Saudi EFL Students' Attitudes towards Communicating in English while Immersed in Virtual Platforms

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Abstract

This study provides findings about Saudi English as a foreign language (EFL) students' attitudes towards communicating in English via one of the most widely used virtual platforms in Saudi Arabia; the massively multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPGs) that can offer English as the medium of communication. According to official statistics (The Saudi Economic Newspaper; Alaiqtisadiyah), almost every Saudi family owns an average of one set of PlayStation or X-Box and nearly 3 million sets are bought every year in the Saudi market. Therefore, this study generally aimed at investigating the motives, positive and negative effects of MMORPGs as well as the level of satisfaction with the immersion experiment from the perspective of Saudi EFL students at King Saud University-College of Languages & Translation (KSU-COLT). The study attempts to answer two questions. First, what are the COLT-KSU students' motives to immerse in MMORPGs as well as the positive and negative effects of being immersed in these virtual platforms? Second, what are the satisfaction levels of COLT-KSU students with MMORPGs after immersion? The findings these of the interviews showed various factors that drive the Saudi EFL Colt-KSU students to immerse in the MMORPGs. The finding also revealed varied opinions and attitudes of the participants; their views combine positive, and at the same time, negative effects about their immersion experiences in these platforms. However, the degree of their overall satisfaction with MMORPGs as a tool to learn EFL was high throughout the four weeks of the immersion experience.

Keywords: attitude, MMORPGs, Saudi EFL students, Second Life, virtual platforms

Introduction

In 2003, more innovative computer games started emerging. According to Al-Khalifah (2009), these computer games can be classified into three categories:

1. The massively multiplayer online role-play games (MMORPGs).
2. Metaverse.
3. The massively multi-learner online learning platforms (MMOLE).

In the MMORPGs, the players play certain roles to reach their goals, and these goals can be achieved through earning points to move from one phase to another. The players in these immersive platforms have different personalities with certain capabilities, and work in groups or clans in their adventures to reach the goals set. Players in these adventures confront a group of enemies and try to defeat them, and often these enemies are pre-programmed personalities working specific roles. *World of Warcraft* is amongst the most widely used massively multiplayer online role-play games (www.worldofwarcraft.com/bc-splash.htm) and are used even by some colleges of economy to train their students with selling, buying and other business transactions.

The Metaverse second life platforms, are a three-dimensional platforms inhabited by characters called (avatar) controlled by real people through the keyboard and mouse. An avatar can be formed in the manner desired by the owner; there is no limit or control to the changing capability of the personality or body. The Metaverse environment differs from its predecessor that there are no certain goals that the players should try to achieve, but rather any user of this environment can set his own goals. That means there are no wars or competition to reach certain goals in such platforms. The Metaverse platforms offer the players the opportunity to form and construct various objects as they desire, and then sell them to other players. (Second Life) is among the most famous of the Metaverse platforms used for different purposes including language teaching and learning.

Another type of the computer games are the (MMOLE). They are considered as educational virtual platforms dedicated to teaching and learning. They operate as extensions of learning management systems (LMS) but in a three-dimensional environment. The primary goal of such platforms is learning, and the surrounding environment is sometimes represented in the form of classroom environment that allows the teacher to control the supply of content and learner to interact with the surrounding environment and to communicate with his peers. As an example of such platforms the ProtoSphere environment and its Web site is (www.protonmedia.com) and it can be customized to work with learning management systems or connect them with e-content. (Al-Khalifah, 2009, p.14)

MMORPGs as An Educational Tool

MMORPGs can be used as experiments to raise awareness and knowledge of different members of community. For example, the MMORPGs for training children what to do when fire out breaks. Studies demonstrated an increase in awareness and knowledge about such situations beyond the scope of electronic games environment (Coles et al., 2007). Children play MMORPGs where they face obstacles that include street and fire risks that require the use of skills they excel in. After playing a game, many children asked questions that focus on how to deal with such circumstances, and they were able to understand and realize the skills they gained

from online games and apply them to the real world. This shows, for example, that those online games might be a golden tool to teach EFL students important skills needed in foreign community by using expressions or images just as used in the target language of that community. i.e., English.

MMORPGs can be important for students in educational field while field trips may not be an easy task in particular education settings. Semdley and Hinggins (2005) proposed that the virtual field trips may seem a good alternative for some students to visit different places around the world. They also pointed out that it is important for teachers themselves to know about this technology to get full advantage of possibilities of the "MMORPGs" in education. Moreover, they noted that the teachers would have better control over students in field trips of virtual platforms. According to Elleven et al., (2006), one advantage of MMORPGs is bringing the virtual trips to classroom as a special education tool to prepare students for real experience in the real world. Hence it becomes easier for students to learn job requirements in real life through MMORPGs more successfully.

Karim, an advisor of Social Sciences at the National Center for Social Research, (as cited in 'abualeinin, 2010, p.23), believes that MMORPGs are important sources for students' education; the students through which discovers a lot, and exceptionally stimulate their imagination. She also assumes that students become more prepared, dynamic, and easier to intermingle with the community after frequent immersions in virtual communities of these MMORPGs. Furthermore, these games give an opportunity for a player to accept and deal with modern Information Technology and Communication (ITC), such as the Internet and other modern smart devices. Last but not least, they also learn logic and reasoning through encountering problems during their immersion in these MMORPGs and gradually solving them.

These MMORPGs are characterized with numerous positive aspects. Aljarudi(2011) stresses that the MMORPGs develop memory and speed thought, develop a sense of initiative logic planning, and also contribute to the children's familiarity with new technologies(p.45). For instance, they familiarize players with steering the wheels, using the joystick, dealing with those machines professionally. In a step further, they learn how to carry out the defense and attack tasks at the same time. Cognitively, these MMORPGs stimulate vigilance and attention, and activate intelligence because they are based on solving puzzles with creative imagination. Socially, these MMORPGs also establish culture of collaborative and teamwork between members.

Social and Leisure Communication Activities via MMORPGs

In MMORPGs, players may help one another to get familiar with the games. Some players can help others of their clans to successfully immerse and intermingle into this second virtual society with continuous encouragement and support. This virtual community may offer members information, encouragement, training, companionship, referrals to other online resources and groups, ways to contribute back to the community, and ways to have fun. This possibility to contribute and, at the same time meet new people speaking English and establish friendships with them, from home, is one of the benefits these games offer to enhance the English oral communication of Saudi EFL students.

MMORPGs offer an environment that invites people to play and engage in leisure activities, relaxing and escaping from the real world (Zhou et al., 2012, p.32). EFL students experience joy by playing and communicating in these online games through English. The possibility to meet and interact with people throughout the world, to have the possibility to choose what to disclose or how to play with identity, supplies the opportunity to socialize in ways not always available in the real world.

Anbari (2010) sees that MMORPGs own several advantages including recreation at leisure time, expanding of player's imaginations through puzzles and problems solving. This, in turn, fosters interpersonal skills through competition between friends playing these MMORPGs. They may also provide the players with new ideas and information (p. 44).

McGonigal, (2011) believes that the playing of MMORPGs as a fruitful and rewarding activity that can create positive emotions and strong social relationships. Additionally, they offer the sense of accomplishment, and the opportunity to develop a sense of productive teamwork (p.12).

The MMORPGs status in the Saudi society might not seem quite different from theirs in the English speaking societies. For instance, Alnfaiee, (2009) in a report - published in the Saudi economic newspaper on 7-1-2009 – writes that the size of the Saudi families spending on electronic entertainment games is estimated at \$ 400 per year, and stressed that the Saudi market absorbed nearly 3 million electronic game sets per year, ten thousand of which are original game while the rest are not. The Saudi markets absorbed about 1.0008 million thousand PlayStation sets, and with more than 40% of the Saudi families there owning at least one (p.55).

As to English speaking countries, Gallagher (2011), the Executive Director of the Entertainment Software Federation, states that entertainment software industry (online games, computers, and the Internet, and mobile devices) is one of the most important economic sectors, they generate on America alone more than \$ 25 billion a year, and it employs more than (120 000) persons with (\$ 90,000) as an average annual salary estimated per employee. He added that American children spend in playing MMORPGs so much time equal to the times they spend in learning at schools, when an American individual reaches 21, he/she will have already spent (10,000) hours at least playing MMORPGs, and that the number of Americans who play MMORPGs is now about 170 million US.

It might be worthy to mention that the Students Club in the College of languages and Translation offers Playstations sets to its students to play during leisure time and holds contests amongst them with good prizes. This decision came as a realization of the widespread of these MMORPGs amongst the current generation of Saudi youth. However, students usually play these online games using the Arabic language in their interactions.

Past Studies Related to Virtual Platforms in Saudi Arabia

A number of Saudi researchers have conducted relevant empirical studies, experiments and projects that focus on language learning via different virtual platforms. For instance, Al-Malki et al (2014) have conducted a paper as a part of a three-year research agenda on using virtual worlds in Higher Education. This paper proposed that a virtual world, like Second Life

(SL), can be used as a highly responsive and motivating learning environment to deliver university practicum courses if a solid framework of best-practice instructional design was implemented. Specifically, the paper investigated how a Project-Based Training Program in Second Life supports the acquisition of competences constituting core requirements in the Practicum Course taught in the Faculty of Computing and Information Technology at King Abdulaziz University. The results of the study indicated a positive response to the administration of this Training Program via SL on the part of the students as well as the participating trainers.

Addowesh et al (2014) have conducted a pilot study at King Saud University to investigate the role of assessment in students' learning from asynchronous online discussion. The study adopted a qualitative methodology to gain an understanding of the students' experiences. Data were collected through: online and in-class observations, focus group and in-depth interviews with the students. Two themes have emerged from the findings. Firstly, the implications of the online environment: e.g. it offers equal opportunities, the quality of the discussions, collaborative learning. Secondly, assessment: e.g. assessment criteria, summative assessment and formative feedback from instructor.

Significance of the Study

This study investigates the attitudes of Saudi EFL undergraduate students towards oral communication in English while being immersed in virtual platforms (namely MMORPGs). Many studies have shown the usefulness of technology integration in foreign language learning. However, to the best of my knowledge, no studies in KSA have researched the attitudes of Saudi EFL undergraduate students towards oral communication in English while immersed in these MMORPGs. Therefore, this study is significant because there is a need to assist such attitudes towards one of the most innovative and widely-used virtual platforms that might help Saudi EFL students in the College of Languages and Translation at King Saud University (Colt-KSU) to be more successfully in their daily oral communication in English.

Again, these MMORPGs have rapidly spread in Saudi society in general and among the Saudi teenagers in particular. In fact, there is an average of an X-box or play-station set almost in every house in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, many Saudi families even take these sets with them wherever they travel and hence increase their children's addiction to these MMORPGs. In the summer holidays, many Saudi parents are confused how to entertain their children during these long holidays. In a survey about how Saudi parents plan to entertain their children during their vacation. Replies of a large proportion of them come to the favor of the latest online and video games ('abualeinin, 2010). He believes these MMORPGs have attracted a wide segment of children, and teenagers even at a global level because of mainly their strong audio-visual effects developed by a large number of creative developers and programmers in the production of these interesting and exciting games (p. 56).

Therefore, this study may help to facilitate the general acceptance of these advanced online platforms as a teaching aid to improve students' oral communication in English. More specifically, the results of this study will, hopefully, encourage EFL language instructors to consider deploying MMORPGs to reinforce their students' oral communication rather than relying only on class or lab-formal English communication drillings.

Hypothesis and Questions of the Study

Whether MMORPGs can be an encouraging immersive environment in English oral communication or not, the researcher thinks it is worthy to conduct a pilot study to evaluate the attitudes of COLT-KSU Saudi EFL students towards these virtual platforms. He assumes that MMORPGs might create positive attitudes towards using English because these platforms immerse learners in scenes that are similar to the real life ones, and enable students to learn by practice and by being involved in the learning process.

More specifically, this study is an attempt to address the following research objectives:

RO-1 Investigate the COLT-KSU Saudi EFL students' motives to immerse in MMORPGs as well as the positive and negative effects of these virtual platforms on them.

RO-2 Ascertain the COLT-KSU EFL students' overall satisfaction levels with MMORPGs after immersion.

Research Questions

This study is an attempt to answer the following main research questions:

RQ-1 What are the COLT-KSU students' motives to immerse in MMORPGs as well as the positive and negative effects of being immersed in these virtual platforms?

RQ-2 What are the overall satisfaction levels of COLT-KSU students with MMORPGs after immersion?

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses guided the researcher in conducting this study:

Ho-1 There will be various motives to immerse in MMORPGs as well as positive and negative effects on COLT-KSU students who immerse in these virtual platforms.

Ho-2 The COLT-KSU students communicating in English through immersion in MMORPGs will show overall satisfaction with this technology.

Methodology of the study

The Population of the Study

The subjects chosen for this study were homogeneous; that is, they were all Saudi students, studying the English integrated course (Eng 101) at King Saud University in Riyadh. The subjects' mother tongue is Arabic. This sample consisted of 24 students aged 19 years and above, and all had been exposed to instruction in English as a foreign language for at least seven years, one in the elementary school, three in the intermediate schools and three in high schools. The repeaters in addition to those who were not versed in online games were excluded from this sample so as not to affect the study's results.

The study lasted four weeks with each week having two sessions. For each week, the researcher selected other six students starting with those who were the more experienced in

playing the roles of avatars in MMORPGs. The selection was based on sampling surveys distributed all the subjects registering in this course. Then, virtual lessons assimilating one chapter of the textbook were played alive using the MMORPGs as in figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1: An Explaining Image of Rooms and Different Furniture and Utensils of a House in the Assigned the Textbook

Source: Enterprise-1-Course-Book, unit three.

Figure 2: An Immersive House in MMORPGs Simulating the Rooms, Different Furniture and Utensils of a House in the Assigned Textbook

Source: Sony Play-station, Call of Duty online games.

Because seven is the maximum number allowed to access simultaneously by the widely available version of this online game at the time of experiment. Six were students and the seventh was the researcher. Since these MMORPGs offer up to 15 prestige ranks; each rank consists of 50 levels displayed in the summary record of each avatar, the best six students who got higher levels with upper prestige ranks played the roles of avatars with the researcher first to pave the way for other students for the sequent weeks. To make it easy for the remaining subjects to refer to, these lessons were recorded and attached as links in the LMS of the ENG 101 course. Throughout these weeks, the researcher played the role of a warrior and the students played the roles of other warriors who attack enemies in a house during the leisure time of the teacher and his students in the evening.

Upon the end of each week's sessions of immersions in MMORPGs, the researcher held interviews with each group of students immersed. The interviews consisted of requests to students to participate in this study. Upon their consent, the interviews were initiated.

Data collection

Upon students' consent, the interviews were initiated. The interviews' questions pertain to the EFL Colt-KSU students' attitudes about the MMORPGs from four themes:

1. What motivates them to immerse in the MMORPGs?
2. What positive effects do they think immersion in the MMORPGs can offer?
3. What negative effects do they think immersion in the MMORPGs can cause?
4. What is the degree of their overall satisfaction after their immersion experience in MMORPGs as a means to enhance their oral communication in English?

(adopted with modifications from Al-Hadllaq, 2012, p. 16)

More precisely, the researcher deployed the descriptive approach while discussing the students' attitudes towards the MMORPGs due to its appropriateness to the nature interviews. The 24 students who played the roles of avatars with the researcher were interviewed on a weekly basis immediately after immersion throughout the four weeks of the experiment; six students per week. Thus, an experiment of immersion in MMORPGs followed by interviews was applied to 25 % of the participants every week. All the interviews with students were held using the Arabic language since most of them were still not capable of expressing themselves adequately in English at this level.

It is worthy to mention that the researcher had already held sampling surveys earlier with the whole population to choose the students who were the most experienced in the online games. The researcher kept a record of the subjects' answers to the demographic, English background questions and their skills in online games for later use.

Data Analysis:

It is evident according to the answers obtained during these interviews that there are a number of factors that drive the Saudi EFL Colt-KSU students to immerse in the MMORPGs. There are also varied opinions and attitudes of the participants; their views combine positive, and at the same time, negative effects about their immersion experiences in these platforms. However, the degree of their overall satisfaction with MMORPGs was high throughout the four weeks of the immersion experience. The following section will display the results of these answers under four themes:

1. The Motives of the EFL Colt-KSU Students to Immerse in the MMORPGs.

According to the answers related to this part, the EFL Colt-KSU students think that there are many motives that interest and motivate them to play MMORPGs. The most repeated factors amongst which are: pursuit victory, striving to defeating others, gaining points and ascending in ranks which in common rotate around challenge and competition between players. The students' answers, actually, support the results indicated by Anbari (2010) that MMORPGs can be seen as an environment or an arena for challenge and competition between the players (p.11).

Hence, challenge and competition are two powerful elements that can ensure continuous motivations of the EFL Colt-KSU students to immerse in these immersive platforms. The results of these interviews are consistent with the report issued by Walladi Magazine about some of the reasons behind the children and teenagers' preference of MMORPGs as follows:

First, the MMORPGs offer a variety of elements that attract players of different kinds through amusement. For example, fighting in houses or jungles, or invading space with fictional characters such as zombies, in addition to other attractors such as animations, colors, imagination and adventure.

Second, MMORPGs stimulate players' meditation and vigilance through varied tasks and missions. For example, they sometimes offer a race with cars which requires the players to focus while driving and simultaneously avoid barriers as much as possible, or progress of science fiction games in space or a supernatural hero defeating bad guys and overcoming obstacles.

Third: MMORPGs offer simulation of champions and heroes. In other words, these online games offer players the capability to embody the characters of heroes. The players can get immersed in avatars resembling the appearance of those heroes then start moving, fighting and modifying their behaviors, interacting and integrating them in the game with other heroes within the same game. (Al-Khalifa, 2009) comments, 'the players in these online games immerse in avatars of different personalities with varied capabilities, and work in groups in adventures to reach a set of goals. Players in these adventures work in groups to confront enemies and get rid of them, and often these enemies are a pre-programmed personalities working specific roles' (p. 56).

2. The Positive Effects of Immersion in the MMORPGs According to EFL Colt-KSU Students.

According to the students' answers on this regard, many EFL Colt-KSU students believe that immersion in the MMORPGs can contribute a lot of positive effects. From their perspective, the interviewees think that the MMORPGs can be a rich learning environment offering a variety

of interaction patterns between the players where they can immerse in online games that exceed geographical, social barriers, and hence allow them to experience a kind of collaboration beyond the traditional learning patterns. So, MMORPGs can remove barriers imposed by distances and borders, and provide new meanings for social interaction and communication.

Some of the interviewees' answers assert that cooperative playing can be one of the effective methods of learning and acquiring new skills if applied properly. Hence, MMORPGs can enhance some learning skills. Their answers' rotate around several skills such as: the skill to search for information, communication skills, speaking and reading skills in English, and problem-solving skills.

In fact, the students who play these online games usually immerse with audience of their age from different places and cultures. This might be a strong motivation for them to express themselves clearly, and improve their skills of conversation with players who might speak different languages and belong to different cultures. Consequently, this will expand their perceptions and understanding of other cultures. Also, it may lead to an enhancement in the quality and clarity of pronunciation among students on a large scale as a result of the speaking, discussions and responses and comments made during their playing of these online games. Finally, MMORPGs may contribute to the reduction of social isolation among some students, and help them towards independence in learning about others languages and cultures and hence encourage them to participate in a more active role while communicating with those players belonging to these languages and cultures.

Some students think that MMORPGs play an important role in social networking and interactive activities. When comparing the MMORPGs to traditional Instructional Software games played without the internet, they think that the former are characterized with a number of features. The most important of which is the online participation of a massive number of players who communicate with each other immediately and directly through the diverse online networks worldwide. This merit is evident when comparing MMORPGs with the traditional Instructional Software games that only allow a limited number of players in one room to play with each other at a specific time. All what a student needs to play MMORPGs is only Internet connection and a PlayStation or X-box set then start playing with a large number of players all over the world's continents. This wide space of the MMORPGs fosters networking and communication between the young people immersing in these online games, and hence help Saudi EFL students maintain and enhance friendship mainly with English speaking counterparts.

The immersion in the massively multiple role-playing online games has been increasing rapidly during recent years. According to the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) report for 2011 (as cited in Gallagher, 2011) indicates that 65% of the US players immersed in MMORPGs with other players in 2011, while the figure was 64% in 2010, and 62% in 2009. Jaroudi (2011) points out that those persons who immerse in the MMORPGs usually try to find solutions to solve puzzles, ask friends and salespersons of the online games before buying them. Sometimes, they resort to reading in electronic magazines or websites specialized in these online games. Thus, they ask questions; receive explanations and exchange information (73).

These results also match with what Kareem (as cited in Abu Aynain, 2010) stresses that MMORPGs are important sources of education; the students explore a lot through them, expand their imagination in unprecedented way, become more motivated and active, and easier to mingle in community. Furthermore, the MMORPGs offer them a chance to deal with the modern technology, such as the internet and other modern smart devices. They, also, expose them to scientific thinking through identifying problems and eventually solving them (p. 54).

In conclusion, the results of these interviews, also, support McGonagall's (2011) assertions that playing MMORPGs is 'a productive work; it produces positive emotions, strong social relationships, a sense of accomplishment, and the opportunity to develop the ability to build a sense of a useful and productive teamwork' (66). Likewise, the results support Jaroudi's (2011) affirmations that MMORPGs are characterized by positive features; they develop memory and speed thinking, develop a sense of initiative and logical planning. These kinds of online games contribute to harmony with new technologies. Hence, shortly, the players steer wheels, use the joysticks, and deal with related devices professionally. Besides, they learn to carry out continuous defense and attack tasks simultaneously with high alertness and active intelligence because accomplishing these tasks is based on problem solving and creative imagination as well as collaboration between participants (19).

3. The Negative Effects of Immersion in the MMORPGs According to EFL Colt-KSU Students.

According to the students' answers related to this dimension, a number of the EFL Colt-KSU students believe that immersion in the MMORPGs might result in several negative effects. The researcher has classified these negative effects after reconsidering the students' interviews into two categories as follows:

1. MMORPGs negative educational effects.
2. MMORPGs negative health effects.

a. MMORPGs Negative Educational Effects.

As to the students' answers under the third category, 79% of EFL Colt-KSU students believe that the MMORPGs may adversely affect their academic progress as follows: 37.5% of them believe that playing MMORPGs may cause reduce time devoted to studying, 20.83% of them believe that playing MMORPGs may cause negative impacts on academic achievements, and finally 25% of them believe that playing MMORPGs may cause late waking up and hence delay going to prayers and school on time. These findings are consistent with what Anbari (2010) pointed out that when a student becomes an excessive player of MMORPGs that can negatively affect his studying and academic progress. If the teens stay up late playing MMORPGs, this will directly affect their activities the next day. So, they may not be able to get up for school, and if they go to school they usually surrender to sleep in classrooms instead of listening to the teacher (43p.). Also, these findings are consistent with Anderson et al., (2007) and (Walsh et al., (2006) studies that concluded that there is a strong evidence that spending a lot of time in playing MMORPGs causes weakness in the student's academic achievement at school, and hence get low grades when compared to other students who play these MMORPGs less.

Therefore, researcher believes that some of these negative effects of MMORPGs can be reduced through parents' monitoring of the MMORPGs content, specifying time limits for their children and teens to play MMORPGs, encouraging them to give priority to their studying with regular following up of their assignments according to a convenient scheduling and planning. In this regard, Abu Jarrah (2005) explains that the root of problem is that we do not have a clear and specific plan for how to fill the leisure time of our children and teens. Though it might be a burden to some families and educators, avoiding the damage that the MMORPGs may cause is worthy bearing such a burden as asserted in the prophetic tradition, "All of you are guardians and are responsible for your subjects. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects, the man is a guardian of his family, the woman is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring; and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your subjects" (p.25). Hence, parents have to select a specific time for their children to play appropriate online games for no more than an hour or two a day, and then spend the rest of their time in daily activities after completing their school assignments (ibid).

In fact, the instructors as well as the Academic Counseling Committee at the schools and universities can also help raising their students' awareness about the importance of time organization and the priority of academic demands and assignments over excessive playing of these online games.

b. MMORPGs Negative Health Effects.

As to the students' answers under the third category, 66% of EFL Colt-KSU students believe that the MMORPGs may cause some health problems: 45.83% of them believe that playing MMORPGs may cause eyesight problems, 12.5% of them believe that playing MMORPGs may cause muscular and nervous system problems, 16% of them believe that playing MMORPGs may cause sleeping disorder.

These health complaints of EFL Colt-KSU students are in consistent with what Ilham Hosni (2012)- a professor of pediatrics at Ain Shams University- concludes in her study over the past five years regarding the spread of online games. She asserts that a new set of health problems related to skeletal and muscular emerged as a result of excessive and rapid movements of some body parts. Furthermore, she points out that sitting for long hours in front of the screens cause unbearable pain in the lower back, and the excessive movement of the fingers on the buttons cause severe damage to the thumb and the other fingers joints as a result of excessive and rapid movements and grab of the joysticks. The same study also notes that online games adversely affect the children's eyesight as a result of the short-frequency electromagnetic radiation emitted from the screens or the digital tablets due to the long sitting in front of these electronic devices and playing for long hours.

4. The COLT-KSU EFL Students overall Satisfaction after Receiving Their English Learning Experience via Immersion in MMORPGs.

By the end of every interview, the researcher requests each participant to express the degree of his overall satisfaction in one of four proposed phrases; highly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, satisfied to a small extent or not satisfied. The researcher intentionally concluded his interviews with this request in order to more statistically validate the second hypothesis of research, which reads as follows: "The COLT-KSU students communicating in English through

immersion in MMORPGs will show overall satisfaction with this technology." With this regard, almost 66,66% expressed their high satisfaction with this experiment of communication in English while immersed in MMORPGs, 20,83% somewhat agreed that they enjoyed communicating in English via MMORPG, only 8,33% liked using these virtual platforms to some extent, but only 4,16% expressed that he was not satisfied.

Conclusion

The interviews of the current study aimed at investigating the positive and negative effects as well as the motives of immersion MMORPGs from the standpoints of EFL College-KSU students. The interviewees' answers rotated around a number of important factors that drive them to play the MMORPGs such as the quest to win, competition, challenge, imagination and others of attraction and excitement elements. Though the EFL College-KSU students believe that immersion in MMORPGs has several positive effects, some of them believe that these online games have negative effects as well.

The major positive effects of the MMORPGs according to the interviewees are their significant contribution to the enhancement of some social and academic skills of players such as: information searching skills, communication skills, speaking and reading skills, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving skills as well as enhancing their second languages acquisition. With regard to the negative effects of MMORPGs, many of them can be classified into two categories: educational negative effects as well as negative health effects such as: waste of time, decrease of academic progress, negligence of school commitments as well as damage of eyesight and muscular and nervous system problems.

The researcher believes that the language learning process as a whole needs to cope with an inevitable wave of change emerging from new technologies. More specifically, Saudi universities should be vigilant and updated of the external conditions surrounding the new digital generation of EFL students in Saudi Arabia. One of the most important challenges facing second language acquisition is how to achieve and maintain the satisfaction of EFL students with the presence of the harsh competition of emerging technology and programs such as Internet, social networking and MMORPGs.

Finally and with regard to the degree of the participants' overall satisfaction with this experiment, most responses to this question during interviews indicated a positive and enthusiastic impression of using MMORPGs as virtual platforms to improve oral English communication. The fact that negative responses were limited may be considered as an encouraging factor to utilize these innovative platforms in foreign language teaching and learning.

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Appendix A: Sampling Surveys

Name: _____ Nationality: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Country of Birth: _____

1. When and where have you studied English other than school and university?

Date	Institute/school	Location	How long	Hrs/week

2. How much time (hours per day) do you spend**a) listen and speak in English (e.g. online games, youtube, snapchat, instigram, English TV channels ..etc?)**☐ none ☐ less than an hour ☐ less than 2 hrs ☐ less than 3 hrs☐ less than 4 hours ☐ less than 5 hours ☐ more than 5 hours**b) play MMORPGs Saudis or Arabs?**☐ none ☐ less than an hour ☐ less than 2 hrs ☐ less than 3 hrs☐ less than 4 hours ☐ less than 5 hours ☐ more than 5 hours**c) play MMORPGs with English speakers?**☐ none ☐ less than an hour ☐ less than 2 hrs ☐ less than 3 hrs☐ less than 4 hours ☐ less than 5 hours ☐ more than 5 hours**3. have you been to an English-speaking country(s)? Yes _____ No _____ If yes,**

What was the country? _____ When _____

How long did you stay there? _____ What was the reason?

Appendix B: The Students' Consents to Participate in the, Surveys and Experiment of the Study

YOU HAVE AGREED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SURVEYS AND EXPERIMENT IN THE RESEARCHER'S STUDY TO HELP HIM COLLECT DATA ON HIS STUDY ABOUT MMORPGS' EFFECT ON PRONUNCIATION OF EFL STUDENTS OF THE LANGUAGES & TRANSLATION COLLEGE AT KING SAUD UNIVERSITY

You will be recorded for research purposes, but you will remain anonymous. Students may benefit by immersing in online games in their pronunciation and oral communication in English. This benefit is not limited to the students of this course but may also benefit other students in the future. The data collected in this experiment will be used in the research and it may be used in publications and/or conference presentations with no monetary compensation to you now or in the future. The recordings will be destroyed upon the completion of the study.

By signing this consent form, you are demonstrating that you have read all the information above and that you have agreed to be recorded. There is no risk to you by participating in this research.

Please contact ALQAHTANI, SHAFI, SAAD; the researcher at (+966) 5050***** or shalqahtani@ksu.edu.sa for more details about the research.

Participant's Signature	Printed Name	Date
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Researcher's Signature	Printed Name	Date
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Appendix C: A Printed Script of the Interview sample

الباحث : الاسم	
الطالب : محمد السعدي	
الباحث : أولا نشكر لك اخ محمد على موافقتك على المشاركة معي في هذا اللقاء.	
الطالب : بالعكس أشرف بوجودي معك.	
الباحث : لو سألناك بعد التجربة التي قمنا بها جميعا من خلال لعب الالعاب الالكترونية , في رأيكم ماهي الدوافع التي تدفعك الى لعب الالعاب الالكترونية ؟	Theme- 1 :[Comment U1]
الطالب : أحد أهم الأسباب هو الفراغ ... وثانيا لزيادة التواصل مع أصدقائي وأيضا زيادة الأصدقاء بحيث أنه يتم تكوين صداقات عبر اللعب معهم عن طريق الشبكة online وأيضا بدفعني حب التجربة	Motive 1 :[Comment U2] Motive 2 :[Comment U3] Motive 3 :[Comment U4] Motive 4 :[Comment U5]
الباحث : لو سألناك أخ محمد بعد هذه التجربة عن المزايا و الإيجابيات الموجودة في ممارسة الالعاب الالكترونية؟ هل تذكر لنا بعض ما في ذهنك؟	Theme- 2 :[Comment U6]
الطالب : أول شيء يطور اللغة الانجليزية بحيث اني أتكلّم مع أجنبي في اللعبة أو حتى للعبة مكتوبة أغلبها بالإنجليزي , وثاني شيء لاني هو زيادة التركيز لأن الالعاب تتطلب تركيز و دقة وأيضا زيادة التخطيط لأنك تحتاج تخطيط إذا كنت تلعب , هذا اللي في ذهني.	Positive effect 1 :[Comment U7] Positive effect 2 :[Comment U8] Positive effect 3 :[Comment U9]
الباحث :جيد.. طيب لو سألناك بالمقابل عن السلبيات التي ممكن تتطوي عليها هذه الالعاب الالكترونية؟ في ذهنك شيء تذكره؟	Theme- 3 :[Comment U10]
الطالب : أولا وأهم شيء هي ضياع الوقت.. يعني يؤثر سلبيا على دراستي و أيضا يؤثر على اختلاطي الاجتماعي مع عائلتي و مع أصدقائي في العالم الحقيقي.. بحيث اني أركز على أصدقائي في العالم الوهمي أكثر من العالم الحقيقي... وأيضا ممكن انها تزيد العنف	Negative effect 1 :[Comment U11] Negative effect 2 :[Comment U12] Negative effect 3 :[Comment U13] Negative effect 4 :[Comment U14]
الباحث : كيف تزيد العنف ؟	
الطالب : مثلا تشوف مشاهد عنيفة كل يوم... خلاص تشوفها أنه شيء عاوي..أيضا يؤثر على البصر لاني أقعد عليها بالساعات.	Negative effect 5 :[Comment U15]
الباحث : طيب.. بالآخر انا أشكرك وفيه سؤال أخير وأود أنك تجيب عليه بكل صراحة عن مدى رضاك عن التجربة التي قمنا بها بالالعاب الالكترونية في انها تطور لغتك الانجليزي سيما على مستوى المفردات و القراءة .	Theme- 4 :[Comment U16]
مستوى الرضاء عندك هل تعطيه : غير راضي جدا - غير راضي - محايد - راضي - راضي جدا	
الطالب : راضي تقريبا علشان نكون منصفين.	Satisfied :[Comment U17]
الباحث: في نهاية اللقاء نشكرك مره اخرى على تواجدك معنا	
الطالب : وانا أشكرك على إتاحة الفرصة	

A Translation Script of the Interview sample

	The researcher: What is your name?
	The student: <u>Mohammed Assadi</u>
	The researcher: First of all, I would like to thank you for accepting to participate in this interview.
	The student: Actually, it's an honor to be with you.
1 st Theme :{1Comment [A]	The researcher: If I ask you about the immersion experiment of the online games we did together, in your opinion what are the <u>motives</u> that drive you to play the MMORPGs?
1 st Motive :{1Comment [A]	The student: One of the main reasons is <u>to enjoy leisure time</u> ... second, <u>to communicate more with my friends</u> , and <u>to increase numbers of friends</u> . In fact, I can build more friendships through playing MMORPGs and finally, <u>love for adventure</u> .
2 nd Motive :{1Comment [A]	
3 rd Motive :{1Comment [A]	
3 th Motive :{0Comment [A]	The researcher: Ok, If I ask you <u>Mohammed</u> after this experiment, what were some of the <u>main merits</u> or <u>positive aspects</u> of playing MMORPGs? Is there anything in your mind you would like to mention?
2 nd Theme :{1Comment [A]	The student: First of all, <u>to improve my English</u> . In fact, I can talk to foreigners while playing MMORPGs. Actually, these games are mostly written in English. The second thing is <u>to increase attentiveness</u> because these online games need concentration, precision and <u>advanced planning</u> because you will definitely need planning while playing. That's all I can recall at the moment.
1 st Positive Effect :{1Comment [A]	
2 nd Positive Effect :{1Comment [A]	
3 rd Positive Effect :{1Comment [A]	
3 rd Theme :{1Comment [A]	The researcher: Good. Ok, if I ask you, on the other hand, about <u>the negative effects</u> that can be caused by these MMORPGs, is there anything in your mind to tell us?
1 st Negative Effect :{1Comment [A]	The student: The first and the most important thing is <u>wasting time</u> . I mean they (MMORPGs) <u>negatively affect my studying</u> and they also <u>affect socializing with my family and friends in the real world</u> That is because I focus more on my friends in the virtual world than on my friends in real world. Also, they (MMORPGs) <u>can increase violence</u> .
2 nd Negative Effect :{1Comment [A]	
3 rd Negative Effect :{1Comment [A]	
4 th Negative Effect :{1Comment [A]	
	The researcher: How can they increase violence?
5 th Negative Effect :{1Comment [A]	The student: For instance, you see violent scenes everyday... Consequently, you see them as something normal. Also, they <u>affect my eyesight</u> because I sit playing MMORPGs for hours.
4 th Theme :{1Comment [A]	The researcher: Ok. By the end of this interview, I thank you, but there remains a final question I would like you to answer it frankly regarding <u>the extent of your satisfaction with the experiment</u> of our immersion in MMORPGs. Do you think it has enhanced your English; particularly at a vocabulary and reading level? Your satisfaction level, is it "strongly unsatisfied", "not satisfied", "neutral", "satisfied" or "strongly satisfied"?
Satisfied :{1Comment [A]	The student: Approximately <u>"Satisfied"</u> to be more fair.
	The researcher: Lastly, I would like to thank you once again for participation with us.

Appendix D: A Sample of Online Games' Contests Held by the Student Activities Committee at the Colt-KSU

بطولة البلايستيشن

شارك التحدي والمنافسة على بطولة البلايستيشن
التسجيل في مقر الأنشطة بالكلية الدور الأول ١٠٥٠
سوف تكون هناك جائزة مالية للمركز الأول

تبدأ البطولة
يوم الاثنين ١/٢٠

فترة التسجيل ١/١٦ - ١/٢٠

سوف تكون اوقات المباريات من الساعة ١٢ - ١ ظهراً
والمسابقات المتأخر ١٠ دقائق سيعتبر منسحب