# Language Attitudes

*by* Language Attitudes

# The Impact of the Free Fire Online Game on Language Attitudes Elementary School Students

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## Abstract

*Playing online games has become a habit, including among elementary school students currently. In addition to entertainment, online games are often used as a means of learning. This study aims to determine the impact of free-fire online games on students' language attitudes. This research was designed in a qualitative descriptive form. The research was conducted on students, teachers, and parents of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 31 Salotellue, Palopo City. Data was collected through observation and interviews. Data analysis was carried out qualitatively by following the Miles and Huberman model. The results of this study indicate that students are active users of free-fire online games using Android devices with a duration of 2-3 hours a day. Students' language attitudes from playing Free Fire online games can be seen using less polite and careful language choices. Changes in students' language attitudes after using the free-fire online game for a long time are indicated by using pejorative language, addiction, emotional changes, interest in learning and lack of interaction. On the other hand, students also get a second language, English, in the form of several vocabulary words used in daily activities.*

*Keywords: Online games; free fire games; language attitudes; elementary schools.*

## Abstrak

*Bermain game online menjadi kebiasaan termasuk siswa sekolah dasar pada saat ini. Selain untuk hiburan, game online sering dijadikan sebagai sarana belajar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dampak game online free fire terhadap sikap bahasa siswa. Penelitian ini dirancang dalam bentuk deskriptif kualitatif. Penelitian dilakukan pada siswa, guru, dan orang tua murid kelas IV SD Negeri 31 Salotellue Kota Palopo. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan wawancara. Analisis data dilakukan secara kualitatif dengan mengikuti model Miles and Huberman. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa merupakan pengguna aktif game online free fire menggunakan perangkat Android dengan durasi 2-3 jam sehari. Sikap*

*Bahasa siswa dari aktivitas bermain game online Free fire dapat dilihat dari penggunaan bahasa yang kurang santun dan cermat dalam memilih bahasa. Perubahan Sikap Bahasa siswa setelah menggunakan game onlie free fire dalam waktu yang panjang yaitu ditunjukkan dengan adanya penggunaan bahasa peyorasi, kecanduan, perubahan emosional, minat belajar dan interaksi yang kurang. Di sisi lain, siswa juga mendapatkan bahasa kedua yakni bahasa Inggris berupa beberapa kosa kata yang digunakan dalam aktivitas sehari-hari.*
**Kata kunci: Game Online; game free fire; sikap Bahasa; sekolah Dasar.**

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## Introduction

Information technology is a human need in seeking information. Besides that, the existence of information technology can also be used as a means of entertainment, such as the use of online games. In ancient times, games that teenagers often played were offline games, namely Playstation or commonly known as PS. Whereas in this day and age, PS games are considered to be left behind because of the emergence of more exciting games that can be played by many people even though they are not face-to-face or face-to-face. Online games can also be played using a mobile phone. In addition to making gamers grow, this online game has several positive and negative impacts on society.

According to research by Harahap & Ramadan (2021), online games have a cognitive impact, making children's thinking skills sharper. Emotionally, game addiction can also reduce children's interest in learning. Meanwhile, from a psychomotor perspective, this game affects children's physical health, namely eye strain and lack of socializing in their daily lives. Another study by Fadillah & Suprayitno (2022) shows that online games have positive effects, such as high concentration, the ability to speak foreign languages, and many friends. Meanwhile, the negative impact is more on changes in children's social behaviour, including children are easily emotional, do not obey parents' orders, lacking manners, liking to be alone, and having difficulty managing study time (Lutfiwati, 2018; Munawir, 2019; Surbakti, 2017). In this study, the impact of online games studied changes in language attitudes.

Language attitudes can occur as a result of excessive use of online games. Language attitude is a relatively long-term belief system about language (Rietveld & Hout, 1993; Uher, 2016). A linguistic object that instils a tendency to behave in a certain way that

pleases someone (Julrissani, 2020). A person's positive attitude towards a language can be measured on three scales: language pride, loyalty, and perceived compliance with applicable language rules (Dewantara et al., 2019; Handayani, 2016; Pratiwi, 2015). These three things are positive language attitudes related to the relative belief or cognition about the speaker's language. Meanwhile, the negative characteristics of language attitudes are the opposite, not having language loyalty, not having pride in language and no awareness of language norms (Fitri et al., 2020).

Online games that are widely used by students today are free-fire games. This mobile game has been downloaded up to 100 million times because it is easy to play on Android phones. The popularity of online games can be seen from the number of young and old users, so many online games have a growing gamer community today (Haqiqi & Muhith, 2021). Free fire game is a complex action adventure in the battle royale genre where players can choose the desired weapon, character, and location according to the level of players who can be played together.

The results of initial observations were conducted by researchers located at the location of SDN 31 Salotellue on February 5, 2022, where researchers found several problems, including 1) children playing games too often, 2) excessive use of mobile phones, and 3) using disrespectful language. The game most used by students in grade IV is the online game Free Fire. The decrease in their attitude toward speaking was not only in the classroom during the learning process, but they were also undisciplined. They formed groups to tell stories about the action games they had played. Some people even bring their cell phones to school to continue their games.

Several previous studies have examined the impact of online games on changes in language attitudes. Research by Hafifah et al. (2022) and Asy'ary et al. (2023) focuses on acquiring a child's second language. Research by Ananda et al. (2022) and Mustika et al. (2022) studied changes in children's first language from various online games. In contrast to these studies, this study examines changes in language attitudes of elementary school students due to the use of free-fire online games in their first language and second language acquisition. Based on these problems, this study aimed to determine the impact of free-fire online games on students' language attitudes.

## Method

This research uses a qualitative descriptive research type. This research was conducted at SDN 31 Salotellue in grade IV students. This research focuses on the impact of the online game Free Fire on students' language attitudes. Researchers' data collection techniques include observation and interviews. The guidelines used in conducting observations and interviews can be seen in Tables 1 and 2. The data that has been done is then analyzed qualitatively by following the Miles end Huberman model.

Table 1.  Observation Guideline

| No | Indicator | Sub-Indicator | Observed aspect |
|----|-----------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Language Loyalty | Language pride | Language use |
| 2. | Awareness of language norms | Careful  Polite | |

Table 2. Interview Guideline

| No | Formulation of the problem | Indicator | Sub-Indicator |
|----|----------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1. | How to use free fire online games for students | Time intensity | Duration |
| | | Instrument | Facilities used |
| | | | Interest |
| 2. | What is the language attitude of students during the activity of using free fire online games | Language fidelity | Language pride |
| | | Norm awareness | Careful |
| | | | Polite |
| 3. | How do students' language attitudes change after using free fire online games for a long time | Impact | Addict |
| | | | Positive behaviour |
| | | | Negative behaviour |
| | | | Mental |
| | | | Emotional |

## Result

### *Use of Free Fire Online Games*

Based on the results of the interviews, it was found that there were five out of 17 students who were active online free fire game users. The students who actively play the free fire game revealed that they have been playing since grade 2 of elementary school. This was reinforced by the answers of students' parents who said that students have been playing online games since grade 2 because they saw their siblings play them first.

Students are interested in free fire online games because they think free fire online games are very interesting, challenging and can make friends with other people who also play them. This can be seen from the results of interviews with students, two out of five students said that "because it's fun and I have lots of friends since playing free fire." This is in line with MF (9 years) that "because free fire online games are fun to play, especially when you get together with friends". Then it is reinforced by AFS's answer (10 years) that

> *"Because my friends use it a lot, the picture is also better than Mobile Legend but I never top up."*

To play online games, all students use android mobile phones. Of the 5 students who are active users of the free fire game, 2 people claim to use their own quota while 3 other people use the wifi network. These findings as conveyed by students that:

> *"Use your own quota, but when you run out, you usually use a friend's wi-fi, if you play, use a cellphone" (MA, 10 years old)*
> *"I use my own quota cell phone, sometimes my friend's hotspot too" Al, (10 years)*

The use of the quota itself certainly has an impact on buying internet quota. This is also a complaint by parents of students where in a month they need to prepare a separate budget to purchase internet quota. This is reflected in the following interview results:

> *"If you use the money to buy a quota to play regular games, it's only Rp. 100.00 for a month" (MF, 9 years old)*
> *"I don't know how much noodles are, so buy the quota, I think it's around Rp. 200,000 – 300,000/month" (FI, 9 years old)*

Even so, parents do not allow their children to top up. As stated by MR that:

> *"There's nothing to play the game because I don't allow him to top up" (MF, 9 years)*

Children who play free fire online games are already known by their parents even though their parents do not like their children if they drag on with the game. There are parents of students who allow their children to play games but there are also those who do not allow them for certain reasons. Three parents of students said they allowed their children to play games but by limiting their time. Meanwhile, two other people did not allow it because their children no longer wanted to hear and some were worried about the health of their children's eyes.

Of the five children who are active users of the free fire online game, it is known that they play it after school for 2-3 hours every day. As stated by students as follows

> *"1 time in 2 hours because I take turns with my mother and sister using a cellphone."*
> *(FI, 9 years)*
> *"Sometimes twice a day but more often once 2 hours." (MA, 10 years)*
> *"Once a day, usually 2-3 hours." (AFS, 10 years)*
> *"I forgot until what time did you play during the day but normally 2 hours at night"*
> *(AI, 10 years old)*

The students' answers were reinforced by the answers of their parents who said that

> *"Usually, he plays when he comes home from school when he has lunch and does homework so during the day around 2 hours after that he goes to recite the Koran first around 4 in the afternoon, when he comes home, he plays outside with his friends but at night he only plays 1 hour because the cellphone time is shared between the younger sibling and me too" (HA, 42 years old)*
> *"Usually, twice during the day, when I come home from school, I usually go with my friends to play games. If I go to bed at night before going to bed, I give them a short game when I have done my homework." (MN, 47 years old)*
> *"Maximum 2 hours" (HM, 45 years)*

So that students can share knowledge about strategies for completing missions, students join the Free Fire online game user community. They are more dominant in interacting with game users than those who do not play games. Two children stated that they spent more time at home than playing with their peers. Meanwhile, three other children stated that both at school and in their home environment, they interacted more with online free fire game users because it was more connected and exciting. This is in accordance with the results of the interview which said that.

> *"I don't get in touch with other friends, except for my friend who often plays games too."*
> *(AFS, 10 years)*
> *"Friends who like to play games are getting closer because we often play together at the baseball field, but rarely play with other friends" (MF, 9 years)*
> *"So, I get closer to my game playmates, and it feels like I'm in my own world when I talk about games" (MF, 10 years).*

### Student Language Attitudes During Free Fire Online Game Usage Activities

The language used by students to communicate while playing the game is the local language that is easily understood by their friends. Based on the results of the interviews, it was found that they used the language in their area because they were in that area and so they could understand each other when having conversations. MA (10 years) said that

*"I use the regional language so that my friends understand what I am saying"*

In addition to regional languages, students also use Indonesian. This was conveyed by MF (9 years) and AI (10 years) that:

*"I use everyday language, namely regional languages and Indonesian."*

Students feel proud to use local languages and Indonesian when playing free fire online games. This pride is because the opponent can understand what they are conveying. This is reflected in the results of the interview which said that

*"Yes, I am proud because I can talk to my friends and we both understand what is being said" (AFS, 10 years)*

However, this pride is inversely proportional to the language attitude shown by students. When playing games, students speak in high tones like we magako, whyko killka baga, tailaso this is e, whyko nijir, you bastard, I will move your father's head. But if students are in class, they use harsh words only occasionally, it is done only when the teacher leaves the class. This is because students are afraid of being reprimanded by the teacher as expressed by students that:

*"Same sis but if the teacher is not in class" (MF, 9 years)*
*"Yes, if I'm with friends, but if there's a teacher, I won't because I'm afraid of being reprimanded" (MA, 10 years)*
*"I used to shout at my friends during recess" (FI, 9 years)*

Free Fire Game users raise different language attitudes from children who do not use games or do not have cellphones. Children who play free fire online games mostly get new languages, some are positive and some are negative. This can be seen from the results of the interviews, the positive language obtained by students is in English such as knock down, looting, welcome, welcome back, invite, alone, love, and squad. While the negative language that students get includes: djancok, asu, bastard, dog, anjir, anying, idiot, bastard, tai, shrew, moron, pig, old devil, and monkey.

The use of language that is considered rude and obscene is often spoken by students without any fear. Students expressed that they did not feel guilty about what they said because the words were not intended for the people around them. Students also revealed that other people rarely heard what they said.

While engrossed in playing games students are not polite in choosing language. Based on the results of the interviews, students revealed that they did not choose the language

they acquired while playing the game. What was conveyed by his friend was also expressed, especially if he was losing. Other students also revealed that the language spoken was as long as it was conveyed because sometimes, they were not aware of what was being said. This condition is reinforced by the results of observations which show that students who use online games use abusive or obscene language without any sense of hesitation.

However, free fire online games also add to students' English vocabulary. This was disclosed by parents of students that

> "Online games are also good, because my child knows a little about English, unfortunately children also use rough language" (MN, 47 years old)

Based on the results of these interviews, it is known that by playing the free fire online game, students experience changes in negative language attitudes even though the game also adds new vocabulary.


## Changes in Students' Language Attitudes in the Long Time

Changes in language attitudes after using games for a long time, marked by frequent harsh words or the use of pejorative language. All students admitted that they got these harsh words from playing free fire online games. Based on the results of interviews with parents and homeroom teachers, it was found that:

> *"Before getting to know games, he never uttered words that were inappropriate to hear, but now, astagfirullah, all his language is rude, even though it is rarely heard at home"* *(HA, 42 years old)*

MH as MF's parent also said
> *"It's a big change, what used to be quite shy now talks a lot with his friends using harsh language."*

This answer is reinforced by the homeroom teacher's answer which reveals that:

> *"In my opinion, by playing free fire online games in the long term, there will definitely be a change in children's language attitudes because now, let alone games from other media, it can also trigger a change in children's language attitudes and a lack of ethics can be seen now how children speak language. rough and dirty like a pig devil dog shit. Sometimes he also calls the gender name, but in class, if the learning process is taking place, I have never heard him speak like that, which is often when he is outside of school."* *(HM, 45 years)*

The habit of students playing free fire causes dependence or addiction. Students revealed that they did not want to do activities other than playing games continuously. Less interest in student learning, interaction with friends is also reduced. This causes students to continuously use offensive language. On the other hand, losing in playing games affects children's uncontrolled emotions. Not to mention if the internet network does not support it. This is in accordance with the results of the interview which said that:

> *"I am very annoyed when I'm playing a game but suddenly the network is disconnected"* (MA, 10 years)

Based on this, it is known that in addition to influencing children's language attitudes, children's gaming habits cause addiction, lack of interest in learning, and children's emotional changes.

## Discussion

### Use of Free Fire Online Games

The free fire online game uses five people, and students use different playing durations with other channels and budgets. Online gameplay is addictive for its users, making it difficult to stop using it. Most students spend 2-3 hours a day playing games. The results of this study align with research conducted by (Ulya et al., 2021) that students can become addicted to playing games, so they become children's main concern in their daily lives. Online game addiction is not visible, but what is seen is a change in the child's personality. Students who experience game addiction can spend more time playing online games than studying, indirectly affecting student learning achievement (Pande & Marheni, 2015). Students interact more with fellow online free-fire game users than those who do not play it. This certainly has an impact on students' social interactions.

### Student Language Attitudes During Free Fire Online Game Usage Activities

The study results showed that the student's language attitudes varied, but on average, the language attitudes were very inappropriate to be spoken by children of their age. The attitude of the language in question is rough or indecent, accompanied by emotional actions. This can be seen in students' behaviour and the way they speak. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Ananda et al. (2022) that children adopt

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harsh slang from games such as the words Fuck, asu (dog), Dumb (Stupid), Dick (Male Sex), Jancok, Bastard and others. This is confirmed by Mustika et al. (2022), who found that children get words and sentences with negative emotions from playing online games such as stupid, stupid games), killing and so on. Students utter harsh words because they are unaware of what is said (Mustika et al., 2022). They only focus on playing without caring about their surroundings (Ulya et al., 2021). In addition, the absorption of coarse language is also caused by several factors, including audio features in online games to vent children's emotions, which become habits and the mutual influence between children (Ananda et al., 2022).

However, games also help students acquire a second language (English). This study's results align with research conducted by Asy'ary et al. (2023) and Hafifah et al. (2022) that online gameplay affects children's second language acquisition. The language in question includes verbs, nouns, and adjectives often used in everyday communication. Second language acquisition can be obtained formally or non-formally. There are several factors second language acquisition of children, such as student characteristics, environmental factors, development, and students' previous language competence. Therefore, parental supervision is needed when children play games (Achadah & Sari, 2022).

**Changes in Students' Language Attitudes in a Long Time**

Changes in students' language attitudes during free-fire online games can be seen using pejorative language or harsh words. These changes can occur naturally or with environmental factors. This is in line with the view of Blanci & Hammers (2000), which states that changes in language attitudes are something that can naturally occur. This is due to online free-fire game addiction, which causes children to get used to harsh words resulting in changes in children's language attitudes (Ananda et al., 2022; Uher, 2016). These parents and homeroom teachers feel this ding changes in students' language attitudes, significantly troubling their minds.

In addition to changes in language attitudes, online games also impact learning interest, lack of interaction and emotional changes in students. Games of online fascination make children miss important moments in their lives, spend less time with their families, and gradually withdraw from their normal lives (Achadah & Sari, 2022). Children neglect their social relationships with their friends, and eventually, their lives spiral out of

control because the internet includes online games. With a sense of addiction to online games, students also start to be lazy to study. They prefer to spend time playing online games than studying and emotional changes are often associated with defeat. Elementary school-level students are immature in their dynamic management, so they are very vulnerable to influencing children's mentality. The existence of dynamic changes will have a return impact on changes in language attitudes if not accompanied by assistance and guidance from parents to be polite and careful in choosing/absorbing a second language.

## Conclusion

Students at SD Negeri 31 Salotellue are active users of free-fire online games for 2-3 hours a day. The language attitude of students playing the Free fire Firene game activity can be seen from the use of language and the lack of politeness and carefulness in choosing a language. Changes in students' language attitudes after using the free-fire online game for a long time are indicated by using pejorative language, addiction, emotional changes, interest in learning and lack of interaction. On the other hand, students also get a second language, English, in the form of several vocabulary words used in daily activities. Therefore, it is recommended that parents help and supervision in using online games so that there are no irregularities in using them.

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# Language Attitudes