VIDEO GAMES: AN INNOVATIVE WAY TO MASTER ENGLISH

Dina Rafidiyah
Muhammad Julian Adhitama
Denny Wianto

English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
University of Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin
Email: rafidiyahdina@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The best way to learn a language is by immersing yourself into it. One way to immerse into English is by using video games as one of the innovative ways to master English. This media enables gamers to get exposed to the target language since they play it for long times. The aim of this paper is to find out the reason why the subjects of the present research play video games and how it can help them to learn English. Lastly, this paper also wants to find out how viable applying video game in classroom's lesson. The research methodology is phenomenology approach. The data were garnered from in-depth interview, the participants answered the questions correctly and coherently to be considered having good English. Subjects of this research are six people with different backgrounds; they were united by their love of video games and their use of English in video games online community. The results of this study were the subjects play video game to entertain themselves through gameplay, story-driven, competitiveness of the game, interaction with other players and releasing stress. All participants agreed that video games help much in improving their English ability. Almost all participants considered that video games could be brought ito English classes, with some considerations

Keywords: Video Games, Innovative Way, Phenomenology Approach

INTRODUCTION

Video games have been around for more than 20 years and it has become so advanced. It is practically a simulation rather than mere game. Firstly, video game graphic has become more realistic recently and it helps with the immersion. Secondly, talent and work that have been put into the voice and the character of model also contribute to an interesting narration pulling players into the game world. Lastly, the control for video games has been refined where someone can play without having to spare a thought on the controller when playing which lead them to be absorbed in the game.

Using game-based approach from the early ages of schooling helped students to gain the language not as a set of rules, but as the tool of communication. Playful atmosphere can stimulate students' motivation, make students feel confident and safe, and create positive attitudes toward foreign language learning. Therefore, game-based teaching method could be integrated with English in the school curriculum (Griva, Semoglou, & Geladari, 2010).

Games can motivate students to learn subject because of three reasons: basic information was given, therefore, students can win the game, learning content is related to the curricula, and multy-sensory engagement can support experiential learning (Furió, Juan, Seguí, & Vivó, 2015). We can use video games for the same reasons. This is very important to consider how children these days are familiar with technology, much more technologically literate than elder person at times. It will also help them to be interested with learning English because they have been playing video game ever since they were still in elementary.

Marcellino (2008) mentioned that there are many obstacles for English teachers in Indonesia to apply competence based, because of two sides' limitations. On one hand, teachers do not have the ability to master English, so they are incompetent to teach the language. The teachers also fail to

make students intrigued enough for them to be motivated in learning English. One of the reasons is that how teachers revert to use traditional way of teaching which led to boredom.

On the other hand, students' culture may hinder them from being active in classroom. They are afraid of expressing their English because their peers perceive this is arrogant or show off. They are also afraid of making mistakes, so the other students will make fun of them. They also never object if the teacher make mistakes.

Therefore, we need to find new way to make teachers and students engaged in the classroom. This is why Video Game is one of the ways to be utilized in classroom. Not only it is effective, it is also favorable by students as deduced in a qualitative research by Barr (2018) where he mentioned that video game help with their skills in communication, resourcefulness, and adaptability. Not only that, video game can be a catalyst for students' interaction and discussion with their peers. This might also help students' higher order thinking skills, or HOTS.

Out-of-School exposure can be one solution to develop learners' language proficiency. Therefore, classroom interaction could not help much. According to Wilde, Brysbaert, & Eychmans (2017), the most out-of-school activities that can influence the Dutch-speaking-children (aged 10-12) are gaming, social media using, and speaking.

The participants of the research is those who love playing games. They have often interacted with those from overseas. Next, they have been playing video game since they were young. This phenomenon is "Incidental Language Learning" where someone acquires new words and structure through simply engaging in a communicative activities, or in other word, they are learning the meaning based on context rather than from theory (Hulstijn, 2008).

The purposes of this paper are to find out the reason why the subjects of the present research play video games and how it can help them to learn English. Lastly, this paper also wants to find out how viable applying video game in classroom's lesson.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Using video games for teaching language skills and vocabulary are very common in several studies. Yudintseva (2015) held synthesis of twenty-six researches to identify digital game-based on second language learning. He mentioned that there are many positive effects of video games, especially in gaining new vocabulary. Some commercial games have benefits also in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, depending on gaming experience, learners' gender, specific educational objectives, and second language proficiency.

One of the studies was done by Parsayi & Soyoof (2018) about video games related to language learning also story telling. The study used qualitative approach for ten EFL and ESL from 18 – 26 years learners. Video games help the participants with listening and reading skills, so they can win the game.

In the case of violent video game exposure (VVE), there is a study about the negative effect by Greitemeyer (2018). This quantitative research involved 499 women and 499 men, about reported aggressive behavior in the past six months. The result is VVE has bad impact for not only the players but also their environments or social network.

METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative approach 'Phenomenology Study', to gain in depth information through interview (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Respondents were invited through online post. The invitation was posted on Facebook. The researcher could interview 6 respondents.

The respondents came from various backgrounds. Respondent 1 (R1) was a College student in 7th semester majoring communication. Respondent 2 (R2) was a high school student in his 3rd year, so were Respondent (R5) and Respondent (R6). Respondent 3 (R3) was interactive fiction author. Respondent 4 (R4) has just graduated from college. What these respondents shared were their love playing video games and how they learned English through video games.

The interview was conducted using Discord server. Discord is an online chat and call just like Skype. However, Discord has stable connection and is much more reliable than Skype. The interviews itself were done in real time and recorded using Audacity. After that, the recorded interviews were transcribed and encoded.

The analysis was to interpret the meaning of the experiences of each respondents about playing video games and their reflection about how they learnt English. As the result, we can gain detailed description about the phenomenon, then compare it with the previous researches to enrich the analysis (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What do they like from video games?

- R1 answered with immersive gameplay and story driven content. He elaborated more by adding "…. I always love roleplaying. When I feel I am the character, participate in their combat and shenanigans and building fictional relationship either for purely event or for pursuing late-game gear by maximize the affection. …" He also added "…And also their interaction to player that feels so real, like a person. Relying on us (Player) and acknowledge that we are useful in our own way."
- R2 also answered the same as R1 by answering with stories (of the game)
- R3 concur with two of the previous respondent and add "… The competitive nature behind the game, like Pokemon VGC for example.
- R4 played game for the story and the game mechanic or in another word, gameplay.
- R5 mentioned, "I like to be an OP character basically a god that control console command." He added, "for first person shooter, I just like to shoot people using a Sniper Rifle or be a pilot"
- R6 mentioned that Video games could release stress. He also added "... It's great to meet other people online, but if you play offline, it can still be entertaining."

From these, we can conclude that most of these people played video games for their stories. This was appropriate considering most of video games text and dialogues come from the story. This can be quite an incentive because when someone is curious about something and try to understand it themselves, the information will be effectively stored in their memory.

Not only that, video games can release stress. This is also true considering video game is created for entertainment purposes. It can make them relaxed. This is perfect for unconscious learning method. While it is not effective in one setting, from sheer quantity of times people play video game, it can build up on par with people that learn English in class maybe even more.

Based on your experience, does video game help you practice your English? How so?
- R1 said, "Absolutely. It helps me remember some difficult word and applying more direct conversation, especially fantasy-driven content."
- R2 mentioned, "Yes, It helps a lot. I can answer some questions right because of the tenses for the example like 'Where is my apple?',

'I ate it yesterday'. If I don't know the tenses i will reply with I eat it"
- R3 confirmed this and elaborate it with, "…English has been part of my life and thanks to knowing a bit of English, I got into my current job and met lots of people in the forum. Imagine if I didn't know any English my life would be in completely different one and not to mention I wouldn't be here right now. (laugh)"
- R4 agreed then added "I learn more English words that's (did) not come from study in school from video game"
- R5 answered by "yes, video games help me learning English. from the reading, listening, and grammar. Since almost all of the Offline games, including Visual Novel, RPG, and others have what they call 'Conversation' and 'Choosing which is the good option or bad option' by conversation, for RPG we do follow the quest and then meeting the NPC and then kill him. Oh sorry, and then talking about the quest"
- R6 said "Basically true. Learning English pronunciation. For example there are three way of saying 'tangga' in English, ladder, stairs, and steps. Most people only knows that English only consist of bad words, but there are much more than that."

In conclusion, all respondents agree with it, albeit with different reasoning.

What is your thought if video games are incorporated with English materials?

- R1 welcomed the idea and said "That's the kind of English lecture I want. It is easier to understand. Not by textbook, but real example."
- R2 elaborated more with, "…people have their own ways of learning like reading a text, listening someone's conversation, and usually doing the same activity for a long time will make us bored but games have their own ways to makes things interesting"
- R3 has mixed reaction in the subject matter, "An interesting idea, if it makes to learn English fun and easy, then I am all out for it. But then again, there are people who don't like video games, so it might depends on the person."
- R4 followed similar vein with what R3 has told us, "(I) agree with it, since I already seen one in my university before, but I think not all school gonna accept that method. Some people, especially elders, only think games as games. (And) just for fun purpose only."

- R5 disagree with the notion, however concur that it may work but only if the game choice is appropriate to use.
- R6 lament the fact that video game has bad reputation in education and disagree with the notion.

1/3 (R1 and R2) completely agree with the idea. R1 implied that he become bored with using textbook in lesson and really want to use another mean of learning. R2 added how video games have the accessibility for those that learn visually, auditory, and kinistetic. After all, video game is built from several components such as visual, audio, and the mean to interact with it.

Another 1/3 (R3 and R4) are not completely sure with the notion. While they do like the idea, they have several issues when it comes to video games. One of the issues is that how only several people like video games. Another is that how video game may not be accepted because some peole see this is only an entertainment without looking as a media to learn (Abbasi & Hadadi, 2014).

The last 1/3 (R5 and R6) disagree with the proposal. R5 went into a tangent and closed off with "… I couldn't recommend just choosing any games for teaching". R6 told the researchers that video game is infamous in education. Many children can be addicted to video game instead of learning with it. It is certainly a hard thing to do to balance it.

CONCLUSION

Video games have been around for quite a while. From a game where you are playing a classic game like *pong* to full-blown AAA grade that make the game more challenging and exciting. This challenge and excitement may be used as media of learning. However, conventional language teaching still has gaps for more innovative and fun way to learn language.

The reasons gamers play video game are gameplay, story, competitive nature, interaction with other players, and releasing stress. Moreover, all participants agree that video games improve their English. Lastly, it can be concluded that video games can be applied to English class with some consideration.

ACKNOLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

Abbasi, H., & Hadadi, A. (2014). The Possible Negative Outcomes of Putting Learners in Spotlight. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *98*, 3–8. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.381

Ahadi, S. D., & Marandi, S. S. (2014). Social Software in the Classroom: The Case of Wikis for Scaffolding. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *98*, 100–108. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.394

Barr, M. (2018). Student attitudes to games-based skills development : Learning from video games in higher education. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *80*, 283–294. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.11.030

Furió, D., Juan, M. C., Seguí, I., & Vivó, R. (2015). Mobile learning vs. traditional classroom lessons: A comparative study. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *31*(3), 189–201. http://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12071

Greitemeyer, T. (2018). The spreading impact of playing violent video games on aggression. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *80*, 216–219. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.11.022

Griva, E., Semoglou, K., & Geladari, A. (2010). Early foreign language learning: Implementation of a project in a game-based context. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *2*(2), 3700–3705. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.575

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2017). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 2: Context, research questions and designs. *The European Journal of General Practice*, *23*(1), 274–279. http://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375090

Marcellino, M. (2008). English language teaching in Indonesia: A continuous challenge in education and cultural diversity. *TEFLIN Journal*, *19*(1), 57–69.

Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European Journal of General Practice*, *24*(1), 9–18. http://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091

Parsayi, F., & Soyoof, A. (2018). Video games:

The interface between langugae learning and storytelling. *International Journal of Pedagogies & Learning*, *13*(2), 103–118.

Wilde, V. De, Brysbaert, M., & Eychmans, J. (2017). *Learning English through out-of-school exposure. Which levels of lanuage proficiency are attained and which types of* *input are important? Artevelde University College Ghent* (Vol. 91).

Yudintseva, A. (2015). Synthesis of research on video games for the four second language skills and vocabulary practice. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, *03*(11), 81–98. http://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2015.311011