



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Education

A LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL GAMES ON IMPROVING STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE WRITING SKILLS

KEY WORDS: Digital Game, English Language, Writing Skills, EFL Classroom.

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ABSTRACT

The new generation uses digital games in their everyday lives for entertainment and learning. Digital games have a remarkable role in the learning process of the new generation. Many education scholars investigated the effect of using games to enhance learners' English language learning in general and specifically improve writing skills, revealing that games in the classroom can foster writing skills and bring remarkable improvement. This study investigates the impact of digital games on improving students' English Language writing skills depending on a literature review. As many studies focus on the impact of digital games on different English language skills, this conceptual literature review aims to stimulate reflection on the use of digital games in enhancing English language writing skills. This study revealed that digital games increase students' engagement in the learning process, create a less-anxious writing skills environment for students, and motivate and help students get a deeper understanding of the English writing process.

1. Introduction

Technological advancements and innovations have made significant contributions to every aspect of education in recent years. The emergence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has had specific significant impacts on the teaching of English due to the rapid growth of technological development and globalization. In the twenty-first century, what will shape education is eliminating characteristics that make learning difficult (Beatty, 2003; Martinson & Chu, 2008; Prensky, 2002; Prensky, 2001:146). So, it is essential in the twenty-first century to understand and study the factors that can affect the learning processes due to the continual advent of interest and necessity to teach English as a second or foreign language because teaching EFL writing is not the same as teaching EFL writing in the previous decades. Students today are born in the era of digitalization (Maqbool et al., 2018; Putri, 2018). Prensky (2006: 27) stated that " Today's students have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, iPad, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age ."Also, a new generation was born due to the changes that take place in the world of technology and the internet. Prensky called this generation a "digit natives". The generation of people is born nowadays surrounded by the strong effect of the internet and its different applications, so they become a significant part of their lives (Prensky,2001).

To improve a student's writing ability, much attention has to be needed by a teacher as approaches to teaching writing through providing guidance and feedback (Leki & Carson,1994). Cahyono & Widiati (2006: 45) stated that teaching writing is not an easy task, so the teachers must identify various techniques for teaching it. The essential thing in the teaching and learning process is the teaching techniques, and media used when teaching. The teacher must use appropriate learning techniques and media to make students better understand the material explained by the teacher and create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom so that it will be easy to understand the material (Bahtiar et al., 2021).

One of the possible techniques to be used is applying digital games in English to the teaching and learning process of English writing. According to Sigurdardottir (2010: 7-9), there are three reasons why games are suitable for promoting fun learning in language, especially in learning writing. Firstly, they are fun. This condition will activate the passive students

and indulge them in their learning process. Second, games will help build a friendly and positive relationship, keeping the learning environment exciting. Third, by participating in games, students will be exposed to various situations, which is one of the reasons some people study the language. The digital game supports student-centered learning, enhances students' motivation, and increases autonomy. While playing, learners will increase by employing metacognitive strategies to solve problems and critical thinking(Cakici, 2016).

As a result, teachers need to improvise their teaching methods by incorporating students' interests into their methods. Students' digital world can be an excellent way to make English learning more alive (Putri, 2018).

This paper presents a rationale for implementing games as a stress-free tool for enhancing writing. Also, in this review paper, the researchers will review some of the significant issues about using digital games in the learning and teaching of English language skills. These issues are as follows: definition of digital games and writing skills, advantages of the digital games, and the use of the digital games in the classroom and its challenges.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Writing Skills

Scholars from various backgrounds use the concept of writing skills in different ways.

Due to Zamel (1982:195), writing is a "process through which meaning is created." Also, White and Arndt (1991) defined writing as a method of problem-solving involving processes such as generating ideas, planning, setting objectives, reviewing, evaluating what will be written, and looking for language to convey precise meaning. Moreover, Nunan (2003) defined writing as the mental process of generating ideas, deciding how to express them, and organizing them into words and paragraphs that a reader can comprehend. Whereas Hutchinson (2005) described writing as another type of speech or communication, it grows with practice by putting words together and processing thought and grammatical structures.

2.2 Definition of Digital Games

Digital Game-Based Learning may be a growing field of using games in education and training different knowledge and skills. Digital Game-Based learning can be defined as "Any

learning game on a computer or online." The development of educational games has prompted computer games for educational purposes (Beatty, 2003; Martinson & Chu, 2008; Prensky, 2002; Prensky, 2001:146).

Also, a digital game is "a game type that is played with different digital devices" (Computer, tablet, mobile phone, etc.) (Michael & Chan, 2006:142).

2.3 Advantages of Digital Games in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language

Even though most teachers are unaware of games as a learning approach, games play an essential role in language classes. However, they have lots of advantages to the learning process of the learners. Games are always fun for the learners in EFL classrooms, so they attract their interest, unlike ordinary lessons. With games, students learn the language while having fun in the classroom. They have a beneficial impact on even the shyest and reticent children. The game increases the children's motivation because they play as an alternative solution, encouraging them to keep their interest in the lesson and continue working. In this way, they reduce the stress of learning another language. Conversely, they produce an effective and positive classroom climate that prioritizes students and their learning (Mei & Yu-jin, 2000).

Digital games are considered alternative, complementary, and enriching to traditional or other teaching methods to make learning fun. They can make a foreign language life in the classroom and make the lesson enjoyable. Also, they facilitate the learning process (Cankaya & Karamete, 2008; Lee, 1991; Lujan et al., 2006; Suhor, 1975). Whitton (2010:1) argued that games can be successfully used "to support adult learners' learning, teaching, and assessment." Ersoz (2000) emphasized that digital Games can be used to practice all language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and used to practice many types of communication. Digital Games will allow learners to think and act both critically and creatively. Siguroardottir (2010) assured that those games are enjoyable and can be the reason for the learners to write. Games are beneficial since learners practice the language freely, so they do not feel anxiety, and their positive feelings increase because they are not afraid of being punished or criticized (Crookal, 1990).

Both Lee (1971) and Lujan et al. (2006) and Cankaya and Karamete (2008) asserted that digital games become parts of the curriculum, and it supports the curriculum to become fun and interesting. However, Suhor (1975), Lee (1991), and Ersoz (2000) point out the importance of teaching foreign languages by using digital games. Hence, digital games provide practice for all language skills and many types of communication, either written communication or spoken communication.

2.4 Using Digital Games in the English Language Writing Classroom

Using video games supports learning and literacy. These skills are beneficial in the classroom, focusing on using cooperative and collaborative learning to make the knowledge a social construct (Gee, 2010; Pappas, 2014).

One way to incorporate Minecraft in language arts to develop students' writing skills is to inspire them to write about gaming experiences. In one scenario, 21 students worked together to escape a hostile situation, similar to a lone survivor. They wrote journal entries embedded in maps during the gameplay and could be saved as text files (Uusi-Makela, 2014). Also, Karsenti and Bugmann (2017) stated that Minecraft required the students to focus on their writing. For instance, students had to name their finished buildings and neighborhood when they created signs. Moreover, students can communicate with classmates in writing. The Minecraft game develops 21st-century skills and academic skills like

writing skills through writing descriptions of what students create.

Xinyi (2013) explored the use of creative writing learning software in the Malaysian classroom and the educational effectiveness of such software among Malaysian primary school students. Next, an initial framework concept is designed using a layered approach. The framework's design principles are synthesized in a pilot study and tested in a low-fidelity test conducted in a private international school. A prototype named Story world is then designed and developed to teach creative writing to primary school students. The Story world prototype is designed to be easily decomposed into essential components to support the concept of software reuse for other creative writing systems. The prototype is user-tested in a separate study with a class of seventeen students. The implications of the findings are discussed in detail, and recommendations for future research are also presented.

Also, Marcon and Faulkner (2016) examined the use of Minecraft as a pedagogical tool to motivate girls' literacy practices within the secondary English classroom. The study was conducted in a co-educational Victorian secondary school in Melbourne's North, involving year (7) English students. The researcher's methodology was the qualitative approach. The tools of the study consisted of an observational note with recorded students' dialogue. The data suggest that girls find Minecraft an appealing text for literacy learning. The study found that using digital games in the English classroom can productively assist teachers in bridging students' outside-and inside-school literacy practices while validating and drawing from youth culture to enhance learning processes. Minecraft can be indirectly incorporated into lesson plans focused on writing to promote creativity, imagination, and other critical composition skills. By describing unique characters in writing, students practice literacy and composition. Minecraft may improve literacy by encouraging students to design characters and landscapes. Students can further develop storylines or blogs about characters' actions or create videos explaining the building process.

In addition, Hamm (2019) examined students' experience of using video games as an approach to literature in English teaching. The study was conducted in a VG1 class consisting of (29) students. The students' experiences, reflections, and knowledge-sharing were collected using observations, reflection logs, and a written test. The researcher's methodology was a mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative design). The study shows that approximately one-third of students experience increased learning and understanding of literature at the end of the study. The findings were assessed in light of sociocultural learning theory and categorized by the nature of the findings. There were also reports of increased literary, conceptual understanding, engagement, and desire to work.

Moreover, Bahtiar et al. (2021) examined the use of Puzzle Game media in optimizing English learning in junior high schools, especially in writing skills. A study on the Puzzle Game use was conducted in 2021 at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurul Qur'an Peloso Jombang with 26 students. This type of research is development research. To analyze the results of the study used, descriptive qualitative analysis. Data were obtained through questionnaires and learning outcomes tests. Researchers tested the effect of Puzzle Game Media. The results get 95 were in the "excellent" category. Through Puzzle Games, students can evaluate learning outcomes well and make it easier to understand the material being studied. The results of this study are very relevant to learning, especially in improving student learning outcomes in learning English at the Junior High School level.

Also, Castillo-Cuesta (2022) examined the impact of games on enhancing English as a foreign language (EFL) reading and writing skills. The participants were 48 students. The participants were divided into an experimental (n = 23) and a control group (n = 25). A mixed-method approach was used for collecting and analyzing data in this research. Pre- and post-tests were administered to all the participants; furthermore, a perceptions survey was applied to the experimental group. This study involved an online instructional process in which game-based activities were implemented to practice reading comprehension and paragraph and essay organization. The results showed that the use of Genially games was effective in enhancing EFL reading and writing skills.

Regarding writing, they showed improvement in recognizing accurate grammar and vocabulary, organizing ideas, and demonstrating awareness of essay organization. Participants also had a positive perception of game-based activities, increasing their motivation.

The previous studies have assured the positive effect of using video games like Minecraft games, puzzle games, and Gone Home games to improve learners' writing skills. Finally, conclude that after reviewing the literature, we find these advantages of the use of digital games in the digital game provides interaction between teachers and learners, provides comprehensible input and output, helps learners to develop thinking skills, make learning and teaching more student-centered, give practice to all language skills, promotes learners' autonomy and helps them feel more confident, and increases learners' motivation to learn writing skills effectively. So, teachers need to give games extra effort and attention while smartly managing and materials of gaming teaching approaches.

2.5 Challenges to the Use of Digital Games

There are several practical and pedagogical obstacles to incorporating gaming into instructed language learning. Among those issues are: "what kind of games to choose or create, how to find the opportunities for language learning within the gameplay, and how to integrate gameplay and its associated activities into the curriculum" (Jones, 2018:9).

3. Conclusion

This paper reviewed some essential issues pertinent to using a digital game in language learning. The literature review indicated the definition of writing skills, digital game and their advantages, how to apply them in the classroom to teach writing, and its challenges. The review revealed that when the digital game is used appropriately, it can bring many advantages to teachers and learners. It is a resource that learners can use because it helps them find methods to use what they have learned in practical and meaningful ways. In addition, the review literature indicated that the use of digital games plays a crucial role in language learning based on their own pace, helps in self-understanding, does not stop interaction with the teacher, and creates high motivation in learners for the effective learning of language skills. Furthermore, the paper represented that learners should use the digital game to enhance their language skills because it has a crucial role in developing learners' creativity and provides them with interesting, enjoyable, and exciting alternatives to study the language. To sum up, the findings of this literature review showed that digital game provides interaction between teachers and learners, provides comprehensible input and output, helps learners to develop thinking skills, makes learning and teaching more student-centered, gives practice to all language skills, promotes learners' autonomy and helps learners feel more confident, and increases learners' motivation to learn writing skills effectively.

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