

## PLAYING VIDEO GAMES IN READING AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

Video games are not always harmful; in fact, they can have positive effects on English language learning. Games that use English as a means of communication can indirectly help non-native English speakers improve their reading skills. As gaming has become an integral part of daily life, especially for students who often use gadgets like computers, tablets, or smartphones, it presents an opportunity for enjoyable and effective learning. The purpose of this study is to examine why participants play video games and how it can aid in their English language learning. The study gathered data through in-depth interviews with ten individuals from different backgrounds who shared a passion for video games and recognized their potential for improving English reading skills. The participants cited entertainment, story-driven games, competition, social interaction, and stress relief as reasons for playing video games. All agreed that video games had helped them significantly in improving their English reading skills.

**Keyword :** Video Games, English Learning, Reading Skill

### INTRODUCTION

Video games, also called computer games, are electronic games that require a device such as a joystick, controller, keyboard, or motion sensing device to play. They typically generate visual feedback, which is displayed on a video device like a TV set, monitor, touchscreen, or virtual reality headset. Video games also feature audio feedback, often delivered through speakers or headphones, and sometimes haptic technology is used to provide additional feedback. They can be categorized into different genres such as puzzle, action, and Role-Playing games (RPG).

One interesting feature of video games is that they often have their own storyline and voiceovers for in-game characters. This forces the player to listen to the dialogue and read the subtitles when the characters talk or engage in a dialogue with the player. This type of gameplay could help improve English reading skills as players indirectly learn and remember what the in-game characters say and how to correctly pronounce certain words. Subtitles that appear when the characters speak also aid in this learning process. Thus, video games could serve as a useful tool to acquire English reading skills. Cruz (2007) states that video games can be used to improve language instruction.

In today's era. Video games have become a part of life for some people, Traditional games have long been fun for children or students, Like playing monopoly, hide and seek, playing chest etc. Due to technological developments that have had a major impact on games. Video games have been created which are more popular which attract the interest of children and students to play video games. Because in fact, today's games are more fun and have many genres or categories. Many students sometimes spend all day just playing video games on cellphones or their computers. Sometimes video games are also can be the reason for some students bad grades, many parents will blame for the sake of video games and parents will tell their kids to stop playing.

If this phenomenon can't be stopped, it's good if we see the positive impact of playing video games. Who knows that playing video games can improved students English reading skill. Games can motivate students to learn subject because of three reasons: basic information was given, therefore, students can win the game, learning content is related to the curricula, and multy-sensory engagement can support

experimental learning (Furió, Juan, Seguí, & Vivó, 2015).

Previous research has examined the impact of online video games, both positive and negative. Adverse effects attributed to these games include the propagation of violence in society. Children who display aggressive behavior may imitate violent scenes from games such as fighting games. Additionally, online video games can significantly affect academic performance, as excessive playing time can result in a loss of focus and neglect of important academic work, potentially leading to addiction. Conversely, video games can also provide enjoyment and a sense of fulfillment, serving as a means of escape from everyday life.

Furthermore, online video games have also become a profitable business, with gamers selling accounts or virtual currency to one another. Out-of-School exposure can be one solution to develop learners' language proficiency. Therefore, classroom interaction could not help much. According to Wilde, Brysbaert, & Eychmans (2017), the most out-of-school activities that can influence the Dutch-speaking-children (aged 10- 12) are gaming, social media using, and speaking. The participants of the research is those who love playing games. They have often interacted with those from overseas. Next, they have been playing video game since they were young. This phenomenon is "Incidental Language Learning" where someone acquires new words and structure through simply engaging in a communicative activities, or in other word, they are learning the meaning based on context rather than from theory (Hulstijn, 2008)

The purposes of this paper are to find out the reason why the subjects of the present research play video games and how it can help them to improving their reading skill.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

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

One of the studies was done by Dina, Julian, and Denny (2019) Using game-based approach from the early ages of schooling helped students to gain the language not as a set of rules, but as the tool of communication. Playful atmosphere can stimulate students' motivation, make students feel confident and safe, and create positive attitudes toward foreign language learning.

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

## METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative approach 'Phenomenology Study', to gain in depth information through interview (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Respondents were invited through online post on whatsapp status and with the help of my friends to invite their friends that really likes playing video games. The researcher could interview 10 respondents. The respondents came from various backgrounds. Respondent 1 (R1) was a College student in 3rd semester so as Respondent 2 (R2), Respondent 3 (R3), and Respondent 4 (R4). Respondent 5 (R5) was a high school student in his 1st year, Respondent 6 (R6) is a college student in 1st semester, and Respondent 7-10 (R7, R8, R9, R10) are college students in 4th semester. What these respondents shared were their love playing video games and how they improving their English Language through video games. The interview was conducted using group whatsapp. Whatsapp is an internationally available freeware, cross platform, centralized instant messaging and voice over IP (VoIP). It allows users to send text and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, user locations, and other content. The interviews itself were done in real time and the answer by the respondent is texted in whatsapp group.

## A. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What do you like about or from video games?

What types of game you usually play? (you can mention the title)

- R1 answered “what I like about video game is that I can feel the beautiful scenery of the MMORPG open world types of games and playing video games can makes me feel joy.” He also added “I like games like shadow of colosus, where you can feel fighting giants enemies with just a sword and the fight that sometimes presented very related to real life.
- R2 answered “I like video games because video games present very interesting visuals, gameplay, music and sometimes really good stories to follow or play.” He continues adding “The game that I often play is minecraft because there I can build whatever I want in the real world into the game.
- R3 answered “what I like about video games is that, some video games contain interesting features so it makes me more exciting when playing a game with many feature and full of adventures that really fun. The type of games that I usually play is MMORPG-based games because I can freely explore the world in that type of games.
- R4 answered “video games helps me in giving myself a little entertainment, or kind of reward in my free time. What I like about video games is that the graphics are attractive and accompanied by the right mix and match music. she also mention the name of a mobile games that she really likes to play “ One of the game that I often play is called “Where’s my water?”.
- R5 answered “ what I like about video games is that, playing video games is really fun, it can help me reduce a lot of stress (well, if you ain’t playing competitive game) by playing an online games you can also get a friend from different country. He also added more about what tyoe of game did he usually play. “I usually play an RPG games with a really good story line to follows”. He also mentions some of mobile games that he plays. “for example like arknights, PGR, and Zenonia series.
- R6 answered “I like video games that can be played using mobile phone because it really flexible and I can play whenever I want even with my friends. The game that I often play is mobile legends”.
- R7 answered “what I like about video games is the graphics of the video game, because in my opinion beautiful graphics can spoil my eyes, so I can enjoy playing the game. Usually I play Genshin Impact because of the beautiful graphics and really good story lines”.
- R8 answered “ I really likes video games since I was kid, There are several reasons why I enjoy playing video games. First of all, it's a great way to escape reality and enter a different world. It's also a fun way to challenge myself and improve my problem-solving skills. And lastly, playing video games helps me relax and unwind after a long day of school”.
- R9 answered “ yes, I do like playing video games. It's a great way to relax and unwind after a long day. But I also enjoy the challenge of solving puzzles and developing strategies to beat the game. Plus, with a good graphic or background of the story places it really gives a very beautiful scenery to makes me enjoy playing even more”.
- R10 answered “ I loves RPGs types of games, I really enjoyed playing that types of games. Usually I play final fantasy 15, Genshin impact, and many more. What I do really like is because RPG games world is usually really has beautiful sceneries of world building. And it really refreshing to see that”.

From these, we can conclude that most of these people played video games for the beautiful graphics and also a really good story line from a video games. This was appropriate considering most of video games text or even the dialogue come from the story. When someone is curious about something, they will try to understand by themselves and the information will be remembered in their memories. Video games can also release stress because video games is basically supposed to be an entertainment purposes.

Based on your experience, does video games helps you practice or even improving your English reading skill?

- R1 answered “From my experience, playing video games can give me a little understanding of the english language. when there is a dialogue I usually translating what the characters say and it

improve my vocabulary skill, not only that, solving puzzle in a game is also need the ability to read to understand the clue that will given by the character in game to solve the puzzles and because of that, my reading skill slowly improved”.

- R2 answered “of course, because what got me interested in learning english is because of video games and I really thanks to video games because my english language ability also improved. I feel like my listening and reading skill is improving because whenever the in game characters having dialogue or talk it forced me to hear and even read the subtitles to understand what exactly is going on in the story of video game that I played”.
- R3 answered “well of course. By playing games it makes my speaking and reading skill improved because sometimes there is a vocabulary that makes me interested and I learn it to understand what exactly the meaning is about”.
- R4 answered “of course, besides movies, games also improving my english reading skill because the game forced me to read to understand what the function of some items in game if Im not reading any of those, I cant even passed to the next level. And I think that’s the reason why my english reading skill is improving”.
- R5 answered “theres a lot of stories in the video games that indirectly helps improving my english language skills. Especially my reading skill, because of reading the story and even the dialogue when characters having a conversation”.
- R6 answered “of course, because video games got me interested in learning english and without realizing it my understanding of english language is increased. And I love to read some lore of the video games to know what exactly happend in the past story in video games, indirectly improving my reading skill”.
- R7 answered “of course, i tis very influential in my knowledge foreign language, especially english, because the games that I play has many features that allows me to communicate with other players from various countries, which indirctly increasing my english language understanding, improving my english pronunciation and reading skills”.
- R8 answered “Actually, yes. When playing games, you need to read and understand the instructions, tutorials, and in-game dialogues. This indirectly trains your reading ability and comprehension in English. One game that really helped me was "Final Fantasy". It has a lot of text-based conversations between characters that I needed to read and understand to progress through the game. I learned new vocabulary and phrases that I wouldn't have come across otherwise”.
- R9 answered “Well, when playing video games, you need to read the instructions, menu options, and in-game dialogues to understand what's happening and what you need to do next. This can help improve your reading ability and comprehension in English. So yeah my reading skill is improving because of playing video games. One game that helped me a lot was "The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim". It has a lot of text-based dialogue that you need to read in order to understand the story and complete quests. I learned a lot of new vocabulary and grammar structures that way”.
- R10 answered “Absolutely. When you play video games, you often have to read instructions, menus, and even subtitles for the dialogue. It's a great way to practice reading and comprehension skills thats’ why my reading skill is getting better because I need to understand all of that. it can also help with understanding accents and colloquial language”.

In conclusion, all respondents agree that by playing video games can improve their English reading skill with different reasons.

## CONCLUSION

playing video games is not only have a bad effects. Video games can be an incredibly effective way for some people to learn English especially to improve their reading skill, not only that, there are some people who interested in English because of playing video games. While you playing a video games, you can discover so many things in English, to know everything in the games you must read. Not only reading the

storyline but everything in the games need the ability to read to understand the items function, characters dialogue, lore of the story, every each character skills, and even the weapon description. So that's why by playing a video games can improved English reading skill without we even knowing.

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