



BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

THE INFLUENCE OF VIDEO GAMES IN YOUNG ADULTS FOR LEARNING ENGLISH

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Languages for the degree of

LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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ENGLISH

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Table of contents

Chapter I: Introduction	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Setting the topic	2
1.3 Purpose of the thesis	2
1.4 Significance of the project	3
1.5 Research questions	4
1.6 Keywords	4
Chapter II: Literature Review	6
2.1 Video games	6
2.1.1 Following instructions	6
2.1.2 Problem solving and logic	8
2.1.3 Hand-eye coordination, fine motor and spatial skills	10
2.2 Video game learning approach	10
2.2.1 Motivation	12
2.2.2 Video games for learning a language	13
2.2.3 Video games are a natural way for learning a language	14
2.3 Kind of video games	18
2.3.1 Life simulation	19

2.3.2 MMORPG	20
2.3.3 UNI-GAME: Social skills and knowledge training	22
Chapter III: Methodology	25
3.1 Context	25
3.1.1 Participants	25
3.2 Method	25
3.2.1 Sample	26
3.2.2 Techniques	26
3.2.3 Tool	26
3.3 Instruments	26
3.3.1 Interview	27
3.3.2 Observation Formats	30
Chapter IV: Findings	31
4.1 Inquiries	31
4.2 Preliminary results	31
4.2.1 Usage of video games	32
4.2.2 Language choice	33
4.2.3 Instructions	35
4.2.4 Learning phrases	37

4.2.5 Improving English level through video games	37
4.2.6 Enjoying video games while learning	38
4.2.7 Online gameplay	40
4.2.8 Specific video games for specific areas	42
4.3 Observation	42
4.4 Conclusions	45
Chapter V: Conclusions	47
5.1 Conclusions	47
5.2 Limitations	50
5.3 Recommendations	50
5.3.1 Further research	51
5.3.2. Pedagogical Implications	51
5.4 Personal experiences	51
References	53
Appendix 1	56
Appendix 2	58

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. 1 OVERVIEW

The use of video games have been increased for the last 20 years. Many scientists and psychologists find that video games can actually have many benefits – the main one being making kids smart. "Videogames change your brain," according to University of Wisconsin psychologist C. Shawn Green (2010). Playing video games change the brain's physical structure the same way as do learning to read, playing the piano, or navigating using a map. Much like exercise can build muscle, the powerful combination of concentration and rewarding surges of neurotransmitters like dopamine strengthen neural circuits can build the brain. Video Games have come a long way since their first introduction into the main stream. With video games becoming more sophisticated and using advanced technology, it seems as if video games are closing in on the gap between games and reality and are a useful tool for learning English.

Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen, an English professor at the University of Helsinki (2010), said the role playing in the games mimics everyday conversation. "The relationship between video games and grades is so indisputable that it is important to recognize its importance in language learning. Nowadays, teachers use the Internet to show material to students, for example, videos on Youtube, but it's passive. Teachers should encourage the active use of video games among all students to see if they have a good impact, even among girls who do not play outside of class" said Tanskanen. She also mentioned " "If you hear English every day, it's just a matter of time before you learn it."

A common 'technology' associated with traditional educational environments is the chalkboard. The teacher stands in front of it and lectures to the students sitting in the classroom. Today's students, though, are experiential learners who multitask and prefer to

learn by “seeking, sieving, and synthesizing” (Dede, 2005, p. 7) rather than passively listening.

The use of video games for a long time can be helpful for the learner, the more time they play the more they learn. This active contact with the language provides a real environment between the language and the learner.

1.2 SETTING THE TOPIC

It has been observed in "La Plaza de la Tecnología", there are young adults playing video games but at the same time inferring the meaning of the English instruction. During this activity I can see they are both enjoying the game and learning English.

The effectiveness of using educational software programs found positive effects in the player and they can be a good tool to improve English in young adults. Having contact with them allow people to learn a lot of things while they enjoy the experience of the game itself.

Most of the playable video games are in English even though they are made in Japan, and young adults (people which consume this product in high levels) feel the necessity to play them, and the first thing they do is playing the game without a clue, and this exposure of the product makes them learn English and encourage them to learn more about the language.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE THESIS

This project has the purpose to describe how video games help young adults to learn English in "La Plaza de la Tecnología". The everyday contact with video games improve their language skills in a significant way. Despite the stuff they can learn within the classroom, spending hours playing video games in English increase their vocabulary, grammar, etc. The exposure to video games in English helps young adults to learn

"Unconsciously" the language. These individuals learn by doing and are actively seeking out the cognitive challenges presented in video games (Steinkuehler, 2005). Because these

students have been exposed to technologies, like video games, educational theories that worked in the past may not in a technology-focused world (Prenkysy, 2001).

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT

As an English learner I can say I discovered many things by playing video games and one of them was learning English with them. The experiences I lived while playing video games made me feel better with my level of English, seeing my classmates in all the school I attended having problems with the language made me feel good and comparing their grades with mines, made me felt much better, so I assumed that was because I played video games in which English was the only way to express what I need and the only manner to advance within the game - especially the ones that need interaction with others-.

The frustration I felt the first time when I tried to talked to a random person was very awful, I could not comprehend what he was trying to tell me and I was incapable of saying a sentence that he could understand. However that experience made me to learn English by my own and also by playing the game assuming the things that happened there, hearing and reading the others, watching the videos, the activities the characters were doing, how the story of the game was getting closer to the end, the expressions the others said etc. It did not matter If the others were typing a lot of words that I could not understand at the very beginning, as the time went by I comprehend the situation and I was able to make progress in the game while learning English in all forms, from grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, idioms to rude words.

LEI and LEMO's students had not had the chance to talk about this type of topic, probably because they are not the kind of people who love video games and they were not exposed to them when they were children, and now as young adults the interest on this sort of dynamics are not something that seems important to them. I consider video games applied to classes or as an extra class are hard because they work on a different educational philosophy than our current education system where most of the time you adopt a passive attitude and the classes are not taught at your speed of learning, while video games are an interactive way in which players can progress at their own pace while trying and failing in a safe environment. A well-designed video game offers a balance of challenges and rewards

that continually pushes players to the limits of their knowledge and skills. If LEI's students take into account this activity as a good tool for learning English just like a Conversational Workshop or going to CAAT, get a book and read it, they can expand the opportunities they will give to their future students as well as themselves.

LEI students do not have an area of video games but we have Biblioteca Central from BUAP where you can play X-box for free. Taking into account this feature of the University we can take advantage of this by selecting several games for the students and then make an invitation to all of them to try them for a few minutes. Ask them how they felt about this experience and if they felt they are learning English. Also video games can be added to the CAAT building as a new format for learning a foreign language. The exposure of this unusual activities within the school can wake up interest among the students to come back to the uninhabited CAAT. Having new ideas using technology and the correct materials to do it, in this case choosing the most effective video games for learning a foreign language, can have a positive effect in the students. Moreover, there are a lot of video games about medicine, math, physics, literature, etc than can be useful for those who are interested in the translation area or for the people who come from other faculties and would love to learn more about their major in the language they are learning.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do video games help young adults to learn English in La Plaza de la Tecnología?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of playing video games in English in La Plaza de la Tecnología?
3. What video games are adequate for young adults to learn English?

1.6 KEY WORDS

The following definitions were taken from www.urbandictionary.com as well as an addition from my own knowledge about this topic.

Video game. An electronic game that involves human interaction with a user interface to generate visual feedback on a video device.

RPG. A game in which players assume the roles of characters in a fictional setting. Players take responsibility for acting out these roles within a narrative, either through literal acting, or through a process of structured decision-making or character development. Actions taken within many games succeed or fail according to a formal system of rules and guidelines Internet.

The Internet. It is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet protocol suite to serve billions of users worldwide.

Technology. It is the making, modification, usage, and knowledge of tools, machines, techniques, crafts, systems, methods of organization, in order to solve a problem, improve a preexisting solution to a problem, achieve a goal or perform a specific function.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 VIDEO GAMES

People may have asked if computer games are destroying our brain or if the hours spent playing them is a waste of time. However, there are many things that should be known for everyone. People possess the viewpoint that video games lead people to become murders, thieves, or lazy humans, and they refuse to see any other side to the coin. While it may be true that excessive playing of video games may lead to harmful mindsets, lazy attitudes, and lack of reality, but that is not to say that video games are bad. For someone who is able to expand his mind, can see that video games show the opposite result. The statements below will introduce teachers to a radical idea: video games can be good for learning a language.

Shaffer (2006) has compelling arguments for the educational power of games that can serve as tools to help people think and learn about real world problems and their solutions. He mentions that video games are significant because they let us think in new ways, which is how the people need to see these technology tools.

While playing video games, it gives to the brain a real workout. In many video games, the skills required to win involve abstract and high level thinking. Sometimes these skills are not even taught at school (at least during the first years). Some of the mental skills trained by video games include:

2.1.1 Following instructions

For many adolescent language learners, the suggestion of playing an educational software title unfortunately brings images of silly environments, and the encourage to play them is not developed because they think video games are for children, but many of video games require foreign language vocabulary before being able to advance during the game.

Sometimes people are interested in video games because they seem amazing, the graphics look very good and the story too, but when they try to play and see they are in a different language their motivation to learn the language increase because they already "fell in love" with the game play. So the people will make the necessary effort to overcome the language barrier ... even learning it by themselves!

It would be nice if everyone could think this, because the interest in something will always bring positive attitudes, and in this case the people can learn the other language, because this motivation comes from the player and not from the teacher who impose the language.

According to a 2009 study made by the Association of Enjoyable Leisure Activities With Psychological and Physical Well-Being: "People often overlook the fact that character dialogue in games helps people develop their reading comprehension skills; score keeping aids their efforts to grasp basic mathematics; and their ability to communicate improves because gaming facilitates. These includes...discussing and sharing, (ii) following directions (understanding prepositions etc.), (iii) giving directions, (iv) answering questions, and (v) having a discussion topic with visual aides to share with others."

Books or films may produce the same effect as video games, but this is not true at all. The first, because it requires constant dependence in a dictionary (while in a game you can further develop the actions without having to understand everything 100%), and the second, some subtitles disappear at speeds that we cannot continue watching (or translate them while watching the movie videogames by their mechanics have most chance to re-read or listen to the same dialogue without any interruption).

There are several important points, especially the repetition and another one is when a person advances within the video game, when sticking in an RPG game, people have the opportunity to talk to everyone to find out what you have to do. Since the dialogues are repeated constantly, you could consult them again and again. Moreover the dialogues displayed during the game experience shows a lot of instruction for the player, in some cases he has to answer with yes/no questions and also characters from the game ask him to

share what he has learned since he started his journey. The world of video games facilitates the interaction between the computer and the player, just like a conventional conversation.

2.1.2 Problem solving and logic

Consider the following quote, “Games are widely used as educational tools, not just for pilots, soldiers and surgeons, but also in schools and businesses ... Games require players to construct hypotheses, solve problems, develop strategies, learn the rules of the in-game world through trial and error. Gamers must also be able to juggle several different tasks, evaluate risks and make quick decisions.... Playing games is, thus, an ideal form of preparation for the workplace of the 21st century, as some forward-thinking firms are already starting to realize.” (Entertainment Software Association, 2006)

Video games are often perceived to be a way of relaxing and switching off from any brain taxing issues. While this is partially correct, there are plenty of games available that require brain power and lateral thinking in order for people to be successful. Here is where the problem solving and logic take part. These games cannot seem fun at the first time, but if people give them a try you will not regret, they are no less fun to play than an average first person shooter or racing game and in most cases, can be far more rewarding when people succeed.

When a person sits in front of a video game, his brain does not go dead or blank out. On the contrary, the challenges of the game bring about an alertness, your brain wakes up. These challenges allow the opportunity for improvement in quick-thinking skills and the ability to adapt to whatever the circumstance. Many video games also present an aspect of logic, take the Mario Series for example. On the face of it, the games are just a series of platform levels from which people get from 1 to 2. However, if they have not done something in a particular order, they will have missed a specific item and the game will not allow them to continue. Maybe they notice a tube in the clouds but have no way of getting to it with a normal jump. In this scenario the person will need to assess all of the objects in order to reach it.

People have to think in different ways to make their character high enough to reach the tube or maybe people will need someone else help to do it. As people can see, what started out as a fun game to kill some time has now turned into a game that is requiring thought and a high amount of logical processing, this kind of obstacles require carefully thought-out moves and decisions in order to conquer the challenges.

Logic games have a big part to play in the development of gamers, old and young alike. With more people playing video games than ever before, games that require lateral thinking and the application of logic could offer a real benefit as people spend more time in front of their console than any other leisure activity. The challenges presented in good-quality games can lead players to a better ability to solve problems, think logically, adapt quickly, and act accordingly based on a variety of different situations. With this said, video games can be seen in a much better way.

James Paul Gee (2010), professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, says: "Playing a video game is similar to working through a science problem. Like students in a laboratory, gamers must come up with a hypothesis". For instance, players in some games constantly try out combinations of weapons and powers to use to defeat a foe. They try a lot of combination until they find the best one, if one does not work, they change it and try the next one. Video games are fundamental to learning, they are goal-driven experiences and force young gamers to read to get instructions, follow storylines of games, and get information from the game texts. Also, using math skills is important to win in many games that involves quantitative analysis like managing resources. Taking into account a famous MMORPG called Diablo III, people need not only math skills but also programming skills, without these aspects people cannot success. Some right combinations of skills will stay people alive and the monsters dead. There are obviously many ways to do it but without looking at the numbers the frustration for getting better will be more.

2.1.3 Hand-eye coordination, fine motor and spatial skills.

The BBC news reported in May of 2003 that United States scientists have found that regular players of shooting games have much better visual skills than most of the population. The researchers have shown that gamers were particularly good at spotting details in busy, confusing scenes and could cope with more distractions than average.

The scientists also found that "with a little game playing the skills of anyone can be improved". (BBC News, 2003)

In shooting games, the character may be running and shooting at the same time. This requires the real-world player to keep track of the position of the character, where he is heading, their speed, where the gun is aiming, if the gunfire is hitting the enemy, and so on. All these factors need to be taken into account, and then the player must then coordinate the brain's interpretation and reaction with the movement in their hands and fingertips. This process requires a great deal of eye-hand coordination and visual-spatial ability to be successful.

One article by the Associated Press quipped that, "All those years on the couch playing Nintendo and PlayStation appear to be paying off for surgeons." The article goes on to explain that researchers found that "doctors who spent at least three hours a week playing video games made about 37 percent fewer mistakes in laparoscopic surgery and performed the task 27 % faster than their counterparts who did not play video games". (Dobnik, V., 2004). Surgeons make less errors by playing video games: Three hours a week decreased mistakes. Associated Press.

2.2 VIDEO GAME LEARNING APPROACH

Games have been recognized as being a good tool to promote learners to actively participate in learning activities (Alessi & Trollip, 1984; Baid & Lambert, 2010; Kirikkaya, ER , & Vurkaya, 2010; Huizenga, Akkerman, Admiraal, & Dam, 2009). Researchers have indicated that game-based learning could be the best way to trigger students' learning motivation (Provost, 1990; Papastergiou, 2009a; Dickey, 2010; Huang, 2010; Tüzün, Yılmaz-Soylu, Karaku , nal, & Kızılkaya, 2009). In addition, it has been reported that a

game-based learning approach might provide a good chance to stimulate children's abstract thinking during the process of cognitive development, and further foster their higher order thinking ability (Carbonaro, Szafron, Cutumisu, & Schaeffer, 2010). Carroll (1982) stated that computer games are able to boost motivation owing to some characteristics, such as adventure, challenge and freshness. Therefore, if teachers are able to apply computer games to teaching,

students can not only have better learning achievements, but also learn happily via these games.

Several previous studies have demonstrated the ease of use and usefulness features of computer games by applying the game-based learning approach to a variety of learning activities (Bourgonjon, Valcke, Soetaert, & Schellens, 2010; Warren, Dondlinger, & Barab, 2008). For example, Terrell and Rendulic (1996) stated that using computer games for learning in elementary schools can increase the internal motivations and learning achievements of students. Yun, Jiang and Li (2010) indicated that through computer games which focus on nutritional education in primary and secondary schools, the learning motivations and learning achievements of the students can be increased, and their competences and knowledge can be promoted. Papastergiou (2009b) also pointed out that through computer games, children's learning interests are effectively promoted, and they are guided to actively improve their food and drink habits.

There are several theories that are recognized as being relevant to the game-based learning approach, such as cognitive theory and situated learning theory. Cognitive theory emphasizes that learners should master basic skills to further acquire higher-level abilities while learning new things. It also emphasizes that learning processes are progressive and move from simplicity to complexity; moreover, games that are adopted need to stimulate students' learning motivation and make learning more fun (Gagné, 1985). Situated learning theory states that learners should enter learning scenarios to acquire knowledge. The knowledge that is actively explored in the scenarios should not only be useful, but should also be analogical. Therefore, establishing a rich learning scenario enables learners to gain practical problem-solving abilities via observation and behavioral exploration, and a well

designed game is able to provide such a learning scenario (Winn, 1993; Young, 1993; Cuenca López & Martín Cáceres, 2010; Kim, Park, & Baek, 2009).

2.2.1 MOTIVATION

Getting motivation for young adults is not an easy job, they tend to distract in things "more" interesting. One way to get students' attention is technology and video games provide this feature that lead learners to pay attention and feel motivated while learning a language.

"An experience provided in the virtual world can be considered, where people would have a chance to learn incidentally without special effort, similar to small children where the learning process through trial and error is part of life" (Holzinger, 2009)

The design of effective learning bring many questions: Why is learning by experience often more efficient than learning by studying? How to provide the learning experiences needed to respond to current challenges? Research has been focused on how people learn to solve problems and enable them to adopt new ways of reasoning.

According to the authors (Al-Ubaidi et al., 2000) (Maurer, 1999) (Pivec, 2000) (Pivec, 2001) (Dondi et al., 2003) (Dziabenko et al., 2003) (Pivec et al., 2003) "The learning process should be interesting, easy and it should be fun to learn. It also should fit with everyday task and the working environment in order to achieve the optimum results".

Using computer games and games in general for educational purposes offers a variety of knowledge presentations and creates opportunities to apply the knowledge within a virtual world, they support and make easy the learning process

2.2.2 VIDEO GAMES FOR LEARNING A LANGUAGE

While the studies above have shown there are a lot of benefits for surgeons, people who like math and programming, eye-hand coordination, how motivation is an important aspect while learning a language, the video games exhibit that they are more than common tools to pass the time, they actually have a great impact in the learning process, the language skills are not forgotten. Of course, the critical thinking can help to learn language and this is the part we are more interested. Video games introduce us to computer technology and the online world, and as people already noticed we live in a high-tech, sophisticated world where technology is needed for any activity. There are a lot of material we can use on the Internet and if we are in touch with technology our searching will be easier and faster. Moreover, video games make people feel comfortable with the concepts of computing and this gives us more tools for facing the world's problems. If people add that video games make learning fun because of the colors, the animation, the beautiful environment, the sounds, as well as the interactivity and the challenge and the rewards of winning we are getting in a "new world" we have more benefits.

The best way to learn is when the learner is having fun at the same time. This idea is supported by Krashen (1997) "Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill." That's why video games are natural teachers. Having fun gives motivation to keep on practicing, which is the only way to learn skills.

Despite the classes taught in the school where the student may not advance at the same time of the rest of the group, video games increase their self-confidence and self-esteem because in many games, the levels of difficulty are adjustable. Most of the games include a beginner difficulty, where people begin at the easiest level and by constant practicing and slowly building skills they become confident in handling more difficult challenges. Since the cost of failure is lower, people don't fear making mistakes. So, they are ready to take more risks and explore more, and transfer this attitude to real life.

Another important feature for learning a language is the cooperative work within the classroom, players can achieve much more if they have a group of people working together, contributing their different talents and perspectives and, above all, their time.

Margie S. Berns (1984), an expert in the field of communicative language teaching, writes in explaining Firth's view that "Language is interaction; it is interpersonal activity and has a clear relationship with society. In this light, language study has to look at the use (function) of language in context, both its linguistic context (what is uttered before and after a given piece of discourse) and its social, or situational, context (who is speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak)"

Now let's take a look at RPG video games or any cooperative game, they involve multiple players from different countries to work cooperatively with you while achieving your goals. People learn to listen to the ideas of others, formulate plans with others, and distribute tasks based on skills. All online games are played internationally, and this can introduce people to players of different nationalities and cultures. This fosters friendships among different people. While playing with others the communication is necessary, if the player is not allowed to determine the current situation and to interpret what the response might be about a given situation they will not continue playing, and the fun will over. However, the frustration is not presented in these cases, on the contrary, these problems will make the player to learn more the language or to active his brain and find a quick solution.

2.2.3 VIDEO GAMES ARE A NATURAL WAY FOR LEARNING A LANGUAGE

People do not play video games because of their violence. The attraction lies in their being rewarded by awesome displays of explosions, fireworks, and yes, blood splattering. Also, violent games have the most emotional appeal. But these factors are only secondary to what people actually enjoy in these games - the opportunity to develop and master skills and have the freedom to make choices in the game universe in a natural manner.

Lessons in the natural approach focus on understanding messages in the foreign language, and place little or no importance on error correction, drilling or on conscious learning of grammar rules (Ohmaye Echio,1998).

While video games are played players are not punished if they do not know the meaning of a word, perhaps the penalize is about the game's mechanics, how the game play is guided for you. But one advantage is that the grammar errors are not noticeable for the other players, and this make communication easier for non-experiment English speakers. On the other hand if there is not anyone to remark the errors, players tend to never learn. If the player don't get the correct form, it is highly likely he will make the same mistake over and over again. But it is matter of time to notice all the grammar errors because all the players will have more contact with the game in future levels and at one point they will find a similar phrase that they made previously, and people are going to ask if the sentence is correct or not. So a doubt will be arisen and will make people find out who is right, the statement displayed in the video game or their own sentence.

"The aim of the natural approach is to develop communicative skills, and it is primarily intended to be used with beginning learners. It is presented as a set of principles that can apply to a wide range of learners and teaching situations, and concrete objectives depend on the specific context in which it is used". (Richards, Jack C.; Schmidt, Richard, eds. 2010).

Terrell (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Terrell et al, 1997) outlines three basic principles of the approach:

- "Focus of instruction is on communication rather than its form."
- "Speech production comes slowly and is never forced."
- "Early speech goes through natural stages (yes or no response, one- word answers, lists of words, short phrases, complete sentences.)"

Terrell outlines four categories of classroom activities that can facilitate language acquisition. The first category is related to Affective-Humanistic activities which include different aspects such as : dialogues - short and useful - "open" dialogues and interviews - pair work on personal information-

As I mentioned before all RPG games tells a story and within a story there must be dialogues. Usually they are short and very easy to understand, and the most important, they can be repeated as many times as people wish. For making progress in the game people

have to talk to others, read what they say and follow the instructions given or infer the clues they show. Taking into account that these dialogues are part of the hero, which means people use the hero itself and then one can feel like saying those sentences and become part of the game just like the conversations people read in an English book.

In every RPG game this hero displays information about his current equipment or location, the abilities he is using, what kind of character he is, even, in some RPG people are able to customize whatever they want, so here is where anyone can include his personal information by filling all those spaces with own criteria and then share all that information with the others.

Krasher (2007) also mentions the adding of personal charts and tables, preference ranking options, revealing information about oneself and activating the imagination. As I stated before all that personal information is included in the profile, anyone can view the heroes' gear, stats, and skills. How high have someone raises the characters' attributes, what are they wearing in each slot, what are their most prominent gear bonuses, etc. Furthermore, video games include a hierarchy which display who is in the top of a particular case and who is at the bottom. This feature is a challenge for the players because they like competition and they want to be number one, so this motivate them to play more, so the more you play the most the exposure of the language is. And one cannot neglect that video games develop a lot of fascinating new worlds where imagination takes place, while visiting all those landscapes people cannot avoid the idea to create his own in his head. Increasing the imagination is always a good tool for creating stories and most of the time that feature is needed while making role plays or for the literature class.

Another important characteristic is that students need to feel comfortable about the language, they have to get the feeling of making progress, and with several profiles one can track their own game progress. See how many acts have been cleared, what bosses have been defeated in each difficulty, how far have people leveled up all their characters, etc. But besides the multiple characteristics a profile can give an addition option (most of the RPG games have it) to share all the information with others and then people can compare all the things they wish, gear, skills, or anything. Communication is a basic tool for playing video games on the Internet, people are not only freer than the classroom where most of the

time the teacher tells what to do and assigns a topic to present, in here, everyone is free to share the things they love without any restriction and whenever they want, not in a specific time, and as Harmondsworth says:

“The development of language-teaching methods ... has in fact been empirical rather than theory" (Corder, 1973).

With this, I can assure that video games are that empirical theory that make people learn a language more comfortable than sitting in a classroom where everyone is abide by the rules.

The second and third category are related to problem solving and games, which I already mention how video games helps the develop of critical thinking of problem solving. But the part of games he considers important can be replace to video games, at the end both games and video games are almost the same, the only difference is that video games requires an interface, a technological device for displaying it.

The use of popular video games help to develop language skills in foreign languages. All the knowledge presented in video games seems valuable, even if it is linked to some unpopular ideology. Taking into account the philosophy that video games are not good ,it is quite clear that they do not use objective judgments and their goal is not scientific, but political and moral (or perhaps another kind) and they do not want to see the positive effects that video games can bring to us, always seek ways to discredit them and find negative statements about them. The last category refers to content activities, like academic subject matter such as math, physics, etc.

An excellent summary of positive effects of video games was made by Barlett, Anderson, and Swing (2009). They review the evidence for video games effects and describe both positive and negative outcomes. Barlett, Anderson, & Swing (2009) mention that "Educational video games and simulators can teach specific educational skills and knowledge such as algebra, biology, photography, computer programming, and flight training."

The effects of media such as TV and movies have been the subject of many studies, and those results are often assumed to apply also to interactive media. However, interactive media is quite different from static media because it is more participatory and active. While you are sitting in front of the TV in a passive way, in video games you are part of it and become an active agent who is able to interact directly with the others.

The evidence for this connection is provided by Gee (2007) and Shaffer (2006). However, most of the games that they discuss are not commercially available. Perhaps educational games will be developed and distributed more widely in the future. "the evidence shows that video games can enhance learning if they are designed properly for that purpose." Gee, (2007).

2.3 KIND OF VIDEO GAMES

The popularity of video games has transcended entertainment through the world of education. While the literature base on educational gaming is growing, there is still a lack of systematic study of this emerging technology's efficacy.

From the simplest of games like The Sims to the complexity of Diablo III, games have engaged and inspired people for decades. From an educational standpoint, games are engaging and adaptable to almost any subject. Languages teachers use games in everyday classes and these activities are amusing for the students.

We live in a world where technology means everything, if people are not technologically updated, they cannot make use of the opportunities that the world offers, and video games is a chance that the world offers to educate, educate in the sense of help people to improve their skills in any subject or maybe as an aid to keep the brain healthy and active through the use of video games that include problem-solving and logic.

The New Media Consortium (2005) points that "They can be particularly useful for teaching cause-and-effect relationships, and the lessons learned from games often tend to stay with students because of the interactive nature of the learning experience. Today games and technology are being combined in increasingly more interesting ways."

Until recently most video games were designed only for "passing the time" most of them have a lack of sustainability as a teaching and learning tool. Many top scholars have spent hours of research about the popularity of video games and how they can help people to learn difficult concepts. Despite the common belief that people say that violent video games only guide to violence, it is necessary to consider that all video games can bring a positive outcome for the player.

Britain and Liber (2000) claim that "What is lacking, however, is concrete empirical data to support or refute these theoretical claims. We suggest that teachers (and we add researchers) need to evaluate video games from an educational perspective to determine whether they can be embedded into their teaching practices."

These aims of adding to the empirical research base and examining the educational impact of video games lie at the center of the work presented here. While there are many kind of video games that have been used to develop skills in specific areas. The ones presented here are some examples of how these type of video games can help students to improve their language skills. Despite there are sub categories of these tools, it is well known that they do not differ from the main attribute which is a natural way to present the language through a story well planned

2.3.1 Life simulation

There are lot of life simulation video games that imitate the real life situations and one of the most famous is The Sims. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (January 2005, pp. 80-96) states that "The Sims is a game designed to simulate normal everyday life. Players control the daily routines of a virtual family, guiding them through tasks such as managing personal hygiene, cooking food, finding jobs, entertaining guests, and so forth.... This exposes learners to abundant L2 vocabulary, yet still provides enough L1 support not to detract from the game."

Let's take The Sims as example. After assigning professions to their characters, players then manage the family resources, deciding how to invest the supplies and find a way to develop their house based on analysis of the emotional states of their characters. While playing the English version of the game, one can notice the vocabulary for the tasks contain many daily expression used in everyday English. When the vocabulary items are displayed in the screen one can think about the stuff found in the class, the advantage while one is in school after playing a couple hours is that people will be already familiar with them and could recall the relevant associated contexts and animations used in the game.

Along with the vocabulary presented during all the game we can consider more features like the customization which allow people to modify lot of aspects within the game. The possibilities and permutations are infinite and give permission to create the most desirable environment people like using tools that are easy to comprehend even for beginners.

This method of modifying video games offers a powerful vehicle for further exploring recent work on incidental learning. Hulstijn (1992, pg. 113-125) suggests that vocabulary retention can be improved if new words are glossed with multiple choices in which the learner must then decide the most appropriate choice.

2.3.2 MMORPG

This kind of games have increased their customers everyday and they are very popular among young adults. " All the tools provided by this kind of games are usually very extended and the games are very entertaining for almost any type of public. "MMORPG games are one of the best option for learning a language. It has been well documented that video games have the potential to encourage students to explore beyond the boundaries of a given material thus allowing for a proactive and exploratory nature that allows the student to become a self-reliant learner" (Taradi, Taradi, Radic, & Pokrajac, 2005).

Rickard and Oblinger (2004) discussed how gaming provides learners the opportunity to learn by doing, experience situations first-hand, and through role-play. They found that "Students perform best when given access to lectures in the context of completing open-

ended complex problem solving tasks. Gaming environments allow both the simulation of experiences that students might have in the real world and also the creation of compelling experiences that cannot normally be experienced directly"

MMORPG games has the chance to meet many people from around the world and to form friendships, bonds, and even to learn more about your own culture through another player. It is a place where one can learn English as a second language. Since English is often the main language of choice for RPG games, because most of the games are made in the USA, players will find themselves interacting with native and non-native English speakers.

As a non-native English speaker people will find more people who doesn't speak the same language like one, and the most common language among MMORPG players is English, that is the only way for communication. These kind of games are a perfect space for players to create characters and practice language skills. In all, MMORPG games become a worldwide community that bridges cultures, and allows players to interact and to learn more about various elements in and out of game through written or oral expressions.

The community of online MMORPG games are populated by players who often help another non-native English speaker with his or her language skills. Many players make organizations to help other people. If the player tells them that English is not the first language spoken the others will make it known to others to help the non-native speaker with language skills. What remains amazing is the willingness established players have to assist others to make the game an enjoyable diversion and to help players learn more about the language written (or spoken) in game as well as the game culture.

While English remains as an official language in most MMORPG, lot of players will find that they are never truly alone because there is always someone in game who speaks one or more languages besides English. So if someone knows Spanish and French he can find someone else from Canada or France.

As the time goes by people will discover that their language skills in French, English, or whatever language people are learning, has improved significantly. If one speaks more than one language one can find more people who share the same situation and then make a

group (often called clan) to talk about the video game or any topic. The best part of doing this is that everyone will help one another to remark misunderstandings and even correct one another. Either way, it is a win-win situation because the learning process never ends. The player improves his English skills and the others also improve their skills in the language they are learning.

2.3.3 UNI-GAME: Social skills and knowledge training

Although games are made for customers who only want to get fun and forget all the stress from school or work, even when people don't consider the educational part while programming a video game, there are several groups that contemplate video games a good tool to be considered within the learning process, take advantage of technology and spread this "new" world into the lives of thousands of people who enjoy them.

Digital game-based learning is a novel approach in the area of Universities and Lifelong learning. In search for new positioning of the universities in the changing setting of lifelong learning, gaming is becoming a new form of interactive content. One of the European Projects, exploring this topic is Minerva project UniGame: Game-based Learning in Universities and Lifelong Learning. Goals of the UniGame project were as follows: to promote digital game-based learning in Europe, to test different educational games within different subjects in various European countries and to focus on social game forms that include virtual communities and collaborative learning.

"Digital game-based learning can be applied as additional option to classroom lecturing. Intention of digital game-based learning is to address new and ICT based didactical approaches to learning and at the same time to provide learners the possibility to acquire skills and competencies later required in the business world. By means of educational games learners should be able to apply factual knowledge, learn on demand, gain experiences in the virtual world that can later shape their behavioral patterns and directly influence their reflection, etc." (Dondi,Pive, and Prensky, 2003)

Learners are encouraged to combine knowledge from different areas to choose a solution or to make a decision at a certain point, learners can test how the outcome of the game

changes based on their decisions and actions, learners are encouraged to contact other team members and discuss and negotiate subsequent steps, among other things, their social skills.

“UniGame: Social Skills and Knowledge Training is a framework that provides a possibility for every interested teacher to apply game-based learning for his/her classes. UniGame: Social Skills and Knowledge Training is a game where teachers can define various topics, thus modifying the game for their own purposes”.

In this kind of game the interface can be manipulated by the teacher who modifies all the tools from the game depending on students' needs which is a high advantage if he wants to focus on one topic.

The game can be classified as a role-play game, that fosters participation in problem-solving, effective communication, teamwork, project management, as well as other soft skills such as responsibility, creativity, micro-entrepreneurship, corporate culture, etc. The game is based on constructivist learning approach and collaborative learning.

The game is accessible through a website, giving the opportunity to users to join from different places. It is a multi-player game. The players form four teams, which can have up to six players. It is moderated by the teacher but it is not impossible to be used independently from a class course. The aim of the players is to comprehend their specific role inside their team and have argumentation with players of other teams over a specific subject, which is specified by the theme of the game. The players gain knowledge over this subject by searching for information and using it in the discussions that follow with other teams' members. Users can communicate using private or public forums, text chat modules and voice chat modules. The game ends when all the specified sub-parts of the selected subjects have been discussed. In each discussion the goal of the players is to reach a consensus with the other teams. If they reach a consensus they gain some points.

In order to play the game, the students form four teams, which have different roles in the discussion that will follow. For example, in a theme about environment protection, the teams could be ‘Government’, ‘Heavy Industries’, ‘Environmental Groups’ and ‘Labor Unions’. Each student has to select a particular role within a team. After that, the team

members have to connect to the 'map of the Subjects' which are relevant for future discussions. In this screen each member of the team has to select a subject for which he/she will be responsible for. Each team has to create a strategy for the general discussion that will take place with the members of the other teams as well as with the teacher (moderator) of the game.

During the team work, the players develop a game strategy, collect and select valuable information and prepare for argumentation. Teams communicate and exchange information in the 'Team Space', which consists of several screens that allow synchronous or asynchronous communication of the members of a team. Each team member uploads all relevant collected information about the subject he/she is responsible for.

By playing different roles students learn and obtain both basic knowledge and practical experience and soft skills that are needed for the organizations of the modern industrial manufactures. The developed game concept can be seen as a game platform where different instructors can introduce different knowledge and contexts to apply game-based learning for their particular topics and specific learning goals.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Context

In this thesis the main area to be observed is called La plaza de la Tecnología which is located in 12 Poniente #107, esquina 5 de Mayo, colonia Centro. In this place you can buy a lot of stuff related to computers but also it has a special area where people join more people and play together. There are fifteen tables that are for anybody who wants to join others and plays video games over the table. There is also room #435 which is related to video games and people can rent a console and play with the others. The schedule for the public services is from 9 a.m. to 9 p. m. from Monday to Saturday. On Sunday the schedule is from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

3.1.1 Participants

The subjects of this research are ten young adults from twenty to twenty five years old to their lives. They have experimented the problem of assuming the meaning of certain situations within the games and they always infer it. Sharing all the things learned in the game is a good tool for them in the languages area. They do not only play these kind of video games, they also play more types of video games, and most of them are in English, so the exposure they have with the language is everyday because they spend a lot of time playing, the more you play the most vocabulary you get, that's my supposition.

Eight participants are male from twenty to twenty five years old and two females from twenty to twenty two. Both are people who study and work, and most of them finished the high school and their English level is basic. most of them have not had previous English language experience before they started playing video games.

3.2 Method

Since it talks about someone's opinion and does not exist exactly numbers of this information, this thesis is developed by a qualitative method. Data here is taken from some people who are interviewed explaining principally what they think and how they feel when

playing a video game in English, if they feel they are improving their skills or if it is difficult for them.

3.2.1. Sample

This is much as a descriptive design. The people I selected for this thesis were because of their performance in video games and English, as well as the continuous time they spend in La Plaza de la Tecnología. These eight males are people who have improved or learned English because of video games and they consider this is a useful tool for learning a language. The other two subjects are females who have similar features, the difference will be the genre which allow us to have an idea of who spend more time playing video games, if there is a difference related to genre or if the kind of game they prefer is different from most of the male players.

3.2.2 Techniques

In order to write this thesis it is necessary to interview people from La Plaza de la Tecnología, so we can work with what it is said about the improvement they have while playing video games. Observation was needed for selecting the right subjects and the next step is making interview which will include questions about their habits and their performance in the English area.

3.2.3 Tool

Audio recorded material will be used with the purpose of getting evidence of all the information exposed here.

3.3 INSTRUMENTS

As people from La Plaza de la Tecnología are interviewee, they are asked to give their own opinion and to express their own feelings about how video games affect their English, if they feel a improve since they started playing and what kind of video games are the most adequate to learn English. At the beginning of making the questions, I was thinking about open-ended questions but the ones with multiple choice seem more viable. In the answers, there are options in order to make easier to respond it. These options are intended in not

modifying people's truly thoughts. Video games vary a lot, thus it cannot be an exactly facts of each gamer exposed here.

3.3.1 Interview

The purpose of this interview is to know how people from La Plaza de la Tecnología are influenced by video games while learning English, what experiences they had faced and how they have learned or improved their English level. This interview is applied to males and females which are young adults and play video games. In order to make it clear and avoid misunderstandings the interview was formed in two languages: English and Spanish. The use of the mother tongue was used to make the questions very clear and evade wrong answers from the subjects. The English part was used in case that the participants would like to hear the questions in the language they are currently learning.

In the first question I want to know how much time do young adults spend playing video games. According to BBC News (2003), scientist found that "with a little game playing the skills of anyone can be improved"

So, the purpose of the first question is checking if the habit is just for a few days or it is something that is part of his daily life, it is important to check whether the people who play more time learn more, so that is why I asked " **How often do you play video games?**".

The second question, " **In which language do you play video games?**" was related to the language used while playing video games, it is important knowing whether the gamers play in English or they choose another language. The options are the three most common languages of video games: English, Spanish, Japanese, and I add one more, "other", if someone else set another language despite the ones I mentioned before. Taking into account the quote by Ohmaye Ehio (1998) "Lessons in the natural approach focus on understanding messages in the foreign language, and place little or no importance on error correction, drilling or on conscious learning of grammar rules" As he mentioned, it is necessary the foreign language to learn a language, even though the importance on errors are not very demanding.

The Entertainment Software Association (2006) states that "...games require players to construct hypotheses, solve problems, develop strategies, learn the rules of the in-game world through trial and error. Games must also be able to juggle several different tasks, evaluate risks and make quick decisions...Playing games is, thus, an ideal form of preparation for the workplace of the 21st century, as some forward-thinking forms are already starting to realize." So, the third and fourth questions are about the instructions in video games, because the rules in a game are important for advancing through the story line, also if the player can understand what they have to do or if they are clueless, that's why I made two questions "**While playing a video game in English, do you understand the instructions?**" and "**How did you learn the instructions?**" The information given by the people will show the process they followed for playing the game.

Fifth and sixth questions are focused on the things they could have learned during playtime, it says "**Have you learned a word or phrase while playing video games?**" and "**Do you think you have learned and/or improved your level of English because of video games?**" I tried to check if the interviewee is aware of the improvement of his English level, if the video games have been an aid for improving their language skills. According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2005) "Players control the daily routines of a virtual family (The Sims), guiding them through tasks such as managing personal hygiene, cooking food, finding jobs, entertaining guests, and so forth(...) this exposes learners to abundant L2 vocabulary, yet stills provides enough L1 support not to detract from the game." If the lessons in the schools are focusing on real life activities and games have been the same factor, the goal is the same, at the end of the day there is no difference between learning daily routines in the classroom or in a virtual game.

The New Media Consortium (2005) points that "They can be particularly useful for teaching cause-and-effect relationships, and the lessons learned from games often tend to stay with students because of the interactive nature of the learning experience. Today games and technology are being combined in increasingly more interesting ways."

Seventh question is related to their personal interest, it says "**Would you like to learn English while playing video games?**" It is necessary to get a motivation for learning English, if they do love playing video games and at the same time they learn, this can be a

factor for make them learn with a little effort. As people pay more attention to video games rather than teachers, it is good to know if those "lessons" while playing video games are more efficient than studying in the classroom.

Margie S. Berns (1984), an expert in the field of communicative language teaching, writes in explaining that "Language is interaction; it is interpersonal activity and has a clear relationship with the society. In this light, language study has to look at the use (function) of language in context, both its linguistic context (what is uttered before and after a given piece of discourse) and its social, or situational, context (who is speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak)" Games played online are the most used among young adults, so the next two questions, "**While playing online, do you think you have improved your English level?**" and "**Do you think that playing online force you to learn English?**" are related to the believe that the interpersonal activity is a tool for learning a language, as well as the social interaction among players, the questions are intended to noticed the improvement of English if the communication is used for the game itself, whether the player is aware of this aspect he can take advantage of this situation and become a better speaker.

The last question is an open-question and it says "**In what kind of video games you have learned more English?**" It is important what type of video games are the most popular among young adults and how (depending on the type of video games) these help to improve or learn English. The answers can be a lot, but nowadays, most of the young adults from La Plaza de la Tecnología prefer fighting and MMORPG's games. Barlett, C. P., Anderson, C.A., & Swing, E.L. (2009), say that "Educational video games and simulators can teach specific educational skills and knowledge suck as algebra, biology, photography, computer programming, and flight training" Checking what are the most popular games among young adults will help this research to gather the information to know which game is better for writing skills, which one is for reading, etc.

3.3.2 OBSERVATION FORMATS

The observation formats were used to gather information about the subjects and their habits while playing video games. There are many aspects that were considered in the formats.

One important point is basic information about the participants, age, gender, number of subjects, as well as the place they are playing the game. It is important the environment where they play because it shows how the condition is.

In order to see a general view of the subjects the setting was important to check how they are located while playing. The number of subjects during the observation is needed as well as the role of them, if they are passive or active players.

Besides the structure point of view of the participants there were many questions related to this observation. These questions were according to the kind of video games they played, how they solve the problems that surge during the game play, what they prefer to do in the game, the differences between boys and girls because the genre is important while playing video games, and finally if young adults are aware of the knowledge they are getting while using video games.

These smalls features were considered to know how young adults behave while playing the games, their reactions, the way they are, the role they play and how they deal with the problems of playing video games.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this research is how English influences young adults from La Plaza de la Tecnología, if the games they play are having a positive impact in their second language acquisition. Games are used in all the classroom during English classes, it does not matter how old the students are, many authors consider this way a good manner to learn a language, so, video games, at the end, they are the same as a game used within the lessons, so teachers can make use of them as a tool to teach English to young adults.

4.1. Inquiries

The main issues in this research are:

- The use of video games by young adults in La Plaza de la Tecnología
- The language (English or Spanish) they use to play, to look for information, to make progress, and to get achievements.
- How they learned the instructions in English
- The phrases they learn while playing video games
- The awareness of playing video games in English
- The pleasure of learning while playing video games
- How online video games helps young adults to learn English
- The most common video games used by young adults

4.2 Preliminary results

Although the majority of young adults from La plaza de la Tecnología do not have computers at home, they have access to consoles and play them every day in the place mentioned before. The new ways of playing online video games are not only by using computers but consoles, but the main problem is something we call *lag*, which is the slowness in an online game because of a bad server, or an over-abundance of people using

it. So, most of people prefer to play with friends instead playing online, but as the results shown, there are people who do not play online because they are humiliated.

By carrying out this research we realized that young adults from La Plaza de la Tecnología have the same access to video games, but through different means. Another important issue that resulted from this research was that young adults use video games in different ways.

4.2.1 Usage of video games

Use of video games serves an immediate functional purpose, and the tasks within the video games generate interesting goals. Games can be adapted to emphasize fluency, vocabulary, real-life activities, intonation, grammar and for most people are competitions to see who is the best. Although language used in games may be repetitive in some cases, there is usually plenty of opportunity for spontaneous use of language, as well. Games encourage learners to experiment and explore the target language.

In this question, only one out of ten participants said that he plays three times a week, while the others play every day. It is important know how much time do young adults spend on video games. The most they play the more they are exposed to the language. The results shown that most of them play every day for a long period of time, although the kind of video games vary, and the purpose too, at the end they are using technology which is a tool nowadays.

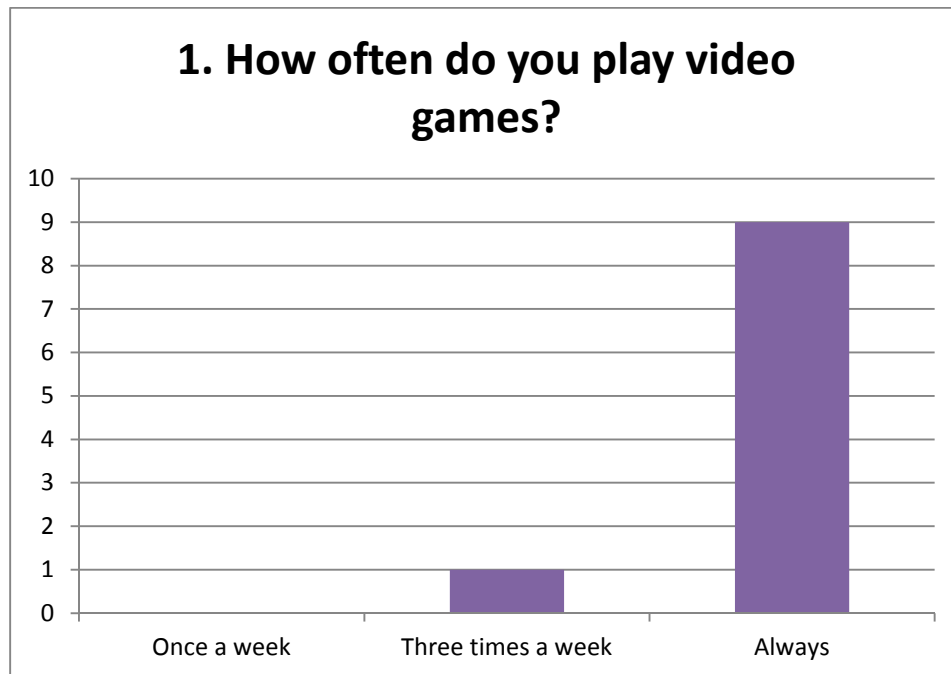


Fig 1. Frequency of video games play

The average time young adults spend on video games is around forty five hours a week, although many of them are not aware about the things they are learning, it is noticeable that they learn some phrases because they always use vocabulary from the game. The educational power of games is tools to help people to think and learn about real world problems and their solutions just like RPG video games or the ones of life simulation.

4.2.2 Language choice

Video games introduce us to computer technology and the online world, and as people already noticed we live in a high-tech, sophisticated world where technology is needed for any activity. There are lots of materials we can use on the internet and if we are in touch with technology our searching will be easier and faster, and of course, most of the best information comes in English. That is why I asked young adults whether they play video games in English or in Spanish; the results are that everyone play video games in both, English and Spanish.

Something curious about this is that young adults play the same game in both language, so this can be helpful for contrasting meaning. For example, if they play a video game that is in Spanish for default because of the region, they play it and after a certain amount of time they change the language and then play it in English, so they can hear or read the same instructions or dialogues in another language.

The results shows how everyone play in English and Spanish and they mentioned that they prefer the game in its original language.

Young adults said that the distribution is a problem for some video games. The reason for this is that the default language for games shipped by retailers is Spanish. Despite people can change the language in some cases there are some games that are not always available to do this (especially the ones from PC versions). For example, the game called Diablo 3 was only available in Spanish if you buy it in Mexico. They have faced these languages problems but they always prefer the sound in its original language. They also mentions that they highly prefer English because the translations are very bad, and they don't match with the original phrases. Some young adults mentioned some phrases that don't make sense just like some jokes that only work in the English versions, because one you transfer the sentence with no backgrounds of the topic you get a bad phrase.

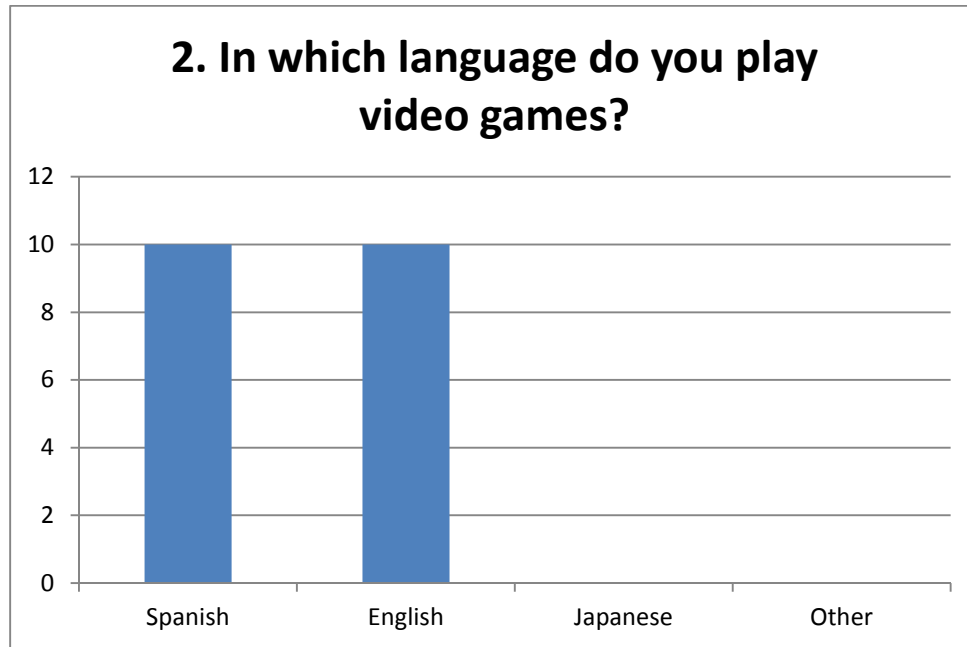


Fig. 2 Languages used to play video games

Although the subjects showed their preferences to English over Spanish, they said they could play any game in any language, just to play it for fun. Also, the subjects said that would be absurd not to allow digital editions to have all language packs available and select the better that fits to their necessities. Young adults said there is no concern over the number of extra discs needed to fit all that audio and it just means the consumer needs to use more resources to play, and while they are searching how to fix these problems they use Internet and go to forums(in English) to solve these boundaries. So, they learned while playing and before playing.

4.2.3 Instructions

The results in this question show that 80% of the participants always understand the instructions, while 20% sometimes. This part involved two questions, the first one was related to the understanding about instructions and the second one is about how they learned the instructions.



Fig. 3 Level of understanding of instructions in English

On the first question, eight people who said that they always understand the instructions seems refutable, because they can know certain instructions of their favorite video games only, but when they start a new video game the instructions change and they have to guess, ask or look for the new information in order to make progress within the video game. Many people are not aware if they understand or not the instructions, but I can see they are in a process where they learn without knowing.

During the next part, even though was an open question, the results vary. But most of them answered that they speak English and that is why they know the instructions, three more said that they learned the instructions because someone taught them.

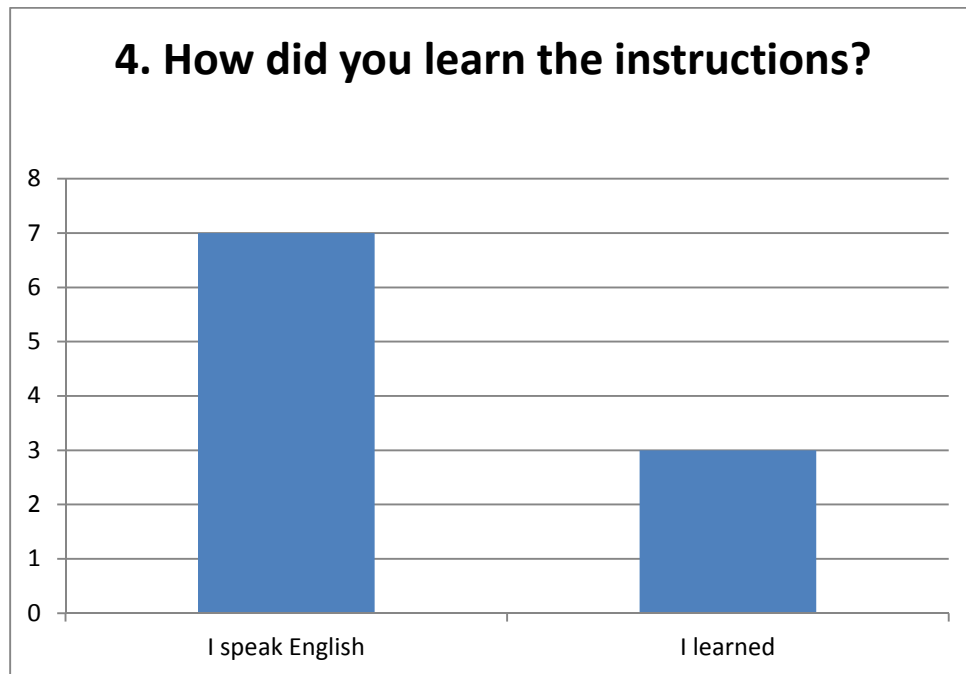


Fig. 4 Ways of learning the instructions

The level of English of all of them varies, the people who have played more video games are more high-level speakers and they are the ones who teach to the others.

4.2.4 Learning Phrases

All the participants said that they learned some phrases while playing video games. It is important to remark that few people know how to pronounce certain words but they don't know how to write it, also they learned a lot of slangs and idioms because in video games the language is not very formal, although there are parts where the language seems very formal, a lot of dialogues are in a more natural way. I can say that at the moment of the interview they were not very aware of all the words they have learned and just said a few ones, they just forgot all the phrases they have learned but they mentioned the ones they learned recently.

4.2.5 Improving English level through video games

Language learning environments can benefit from the use of playing video games. Because games are often based on real-life activities, they offer an opportunity to practice the realistic use of language to communicate with others. Although video games can be used to

review existing language content, they don't need to be limited to this use, they can also be used to improve, explore and acquire new language content. However, not all language learning games are equivalent, some are helpful in practicing individual vocabulary words, or focus on listening, while others involve the player in more complex discourse and inferring situations where they are exposed to.



Fig. 5 Improvement of English while playing video games

The results of these questions is complicated, because I can see they learn while playing video games, and just 30% are aware of this, while 70% are not. They are focus on the game but not on the content they get while playing it. The participants don't take into account English as something to learn, they just play for fun and learn some words or phrases, the most important things they have in mind is having fun.

4.2.6 Enjoying video games while learning

Young adults take advantage of modern computers and their multimedia capabilities to provide authentic linguistic experiences, either in the classrooms or in self-study. Although video games can show real-life situations just like in the classroom, at the end, this is not the same. In the first, you are exposed to this situation for a specific communication

purpose, and most of the time, you are doing for getting a good grade, on the other hand, a video game is a language activity involving a competitive element and scoring (individual or in teams).

The subjects said that the feeling of enjoying a game and learning at the same time is what makes good video games, they are motivating and entertaining. People actually enjoy learning, though sometimes in school they don't do that at all.



Fig. 6 Learning English with video games

Only 40% of the participants agree with this, they consider playing video games a good tool for learning English, but the ones that don't agree is because they are not interested in learning a language, they just play for fun and , if they learn something within the game play they don't care too much. This difficulty may be in part due to the sometimes negative influence of the player on learning a language, the lack of motivation is also an important feature that affects the possibility to learn English. Young adults who are interested in other areas but English are more focus on fun rather than learning while playing video games. As my perspective during all my years on the school I have seen that people who love language love games, and video games, are games but played using software .The people

who would like to learn English consider they get both, fun and knowledge while playing. These players who are interested in learning English are happy to play video games

4.2.7 Online gameplay

New generations of learners require new methods of teaching. As computer and Internet use become more widespread among students of all ages, teachers must be prepared to adapt to the needs of this interactive and innovative generation. Gaming online provides an excellent alternative to traditional learning activities. Learners can engage in various subject materials in a fun and competitive way, but most important, they interact with people around the world.

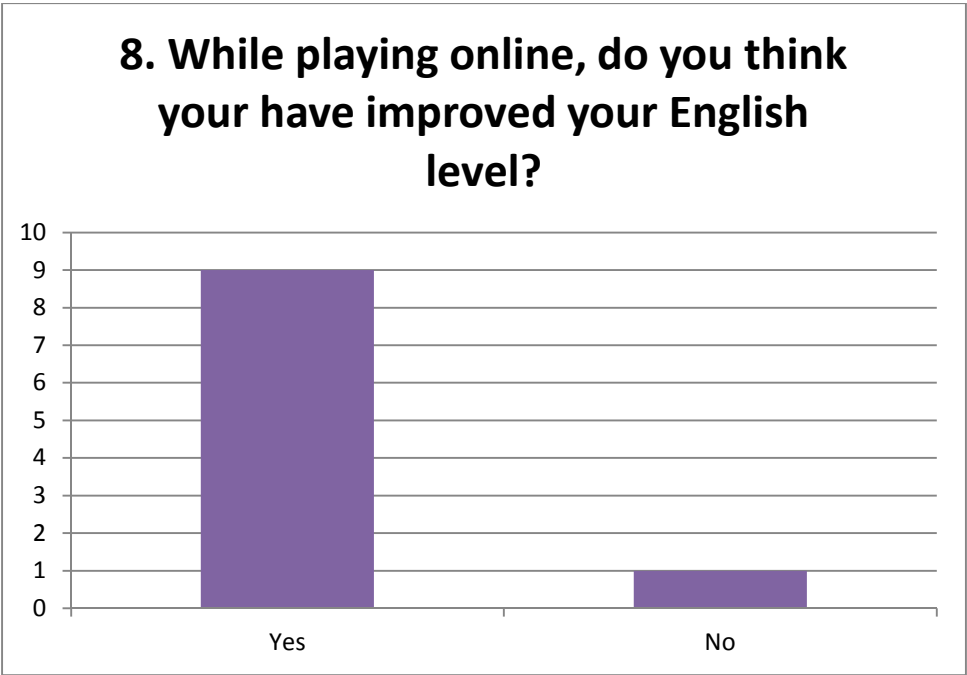


Fig. 7 Improvement of English while playing online video games

90% of the subjects consider that playing online can be useful for learning English and they see an improvement. An important part of this question was that one participant said he don't play online because the users are rude and he feels offended, the others consider that their level of English has been upgraded in small areas because most of them don't chat while playing online, however, when they start a conversation they feel they are learning. Young adults said the online experience allow you to connect with their peers in new ways

of communication, because most of the video games have the feature to use a microphone and talk to the others while playing. On the other hand, for those who don't use the microphone, there is the option to chat with the other gamers, they have increased their technical and media literacy, as well as collaboration skills and learned many vocabulary. They online game play provides an entertaining way to take in information that is interactive and not static and one-sided. Furthermore, according to the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), games promote active learning, learning by doing, and learner-centered learning, all of which “compel the student to become part of the learning process—not just the object of lectures or reading materials.”

There was another question related to the idea that playing online video game improves your English level, 100% of the participants agree that playing online force you to learn English. They say that all the Internet is full of foreigners, and that's why you have to use English.

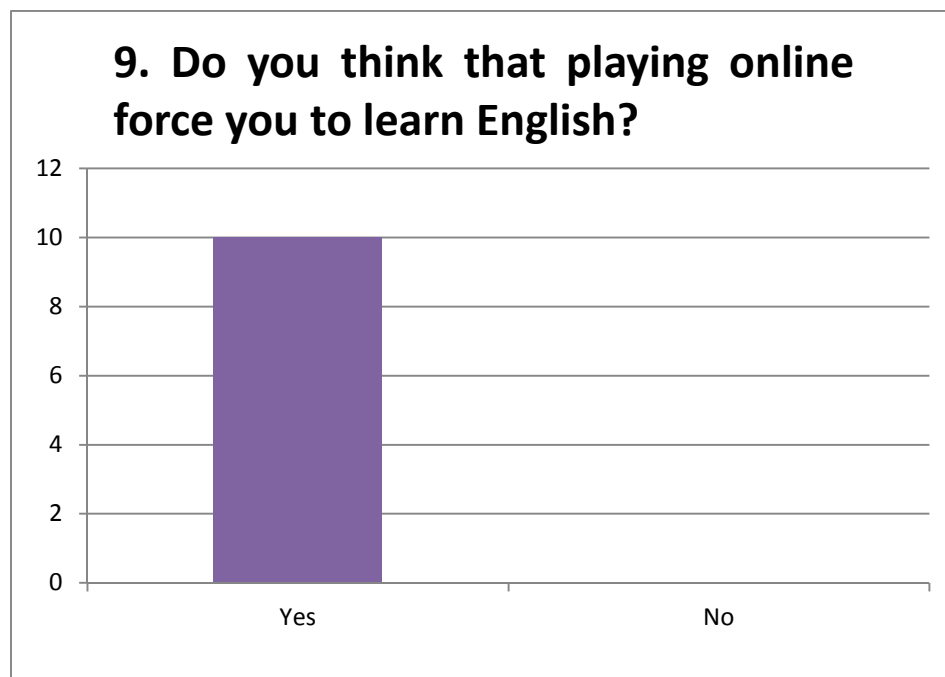


Fig. 8 Online playing for improving English

Young adults said that playing online becomes a problem because you start a confrontation with the game. If they find it hard, long, and complex, they fail many times and have to

engage in a virtual research project via the Internet to learn some of the things they need to know about how to make progress in the game, and these guides are in English because there are just a few people who make guides in Spanish, and most of the video games are developed in English so the guides. So, when they are run out of ideas they start this research to advance within the game with the gamers community.

4.2.8 Specific video games for specific areas

The last question was related to the kind of video games they play. Fantasy RPGs are one of the most popular genres of young adults. They inherently involve a lot of reading and interacting with other characters, and so were the most mentioned video game.

It is important to mention that girls do not differ from boys, they have actually the same likes, the slightly differences are that they are not as good as boys in games, specially the fighting games. The type of video games vary in this question. Some of the video games mentioned are, TCG, RPG's, MMORPG's, Fighting Games, Life Simulation, FPS, Adventure, Music Games, etc. The video games they play are good for improving English, although not every game has the same purpose, they work in different areas, for examples, the Music Games are very good for practicing your speaking, RPG's are good for your reading comprehension and TCG is very useful for vocabulary.

4.3 Observation

Inquiries taken into account were:

- The use of video games by young adults in La Plaza de la Tecnología
- The language (English or Spanish) they use to play, to look for information, to make progress, and to get achievements.
- The awareness of playing video games in English
- The pleasure of learning while playing video games
- How online video games helps young adults to learn English
- The most common video games used by young adults

a) Day 1

This day there were four pairs ready for playing. All people were using a rug to set some cards they are going to use for playing. They were playing a game called Yu-gi-Oh which consist of a battle-based trading card game in which players draw cards from their respective decks and take turns playing cards onto "the field", the usual win condition is the reduction of the opponent's Life Points to zero.

Also I noticed when they had doubts they asked to a friend what the meaning of a word was, or if a sentence contain more than unknown word they ask what does that mean, there is someone who already knew the answer. I asked him how he knew it, and I got two answers, one is that he knew English and the other is that he learned from a friend who told him how that card works; People also infere some attacks depending on the icon they represent. If they see a blue one they already know is about water-type, if it is red they know is fire-type, etc.

People was not sure about the meaning of some cards so they asked to the others because they did not want to lose. They are very eager about who is winning the match, and they are serious while playing a money match. They read the cards very carefully and decide what the next move is. I saw that boys are not very different from girls in this kind of game, they play alike. They like winning money while playing video games, but some people just play for fun, girls, just like boys like winning, and they are more trained than boys because they want to demonstrate they also play video games.

Despite the people who seems very good at English, they practice while pronouncing the words, when someone asks about a word they say it and the manner in which they pronounce it is very good. When people takes a card they read it again even when they know what to do, even when they know what the purpose is, they teach to others how that card works.

In this type of video game the steps to followed cannot be omitted. Young adults do a great job in both, playing and learning sime vocabulary. Although the words they learn are not very common at the moment of speaking, the more vocabulary they know the best they do.

Also, at the moment of playing the game they cannot notice the improvement of English, they will do it when they use the language for playing in another time, when they play the game again or a different one, it is an unconscious process.

b) Day 2

During this day there were four young adults. All people take an instrument to play the game, two guitars, a bass, and a microphone. This game is very popular among young adults and they spend a lot of time playing it. I noticed that girls are the most common people using the microphone, while males prefer the use of the instruments.

This game is called Guitar Hero which consist of playing an instrument and simulate they are singing or playing it while following the steps shown on the screen while playing the song. These song varies depending on the game they select. In this case they chose two, one from The Beatles and the other from the band Metallica. Another important thing is that this game is not available in Spanish or another language, the only one is English.

While the woman was singing she faced some problems while speaking because there were words she did not know, but as the time goes by and you cannot stop the game once it has started she had to infer how the word is pronounced, and she did a very good job while singing. Moreover, when the song was very fast and the girl cannot follow the timing, she asked to set the options in a lower difficulty because depending on the difficulty the lyrics change in intonation. While playing the song repeatedly she asks the meaning of some words and the pronunciation too. The boys answered when they know the meaning but sometimes they had no clue about the word.

This game is more visual than tactical. They focus on the screen and the girl, who was the one singing should be aware of the intonation of the song, if there are many mistakes, the song ends and the game is over, but this responsibility was not only on the girl, if the others miss a button from the "guitar" the song can be finish after many mistakes.

When one song ends and the score was shown they were very enthusiastic about the numbers they get, they were very happy

the final part where the score is showed, that is very enthusiastic for them. Also I noticed that the girl was the only one who was practicing English in an oral way because she was singing, but I consider that the boys could hear her and this helps them to the listening area, they read the lyrics on the screen and hear while their parter sings. Also, at the moment of playing the game they cannot notice the improvement of English, they will do it when they use the language for playing in another time, they learned the words or phrases and use them after in other context.

4.4 Conclusions

Taking into account the findings above, we can observe that the project shows good results, young adults are able to learn some words while playing video games. I could noticed that people who play more often are those who know more words in English. Many of them already knew the meaning while playing, there were people who were not very focus on what is going on within the video game but most of the time they infer the meaning and the instructions.

The influence that video games have on young adults is bigger than people think because they consider this a life style, they spend a lot of time playing in English and learn some phrases depending on the types of games. Although the motivation for learning English is not an important point while playing, they show language skills even when they refuse to learn something know, everything they see, hear or do is in English. The concept of video games for young adults is not focus on learning a language but they worry about understanding because without it, they are lost within this magic environment.

The online game play was also another issue that was important in this project, because playing with people around the world spreads your knowledge and communication with the others. Young adults show that playing online can be benefit for them because most of the people speak English and they talk about video games and daily activities. The subjects mentioned that they have learned many words from the others while chatting in a game or doing the quests. Although there was a person who said he doesn't like playing online

because the others are rude, the majority agreed with the idea that online game play is just another way to improve your English.

Collaborative work is necessary to succeed in online video games and language. If people in the classroom work together to solve a problem or make up a role play the outcome is very good. This type of work forces students to make teams and explore a significant question or create a meaningful project. A group of students discussing a quest is a good benefit to improve their language skills, if people work together over the Internet sharing a common assignment, the diversity is celebrated, and all contributions are valued for the team. Students who do collaborative work learn skills for resolving conflicts when they arise, they are quicker than those who are not familiarized with this kind of activities. All members from the team draw upon their past experience and knowledge and figure out a solution for the problem, the goals are clearly identified and used as a guide to show improvement in their language skills.

It is important to mention that most of the subject play the same video games and I could see that the words they have learned are the same, so this means that the video game worked in the same manner with one person and another. Also, one person was against the idea of getting both, pleasure and learning for doing one thing: playing video games. He didn't agree with this because he is not very eager for learning English, although he likes English, the idea of 'learning' is disgusted for him. But most of the people agreed that they would like to learn English and play video games at the same time.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter are presented the results from the project I did. Some finding implied that the project is a suitable way to teach English with video games because there is already games within the classroom, and these are almost the same, but played with a computer or a console. Most of the languages teachers use games for teaching, they add fun to the class by making competition through the use of games and they introduce vocabulary and grammar by using them.

The main issue was how video games influence young adults while learning English, the effects that video games have in English.

In regard of the use of English and Spanish, I noticed that they also play in other languages and the words learned depend on the selected language while playing the video game.

Although young adults play similar video games they learned the instructions in different ways. Some people taught them, other played the game in Spanish first and went back to English, and few more had to look for the meaning.

During this research I have mentioned many advantages of playing video games, such as improvement in motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and problem solving and logic. They are a natural way to learn a language because they contribute in many manners, for instance, most of students are afraid to make errors while learning, they are not sure about asking a question, they prefer to stay quiet, on the other hand, video games don't judge the player, they show multiple times the same structure in a dialogue and the environment is very peaceful, a thing that learners really appreciate. Video games provide to young adults a different way to learn a language, a way quite distinct from the methods we have seen in a

typical classroom, they make the young adult more confident with themselves and increase motivation to keep learning.

According to the results, there are various video games that can be good for learning English. The subjects mentioned that the most important point to learn a word, phrase or new structure is not directly related to the type of game they play, it is related to the language of the game. If the game is played in English, they will learn English, if the game is in French, they will learn French, etc. However there are video games such as UNIGAME which is a interface created specifically for learning a second language, commonly focus on grammar and vocabulary. This kind of game was developed for a group of people who wanted to use video games as a teaching tool, they thought that this kind of activities among learners would have an important impact in the way they learn.

Another type of video game that is very useful to improve the language skills is the MMORPG. This kind of game is played online where thousands of people play every day and they are from other countries, so people have the opportunity to practice English. In this games the players have to play in a cooperative manner to make progress, if this is not the case, they cannot advance. Forcing players to communicate to others improves their social skills. As social human beings we need to talk to learn, that is why these features are very useful as a second language learner.

Life simulation is another kind of game that serve to learn English. As the title suggests, this kind of video games are very helpful to enrich vocabulary. The player controls a person that do daily routines and has to make a series of quests in order to get from point A to point B. This sort of games is for beginners who want to familiarize with easy structures and basic vocabulary.

The advantages of video games show many benefits, however there are people who believe that video games have a negative impact in players. More commonly related to aggressive attitudes or violent acts which lead to a life of crime. Talking about disadvantages while learning English I can mention that online video games provide both a formal and informal way to speak English. The weak point here is that in school the informal way is not well seen. This kind of problem can lead to learners to a mass confusion where they are not able

to rip apart the informal vocabulary from a formal context. The vocabulary they learn from other players is commonly rude, related to racism, so the players learn many bad words which are not good talking about good manners.

The advantages are more than the disadvantages, for the people who love learning a language in many ways, including the dark part, video games are a good utensil to learn and keep improving the language, whether people are beginners or experiment learners.

Video games are not the only way to improve English, but I think it is underrated because not many people trust in them. When the word video game is said many think it is silly and only for children but that is not true at all because many video games requires certain level of intelligence more than just mashing buttons. This research shows how certain kind of game can be used for improving a certain area and how a specific video game can be as good as a grammar book.

The questions used for this research varied from the interviews, but the point is that the goal was achieve, I wanted to prove that video games can be an useful tool for educators, they can use this tools for introducing the topic they want, it is not necessary to play a long video game that takes more than fifty hours to complete, the access that students nowadays have is always by using the technology, and as a future English teacher I am aware of this, the young adults are very interested in technology, they are amused by using it in the classroom. When they see that the teacher introduce technology with video games in the classroom, the students will be more interested in English.

The influence in young adults is greater than their knowledge. Not only many players are aware of this improvement but also, there are a few who are not interested in learning English, but they still learn English because they hear all those conversation displayed in the screen more than one time, they see the same words over and over again until they memorize and repeat them. Perhaps they never wanted to learn English, but this exposure of the language while playing video games is evident because they keep using those expression even when they are not playing. The majority of the subjects agree with the idea of using video games for learning English because you get both, fun and learning English.

5.2 Limitations

During my research the English proficiency limited the project because many of the subjects forgot many words they have learned from playing video games. It is important that at the moment of interviewing, most of the young adults were not aware about all the things they have acquired while playing video games, they just mentioned the new vocabulary they learned for the last few months, or weeks.

It is also important to remark that few subjects are not interested in learning English because they do not want to learn anything while playing video games, the experience they want is without attachments and pressures of learning English.

The problems risen while asking the questionnaire were not big, most of the interviews were fast and clear while responding but as I mentioned before, the problems were the words they have learned during all the time they have spent in video games.

5.3 Recommendations

Few people believe that the main problems while teaching English with video games is not the video game itself but the feeling of learning. Subject said that playing a video game should be enjoyable and the part of learning should be forbidden. While other subjects think that this is a good tool for educators because if they are getting fun and learning something that will have benefits in their lives is good, on the other hand the people who said that they don't want to learn English while playing video games is because they don't enjoy studying, they feel that is as annoying as the school's programs, but they mentioned that they would like to learn English using video games without a grade in the way.

5.3.1 Further research

Nowadays technology is taking place over the whole world, and teaching cannot be out of this. It is necessary to implement new technology in the classroom for improving any area of English. The increasing number of young adults or any other kind of people's nowadays who play video games can be a link to guide them to learn English in a different way. This project was focused on young adults only, but for further research can take place in children, teenagers and adults. In this century more and more people are using technology as a daily life style, and devices such as telephones, computers, tablets, consoles, etc contain video games. The new generations are playing more video games than now, and that is because they enjoy doing it, it is a matter of time to notice how they get both, English and fun while playing video games.

5.3.2. Pedagogical Implications

Teachers can introduce students to this new 'world' for learning English at home or at school and the results of this research may benefit English teachers in our institution and other schools can adapt their teaching techniques and methodology to the use of video games to teach English.

Another important point is that this project can lead to projects where students try to make material in a school, just like flashcards and posters, future teachers can use video games for teaching vocabulary, just like people who display movies within the classroom with the objective to teach any topic.

5.4 Personal experiences

This experience has been tired, challenging, and wonderful. It was very nice to work with the things I love despite English: computers and video games.

The significance of this project was very important to me because not many people believe that video games can be useful for learning English, and I am sure that video games helps a lot while learning any foreign language. There are many kinds of video games for any likes, so the decision to play a game is very large and people can choose the best that fits their needs of what a good game is and how to improve English.

I learned many things while making this project, not just about the topic itself, but while reading many articles and books about this research I also learned more vocabulary. I would like to spread among my friends and my faculty the way I learned English, and the way I keep learning, it was very good to me to make a research about the benefits of video games for those people who share the same idea than me and also, for those who believe that video games are useless.

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APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRES

1. ¿Qué tan seguido juegas video juegos?

Una vez a la semana Tres veces a la semana Siempre

2. ¿En qué idioma están los video juegos que juegas?

Español Inglés Japonés Otro

3. Al jugar un video juego en Inglés, ¿entiendes las instrucciones?

Siempre A veces Nunca

4. ¿Cómo aprendiste las instrucciones?

5. ¿Has aprendido alguna palabra o frase al jugar video juegos?

Si No ¿Cual(es)?

6. ¿Crees que has aprendido y/o mejorado tu nivel de Inglés por jugar video juegos?

Si No ¿Porqué?

7. ¿Te gustaría aprender Inglés mientras juegas video juegos?

Si No ¿Porqué?

8. ¿Al jugar en línea, ¿crees que has mejorado tu nivel de Inglés?

Si No ¿Porqué?

9. ¿Crees que jugar en línea te fuerce a aprender Inglés?

Si No ¿Porqué?

10. ¿En qué tipo de video juegos has aprendido más Inglés?

The questionnaire consisted of ten questions , where most of them were multiple choice, however there is one open question.

1. How often do you play video games?

Once a week three times a week Always

2. In which language do you play video games?

Spanish English Japanese Other

3. While playing a video game in English, do you understand the instructions?

Always Sometimes Never

4. How did you learn the instructions?

5. Have you learned a word or phrase while playing video games?

Yes No Which?

6. Do you think you have learned and/or improved your level of English because of video games?

Yes No Why?

7. Would you like to learn English while playing video games?

Yes No Why?

8. While playing online, do you think your have improved your English level?

Yes No Why?

9. Do you think that playing online force you to learn English?

Yes No Why?

10. In what kind of video games you have learned more English?

APPENDIX 2 OBSERVATION FORMATS

OBSERVATION FORMATS

BENEMERITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

OBSERVATION FORMAT

<p>PLACE:</p> <p>AGE:</p> <p>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:</p> <p>GENDER:</p> <p>DATE:</p>
--

SETTING	DESCRIPTION
SUBJECTS: BOYS: GIRLS: ACTIVE: PASSIVE:	DESCRIPTION
WHAT VIDEO GAMES ARE THEY PLAYING?	COMMENTS

HOW ARE THEY FACING THE LANGUAGES PROBLEMS?	INFERRING	ASKING
WHAT DO YOUNG ADULTS DO WHILE PLAYING VIDEO GAMES?		COMMENTS
ACCORDING TO YOUR OBSERVATION WHAT DO YOU BOYS LIKE TO DO THE MOST?		COMMENTS
ACCORDING TO YOUR OBSERVATION WHAT DO YOU THINK GIRLS LIKE TO DO THE MOST?		COMMENTS
DO YOUNG ADULTS DO WHAT THEY ARE ASKED TO OR DO THEY DO OTHER THINGS?		COMMENTS
DO YOUNG ADULTS ARE AWARE THEY ARE LEARNING ENGLISH WHILE PLAYING VIDEO GAMES?		COMMENTS