

THE USE OF DIGITAL AND CONSOLE GAMES AS SUCCESSFUL TOOLS FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF ITALIAN EFL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' VOCABULARY RETENTION AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILL

Dott. Federico Valente¹

Dott. Francesco Spilabotte¹

Dott. Valentina Coccarelli¹

¹ University of Cassino and Southern Lazio, Italy

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to discover whether digital video games can be effective EFL learning tools for Italian high school students, in particular if they can facilitate their retention of vocabulary and the development of listening comprehension skill. The stimulus for this research comes from the reading of academic articles on the usefulness of using commercial games for EFL learning which we analyzed before undertaking this study in order to have a broader view of this topic. The literature review describes in detail theoretical issues with regard to the advantages of using digital gaming as a medium for out-of-class exposure to English. This investigation was conducted in Italy and the data gathering processes consist mainly of qualitative semi-structured interviews with eight participants (four ESL students and four English language teachers in a private sector), interview transcripts, and content analysis techniques which were used to examine and interpret data collected.

Findings demonstrate that not only can console games be successful learning material which could lead Italian ESL learners to enhance their listening abilities and extend their vocabulary size, but they seem to help them to improve their communicative abilities as well and foster their motivation and out-of-class EFL independent learning.

Keywords: digital games, EFL, L2, out-of-class, pedagogical tools, SLA, TLM.

INTRODUCTION

First and foremost, in the last few years, English has become the language of international communication. It goes without saying that the advancement of the internet and the media has given the possibility to many people in non-Anglophone countries to have everyday access and exposure to authentic English. In addition, the use of Web 2.0 has facilitated the interaction in the English language among people from all over the world. This phenomenon seems to demonstrate that not only can EFL learners from non-English speaking countries have the possibility to use a considerable amount of English beyond the classroom for their own interests, but this could positively influence their SLA (Second Language Acquisition) (Benson and Reinders 2011)[3].