FARMVILLE GAME: A TOOL FOR LEARNING ENGLISH?

Autor(es)

LARISSA CORROCHER

Co-Autor(es)

ELTON COUREL VELLOZO
PAULA VARELLA DE LIMA RASERA

Orientador(es)

OSVALDO SUCCI JÚNIOR

1. Introdução

Nowadays technology represents a very important role in people's daily life. It is present everywhere and gives us a better quality of life. Technology is also involved with education and it facilitates the process of education in many aspects, such as on-line contact, sharing information, computer programs, products as e-books, and so on. As future teachers we have to be aware about these new technologies, and also about methods and approaches that we have in education, because we are going to face very different students, which will need different classes applied. In this technology/education field, we find the called "serious games" (2007), which are games developed to teach. These games are created focusing in some goals that the company/school requires and the player is going to learn in a very playful and natural way. Besides these "serious games", we have the well-known "casual games" (2007), the normal games, that are 10.000 hours played in almost all children's and teenagers' life nowadays, as Prensky illustrates in his article "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants". These "10.000 hours" explain where the idea about "serious games" has started. A very famous casual game is FarmVille®, developed by Zynga© and available at Facebook©, the most famous social network. This game is completely in English and the players can build their own farm, achieving goals, winning prizes, completing tasks during the game. It involves planting, plowing, taking care of animals, everything a real farm could have, and at the same time interacting with other players.

2. Objetivos

We agree that "serious games" are excellent tools for the educational process, but can be FarmVille®, a casual game, a good tool too? Is this "playful environment" of game somehow helping FarmVille® players' vocabulary acquisition? These are some questions that made us think about this project. We believe that FarmVille® players have kind of natural vocabulary learning, because we observed players in casual conversations talking about the game and using its vocabulary. Through this observation, we have some other questions: Are these players using the game vocabulary because they were talking to other players? Are they able to use the same words in another context? Does the player English level influence in this possible vocabulary acquisition? Thinking about all these information given and all these questions made, the aim of this paper is try to discover the answers and to understand more about the benefits of the game for learning, focusing in our future in classrooms. Facebook©, FarmVille®, Internet, are very accessible tools nowadays. Because of the government initiatives internet is available in most of schools and houses. If we analyze that FarmVille®

can be a tool in the process of learning/teaching, we can apply it to our future students, which are surely interested in on-line games.

3. Desenvolvimento

our intention is to elaborate a questionnaire which will be applied to assiduous players of FarmVille® game. In these selected players, we are going to consider: age, gender, frequency of game playing, level that the player is in the game and knowledge of English language, because we believe that these factors can influence in the result. As explained before, we have some questions involving this game: 1) Can this "casual game" be a tool for learning, as a "serious game"?; 2) Is the "playful environment" of game somehow helping FarmVille® players vocabulary acquisition?; 3) Are these players using the game vocabulary because they were talking to other players?; 4) Are they able to use the same words in another context?; 6) Does the player English level influence in this possible vocabulary acquisition?. The questionnaire will be prepared focusing in the most frequent words that appear in the game and also in some expressions. These vocabulary chosen are the ones that appear since the first level and the player use every time he/she plays the game, which means that the chosen vocabulary is always present and certainly these are the words that are easily incidentally learned by a player. The questionnaire will be divided in two parts. In the first part we will try to answer the questions 3 and 4 given in the begging of this text. The second part is attending the 2 question. The questions 1 and 6 are just going to be analyzed observing the data collected through the part one and two. The first part of the questionnaire is going to contain the most frequent words of the game, but in a different context, to check if the participant players are able to identify the game vocabulary out of the game, not only when they are talking about the game with other players. For example, we will put a piece of an agriculture text that contains the words of the game, to check if they can identify the words. We can put some pictures of fruits, and ask the players to name them, and so on. The second part of the questionnaire is going to be a completely FarmVille® scenario. We are going to use the most frequent pictures, words and sentences from the game, to check if the selected players complete the activities easily, because the game is explicitly involved, and if it interferes in the players assimilation of vocabulary. For example, we can take the image of the most frequent fruits of the game, and ask the players to name it. We can put in English the name of some objects that appear in the game, and ask the player to translate them, and so on. After collecting the data from this questionnaire, we are going to relate it with the English level of the participant players, to analyze if it influences in this possible natural acquisition.

4. Resultado e Discussão

This data will provide us the information that we are looking for: Is FarmVille®, a "casual game", a good tool for learning/teaching English? The result is very important, because as future teachers, facing in a near future students very interested in games and technology, we have to make all the efforts to attend to these new students who will need different approaches inside the school.

5. Considerações Finais

This presentation is going to be about our project, we are not going to show the results, as it is a research in progress.

Referências Bibliográficas

Derryberry, Anne. "Serious Games". San Jose, CA 2007. http://www.adobe.com/resources/elearning/pdfs/serious_games_wp.pdf Prensky, Marc. "Digital Natives". USA 2001. April, 14 2011. http://www.marcprensky.com/default.asp Alptekin, Cem. "Foreign Language Learning Strategy Choice: Naturalistic Versus Instructed Language Acquisition" Journal of Theory and Practice in Education. Makaleler, 2007. April, 21 2011. http://eku.comu.edu.tr/index/3/1/calptekin.pdf Schneider, Edd. April, 28 2011 http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T007&prodId=AONE&docId=A170279578&source=gale&userGroupName=capes2&version=1.0. Zheng, Kai. April, 28 2011 http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T007&prodId=AONE&docId=A170279578&source=gale&userGroupName=capes2&version=1.0 Robinson, Peter. Individual differences and instructed language learning. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, Publishing. CO, 2002. Norman, Donald. "The Motivation of Gameplay". On The Horizon. 2002. May, 05 2011. http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20The%20Motivation%20of%20Gameplay-OTH%2010-1.pdf Prensky, Marc. "Not Only The Lonely ". USA 2002. April, 14 2011. http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Not%20Only%20The%20Lonely%20-%20OTH%2010-4.pdf Prensky, Marc. " Open Collaboration". USA 2002. April, 14 2011. http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Open%20Collaboration%20-%20OTH%2010.3.pdf Prensky, Marc. " "Simulations": Are They Games?". USA 2002. April, 14 2011. http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Simulations-Are%20They%20Games.pdf Prensky, Marc. "Types of

Learning". USA 2001. April, 14 2011. http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Types%20of%20Learning%20(Chart).pdf Prensky, Marc. "Why Games Engage US"?. USA 2001. April, 14 2011. http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Why%20Games%20Engage%20Us.pdf