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English Terminology in Mobile Legends: A Digital Linguistics Perspective on Player Navigation

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how English terminology functions within the Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) game interface, focusing on its role in player navigation and decision-making. Through qualitative analysis of the game's interface over three weeks, we identified 27 specialized English terms across four key areas: starting menu, hero classifications, positional roles, and battle spell icons. Our findings reveal that these terms form a structured linguistic system rather than random labels, each term serves a specific navigational purpose and helps players make quick strategic decisions during gameplay. The terminology shows interesting linguistic features, including semantic narrowing and the creation of game-specific words, particularly among battle spells. To strengthen our analysis, we gathered feedback from five active MLBB players about their experiences with interface terminology and consulted a linguistics expert to validate our interpretations. The results suggest that MLBB's English terminology operates as a controlled vocabulary that standardizes gameplay communication across different language backgrounds. However, this study primarily analyzed the interface itself rather than extensively exploring how diverse players actually interpret these terms. Future research should include broader player perspectives, especially from users with varying English proficiency levels, to better understand the cognitive processes behind terminology comprehension in multilingual gaming communities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has fundamentally transformed how people communicate and process information in online environments. Interactive platforms, particularly multiplayer games, have become linguistic spaces where communication extends beyond traditional text-based exchanges to include multimodal cues, system prompts, and interface terminology that guide user behavior and understanding (Androutsopoulos, 2014; Pasaribu et al., 2024; Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). In these environments, language functions not merely as a social tool but as a structured navigational system that helps users interpret instructions, make decisions, and coordinate actions within complex digital architectures. Understanding how language operates in game interfaces has therefore become essential for comprehending broader patterns of digital communication and literacy.

Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) exemplifies this phenomenon as one of the world's most widely played mobile games, with millions of daily active users across diverse linguistic backgrounds. The game incorporates English terminology throughout its interface, in menu labels, hero classifications, positional roles, and battle spell icons, creating a linguistic environment where players must interpret specialized vocabulary to navigate effectively and participate successfully. For players with limited

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English proficiency, unfamiliar terminology can create barriers that disrupt navigation, hinder comprehension of gameplay mechanics, and diminish overall gaming experience (Gusnawaty et al., 2022; Misnawati et al., 2025; Reinhardt & Sykes, 2014; Sulistiawati et al., 2024). While previous research acknowledges that MLBB offers opportunities for incidental English learning through vocabulary exposure and communicative practice (Aflah, 2023; Balqish & Hadi, 2023; Sinaga et al., 2025), these studies emphasize player-to-player interaction rather than examining the linguistic structure and functional role of terminology embedded directly in the interface.

Existing research demonstrates that interface terminology in digital games contributes to meaning making through combinations of textual labels, system prompts, and visual representations, forming multimodal systems that support player comprehension and guide real-time decision-making (Abriani et al., 2018; Kobis & Tomatala, 2020; Waqidah & Fajar, 2025). Studies of digital gaming communities further highlight how social interaction influences the ways players interpret terminology and respond to gameplay instructions (Ambarwati et al., 2022; Yusrinawati, 2023). However, theoretical discussions remain limited, and the linguistic functions of interface terminology have not been examined in sufficient analytical depth. Most analyses describe the presence of English terms in games without explaining how these terms operate as components of digital linguistic behavior or how they structure player cognition and navigation (Gozali, 2024). This gap reveals the need for systematic linguistic analysis that treats interface terminology not simply as labels but as a communicative system shaped by and shaping user interaction.

To address this gap, we apply Crystal's (2006) Internet Linguistics framework to analyze the structure, semantic properties, and functional roles of English terminology in MLBB's interface. Crystal's framework emphasizes that language in digital environments evolves rapidly, forming new structures, abbreviations, and specialized vocabularies that emerge from technological interaction. Language in digital contexts reflects not only communicative efficiency but also social identity formation, cultural adaptation, and cross-community coordination (Rijal et al., 2022). This theoretical lens enables deeper understanding of how terminology functions within technology-driven environments and how players rely on linguistic cues to navigate interfaces effectively. By examining MLBB through this framework, we can illuminate broader patterns in how digital platforms use language to structure user behavior and enable collaborative action.

This study investigates how English terminology embedded in MLBB's interface operates linguistically and functionally. We focus on terminology found in four key interface components: the starting menu, hero classifications, positional roles, and battle spell icons. Through systematic analysis of these terminological elements, we aim to explain how interface language contributes to player understanding, facilitates strategic decision-making, and shapes interaction patterns within digital gaming environments. This approach provides grounded insight into the linguistic processes that characterize contemporary online gaming contexts and contributes to broader understanding of how specialized vocabularies emerge and function in digital communication.

1.1 Problem Formulation

The problem formulation in this study is designed to direct the analysis toward understanding how English terminology operates within the MLBB interface. Because terminology shapes how players interpret features, navigate menus, and respond to gameplay instructions, the study focuses on three core dimensions: the linguistic form, the semantic meaning, and the functional role of the terminology. In line with this focus, the guiding research question is: “How are the linguistic form, semantic meaning, and functional role of English terminology represented in the MLBB interface and how do players interpret this terminology in ways that influence their navigation and comprehension of the game system?” This formulation ensures full alignment with the purpose and findings stated in the abstract while providing a clearer analytical foundation for the study.

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1.2 Literature Review

Language functions as a dynamic and adaptive system that evolves in response to social interaction and technological change. One essential component of linguistic study is terminology, which refers to specialized vocabulary used within a particular field to convey precise meanings (Crystal, 2006). In digital environments, terminology develops rapidly and tends to reflect not only technical functions but also the social identities of its users. Crystal (2006) notes that linguistic expression in the digital era has expanded to include emerging forms such as abbreviations, hybrid constructions, and specialized vocabulary that arise from fast-paced online interaction. This perspective highlights the flexibility of language when responding to new communicative demands in technologically mediated spaces.

The evolution of terminology in digital communication is further illuminated by sociolinguistic studies that emphasize how interaction across diverse cultural backgrounds generates new linguistic practices. Rijal et al. (2022) observe that digital users frequently engage in code-switching, code-mixing, and other adaptive strategies as they negotiate cultural identity and social belonging. These processes demonstrate that terminology operates not only as a technical resource but also as an index of identity, affiliation, and participation within digital communities. Thus, terminology can be understood as a linguistic expression shaped by both functional needs and the social dynamics of online interaction.

Within the environment of online gaming, terminology serves a particularly important role in facilitating gameplay, navigation, and social coordination. Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) exemplifies this dynamic. The interface relies heavily on English terminology to communicate system functions, guide player decisions, and signal in-game roles and features. Prior studies have demonstrated that MLBB can expose players to repeated English input and contribute to vocabulary familiarity (Aflah, 2023; Balqish & Hadi, 2023; Kobis & Tomatala, 2020). However, these studies emphasize player communication and incidental language learning rather than examining the structure and function of terminology embedded in the game's interface. This distinction is essential because interface terminology functions differently from player-to-player interaction: it represents system-generated cues that guide comprehension rather than serve as interpersonal communication.

Research on digital language learning environments similarly suggests that players develop linguistic awareness through contextual exposure to terminology in games, menus, and gameplay prompts (Sinaga et al., 2025; Waqidah & Fajar, 2025). These findings confirm that terminology can act as a learning scaffold by providing repeated and meaningful linguistic input. Nevertheless, the influence of interface-embedded terminology on comprehension and interpretation remains largely unexplored. Studies such as those by Reinhardt and Sykes (2014) highlight the importance of investigating how digital environments shape language processing, yet applications of this framework to game-based terminology remain limited. This gap suggests the need for a focused linguistic analysis of how MLBB terminology supports or constrains player navigation.

The linguistic nature of MLBB terminology is also intertwined with visual representation, as many of its interface elements, particularly battle spell icons, pair English terminology with symbolic imagery. Androutsopoulos (2014) and Crystal (2006) emphasize that visual–verbal combinations are characteristic of digital communication, enabling faster interpretation and more efficient meaning-making. In MLBB, the integration of text and visual cues is central to how terminology communicates function, strategy, and sequence during gameplay. However, empirical studies have yet to explain how these multimodal features shape a player's understanding of the terminology or contribute to semantic processes such as specialization or narrowing of meaning.

Although existing literature highlights MLBB as a space for linguistic exposure, the focus tends to center on communication practices, community behavior, or incidental vocabulary acquisition. Limited attention has been given to how the terminology embedded directly in the interface functions linguistically or how players interpret these terminological cues. As a result, the relationship between

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terminology form, semantic function, and its role in guiding gameplay remains insufficiently addressed. This gap justifies the present study, which views MLBB terminology as both a communicative and a semiotic resource that shapes how players navigate and interpret the game environment. In summary, the literature demonstrates the importance of terminology within digital communication and gaming environments, yet it also reveals the absence of analytical studies focusing specifically on interface-based terminology in MLBB. By addressing this gap, the present research aims to provide a comprehensive linguistic description of the form, meaning, and communicative function of English terminology in MLBB's interface and to examine how these elements influence player comprehension and navigation.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design and Participants

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the linguistic form, semantic meaning, and functional role of English terminology used within the Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) interface. This design is appropriate because it aligns with the interpretive and contextual nature of linguistic data. As stated by Miles et al. (2014), qualitative inquiry seeks to develop an in-depth understanding of phenomena by emphasizing observation, contextual interpretation, and meaning making rather than hypothesis testing. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is not to measure causal relationships but to describe linguistic features that naturally emerge within a digital game environment.

The researcher served simultaneously as the primary instrument and the sole participant in the study. This role is consistent with the principles of qualitative research, in which the researcher's interpretive capacity forms the core of the analytical process (Listyantono, 2023). Through sustained participatory observation, the researcher identified English terminology embedded in the game interface, examined its contextual use, and interpreted its linguistic features. Because the study does not involve external human subjects, the term "participants" refers exclusively to the researcher as the observer. Data were collected across a continuous three-week observation period to ensure repeated exposure to terminology under natural gameplay conditions. To mitigate the limitations inherent in self-observation and to enhance the reliability of the initial terminology inventory, the list of identified items was reviewed by an experienced MLBB player who evaluated the accuracy, functional relevance, and community-recognized usage of each term.

In accordance with the reviewer's recommendation to incorporate actual user perspectives, supplementary feedback was obtained from five MLBB players with varied gameplay experience. A brief structured questionnaire elicited their familiarity with interface terminology, the challenges they encountered when interpreting English terms, and the extent to which terminology influenced their navigational and strategic decision-making. These responses served as interpretive support rather than as generalizable data, thereby preserving the qualitative orientation of the study. Additionally, an expert validation process was conducted by a linguistics lecturer, who examined the terminological categorization and interpretive framework to ensure theoretical coherence and analytical rigor.

2.2 Data Analysis Instruments and Techniques

Given the qualitative orientation of the study, the researcher served as the primary analytical instrument. In addition to direct observation, visual documentation in the form of screenshots of the MLBB interface was used as an auxiliary instrument. These screenshots supported the verification of terminology and ensured that each item was interpreted in relation to its functional and visual context.

Data collection proceeded in two stages: (1) Direct observation, which identified English terminology that appears consistently across gameplay; and (2) Visual documentation, which captured

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the spatial arrangement and system functions associated with each term. Only lexical items with specialized procedural meanings were included in the dataset. General vocabulary, colloquial chat expressions, and elements unrelated to interface navigation were excluded to maintain terminological precision and conceptual integrity.

Data analysis followed the procedure outlined by Miles et al. (2014): (1) Data Reduction, involving selection and refinement of relevant terminology; (2) Data Display, achieved by organizing items into four analytical categories (starting menu, hero types, hero placement, and battle spell icons); and (3) Conclusion Drawing, in which linguistic forms, semantic patterns, and functional roles were interpreted in relation to interface mechanics.

Although the study is qualitative, descriptive frequency counts were incorporated solely to illustrate the proportional distribution of terminology across categories. These numerical indicators served as supportive descriptive tools rather than statistical measures. Credibility was further reinforced through two validation strategies: (1) expert review, which ensured theoretical alignment and analytical precision, and (2) player validation, which confirmed the practical accuracy of the interpretations from the perspective of active MLBB users. Together, these validation processes contributed to the robustness and trustworthiness of the findings.

3. FINDINGS

The study identifies and analyzes English terminology embedded within four core components of the Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) interface: the starting menu, hero type classification, hero placement (lane), and battle spell icons. During a three-week observation period, thirty-five English lexical items were initially identified. Following a terminological selection process based on semantic specificity and functional relevance, only twenty-seven items were classified as terminology. These items demonstrate consistent linguistic patterns in which each terminology carries a defined operational function within the game interface. Their distribution demonstrates that the terminology system in MLBB operates as a coherent and structured semantic network rather than a collection of arbitrary labels. The remaining eight English items were excluded because they function only as general vocabulary or informational labels with no specialized meaning. The twenty-seven terminology items were then organized into four analytical categories: starting menu, hero type, hero placement, and battle spell icons. Each category represents a distinct linguistic domain in which terminology contributes to specific facets of navigation and decision-making within the digital environment.

3.1 Terminology of Starting Menu

The initial menu is the first display that appears when players open the Mobile Legends: Bang Bang application. In this section, various feature labels serve as the main navigation to the game page, strategy settings, and access to exclusive items.

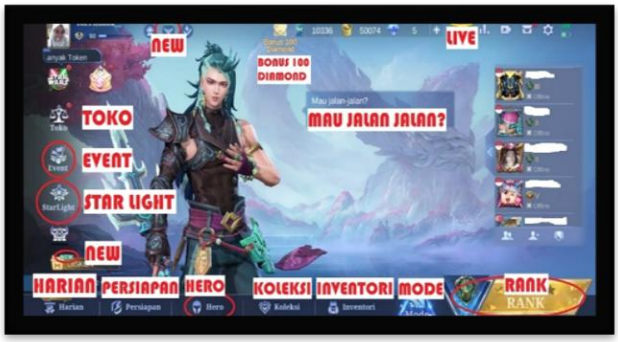

Figure 1. The Starting Menu

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The image above shows the arrangement of the main menu that is displayed interactively. From the observations, only four terminologies fall into the terminology category because they have a special function in the game system, namely "Star Light," "Hero," "Bonus," and "Preparation." This view shows how the English term is used to mark the main navigation function in the game, as well as the basis for the initial grouping of data.

Table 1. The Terminology of the Starting Menu

No	Terminology	Terminology Form	Types of Linguistic Data	Functions in MLBB
1	Star Light	Phrase	Noun	Premium currency to buy special items.
2	Hero	Single word	Noun	Display your collection of heroes.
3	Bonus	Single word	Noun	Provides extra benefits for players.
4	Preparation	Single word	Noun	Determine the settings of your hero and equipment before the match.

The four terminologies serve as the main navigation that helps players recognize important features before the game starts. "Star Light" is used as a digital transaction system. Bonuses provide additional rewards to active players, while "Preparation" and "Hero" serve to prepare game strategies. These four terminologies indicate that even in the main menu, English is used technically to mark features that have a strategic role for the player. From an analytical perspective, the starting menu functions as a foundational linguistic structure in which terminology is organized according to the hierarchy of operational importance. Each terminology item acts as a semantic signpost that directs players toward specific system functions, thereby ensuring clarity, procedural order, and navigational coherence.

3.2 Terminology of Hero Types

The hero type represents the taxonomic classification of characters according to their functional attributes and operational roles within the game architecture. Each hero embodies distinct capability parameters and semiotic characteristics, requiring players to interpret these classifications to formulate coherent strategic decisions. From a linguistic standpoint, this categorization exemplifies a domain-specific system of terminology in which each item encodes a defined tactical function embedded within the game's semiotic and procedural structure. This classification creates a stable interpretive framework through which players can distinguish competence patterns, role obligations, and team dynamics.

Figure 2. The Division of Hero Types

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Figure 2 shows the six main icons that are the basis for the hero grouping. The six hero icons are: "Tank," "Fighter," "Assassin," "Mage," "Marksman," and "Support." The terminology that appears in this section is entirely technical in nature as it describes a specific role in the game system.

Table 2. The Terminology Hero Types

No	Terminology	Terminology Form	Types of Linguistic Data	Functions in MLBB
1	Tank	Single word	Noun	Protect your team and resist your opponent's attacks.
2	Fighter	Single word	Noun	Attack and survive in battle.
3	Assassin	Single word	Noun	Finish off opponents with surprise attacks.
4	Mage	Single word	Noun	Grants magical power-based area attacks.
5	Marksman	Single word	Noun	Attack enemies from a safe distance with high consistency.
6	Support	Single word	Noun	Support team members with healing or protection abilities.

The above six terms represent the main role categories in MLBB. Each term describes a specific hero's function, from "Tank" offense to "Support." For example, "Tank" and "Support" tend to play defensive roles, while "Assassin" and "Marksman" tend to play offensive roles. This role structure shows the existence of a terminology system that not only defines the character's abilities but also regulates the pattern of cooperation and the balance of strategy between players. The consistency of these terminology items across all gameplay contexts demonstrates the presence of a controlled vocabulary that stabilizes meaning and minimizes ambiguity in strategic communication.

3.3 Terminology of Hero Placement

Hero placement is an important part of the game's strategy. Each position on the game map has certain functions and advantages, depending on the type of hero the player uses.

Figure 3. The Heroes Placement

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Figure 3 shows the division of areas in the game map. Every terminology that appears in this section has a technical meaning related to the strategy and role of the hero in the team.

Table 3. The Terminology of Hero Placement

NO	Terminology	Terminology Form	Types of Linguistic Data	Functions in MLBB
1	Gold Lane	Phrases	Phrase	Marksman's hero-specific area to upgrade items faster.
2	Roam	Single word	Verb	Support hero tasks to help other paths and team rotations.
3	Jungle	Single word	Noun	Locations for Assassin heroes to find additional items.
4	Mid Lane	Phrases	Phrase	Main paths for Mage heroes for rotation and area control.
5	Exp Lane	Phrases	Phrase	A place for Fighter heroes to strengthen their starting levels.

The five terminologies above reflect the coordination system in team games. Gold Lane and EXP Lane are concerned with the development of player resources, Mid Lane regulates the control of the main areas, while Jungle and Roam mark the dynamic movement between lanes. This overall term reinforces the view that MLBB terminology is not only informative but also serves as a system of linguistic strategies that directly affect the actions of players. These spatial terminology items encode positional meanings that shape players' tactical expectations and support the formation of predictable coordination patterns during gameplay.

3.4 Terminology of the Icons Battle Spell

Battle spells are an important feature that gives players additional abilities. Each spell has a different effect and can significantly affect the course of the match.

Figure 4. The Form of Icons Battle Spell

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Figure 4 shows twelve battle spell icons, each with a specific function and effect. All the terminology that appears in this section is categorized as technical terminology because it has functional meanings that can only be understood in the context of the game.

Table 4. The Terminology of the Icons Battle Spell

No	Terminology	Terminology Form	Types of Linguistic Data	Functions in MLBB
1	Execute	Single word	Verb	Kill enemies with low HP.
2	Retribution	Single word	Noun	Speed up farming and kill monsters,
3	Sprint	Single word	Noun	Increase movement speed.
4	Purify	Single word	Verbs	Remove negative effects (de-buff).
5	Flicker	Single word	Noun	Short teleportation to dodge.
6	Vengeance	Single word	Noun	Reflects damage to enemies.
7	Inspire	Single word	Noun	Increase attack speed.
8	Revitalize	Single word	Noun	Heal and improve HP regeneration.
9	Aegis	Single word	Noun	Provides additional protection.
10	Petrify	Single word	Noun	Stop and slow down enemies.
11	Flameshot	Single word	Noun	Attack and repel enemies globally.
12	Arrival	Single word	Noun	Long-range teleportation to allies.

The twelve terminologies in this category confirm that battle spells are the part with the most complex linguistic function in MLBB. Most of the terminology here indicates a form of high language efficiency: a single word is capable of representing complex action concepts, such as "Flicker" for short teleportation or Retribution for monster killing mechanics. In fact, some terminology, such as "Flameshot," is a form of new word formation (digital neologism) created specifically for the context of the game. It shows how the language in the game adapts creatively to the needs of digital systems and mechanics. These terminology items form a highly specialized lexicon in which each label corresponds to a consistent action schema, thereby enabling rapid comprehension and precise in-game execution. Their recurrent appearance across the interface reflects the stability of MLBB's controlled vocabulary and its central role in maintaining semantic precision in high-speed digital interaction.

Table 5. Recap of the numbers of terminology.

Category Type	Number of Terminology	Presentation
Initial Menu	4	14,8%
Hero Type	6	22,2%
Hero Placement	5	18,5%
Battle Spell	12	44,5
Total	27	100%

Based on the table above, it can be shown that the battle spell category has the highest number of terminologies, which is 12 terminology (44.5%), while the initial menu category has the least number, which is 4 terminology (14.8%). This data shows that most of the terminology in Mobile Legends: Bang Bang focuses on the combat and strategy aspects of the game. This dominance shows that the

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terminology component in MLBB is more developed in the aspect of strategy and game mechanics than in other parts of the interface. These findings confirm that MLBB's terminology is not merely a naming system, but a structured linguistic mechanism that mediates communication between the player and the digital environment. The distribution further illustrates that the densest terminological development occurs in gameplay segments requiring precision, rapid interpretation, and tactical responsiveness.

4. DISCUSSION

Our analysis reveals that English terminology in Mobile Legends: Bang Bang functions as a structured linguistic system that guides player navigation and strategic decision-making. The 27 identified terms distribute unevenly across interface categories, with battle spells accounting for 44.5% of all terminology distribution that reflects the cognitive demands of real-time gameplay where rapid terminology recognition becomes critical. This finding aligns with Crystal's (2006) observation that digital language evolves toward efficiency and functional precision, particularly in contexts requiring immediate comprehension and response.

The terminology operates as what we term as a "controlled vocabulary system," where each term maps onto specific game functions with minimal semantic ambiguity. This characteristic distinguishes game interface language from natural language, where meaning emerges through varied contextual usage (Androutsopoulos, 2014). Terms like "Execute" or "Retribution" undergo semantic narrowing, general English words acquiring highly specialized meanings within the game environment. Crystal (2006) identifies this process as characteristic of internet linguistics, where digital platforms create microsemiotic systems with distinct vocabularies and semantic rules. The battle spell terminology exemplifies this pattern particularly well, featuring both narrowed conventional terms and pure neologisms like "Flameshot" that exist exclusively within the game's linguistic ecosystem.

The multimodal nature of MLBB's terminology system, pairing textual labels with visual icons, serves crucial cognitive and communicative functions. This redundancy provides multiple pathways to comprehension, enabling faster recognition during intense gameplay while maintaining precision in strategic discussions (Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). For multilingual player communities, visual icons function as scaffolding devices that support comprehension even when English proficiency is limited, a pattern consistent with research on multimodal literacy in digital environments (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2014). The term-icon pairings may also facilitate incidental vocabulary learning through repeated exposure, though this study cannot confirm such effects without direct player assessment.

Spatial terminology in hero placement, "Gold Lane," "Exp Lane," "Mid Lane," "Jungle," and "Roam", creates what we describe as predictable coordination patterns in an otherwise chaotic multiplayer environment. These terms encode not merely locations but strategic expectations and role assignments, enabling five strangers to coordinate effectively through shared terminological understanding. This finding extends Rijal et al.'s (2022) observation that digital users negotiate identity and social belonging through specialized linguistic practices. In MLBB, terminology becomes the primary mechanism through which distributed players achieve collaborative reasoning and strategic alignment.

The hero type taxonomy, Tank, Fighter, Assassin, Mage, Marksman, Support, functions similarly as a classificatory framework that organizes gameplay roles into discrete, mutually understood categories. This taxonomic stability, maintained across game updates and patches, demonstrates what sociolinguists call "entrenchment," where linguistic conventions become so deeply embedded in community practice that modification would disrupt shared understanding (Androutsopoulos, 2014). The taxonomy provides cognitive shortcuts that accelerate decision-making, a function particularly critical in fast-paced digital gaming contexts where players must process complex information under time pressure.

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While our interface-focused analysis illuminates systematic patterns in MLBB's terminological structure, we acknowledge important limitations. Our findings describe the linguistic system as designed and implemented but do not directly examine how players with varied linguistic backgrounds actually interpret and utilize these terms during gameplay. Previous research suggests that gaming environments can support incidental language learning (Aflah, 2023; Balqish & Hadi, 2023; Sinaga et al., 2025), yet the mechanisms through which interface terminology specifically contributes to comprehension remain underexplored. Future research incorporating player interviews, think-aloud protocols, or comprehension testing across different English proficiency levels would substantially strengthen understanding of how controlled vocabularies function in multilingual gaming communities.

Our study contributes to digital linguistics by demonstrating how specialized vocabulary systems emerge and stabilize within bounded digital environments. MLBB's terminology exhibits key characteristics Crystal (2006) identifies in internet language, speed, brevity, multimodality, and creative adaptation, while showing how these characteristics serve specific functional demands. Terminology constitutes what we call a "microsemiotic system", a small-scale linguistic ecosystem with distinct vocabularies, semantic rules, and usage conventions operating within larger languages. Understanding such systems matters because they increasingly characterize digital life, from gaming to social media to professional platforms. This research also highlights the importance of studying interface language as distinct from user-generated content, revealing how digital platforms use carefully designed terminology to structure user behavior and enable particular forms of interaction (Waqidah & Fajar, 2025).

The findings have practical implications for game designers, who might benefit from explicitly considering how terminology choices scaffold player understanding and whether visual-textual redundancy adequately supports diverse linguistic backgrounds. For educators exploring games-based language learning, our analysis indicates that MLBB's controlled vocabulary creates repeated, contextualized exposure to English terms, though the highly specialized nature may limit transfer to broader proficiency. For language researchers, MLBB exemplifies how digital environments create linguistic innovation under functional pressure, language evolution driven not only by informality but by precision, efficiency, and collaborative meaning negotiation. While this study illuminates the structure and logic of MLBB's terminological system, future research incorporating diverse player perspectives will deepen understanding of how digital game language actually functions in practice, advancing both linguistic theory and the design of more accessible, inclusive digital interfaces.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined English terminology embedded in the Mobile Legends: Bang Bang interface, identifying 27 specialized terms across four categories: starting menu, hero types, hero placement, and battle spells. Our analysis reveals that these terms function as a controlled vocabulary system rather than arbitrary labels, with each item serving specific navigational and strategic purposes within the game environment. The concentration of terminology in battle spells (44.5%) reflects the linguistic complexity required for real-time combat mechanics, where single-word expressions must convey sophisticated procedural concepts rapidly and precisely.

From a theoretical perspective, MLBB's terminology demonstrates key characteristics of digital language identified by Crystal (2006): linguistic reduction, multimodal representation, semantic specialization, and creative lexical formation. These patterns illustrate how digital platforms develop microsemiotic systems, specialized linguistic ecosystems that enable efficient communication within bounded contexts. The terminology creates shared interpretive frameworks that allow players from diverse linguistic backgrounds to coordinate strategies effectively, functioning as a standardizing mechanism across multilingual gaming communities.

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However, our interface-focused approach presents limitations. While we document systematic terminological patterns, we have not extensively examined how players with varying English proficiency levels actually interpret and process these terms during gameplay. Future research should incorporate player perspectives through interviews, comprehension assessments, or cognitive protocols to understand the sociolinguistic dimensions of terminology use in multilingual contexts. Such investigations would clarify whether and how interface terminology contributes to incidental language learning, cognitive processing differences across proficiency levels, and the role of visual scaffolding in supporting comprehension.

Despite these limitations, our findings contribute meaningfully to digital linguistics by demonstrating how game interfaces employ carefully structured terminology to guide user interaction. This research provides foundational understanding of interface language as a distinct category of digital discourse, one that merits continued scholarly attention as gaming and other interactive platforms increasingly shape global communication practices.

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