war simulation games on their language development and social interactions. A literature review encompassing previous studies found that exposure to coarse language in games can contribute to the normalization of aggressive behavior and the use of inappropriate language in daily life. Furthermore, the importance of parental and educator roles in guiding children to understand communication boundaries is emphasized. Recommendations for introducing educational games that stimulate creativity and language skills, such as Minecraft and LEGO, are also presented as positive alternatives. Thus, this study concludes that the appropriate selection of games and support from parents can help mitigate negative impacts and support children's overall social and emotional development.



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INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly advanced digital era, technology has become an integral part of everyday life, especially for children (Sudiantini et al., 2023; Iivari, et al, 2020; Kumar, et al, 2019). One of the most prominent aspects of technological development is the emergence of various online games as a dominant form of entertainment (Prasetya & Marina, 2022; Crawford, et al, 2013). Various platforms and game genres have attracted children's attention, ranging from educational games to simulation and action-based games. For example, Minecraft, as an educational game, encourages players to build and create in a virtual world, while The Sims teaches time management and social development through daily life simulation. On the other hand, games such as Call of

Duty, MLBB, and PUBG fall into the war simulation genre, which is very popular among children and teenagers (Sidiq & Simamora, 2022). These games offer immersive experiences with realistic graphics and intense storylines, making them highly appealing to young players (Kors et al., 2016).

However, despite offering thrilling entertainment, it is important to recognize that war simulation games are not without their potential negative impacts (Umam & Muhid, 2021; Benny, 2015). One of the main concerns is the language and communication used in these games. For instance, in games like Call of Duty or Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB), players often use aggressive language or give harsh commands when coordinating with teammates, especially in multiplayer mode. The competitive nature of these games, combined with the need for quick, strategic decisions, can lead to high-pressure situations where emotions run high. As a result, harsh language, insults, or even taunts are frequently heard in voice communication between players (Wadley, 2015). This type of aggressive communication is normalized in these environments and sometimes even encouraged to "motivate" teammates or intimidate opponents. The concern arises when younger players, especially children, are exposed to these patterns of interaction. Prolonged exposure to such language can potentially shape their communication styles, making them more prone to using aggressive or disrespectful language in real-world interactions (Bonvillain, 2019; Garcia, et al, 2023). Furthermore, children may struggle to differentiate between acceptable behavior in the context of a game and in real life, potentially leading to behavioral issues or strained social relationships. In this way, while war simulation games may offer excitement and an outlet for competitive energy, they can also negatively influence children's communication development and social behavior if not properly moderated.

In terms of behavior, children accustomed to the competitive and harsh atmosphere in war simulation games may begin to show changes in their attitudes and how they interact in real life (Pratiwi & Pritanova, 2017; Kivikangas et al., 2014). For example, children may become more easily angered or frustrated when faced with challenging situations at school or in friendships (DeCamp & Ferguson, 2017). They may also mimic aggressive behavior, such as shouting, using foul language, or showing impatience when communicating with others. Furthermore, the tendency to make decisions without considering others' feelings, as often done in war simulation games, can carry over into their daily interactions with peers or family (Kors et al., 2016).

Research shows that children frequently exposed to violent-themed games tend to experience behavioral changes, including in their language use (Adiningtiyas, 2017; Plante, 2014). Children involved in these games may imitate inappropriate or coarse language patterns used in the games (Kowert & Quandt, 2015). Additionally, the lack of language restrictions in online games also allows interaction with other players globally, which can broaden children's exposure to various forms of language that may not align with their social or cultural norms (Shao & Wang, 2019).

With the increasing involvement of children in war simulation games, games such as Call of Duty, MLBB, and PUBG, it is important to further examine the challenges that arise in language use and communication in the virtual gaming world. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the various impacts of language and communication in war simulation games on children and explore the potential long-term implications.

METHOD

This research traces previous studies that discuss the effects of video games on children's behavior, with key references such as "A breathtaking journey. On the design of an empathy-arousing mixed-reality game" by [Kors et al. \(2016\)](#), which examines the relationship between violent video games and aggressive behavior. Additionally, "The Video Game Debate" by [Kowert & Quandt \(2015\)](#) discusses the social and psychological effects of digital games. These two sources provide a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how exposure to violence and language in video games can influence children's communication patterns.

This study utilizes a literature review methodology to systematically explore existing research on the topic. By gathering and analyzing relevant literature, this method allows for an in-depth examination of various perspectives and findings related to children's communication and behavior in the context of video games. An analysis was conducted using content analysis, where findings were categorized based on emerging themes. This study focuses on the impact of aggressive and harsh language used in war simulation games on children's communication, as well as factors influencing their language development, such as interactions with other players online.

The research also considers the global context, where children interact in cross-cultural environments, as highlighted in [Shao & Wang's \(2019\)](#) study, which emphasizes the importance of moderation in violent games in shaping children's behavior. Additionally, a qualitative approach is used to analyze published literature, complemented by interviews with several children who play war simulation games to gather empirical data related to their experiences in using harsh or aggressive language while playing. The data obtained were then processed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and trends in children's communication behavior ([Onwuegbuzie, et al., 2017](#); [Gentles, et al., 2016](#)).

Through this approach, it is expected that a holistic understanding will be obtained regarding the language and communication challenges faced by children in war simulation games. This research also refers to recent studies published in communication and psychology journals, such as "The Impact of Degree of Exposure to Violent Video Games, Family Background, and Other Factors on Youth Violence" by [DeCamp & Ferguson \(2017\)](#), ensuring that the literature review findings are relevant to the context of children in today's digital era.

RESULT

Many studies show that exposure to violent content in war simulation games can influence children's behavior, especially regarding language use and aggression. Exposure to offensive language in games can trigger children to imitate and internalize these inappropriate communication patterns in their daily lives, particularly when interacting with peers. In addition to aggressive behavior, the use of offensive and inappropriate language has also become a common phenomenon in online gaming environments. Children exposed to violent content in games tend to use harsh language as part of their response to in-game situations. This demonstrates how war simulation games have the potential to alter children's communication styles, both in online environments and outside of the game.

The harsh language used in games is often seen as part of the gaming experience, which can shape children's perceptions of such language in everyday life. Many children who play online war simulation games undergo a process of normalization regarding the use of harsh language. They perceive this language as an accepted behavior within the gaming environment, and frequently, this norm carries over into their social interactions outside of the game. This suggests a connection between gaming experiences and children's language development, where the language used in war simulation games becomes part of their everyday social behavior.

According to download data across various platforms in July 2024, there is a noticeable difference in user preferences between educational games (Minecraft) and war simulation games (MLBB). While war simulation games are particularly popular among teenagers and young adults, educational games are gaining traction, especially among children and younger teens guided by parents. The pie chart below illustrates this download comparison, highlighting the relative popularity of each game type across different age groups.

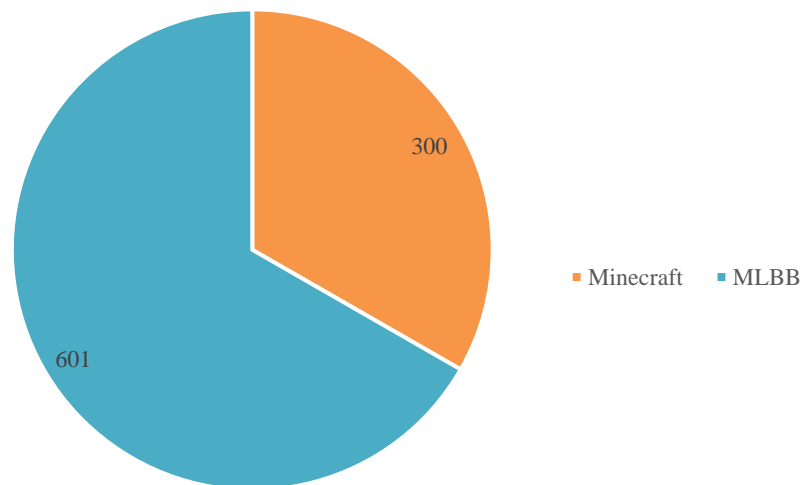


Figure 1. User Preference between MLBB and Minecraft

The download data shows a substantial difference between the popularity of war simulation games and educational games, with war simulation games (MLBB) reaching approximately 601 million downloads, compared to 300 million downloads for educational games (Minecraft). This indicates that war simulation games hold a significant share, accounting for roughly two-thirds of the total downloads in these categories. This popularity suggests that children and teenagers are more exposed to the themes present in war simulation games than in educational games, underscoring the importance of parental and educational guidance to balance exposure and support positive language and communication development.

Exposure to harsh language and aggressive behavior in war simulation games cannot be viewed from a single cultural perspective. In some countries, children may adopt harsh language as part of behavioral norms if cultural values are more tolerant of aggression. In contrast, in

cultures like Indonesia, where politeness and respect for authority are highly valued, harsh language adopted from video games is often seen as deviant behavior. The role of parents and educators is also crucial in moderating the potential negative impact of war simulation games on children's development. Active parental supervision and guidance can help reduce children's exposure to inappropriate language and encourage positive communication behaviors.

The role of parents and educators in mitigating the negative effects of war simulation games on children's language development is essential. Parental involvement, particularly through open conversations, helps children distinguish between the language used in gaming and appropriate language for everyday interactions. By discussing gaming experiences, parents can reinforce communication skills that benefit children both at home and in school. Likewise, teachers play a critical role by guiding students to understand respectful communication and digital etiquette, acting as facilitators, motivators, and mentors. Schools can further support children by helping them recognize the differences between language used in digital spaces and respectful communication in real-life settings.

An example of positive digital interaction can be seen in Figure 1, which showcases a digital replica of Borobudur Temple constructed within the game Minecraft. This replica, created with intricate virtual blocks, demonstrates Minecraft's educational potential in promoting skills like construction, art, and cultural appreciation. By featuring iconic elements such as Borobudur's stupas and reliefs, the replica provides players with an immersive experience to explore the history and architecture of this UNESCO World Heritage site interactively.

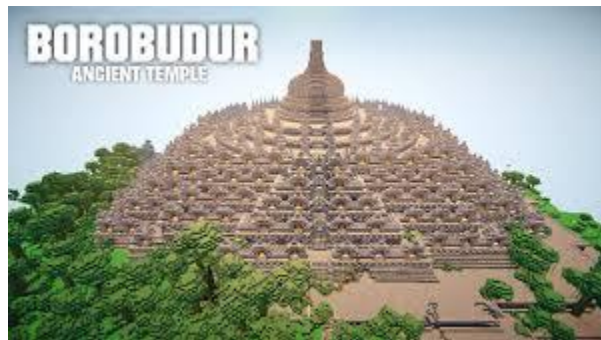


Figure 2. A replica of Borobudur Temple created in Minecraft

In understanding the impact of games on children's language and behavior development, it is important to make clear comparisons between war simulation games and educational games. The table below presents a comparison of key aspects, including the influence on language use, creativity levels, and children's social behavior. Referring to relevant research, this table aims to provide a comprehensive overview of how different types of games can affect children's development. A better understanding of these differing impacts will help parents and educators choose more appropriate games for children and support positive language and social interaction development.

Table 1. Comparison of the Impact of War Simulation Games & Educational Games

No	Aspect	<i>War Simulation Games</i>	<i>Educational Games</i>
1	Language	Tends to be harsh, impolite	Constructive, positive
2	Creativity	Limited to war scenarios	Encourage innovation and imagination
3	Aggressiveness	Increased	Tends to be low
4	Social Interaction	Tends to be negative	Tends to be collaborative

The comparison in Table 1 highlights the distinct differences between the impact of war simulation games and educational games on children's development. War simulation games often expose children to harsh language, which can normalize impolite or aggressive communication patterns in their daily lives. The limited scope of these games, focused on conflict and competition, may also restrict creative expression, as children are encouraged to engage in predetermined war scenarios. Educational games, however, foster a more constructive environment, promoting positive language use and encouraging creativity. Games like Minecraft and other educational platforms encourage innovation, imagination, and collaborative problem-solving, providing a more balanced environment for cognitive and social growth.

These findings underscore the importance of selecting games that positively influence children's language and social development. While war simulation games may have appeal due to their action-oriented content, their focus on competitive, conflict-driven interactions may inadvertently reinforce aggressive language and limit creative growth. In contrast, educational games offer a constructive space that supports cognitive and social skills through positive language use and collaborative activities. This comparison emphasizes the potential benefits of educational games as a balanced approach for parents and educators seeking to foster healthy communication and imaginative problem-solving in children, highlighting the need for mindful guidance in children's gaming choices.

DISCUSSION

Impact on Children's Behavior

[Kors et al. \(2016\)](#) found that children who frequently engage in violent video games are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior and use harsh language in their interactions. This finding is also supported by recent research from [Przybylski & Weinstein \(2019\)](#), which confirms a significant correlation between participation in war simulation games and increased aggression in teenagers. Furthermore, [Domahidi et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Wiedeman et al. \(2015\)](#) observed that the normalization of offensive language in games extends to everyday interactions, influencing how children communicate with peers and families.

Normalization of Harsh Language Among Children

Research supports this observation, [Kowert & Quandt \(2015\)](#) found that children view harsh language as a norm within gaming environments, while [Burns et al. \(2018\)](#) highlighted the potential for this behavior to spill over into offline social interactions. In Indonesia, [Hidayati &](#)

Mardiana's (2021) study further illustrates this trend, showing that children who frequently play online war simulation games are more likely to use harsh language not only in gaming contexts but also at school. This study found a correlation between frequent gameplay and the adoption of inappropriate communication patterns in children's everyday interactions.

Cultural Context and the Role of Parents

Research supports these observations, Shao & Wang (2019) found that the effects of violent games are perceived differently across cultures, with children in violence-tolerant cultures more likely to accept harsh language. In Indonesia, Nursalam (2019) emphasized the importance of parental control in monitoring children's gaming habits, while Saeed et al. (2024) highlighted the key role of parents and educators in managing exposure to inappropriate content. Hidayati & Mardiana (2021) further suggest that parents who actively discuss the negative effects of harsh language and model positive communication behaviors can mitigate the influence of violent games on children's language development and behavior.

The Role of Parents and Educators

Supporting research highlights the importance of these roles, Saeed et al. (2024) and Nursalam (2019) emphasize that parental monitoring of content consumed by children can significantly reduce the negative impact of gaming language, while Samoiri & Tapilaha (2023) and Eriksson (2024) underscore the value of open dialogue about gaming language. Hidayati & Mardiana (2021) found that discussions about harsh language effectively improve children's communication. Additionally, Istiqfaroh & Akrom (2021) argue that teachers' roles as facilitators and motivators are key to meaningful learning, and Sibuea et al. (2022) suggest special school sessions on digital communication ethics. Domahidi et al. (2020) further recommend teaching children the importance of politeness and respectful language use.

Alternative Game Recommendations

To support positive language and communication development, parents can introduce games that are not only entertaining but also educational (Xie, et al., 2021; Torrente et al., 2010). Games like "Minecraft" and "LEGO" offer environments that foster cognitive and social development without involving violence or harsh language. According to Granic et al. (2014), construction-based games like Minecraft help children develop critical thinking, collaboration, and good communication skills through creative project development alongside their peers. These games allow children to work together, communicate effectively, and build their own environments, which helps strengthen positive communication skills.

Mufidah & Lestari (2022), in their study on the impact of digital games on children's social behavior in Indonesia, also recommend games that stimulate creativity and positive interaction. They emphasize that parents need to be more selective in choosing games that are not only entertaining but also educational (Torrente et al., 2010). Games that offer creative challenges, such as Minecraft, can help children enhance their constructive language skills in non-violent situations.

[Sugito \(2021\)](#) adds that educational games that are not only fun but also contain moral values are crucial for children's development, especially in a broader social context.

Research supports the idea that war simulation games can contribute to increased aggression and negative social interactions. Studies such as [Putra & Rusli \(2021\)](#) demonstrate that children who frequently engage with violent game content are more prone to aggressive behavior and less adept at using empathetic and polite language. In contrast, educational games are associated with lower levels of aggressiveness and often promote collaboration, where children work together to solve problems or create projects. This collaborative aspect reinforces positive social skills, helping children develop healthier communication and interaction habits. As [Fatimah et al. \(2023\)](#) emphasize, educational games can serve as tools to enhance critical thinking and creativity while simultaneously supporting positive language use.

By introducing more non-violent games such as LEGO or Minecraft into children's playtime, parents and educators can provide alternatives that promote not only cognitive development but also positive social and language skills ([Hanghøj, et al; 2018](#); [De-Marcos, et al, 2016](#)). These games create opportunities for children to engage in creative and constructive play, free from violent or harsh content. [Kors et al. \(2016\)](#) affirm that exposure to non-violent games leads to more positive behavioral outcomes, supporting the notion that carefully selected educational games can have a beneficial impact on children's overall development. This comparison underscores the importance of choosing games that align with healthy language development and social interaction, offering a path to more positive growth in the digital age.

In addition to promoting positive language and social interaction, educational games also provide a platform for children to develop essential problem-solving skills. Games like Minecraft challenge players to use logic, creativity, and resource management to build structures or solve in-game puzzles ([Parmentier, 2016](#); [Schrier, 2016](#)). This fosters not only cognitive development but also resilience and perseverance as children learn to overcome challenges within the game environment. By facing obstacles in a non-violent, constructive setting, children are more likely to develop a mindset geared toward collaboration and innovation, rather than competition and aggression. This shift in focus can have a lasting impact on how children approach problem-solving in real-world situations.

Moreover, the role of educational games in promoting cross-cultural understanding cannot be overlooked. Many of these games encourage online collaboration with players from different parts of the world, allowing children to engage in positive communication across cultural boundaries. In contrast to war simulation games, where interactions may be more aggressive and competitive, educational games tend to foster a cooperative and respectful atmosphere. This not only enhances children's communication skills but also broadens their understanding of diverse perspectives and cultural practices. Encouraging children to engage in games that promote global collaboration prepares them for a more interconnected world, where empathy, understanding, and effective communication are key to social success.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion, it can be concluded that children's involvement in war simulation games significantly affects their language and behavioral development. Research shows that exposure to violent content and the use of harsh language in these games contribute to increased aggressive behavior and the normalization of inappropriate language in daily life. In the Indonesian context, findings reveal that children who frequently play war simulation games are more likely to use harsh language in their social environments, emphasizing the need for parental and educational supervision. The active role of parents and educators is crucial in moderating these negative effects, as open dialogue about game content and active monitoring can help children understand appropriate communication boundaries. Moreover, introducing more educational and creative games, such as Minecraft and LEGO, offers positive alternatives that foster language development and social skills without exposing children to violent content. Overall, the careful selection of games and active involvement of parents and educators can greatly support children's language and behavioral development, promoting positive social interactions. With greater awareness of the impact of games, it is hoped that more efforts will be made to support children's growth in this digital era.

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