

## Register Used by Indonesian E-sport Team (Onic) in Mobile Legend Bang-Bang

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### Article History:

Submitted: 15/03/2024

Revised: 24/05/2024

Accepted: 31/05/2024

### Keywords:

Register; Pro Player;

Online Game;

Sociolinguistics

**Abstract.** Register refers to a form of language variation specific to a particular community or group. Different language varieties within a community can convey distinct meanings. This paper aims to identify the forms of registers used by pro players from the Onic e-sports team in the online game Mobile Legends: Bang Bang and to explain their functions. The data found were 18 registers used by pro players to communicate in the team. The form of the register is classified into two: lingual units of word as many as 15 registers and lingual units of phrase consisting of 3 registers. From these registers there are three functions, namely; a) enhancing communication efficiency, b) boosting hype and atmosphere, and c) facilitating communication among players. Studying these registers is significant as it sheds light on the unique linguistic dynamics of gaming communities, contributing to a deeper understanding of language use in digital and collaborative environments.

**Citation:** Linuwih (2023). Register Used by Indonesian E-sport Team (Onic) in Mobile Legend Bang-Bang. *Journal of English Language and Pedagogy (JELPA)*, 2(1), 44-53  
<https://doi.org/10.51826/jelpa.v2i1.1100>

## INTRODUCTION

Sociolinguistics is a field of linguistics that studies the relationship between language society. According to Homles (2003), sociolinguistics is the particular way a person applies language in different social situations. It provides information about how language works, social relations within a community, and how people convey and construct aspects of their social identity. Therefore, the language used must be adapted to social aspects to facilitate communication. The formation of a word or sentence that is different from other groups often occurs consciously or unconsciously. The sentence or word is also familiar to speakers from the community.

Register is a form of language variation appearing in a particular community or group. Crystal argued that register is a social language variety that is described based on its users. (Crystal, 1991). This means that language speakers have the alternative to communicate in different ways in different situations because different ways will give different social meanings. In Sociolinguistics, the register emphasizes grammatical and lexical selection. Something that is specific to the speaker that depends on the context of the situation (Haliday, 1989). Register is classified into three types, namely; 1) Fields of discourse or topics of conversation that relate to the purpose and subject; 2) Modes of discourse or modes of conversation related to means such as note material, discourse, written letters and so on; 3) Manner of course or conversation manners for example formal language, ordinary, familiar, and so on. (Alwasilah, 1993).

The popularity of online gaming in Indonesian society has made online gaming a sport (e-sport) and is one of the fields that competed in the Asian Games in 2018. From various social

groups that play online games, various language phenomena are found in the community with the terms or registers in online games in their daily lives. MOBA (Multigamer Online Battle Arena) type online games are now increasingly popular, especially in Indonesia, with the number of players growing every year. In Indonesia, users of this type of game reached 200 million active players, surpassing MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game) which were very popular in early 2005 (Jiwandono & Purwandi, 2020). This number has contributed to the Indonesian gamer community's growth and influenced the language's development. Online games can be played individually or in teams. Online games are not only played as fun but also become games that are competitive nationally and internationally. One of the online games that has become part of electronic sports (e-sport) is Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang. Mobile Legends: Bang Bang, commonly referred to as ML or MLBB, is a mobile multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) game developed and published by Moonton, a subsidiary of ByteDance. Launched in 2016, the game has grown in popularity around the world, especially in Southeast Asia, and has since passed the 1 billion downloads mark, with monthly players reaching 100 million.(Aziiz, 2024).

Mobile Legends: Bang Bang often shows live matches to the public through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. By showing it to the public, several teams must display match results, analysis, or information about gameplay in each ongoing competition. In Mobile Legend Bang-Bang tournaments, pro players must communicate well with other players to coordinate during the match. Pro players usually use special terms to describe situations that might occur in a game. The terms they use are typically new and not even understood by other community members. Given this situation, it is crucial to know the register used by each player to recognize all the words they say. Various previous studies have been conducted on this issue. Pratama (2022) entitled "Register Used By Indonesian Casters in Online Game (Mobile Legends; Bang-Bang)" the research focuses on studying the language registers employed by Indonesian casters in the online game Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang. The study identified 43 language registers used during a specific match between Indonesia and the Philippines. These registers were classified into individual words (19 instances) and phrases (24 instances). Haryani (2021) entitled "A Register Analysis of Photographers Commentaries on Social Community (Instagram)" This study focused on analyzing the linguistic aspects of form, meaning, and motives found in Rembang photographers' comments on Instagram, a social media platform.

In this study, the proplayers did not use the proper terms in their domain, so it could not be fully understood. Pro players often use several terms in the form of abbreviations, fragments, acronyms, and contractions as registers in the Moblie Legend game. The use of registers also seems to have certain motives. From the description above, this research aims to identify the form of the register, the meaning of the register, and the function of the register.

Despite existing studies on language use in gaming, there is a gap in understanding the specific linguistic strategies employed by professional players in high-stakes environments. This study addresses this gap by providing a detailed analysis of the registers used by the Onic e-sports team. The significance of this study lies in its potential to enhance our understanding of how professional gamers communicate, which can inform the development of more effective communication strategies in e-sports and contribute to broader research on language use in digital and collaborative contexts.

## METHOD

This research is descriptive qualitative research that emphasizes meaning and understanding. The subject of this research is the communication between pro players of the Onic e-sports team during matches in the Mobile Legends game. This team was chosen due to its prominence and success in the e-sports community, making it a rich source of data for examining the unique linguistic strategies employed by professional gamers.

The data consists of registers used in team conversations, including words and phrases. The data sources were recordings from the official Onic e-sports YouTube account. The research process involved three main steps: first, watching and listening to several videos from the Onic e-sports YouTube channel; second, noting the registers used in the videos; and third, analyzing and classifying these registers according to their form.

For the theoretical basis, this study uses Halliday's theory of register analysis, which focuses on field (the subject matter or activity), tenor (the participants and their relationships), and mode (the channel of communication). This framework allows for a comprehensive analysis of the registers, examining not only their forms and meanings but also their functions and the contexts in which they are used. By applying this theory, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the linguistic dynamics within professional gaming teams.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Form of Register

The various registers obtained by researchers are identified based on the form and meaning of the register. The total register data found was 18 data. The register is divided into word lingual units, and phrase lingual units in the form of noun phrases, verb phrases, and adverbial phrases.

#### a. Lingual Unit of Words

##### 1) *Ulti*.

In Mobile Legends, "Ulti" refers to the ultimate skill, the last or most powerful skill a hero possesses.

##### 2) *Gass*.

While in the real world it means to accelerate for a motor to run, in Mobile Legends, "Gass" conveys the idea of attacking, chasing enemies, or engaging in combat.

##### 3) *Cover*

This term is used to describe the act of guarding, assisting, or saving teammates who are in difficulty due to being attacked by enemies.

##### 4) *Reset*.

"Reset" is as straightforward as you might think. It signifies that players and teams, after completing a battle or finishing a match, should not dwell on what has already happened.

##### 5) *Dash*.

Like "Blink," "Dash" indicates that a hero's or opponent's skill is currently on cooldown. This is considered essential information for the team.

##### 6) *Kiting*

The meaning of "Kiting" is to lure or pull opponents first, typically during a war when both teams are in a confrontational position.

7) *Missing.*

"Missing" informs teammates that an enemy hero is absent from their designated lane. This could imply that the enemy might be preparing for an ambush.

8) *Retri.*

Short for Retribution, it is a spell or mantra that aids in killing creeps or jungle monsters such as turtle and lord more quickly.

9) *Flicker.*

Similar to Retribution, Flicker is a commonly used spell for blinking or dashing. Players use this term to communicate that their Flicker spell or the enemy's has been utilized.

10) *Timing.*

Refers to the precise moment or the right decision. This term is used when the shout caller is making decisions, especially in waiting for the perfect timing to initiate a hero abduction or engage in a war.

11) *Purify.*

"Purify" is a frequently used spell in Mobile Legends. Its purpose is to cleanse or interrupt enemy skills targeting us. Typically, this word indicates that either the enemy's or our team's spell has been used, providing information on whether to attack the opponent or vice versa.

12) *Gacor.*

This Indonesian term, similar to cool, excellent, or great, is often used as a mood booster for our team. It serves as an expression of appreciation when the team performs impressive actions.

13) *13. Farming.*

As you might know, "Farming" is the process of collecting resources extensively to accumulate more gold quickly. In Mobile Legends, gold significantly influences items that can make characters stronger.

14) *Immo.*

"Immo," a clipping for Immortal, refers to an item that acts like having two lives. This term conveys information that a team or an opponent has purchased this item or indicates that the team or opponent no longer has the Immortal effect, meaning their extra life has been used.

15) *Poke.*

In Indonesian, "Poke" can be interpreted as poking or harassing. So, this term is a command for the team to harass or poke the enemy slowly, causing the enemy's health to decrease gradually.

The findings reveal a diverse array of gaming terminology prevalent within the Indonesian Mobile Legends Bang Bang community, showcasing various word formation patterns integral to effective gameplay communication. Clipping, as seen in "Immo" for "immortal", "Ulti" for "ultimate", and "Retri" for "Retribution", are common, reflecting a preference for brevity and efficiency in conveying essential concepts. The word formation streamlines communication by

condensing syllables into easily pronounceable words. Clipping allows for the creation of new words or expressions that are easier to pronounce and remember, facilitating quick and effective communication, especially in fast-paced environments like online gaming (Irwin, 2011). The current study's findings align with Pratama & Imperiani (2020) that clipping in gaming terminology not only aids in efficient communication but also contributes to the development of a unique gaming lexicon that reflects the culture and identity of gamers. Additionally, borrowings like "Gacor" from Indonesian are present, as expressions of excitement or encouragement within the gaming context that show the user's identity. The findings support a study by Iskandar (202) that found the use of borrowing words reflects gamers' unique culture and identity, creating a sense of solidarity and shared experience among players. Verbal nouns and gerunds, such as "Farming" and "Kiting," derive from actions or ongoing processes during gameplay, emphasizing the dynamic nature of gaming interactions. Though less common in this set, compounding also plays a role, evident in terms like "Purify" and "Cover," where multiple morphemes combine to convey specific gameplay mechanics. Collectively, these word formation patterns highlight the linguistic creativity and functionality tailored to the needs of the Mobile Legends gaming community, facilitating effective strategy and teamwork during matches.

In addition to the mentioned word formation patterns, terms like "Poke," "Dash," and "Flicker" exhibit further linguistic features common in gaming terminology. These terms may also demonstrate semantic processes, where meanings are condensed or altered to convey specific actions or concepts within the gaming context Kulakova (2021). These terms often undergo semantic shifts or are repurposed from their original meanings to suit the context of Mobile Legends gameplay. "Poke" derives from its original meaning of jabbing or prodding but is now used to instruct players to harass or gradually wear down enemy health during battles. Similarly, "Dash" typically denotes a quick movement or sprint, but in Mobile Legends, it signifies that a hero's or opponent's skill is on cooldown, providing vital information for strategic decision-making. "Flicker," on the other hand, may have retained its literal meaning of a sudden movement or flash, but in the game context, it refers to a specific spell used for teleportation or quick evasion. These terms exemplify the adaptability of language within gaming communities, where words are molded and repurposed to suit the unique demands of gameplay, enhancing communication and coordination among players.

## b. Lingual Unit of Phrase

### 1) *Nice Trade*

This term denotes an exchange in which the outcome is considered fair. It typically occurs when a teammate successfully eliminates the enemy's carry hero while sacrificing oneself or another teammate.

### 2) *WON*

"WON" is an abbreviation of Wind of Nature can be seen as a life-saving spell for oneself, the team, or against enemies. The difference is that WON is an item providing temporary immunity to physical damage from enemies.

### 3) *Musuh Low*

This sentence is a combination of Indonesian, namely "Musuh" and English, namely "Low". and this word is information for the team that the enemy's health is low or on the verge of defeat.

### 4) *Buying time*

This phrase refers to act of depleting the enemy's skills and keeping the enemy busy against one of the team to give his teammates a chance to gather or take another advantage.

The abbreviations and acronyms, as seen in "WON" for "Wind of Nature," reflecting the tendency to shorten lengthy terms for convenience during communication. The use of abbreviations and acronyms facilitates quick communication in high-pressure situations. Barnett & Doubleday (2020) highlights the growth of acronyms in the scientific literature, highlighting the increased use of acronyms over time. This trend aligns with the practice of abbreviating terms for ease of communication, as observed in gaming environments. Additionally, the hybridization of languages, as demonstrated in "Musuh Low," where Indonesian and English are combined to convey specific gameplay information, underscores the linguistic diversity within gaming communities. Blending languages in gaming communities, such as in terms like "Musuh Low" which combines Indonesian and English, is a form of code-switching that serves various functions, including expressing cultural identity, conveying nuanced meanings, and promoting inclusivity among players from diverse backgrounds. The findings of the current study support a study by Rizkyna et al. (2021) that examines the analysis of mixed Indonesian language with other languages on social media, shedding light on the unique language form known as Indoglish, a fusion of English and Indonesian. This source underscores the distinctiveness of language blending and codeswitching, reflecting the cultural identity and linguistic diversity inherent in communication practices.

## 2. The Function of Register

### a. Enhancing Communication

The use of registers enhances communication effectiveness. Concise and clear terms have the same meanings as our primary language but are adapted to English, which serves as the intermediate language for players and information-sharing. It also serves as a global language to facilitate easier understanding of these terms within the community. The use of registers in online gaming indeed significantly enhances communication effectiveness by providing players with a standardized set of concise and clear terms that are easily understandable and universally accepted within the gaming community. These registers play a crucial role in fostering communication and considerably extending the range of communication types within online gaming environments (Söbke & Broker, 2015). They catalyze communication, enabling players to interact more efficiently and effectively during gameplay (Sirola et al., 2020).

These terms, adapted to English, serve as an intermediate language for players from diverse linguistic backgrounds, allowing them to communicate efficiently and effectively during gameplay and information-sharing. One of the key advantages of using English as the intermediate language in gaming registers is its status as a global language. The extensive use of English as a lingua franca for international communication, along with the effects of globalization, has significantly influenced language policies in non-English-speaking nations (Kirkgöz, 2008). This global status of English facilitates effective communication among gamers from various linguistic backgrounds, creating a platform for interaction and collaboration within the gaming community.

Moreover, the adaptation of registers to English enhances communication effectiveness in online gaming by providing players with a standardized and easily understandable language for communication and information-sharing. This facilitates smoother gameplay and fosters a sense of community and belonging within the gaming community, ultimately enriching the

overall gaming experience for all players involved. Additionally, the use of English in gaming registers aligns with the concept of zero-shot cross-lingual and lightweight monolingual classification of registers, emphasizing the functional similarities of registers across languages for effective communication (Repo et al., 2021).

#### b. Creating Atmosphere and Hype

The use of registers to increase hype and ambience. By immersing players in captivating narratives and scenarios, gaming registers can boost emotional involvement, establish connections with characters, and mitigate the impact of counterarguments, thereby enhancing player engagement and immersion (Forsyth & Malone, 2018). In this study, several words can improve the atmosphere in a match or game, including "Gacorr" and "Nice". These words are very often used in games with the aim of appreciation and motivation so that friends are more enthusiastic and enjoy the match.

"Nice" is a straightforward expression of approval or admiration often used to acknowledge impressive plays, successful maneuvers, or skillful actions performed by teammates or opponents. By using this term, players can boost morale, create a sense of achievement, and encourage continued effort and engagement throughout the match. It serves as a form of positive reinforcement that can uplift spirits and increase motivation among players.

Similarly, "Gacorr" serves a similar purpose but with a more specific cultural context. It is an Indonesian term that conveys excitement, enthusiasm, and appreciation for exceptional gameplay or outstanding performances. When used in matches, "Gacorr" creates a lively and energetic atmosphere, encouraging players to strive for excellence and celebrate each other's successes. It fosters a sense of camaraderie and solidarity within the team, promoting teamwork and collaboration towards a common goal. These terms play a crucial role in shaping the ambience of matches by infusing them with positivity, encouragement, and excitement. They contribute to a more enjoyable gaming experience by fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where players feel valued, motivated, and engaged.

Additionally, using such terms helps build stronger bonds and friendships among players, as they celebrate victories, overcome challenges, and share memorable moments together. Overall, using registers to increase hype and ambience in online gaming enhances the overall enjoyment and satisfaction of players, contributing to a vibrant and dynamic gaming community.

#### c. Facilitating Cross-Cultural Communication

The existence of registers bridges communication between players. The Onic Esport team has two individuals from outside Indonesia, specifically from the Philippines. The use of register such as "Buying time, Nice Trade, Cover, missing, etc." can assist them in communication as an intermediate language, whether in-game or in their daily activities. This illustrates that the use of registers can distinguish language domains from one another.

Registers like "Buying time" and "Cover" convey specific strategies or actions in gameplay that transcend language barriers. These terms are universally understood within the gaming community and provide a standardized vocabulary for discussing tactics and coordinating moves during matches. By adopting these registers, players can effectively convey their intentions, coordinate with teammates, and respond to in-game situations, regardless of their native languages.

Moreover, the use of registers in the Onic Esport team illustrates how they can serve to distinguish language domains from one another. While players may come from different linguistic backgrounds, the shared adoption of registers creates a distinct language domain specific to gaming communication. This allows players to compartmentalize their language use, seamlessly transitioning between registers for gaming purposes and their respective native languages for other contexts.

Furthermore, communicating effectively through registers strengthens team cohesion and synergy. When players can understand and respond to each other's calls and strategies using shared registers, it fosters a sense of unity and teamwork within the team. This, in turn, contributes to improved performance and success in competitive gaming, as players can coordinate more efficiently and effectively on the battlefield.

Using registers is a powerful tool for bridging communication barriers between players from different linguistic backgrounds, fostering teamwork, and enhancing overall performance. Furthermore, bridging the society in online gaming communities demonstrates how diverse populations can unite around shared contexts, facilitated by the use of registers and common communication practices (Gandolfi et al., 2021). In multicultural teams like Onic Esport, registers facilitate seamless communication and coordination, allowing players to transcend language differences and work together towards shared goals in the world of competitive gaming.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis that has been carried out, there are 18 data registers used by players from the Onic Esport Indonesia team in the ONIC vs ECHO MSC Semifinal and ONIC vs BLACKLIST INTERNATIONAL Grand final matches. The form of register terms is classified into word lingual units, including clipping, borrowing words, verbal nouns and gerunds, and gaming terms. The study found the register forms in acronyms, abbreviations, and code-mixing in the phrase lingual units. Then, three register functions are used by players from the Onic Esport Indonesia team in Mobile Legends: a) using registers to make communication more effective; b) registers to increase hype and atmosphere; c) the existence of registers bridges communication between players. This study demonstrates that the use of specific registers by the Onic Esports team is integral to their in-game communication, contributing to their overall coordination and performance. These findings provide insights into the linguistic strategies of professional gamers, highlighting both the functional and motivational aspects of register use in e-sports.

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