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TESOL

THE EFFECTS OF VIDEOGAMING ON SECONDARY STUDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO
COMMUNICATE AND THEIR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING: A CASE STUDY

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the students who I can proudly claim I was and am their teacher. They have provided me with a reason to continue to study and try to be a better teacher. They also are my motivation to become a better human being. I can only hope that the abilities and knowledge acquired throughout these past two years might serve to guide them into becoming even greater English learners and, more importantly, people who could favourably impact our world.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the effects that video gaming (VG) has on the willingness to communicate (WTC) and self-directed learning (SDL) of a small group of learners in a private secondary school in Santiago, Chile. The participants of this study were eight students ranging from first to third year of secondary education. The tools used to collect data included an initial online questionnaire intended as a means to select participants, one-on-one interviews, and focus group interviews. The period of the study began in August and ended in December of 2020. The data analysis was conducted using an inductive model. The findings reveal that those learners in the group who spend more time VG prefer using English as the language in which to play. Also, the effect that VG has on English learning varies in terms of the extension of time that students play. Finally, VG appears to have little impact on the learners' WTC in the classroom. These findings both support and at the same time contradict previous research that reveals a certain connection between VG with WTC and SDL.

Key words: Video Gaming (VG), Willingness to Communicate (WTC), Self-Directed Learning (SDL), EFL secondary school learning.

RESUMEN

La presente investigación tiene como objetivo explorar los efectos que los videojuegos tienen en la voluntad de comunicarse y en el aprendizaje autodidacta en un pequeño grupo de estudiantes secundarios en un colegio privado de Santiago, Chile. Los participantes de este estudio fueron ocho alumnos desde primero a tercero medio de educación secundaria. Las herramientas para recopilar datos fueron un cuestionario en línea que sirvió para seleccionar participantes, entrevistas personales y entrevistas grupales. El período del estudio comenzó en agosto y terminó en diciembre del 2020. El análisis de los datos fue hecho utilizando un modelo inductivo. Los hallazgos revelan que los estudiantes que pasan más tiempo jugando videojuegos prefieren usar inglés mientras juegan. También, el efecto que los videojuegos tienen en el aprendizaje del inglés varía conforme la cantidad de tiempo que los estudiantes juegan y otros factores que están fuera del foco de este estudio. Finalmente, los videojuegos parecen tener poco impacto en la voluntad de comunicarse en clases. Estos hallazgos apoyan y se contradicen con el conjunto de estudios que revelan una conexión entre el uso de videojuegos y la voluntad de comunicarse y en el aprendizaje autodidacta.

Palabras clave: Video Juegos (VG), Voluntad para Comunicarse (WTC), Aprendizaje Autodidacta (SDL), Aprendizaje del Inglés como Idioma Extranjero en la Educación Secundaria.

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Significance of the study

Video gaming (VG) has been in constant growth since the early 1990s. The importance of VG, especially in the younger population, is undeniable. Gaming is increasingly becoming essential to people's lives (Takahashi, 2013). The intense eruption of the Internet, which has impacted every aspect of our daily routines, has also done so in the VG world. The Internet has spread to a massive amount of households and has provided opportunities to engage in online VG with players from the world over as well as to be able to participate in global adventures and tasks that require cooperation among its users. Another factor that has increased the acquisition of VG consoles is the accessibility of gaming gadgets in the current market, the prices of which have lowered while at the same time family incomes have improved. The utilization of credit cards and loaning techniques that the contemporaneous capitalist system has presented/imposed on us is also a contributing component in how much the acquisition of VG consoles has augmented. The eruption of the Internet and the increasing opportunities to obtain a game console have produced an immense change in our customs: most people do not gather round *the hearth* anymore, but are connected to their console of preference, communicating and gaming with players that share their taste in VG.

Second language acquisition (SLA) research, for several decades, has had a great deal of interest in games. Finding ways to improve and make the language learning experience more dynamic has received considerable attention in the SLA field. Although VG had been popular for over a decade, it only found a way into the research field of SLA during the first half of the 2000s. At the same time, households have continued to acquire consoles and computers that provide the interface for younger members of society to play video games. As online VG widens its scope and expands its number of users, so does the connection with SLA research (Thorne et

al, 2009). The emerging scholarship in this area suggests that VG can have a positive impact on learning vocabulary and enhancing communicative skills (Anderson et al, 2008; Chen & Yang, 2013; Rudis & Postic, 2017; Horowitz, 2019; Janebi Enayat & Haghghatpasand, 2019; Vásquez & Ovalle, 2019). During the last decade, assisted by the serious impact that the Internet combined with social networking technologies have had on our lives, VG has become a collective experience. Online games, consequently, have embraced a communal mode in which players have to work cooperatively to complete tasks or missions. This collaborative characteristic has equipped gamers with the necessity to communicate, generally in English, in order to accomplish these missions. This phenomenon has broadened the horizon for researchers of SLA to embark upon the study of online VG and its relationship with the learning of a foreign or second language. The results of these studies, although not conclusive, are generally promising (see Horowitz, 2019). Findings indicate that communication in the VG setting tends to happen naturally and without the pressure that learners might encounter in formal settings such as classrooms. Scholars working in this area (e.g., Mukundan & Kalajahi, 2014; Klimova & Kacet, 2017) have also highlighted the prevalence of meaningful and in-context communication called for in VG settings which is otherwise missing in formal environments. The high level of interaction, the utilization of discourse management strategies to be properly understood, and the gain of valuable fluency practice are also mentioned as possible positive attainments by learners when taking part in online VG (Reinders & Wattana, 2011; Peterson, 2010; Da Silva, 2014). While some studies have revealed obvious and beneficial features derived from VG playing, there is one particular drawback to using online games in terms of learning English - as learners get better in exchanging in interactions, they become increasingly less grammatically accurate (Da Silva, 2014; Rashid & Asghar, 2016).

Another characteristic that has also promoted the VG consoles and PCs accession is the

continuous technological refinement done by VG developers. The features that previous games would offer are quite limiting in comparison with the broad spectrum of possibilities a more contemporaneous one can provide. There is one type of game which is particularly famous around the world and it is known for being thoroughly personalized: the massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG). The most important attribute that this type of game provides is that every player is in charge of one or more characters and is also responsible for the decisions that those characters make throughout the duration of the game. This feature has led to a great deal of independence and personalisation which enables the game to be a distinct experience for each player.

In my own experience of English language learning, others that I have known over the years and I can trace our SLA beginnings to informal settings. The motivating cause for which we have acquired a second or foreign language is mostly connected to individual and personal predilections: wanting to understand the lyrics of particular music bands, desiring to watch a film without the help of subtitles, having the dream of living in a foreign country, or trying to decipher puzzles inserted into videogames that are only available in English. My closest friends and I were part of this latter group. Although we were invested in different games, we were all facing the same challenge: attempting to comprehend the English language in order to succeed in our private endeavours. These were my opportunities for effective second language learning for a long time. Indeed, learning was seldom found in my experiences in formal English language classrooms.

The need to understand how informal settings and preferences influence our second language learning, how they might shape our impressions concerning a foreign language, and how they determine the perceptions that we have of ourselves as learners is deeply embedded in my personal interests as an EFL educator. In spite of the fact that a great deal of literature has

been published on the subject of VG and its relationship with SLA, very little research has been conducted in our country, Chile, considering the massive scope that online VG has and how extremely habitual it has become within a population, especially among young people (Matijević & Topolovčan, 2019).

1.2 Context

The need for educators in Chile to enhance students' abilities in the English language is a paramount objective that many believe must be addressed. Through a nation-wide study, the Agencia de Calidad de la Educación (ACE) has demonstrated that 68 percent of students of third grade of secondary education do not reach A2 or B1 level (CEFR) and only 32 percent reached the desired levels. In other words, 7 out of 10 students of third grade of secondary education do not meet the criteria for an eighth grader. Furthermore, social and economic backgrounds also conclusively impact the level that students attain; 85 percent of high-income students of third grade of secondary education reach A2 or B1 and only 9 percent of low-income students of the same grade achieve that same goal (ACE, 2017).

Facing the challenge of instructing English to low-level students and in glaringly inequitable contexts, Chilean researchers and educational stakeholders have tried to take on this difficult task. A great deal of studies can be found regarding the possible ways in which we can improve ELT in Chile (e.g., Barahona, 2016). Although a significant amount of research has been conducted in the areas of teaching practice and methods, little has been done concerning the attitudes of learners when in a L2 class and in particular their willingness to communicate (WTC). WTC has been considered a vital part of modern L2 pedagogy as well as a pivotal point when trying to achieve language instruction's aim of bringing cultures in contact with one another and nations together (MacIntyre et al., 1998)

On the other hand, in a study conducted in Santiago, Chile, Kormos et al (2011)

demonstrated that secondary ESL Chilean learners in both public and private schools are highly motivated to acquire the L2 because they are eager to become members of the globalized international English-speaking community. The authors claim that the international posturing of this group of learners strongly influenced their language learning goals. International posture describes the students' intention to use English as a lingua franca and communicate with other people in the world (Kormos et al, 2011). The authors compare the Chilean context to the one in Hungary by stating that Hungarian students, who share the same first language with very few other people (Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Csizér & Kormos, 2009), and Chilean learners have a similar motif to learn English so they can be part of a globalized international English-speaking community.

This phenomenon points to the fact that for the young generations of language learners regardless of the ethnolinguistic vitality of their L1, English plays a highly important role as a mediating language in the often borderless and globalized cultural environment in which they live (Lamb 2004, 2009; Yashima 2009).

1.3 Rationale of the study

Given the poor and yet inequitable English learning outcomes (ACE, 2017) and the increasing importance that Chilean learners place on learning the second language (Kormos, Kiddle & Csizér, 2011; Gómez & Pérez, 2015), the need for a more efficient way in which to teach a second language has become fairly apparent in Chile. I take the position that a new understanding of language teaching is needed: one that does not aspire to change students into acquiring machines, but one that seeks to be changed according to the needs of the learners. In taking this position, I argue that rather than seeking to impose a way of learning, instructors and educational stakeholders must embrace malleability as a foundational stone in their practices in an effort to relate to students' interests and realities.

Since communication is the desired outcome in an English class, the way in which most school learners communicate is by using a gadget which enables them to chat and make video-calls with people the world over. As technology improves and online connectivity pervades many aspects of daily life, the ability to interact with others online grows more and more commonplace. Text messaging and the use of social media have become standard means of communication for many individuals, and this level of connectivity carries over to video games (Horowitz, 2019). Recent years have seen a growing interest in the pedagogical potential of digital games. The educational value of games has long been recognized, but digital games in particular are now acknowledged as having a powerful potential to engage learners and to encourage interaction in the target language (Reinders, 2012). Immersive environments offer learners the chance of further exposure to target language input, and opportunities for output. Successful learning is integrated into the ordinary context of learners' lives and encourages collaboration and lifelong learning (Reinders, 2012). Therefore, what immersive environments provide and what is understood by successful learning in language education are in total concord; the use of new technologies facilitates the bridging of learning within and outside the language classroom.

Game consoles and home computers have succeeded in making online interactions smooth and accessible and that has led to the current worldwide popularity of online multiplayer videogames. More than half of those who play video games (53 percent) do so with others, spending more than six hours per week playing online (ESA, 2017). Takahashi (2013) has estimated that seven hundred million people, or 44 percent of the global online population, play online videogames.

The accessibility of social media and online video gaming has also made it easier than ever to interact with those from other cultures using other languages (Horowitz, 2019). The need to speak especially in English, considered the lingua franca globally, is more relevant than ever,

yet most schools in Chile struggle to prepare students for a bilingual or English-speaking environment (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación, 2017).

My personal and professional frustrations with this situation have led me to seek to establish a more tangible connection between learners' preferences and characteristics and the second language learning process. To be able to identify that link, in my estimation, would make the experience more relatable and meaningful. Although research has demonstrated that school pupils show a significant propensity to becoming competent in English as a second language (Kormos et al, 2011; Gómez & Pérez, 2015), the reasons for which learners wish to acquire the L2 are numerous. This desire for English is inextricable connected to the social and economical status that students enjoy (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación, 2017). Throughout my experience as a language learner in a public school and as an EFL teacher in a private institution, I have observed that most EFL learners that I have come into contact with that have mastered an L2 have personal motivations for acquiring the language and most individual reasons can be traced to VG.

Being confronted with the challenge of teaching learners a second or a foreign language, researchers have paid some attention to VG as a tool to make learning more meaningful and relatable. VG shares some key characteristics with SLA that has made VG as popular in various educational research fields as it is among young people. Dehaan (2005), for example, points out that "although video games may not yet be able to effectively educate users in a content area, language learners may benefit from video games" (p. 229). Reinders (2012), as well, advances that successful games mirror successful teaching insofar as they create environments that balance user/learner control with clear expectations, exploration with feedback, and ample opportunities for genuine interaction.

Online VG has been shown to make learning more motivating (Peterson, 2012) and to

include a significant level of interaction (Horowitz, 2019). These two features are aligned with the definition that MacIntyre et al. (1998) have provided for willingness to communicate: “WTC in L2 is defined as the intention to communicate with specific persons at a specific time” (p.549). WTC was originally developed to describe differences in L1 communication. Burgoon (1976) posited the construct of “unwillingness to communicate” as a predisposition to chronically avoid oral communication based on such factors as introversion and lack of communication competence. McCroskey and Baer (1985) postulated a more specific construct defining WTC as the intention to initiate communication given the opportunity. This subtle change in definition extended its scope to a variety of fields, including the case of communication in a second language.

1.4 Research Questions

Taking into consideration that the definition of online VG and WTC intertwine and that they have the same intention: to communicate with specific people at a specific time, the aim of this study was to explore the impact that VG has on learners’ WTC and SDL in a private secondary school in Santiago, Chile. By gaining a better understanding of how VG is connected with WTC and SDL concerning language learning, a more robust comprehension of how to improve SLA, specifically EFL learners’ WTC in and outside formal settings, is intended. The research questions that guided this study are as follows:

1. What are the reasons behind the decision to choose to play videogames in one language over another for a small group of secondary students in a Catholic school in Santiago, Chile?
2. From the perspectives of this small group of students, what are the effects that VG has on their English classes?
3. In what ways does the communication that occurs in VG relate to the one in English classes?
4. How does VG influence this small group of students into becoming *better* language learners, if

at all?

1.5 Definition of Terms Used in the Study

Due to the wide range of definitions for only one construct and the various meanings that individual scholars apply to a single idea, in this section, I provide a set of definitions which have been embraced to frame the development of this inquiry.

- **Video Gaming (VG):** Since the 1970s, the term Video Gaming has been defined as the activity or pastime of playing video games and it is used. Benson and Chik (2011) describe VG as “an avenue for language learner development, and as a potential area for foreign language and teaching” (p. 13). For the purposes of this inquiry, VG is interpreted as the undertaking of playing video games which might translate into a language learning opportunity.
- **Willingness to Communicate (WTC):** Although, the term WTC was originally used in first language acquisition, it was later attained in L2 to describe the intention to initiate communication given the opportunity (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). For the purpose of this inquiry, the description given by MacIntyre et al (1998) is utilized: WTC is the intention to communicate with specific persons at a specific time.
- **Self-Directed Learning (SDL):** Despite the fact that historically SDL has been more related to andragogy than to pedagogy (Merriam, 2001), for the objectives of the present study, SDL is considered a skill that both young and adult learners might possess. SDL, according to Knowles (1975), is defined as “a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes” (p. 18).

Although this definition is dated, current scholars are increasingly considering SDL as an important 21st century skill. (Tan et al, 2017).

1.6 General outline of the study

The present report of the study is structured in five chapters and it is explained as follows.

In Chapter 1, the topic of the present research is introduced and the context of the investigation is described. Also, justifications to pursue the research are given and the research questions which shaped the study are presented. Finally, the main concepts that are common throughout the study are defined.

In Chapter 2, theories underlying the research and the literature which help to frame the present study are detailed. WTC and SDL are explored and related to second language learning. Also, literature regarding WTC and SDL within the technology and VG fields is explained. Finally, a general overview of VG in the second language acquisition is described.

In Chapter 3, the methodology utilized during the investigation and the research design are described, along with the participants and important contextual features. The tools for data collection and the reasons for their selection are explained as well as the ethical considerations that were taken for the realization of the study. The process used to analyse the data are outlined.

In Chapter 4, the collected data is analysed according to the themes that emerged from the data sets used in the collection process. At the end of the chapter, the findings are presented in a detailed discussion relating these findings to current scholarship.

In Chapter 5, the results obtained in the present study are summarised and used to provide responses to the research questions. Also, implications for EFL teachers, parents or legal guardians, educational institutions, policy makers, and myself are drawn from the findings. At the end of the chapter, important limitations of the study are discussed.

1.7 Summary

In this first chapter, the reasons that have motivated the realisation of the present study have been pointed out alongside the main goal of this research. This goal was to explore the effects that VG might have on learners' WTC and SDL through interviewing participants who would be interested and invested in the *video game world*. The focus of the study was to give voice to a small group of secondary school gamers in allowing these EFL learners with an opportunity to express their perceptions and opinions about the role VG plays in their lives and education. Also, the general and inequitable context which Chilean students face every day has been explained. Additionally, the rationale behind this study, combining the unbalanced Chilean reality with the desire to inquire about the impact that VG might have on learning, is discussed in depth. At the end of the chapter, the research questions that will lead this study were outlined as well as the definition of recurring terms.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The present study involves three main concepts: WTC, SDL, and VG. Each of these is presented in this chapter according to its history as a factor in the acquisition of a second language, specifically English. Also, the scholarship that has shown the impact that VG has on WTC and SDL are reviewed

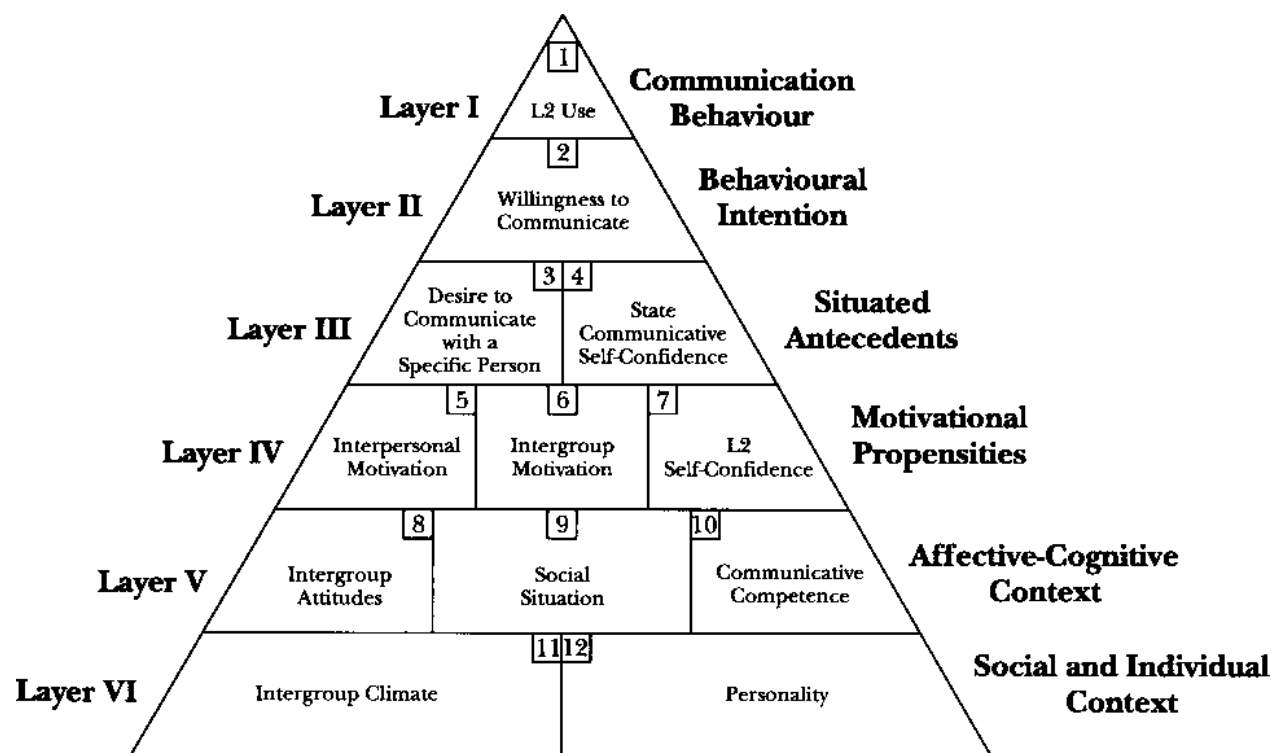
2.1 Willingness to Communicate

Willingness to communicate (WTC) was originally developed to describe individual differences in L1 communication. Burgoon (1976) explained the construct “unwillingness to communicate” as a predisposition to chronically avoid oral communication based on such factors as introversion, lack of communication competence, alienation, anomie, and communication apprehension. A more specific definition is provided by Mortensen et al. (1977) who postulated a consistency across situations in the global features of speech, labelling their construct predisposition toward verbal behaviour. McCroskey and Richmond (1982) used the term *shyness* to investigate this predisposition and defined it as the propensity to be timid and reserved and to do less talking. These constructs were designed to describe regularities in communication patterns across L1 learning situations. Finally, McCroskey and Baer (1985) offered WTC as a slightly more specific construct, defined as the intention to initiate communication given the opportunity. This subtle change in definition allows for clear links to the broad behavioural-intention literature and focuses research on the multiplicity of factors that lead to such an intention, including the case of communication in a second language.

However, WTC’s adaptation to the L2 situation came to be prominent a decade later when a pyramid model designed to account for individual differences in the decision to initiate L2 communication was proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998). At the top of the pyramid is the intention to communicate with specific persons at a specific time (WTC) which is regarded as the

final step before starting to speak the L2 (MacIntyre, 2001).

Figure 1. Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998)



2.1.1 WTC in Online Gaming and in Technology

Two concepts which greatly affect WTC are motivation and interaction. Both concepts can be found in VG (Peterson, 2012; Horowitz, 2019), especially in online VG. The informal setting of online multiplayer video games may offer safe spots for speakers of other languages learning English to practice their communication skills and reduce their anxiety about using a second language. This particular feature allows learners to have a protected place where they can freely engage in interaction and could be useful to improve their WTC. However, very little research has been done trying to establish a relationship between online multiplayer video games and WTC. One example of such an attempt is the study carried out by Horowitz (2019). He examined the relationship between both WTC and anxiety with the time spent playing online games by basic and intermediate English as a second language (ESL) college students in Puerto

Rico. The results suggested a statistically significant relationship, supporting the statement of establishing a relationship between online multiplayer video game play, increased confidence, and lowered anxiety toward using English among SL learners. The results are in line with Chik's suggestions (2011) which argued that massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG) presented opportunities for language learning that could increase WTC in English because "a strong interest in completing in-game objectives fuelled the need to understand in-game texts and contexts" (p. 97)

Outside the scope of VG, Navarro (2013) conducted a pilot project which explored a Teletandem experience to increase undergraduate students' WTC in a foreign language. During six months, a Spanish class from Canada was paired with an English class from Chile. The results showed a tendency for a greater WTC in Spanish and English at the end of the term. Also, students' increased perception of their ability to speak the L2 correlated positively with higher frequency of language use. On the other hand, Gómez and Pérez (2015) found that English is positively evaluated by the participants in their study (Chilean 12th graders) and that they recognized the importance of mastering the language in current times. This latter finding is worth noting given that Chilean students are traditionally considered to be passive who generally make little effort to engage in learning the language. The authors also suggested that educational policies should facilitate teacher training and better incentives for educators in order to foster improvements in teachers' methodology to enhance students' practice of the target language in other contexts different from the English class (p. 322).

2.2 Self-Directed Learning

Another skill, which has been referred as highly beneficial for SLA, affected by playing VG and intended to be explored in this study is self-directed learning (SDL). SDL was initially defined by Knowles (1975) as "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without

the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes” (p. 18). Kerka (1994), apart from adopting Knowles’ (1975) definition for SDL, dispelled three myths associated with SDL: adults are naturally self-directed, SDL is an all-or-nothing concept, and SDL is an individualistic and isolated activity. SDL, although proposed in 1975, has come to prominence since the beginning of this century along with student-centred learning (SCL). SCL is a learning process where much of the power, instead of residing in one person, is shared equally among students and their teachers (Estes, 2004). Nowadays, SDL is viewed as an essential skill for individuals of any age in the twenty-first century (Tan et al., 2017).

Apart from being generally an important skill in education, SDL has been deemed highly significant when acquiring a second language. Students’ motivation and sense of personal accomplishment are boosted when SDL is promoted in a second language class (Du, 2013). Also, when language learners are required to establish their own goals, learning strategies, and learning styles in order to augment their language learning experiences, they become effective promoters of their own learning (Pemberton & Cooker, 2012). Hence, developing autonomy in L2 learners might be crucial for language learning because it equips students with opportunities to unaffectedly apply their acquired knowledge and skills outside the learning context (Wenden, 1991). According to Du (2013), SDL is considered to be a powerful strategy for L2 learners since this particular skill can lead to enhancement of one’s knowledge domain, meta-cognitive skills, and motivation.

2.2.1 SDL and Technology

Although SDL has been extensively researched in SLA and particularly in andragogy, very little is known when merged with the use of technologies. SDL is deemed to be a vital tool

in the concept of *lifelong learning* (Rashid & Asghar, 2016), whose meaning has been expanded by the attractive and new communication networks accessible through digital technologies (Kim, 2010). Focusing specifically on students, Laird and Kuh (2005) claim that contributing and participating in active, academic cooperation with other students are skills found in learners who use digital technologies for academic purposes.

Further research attempting to better understand the connection between SDL and technology is the one conducted by Rashid and Asghar (2016). Their study aimed to examine a path model with technology use, student engagement, academic performance, and SDL among undergraduate students in private universities in Saudi Arabia. The results indicated that technology use has no significant direct effect on academic performance, however, a direct positive relationship was found between technology use with students' engagement and SDL. The use of social media appeared to be a positive predictor of all variables, whereas phone calling and watching TV were negative predictors. Importantly, SDL was discovered to be positively related with technology use and students' engagement. Indeed, technology use may indirectly affect academic performance through SDL, as was suggested by Candy (2004).

Shifting the aim closer to the objective of the present study, Toh and Kirschner (2020) carried out an investigation intended firstly to derive a set of SDL strategies in video games which might be taken into account for pedagogical settings. And secondly, the authors' coding scheme of SDL strategies can be used to assess video games as enhancing SDL strategies in learners. According to Toh and Kirschner (2020), the principles from SDL derived from video games (engaging, independent learning, and authentic learning environments) might be applicable in classroom contexts to capture students' interests (Deng et al., 2016) and motivations (Bawa et al, 2018) to "promote their SDL of metacognitive skills and the integration of new concepts and curricular content" (p. 10)

2.3 Videogames in Language Learning

Saying that technology has made a massive impact on our daily lives has become the zeitgeist among people around the world. Claiming that the educational system has avoided such influence is short-sighted. According to Rashid and Asghar (2016), students could be using different technologies in order to ease and enhance their learning experience and to successfully fulfil academic challenges. There are some researchers that go even beyond the notion of technology being an accessory to SLA, putting forward the claim that teaching and learning are improved and have already been altered by digital technology (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013). One particular type of digital technology largely used in students is VG. It has been approximated that 44 percent of the global online population (seven hundred million people) play online video games (Takahashi, 2013). To fully understand how VG can impact language learning, we first must grasp the concept of Digital Game-Based Learning.

The term ‘Digital Game-Based Learning’ was proposed by Prensky (2001) to denote the use of computer games for educational purposes. The advantages of utilizing digital games for the learning process have been steadily increasing in number. Gee (2003) identified a number of features of digital games which are beneficial for learning such as being engaging, interactive, productive, and having minimal negative consequences for learners. O’Neil et al (2005) later pointed out that computer games can provide a range of approaches to learning processes, address cognitive and affective issues of learning, and motivate students. Then, deHaan et al (2010) posited that computer or digital games have some other characteristics which make them suitable resources for language learning such as comprehensible input, self-study opportunities, subtitles, repetition, and authentic language. According to Sandberg et al (2011), digital games make the learning experience fun and relaxing for students and, as Liu and Chu (2010) suggested, increase their interest and attention.

In a recent mixed-method study conducted by Janebi Enayat and Haghghatpasand (2019) which was intended to examine the possibility of exploiting commercial adventure video games, the authors claimed that designing pedagogical supplementary materials could improve vocabulary recall in second language learners. Results suggested that playing adventure video games contributed to not only the immediate receptive, but also the delayed productive vocabulary recall of the players. The EFL learners also expressed positive perceptions toward the game and identified gaming as a helpful tool for language education in general, and vocabulary learning in particular.

Vásquez and Ovalle (2019) carried out an Action Research study that aimed at demonstrating the effects of videogames on vocabulary acquisition in a group of 15 students from 8th semester of the B.A. English program in a university in Colombia. The findings indicate that videogames could be used as effective tools in the classroom. As the data from this study indicates, there is a link between the use of videogames and an increased uptake in vocabulary. Based on these findings, the authors claim that the games appear to have positive repercussions on learners' vocabulary acquisition process.

Also referring to the acquisition of vocabulary through videogames, Chen and Huang (2010) aimed to investigate Taiwanese EFL college students' perceptions of the potentials of computer games for language learning. The participants were required to play two selected games, *Sid Meier's Pirates* and *Telltale Sam & Max* in the researcher's computer assisted language learning class. To elicit participants' perceptions of computer games, researchers asked them to write a reflection paper after they had played these two games for more than ten hours. The findings indicate that most students' perceptions deem certain computer games helpful in second language learning.

Matijevic and Topolovcan (2019) analyzed the positive effects of video games on

teenagers' development and on their informal learning by interviewing students who were online players. The interviews were conducted as open interviews with two general questions: 1) Describe the game you are playing. 2) Explain what you think makes the game beneficial for school and learning. Through an analysis of the main concepts used by players to express the values and benefits of playing video games, the most prominent terms were found to be entrepreneurship, creativity, time and money management, critical thinking, teamwork and cooperation. It is also pointed out that, since all of the games in the analysis were in English, which was not the participants' native language, all players perceived they had improved in their speech and writing in the English language. This improvement might be traced to the time spent playing video games in a different language from their own. Finally, Matijevic and Topolovcan (2019) suggested that it is evident that teenagers and students play a variety of video games that can develop skills needed for informal learning or for later in life. These skills are often not taught in the classroom, and rarely form part of the school's learning programme. The results show that students recognize the "value of communication skills, decision making, multiculturalism, critical thinking and entrepreneurship in video games and that these competences are crucial in everyday life" (p. 22).

Although the use of technology has been considered beneficial for second language learning, some scholars have expressed hesitations. Losh (2014) questions the use of technologies by claiming that not all types of digital engagement meet the requirements for educational purposes. VG has also received critiques from educators who are doubtful of the educational value of VG. Newcombe and Brick (2017), for example, stated that "many of the benefits games have on language learning are incidental rather than intended" (p. 83). Some researchers have gone even further suggesting that VG may hinder SLA because of the high degree of interactivity in VG and the lack of knowledge that teachers may have about computer games (Kilmova &

Kacet, 2017). Yet, not only reservations about their usefulness in SLA have been made.

Educators should use games which students are accustomed to (Hidi & Renninger, 2006) and are suitable in terms of their content avoiding violent and misogynistic themes (Gros, 2007).

According to Mukundan et al (2014), “teachers should make informed decisions regarding the employment of these games in a particular educational context and with a particular type of language learners” (p.22)

2.4 Summary

In this second chapter, the relations between the various topics related to this study were described. The WTC construct was explained alongside its connections to language learning and technology. Similarly, SDL, based on a wide source of scholarship, was defined as well as its relationship with technology and so-called *21st century skills*. In order to provide a more specific scope to the present study, VG and its link with language learning based on several recent studies was outlined.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Since the beginning of this century, interest in qualitative research has shown a significant increase, especially in the value that it offers in examining human conduct within the contexts of their customary manifestation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). This feature of qualitative research has been exploited for the last twenty years in the field of education in order for educators to better comprehend the world from the position of those living in it (Hatch, 2002). In other words, researchers and teachers have been uncovering the educational process from the learners' perspective.

In order to explain how I worked within the qualitative paradigm to uncover the participants' views and perceptions about how VG affects their English learning process, I describe the research design approach in this chapter. Then, a detailed explanation of the setting and participants is presented in order to provide readers greater knowledge of the context, necessary for a deeper understanding of the analysis and findings. Next, the data collection methods are described and explained and the steps taken to assure that strict ethical standards were respected in the inquiry are outlined. Finally, I provide a detailed account of the data analysis process and how the results were investigated.

3.1 Underpinnings for Choosing a Qualitative Approach

“Human resources are like natural resources; they're often buried deep. You have to go looking for them; they're not just lying around on the surface. You have to create the circumstances where they show themselves.”

Sir Ken Robinson

The quote above is a two-fold reflection which has haunted me throughout my rather short teaching and research practice. As an educator, I have experienced and felt the pressure under which teachers are being put to cover all the contents that the Ministry of Education has imposed.

This stress is created by the governmental authorities, coordinators in schools, and by teachers themselves. Yet, little room has been left for the most important of all the things educators can offer to learners: an opportunity to find about what one is passionate. We, as a society and as teachers, have constantly failed to provide students with this possibility and have continued to focus on the teacher-to-student transmission of contents. On the other hand, as a novice researcher, I tended to see scholarship as a precise process which would allow only the study of regular quantifiable data. Also, media and popular culture normally display research using charts and graphs to illustrate the results of a certain scientific research. In newspapers, television, and radio, the terms related to research are *variables, sample size, and results* making research intended for public use associated with quantitative methodologies (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). However, the human condition is always alterable and ever-changing. Furthermore, numerical information can only scratch the surface of the overall knowledge that a social science can attain and, as the quote above states, only by laying down the proper set of conditions, by looking down deeply, can we begin to understand the complexity of human nature.

It must be noted that, because of the formal and biased education I received as an undergraduate student, this study was originally intended to be a quantitative one. Yet, as I was searching for literature on the field of VG in education and reflecting on this study's research questions, I realised that what we need is understanding rather than another statistical analysis to add to the already large stockpile. The more I inquired into this area and reviewed my beliefs and practices as a teacher, the more I was convinced that a qualitative approach might provide the appropriate answers. In addition, obtaining a deeper comprehension of this topic would make my and, hopefully, others' teaching practices more efficient and effective. The applicability of qualitative research findings to real teaching practices are well recognized. Even though the sense of achieving a superior teaching practice is reason enough to conduct this study, due to the fact

that my first experiences as an English language learner were related to VG, I was also interested in grasping a greater understanding of my own learning process. I too was keen to find out whether my case was isolated or common among young learners.

3.2 Approach to Inquiry

As stated above, the present study is considered of a qualitative nature. Qualitative research is an open-ended procedure which utilizes abundant descriptive data that represents the essential characteristics of a few participants in a holistic manner and it emerges without the use of statistics (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Qualitative research is in pursuit of comprehending the world from the point of view of the people inhabiting that world (Hatch, 2002). To explore human behaviours within the contexts of their natural occurrence is the ultimate goal of this type of inquiry (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Qualitative research opposes the idea of having controlled or manipulated settings. According to Hatch (2002), if contrived environments are used as in traditional or quantitative research, “the outcomes are studies that tell us little more than how individuals act in narrowly defined and inherently artificial contexts” (p. 7). Taking into account these definitions of what qualitative research is and is not, the present study was carried out with the purpose of exploring and understanding a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012), which, in the present study, was to better understand how VG impacts learners’ WTC and SDL.

Many attempts have been made to differentiate qualitative research from other research approaches. However, in order to offer characteristic qualities, Hatch (2002) has provided predominant features by which a study can be considered qualitative. The attributes, by which this present study was constructed and shaped, are the following:

- to include natural settings to better comprehend how people make sense of their everyday lives;

- to provide prominent importance to participants' perspectives or voices;
- to consider the researcher as a gathering instrument;
- to spend enough time with the participants in their contexts to feel confident that the appropriate data is gathered;
- to follow the foundations of Max Weber's interpretative sociology (Giddens,1971), the researcher must aim to understand the phenomenon rather than to identify it;
- qualitative reports must be complex, detailed texts that include the participants' voices;
- to embrace subjectivity to possibly understand the implicit reason and assumptions of the participants;
- to accept that research questions, methods, and other elements are changed as the inquiries unfold;
- to discover patterns in the data, to form categories, and then to determine if the categories are supported by the overall data set;
- to be reflexive, to keep track of the researcher's influence on the setting, to classify biases, and to track emotional responses in order to come nearer to human action to understand what is unfolding.

By adhering as closely as possible to these guidelines, the present study seeks to comply with the necessary requirements for it to be considered qualitative in nature. Additionally, by aligning the methodological steps taken to Hatch's (2002) recommendations, the results uncovered in this study can be thus considered reliable, valid, and, ultimately, replicable (p. 6).

3.3 A Case Study

Within the realm of qualitative research, the inquiry follows a case study methodology. According to Cohen et al (2007), case studies provide "a unique example of real people in real

situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles” (p. 253). Throughout the development and realisation of the inquiry, the perceptions and voices of the participants are the central concern. These impressions and utterances were gathered from a specific group of people, who were students of secondary education and were partaking in a specific activity – playing video games. In the area of language learning, in which area this study is located, case studies are intended to provide a holistic description of the language acquiring process within a determined setting and population (Mackey & Gass, 2015).

A case study was selected in order to attain a deep insight of the situation in ways that numerical analyses are unlikely to grasp (Cohen et al, 2007). In addition, one of the main established purposes was to produce comprehensive descriptions of specific learners inside their particular setting (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Yet, it must be noted that the selection of methodology, rather than being the researcher’s choice, was related to the participants and how it would be more appropriate to obtain the necessary data. Also, the research questions and the kinds of information that they are intended to uncover determines the methodological framework for the study. As Hitchcock and Hughes (2002) argue “case studies are less distinguished by the methodologies that they employ than by the subjects/objects of their inquiry” (p. 316).

3.4 Research Design

The research began to take form during the first semester of 2020. Although, this study was originally intended to follow a quantitative methodology, it was later re-designed to attain a deeper understanding of the impact that VG has on learners’ WTC and SDL. Once the research proposal was modified, instruments to obtain official permission from the school authorities were created. After the headmaster was contacted informally and had approved the realisation of the study in the institution, a letter of intent was delivered to gain accredited authorization. At the

request of the headmaster, all data collection procedures were conducted once classes had ended and letters of consent had been signed by the participants' parents and/or legal guardians. It is important to point out that that the headmaster and the learners' legal guardians were asked to thoroughly read both letters and had enough time to agree or decline the invitation to be part of this study.

While letters of consent were signed, delivered, and stored, the online questionnaire was designed. The purposes of the questionnaire were to obtain a general depiction of the prospective participants' impressions regarding the topics of this study and to provide the necessary information to choose participants for the interviews. Subsequent to receiving responses from the questionnaire, eight students were selected to take part in the one-on-one and focus group interviews. These learners were chosen because they provided highly different responses in the questionnaire that could ensure the display of numerous perspectives in the attempt for understanding the phenomenon.

After all online interviews were conducted, transcriptions were made. The organization of the information led to the analysis of the data focusing on the findings, discussion, conclusions, and implications of the study.

Figure 2 summarizes the stages of the study and their corresponding timeframes and illustrates the cyclical nature of the study.

Figure 2: Phases in the research development



3.5 Context and Participants

The present study took place in a private Catholic school in Santiago, Chile. This school offers the complete compulsory educational spectrum in Chile: pre-primary, primary, and secondary education. The school's main aims are to educate people based upon the values and beliefs of the Catholic Church and to guide students to become upstanding human beings who can succeed in the academic and their personal/social fields. Originally, the school was intended to be exclusively for families and students who shared the same creed as that of the school – Roman Catholicism. However, as time passed, despite being a Catholic school, students and families from diverse religions and creeds were also welcomed to be part of the school family. At

the time of the study, there were approximately eight hundred sixty students across the sixteen levels that the school offers. All levels consist of two classes (class A and class B) which, roughly, have twenty-seven students each. In order to cover every level and every mandatory subject, there are thirty-two teachers who are full time staff at the school.

The school resides in one of the communes with highest incomes in Chile and receives students from the same or adjacent communes that are also considered to be within the wealthiest of the country. Hence, since the higher your income is, the better your level of English (ACE, 2017), most students can maintain a conversation in the foreign language without difficulty by the time they reach seventh grade. Although the majority of families enjoy a comfortable economic status, this prosperous lifestyle leads often to long working hours for parents and the need to expect teachers to assume most of the responsibility of raising their children. Based on my five years at the school, I observed that parents seem generally unconnected with their children's learning processes.

The school also forms part of a "network" of schools which are distributed throughout several cities in Chile. This network acts as a bridge over which activities and contests, which include participants from every school, are organized in the spirit of sharing and improving students' skills and knowledge. These events occur regularly throughout the year and most of the subjects have, at least, one activity or contest. In the case of English, there are two activities: Spelling Bee for primary school and Public Speaking for secondary school.

Although the school is not considered bilingual, a great deal of emphasis is given to English. This subject is taught from Pre-Kindergarten to fourth year of secondary education covering five pedagogical hours in their weekly schedule. It should be mentioned that the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) only requires English as a second language to be instructed from fifth grade and for only three pedagogical hours a week. The importance that the school

places on English teaching has resulted in most of students reaching a minimum B2 level in English, according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

As a teacher working in this particular Catholic school in Santiago, I have witnessed various problems that students in this specific context face. The most important and constant issue that learners vocalize is the disconnection between what is taught in English in the school, i.e. the individual course contents, and how students foresee the ways they will use the language in their realities. One other claim students make, which coincides with my own experience learning the language, is that watching series or playing videogames in English has encouraged them to pursue an interest in acquiring the language.

After completing the sampling process, eight students were selected to be the main participants in this study. Four of the participants were female and the other four were male. To guarantee the confidentiality of these learners, they will be referred as Martín, Francisco, Antonia, Sonia, Ignacia, Joaquín, Vicente, and Renata. The selected participants represented each of the three grades who responded to the questionnaire, i.e. first, second and third secondary. Despite the fact that three of the participants had attended primary school in other institutions, all participants have been taking English classes since they were four years old.

Although all eight participants claimed in the initial questionnaire that they played video games, there were differences in how much they played each day and for how long they had been playing at the time of the inquiry. Martín and Francisco, for example, play video games every day and have been playing since they were three or four years old. At the opposite end of the spectrum, are Antonia and Sonia. They had only started playing around the time of the study being conducted and play only once or twice a week. Ignacia, Joaquín, Vicente, and Renata had played video games for five or six years and they reported playing four or five days a week.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

In the next section, the inquiry tools which were utilized to collect data are described and, in order to guarantee the ethical extent of the present study, a justification for their use is illustrated.

3.6.1 Online Questionnaire

The online questionnaire was designed for two reasons: to have a general image of students' impressions regarding the topics of this study and to help in the process of selecting participants for the study.

Students in six complete classes ranging from first grade to third grade of secondary education, i.e. 9th to 11th grade, were asked to respond to this online Likert-style questionnaire (see Appendix A). The questionnaire had the intention of gaining a general image of the students, how they perceive English classes, their WTC in class, and how they regard VG. A second reason for implementing a questionnaire was the selection of the type of sampling: purposeful sampling (PS). PS was used to intentionally choose participants "that are information-rich with respect to the purposes of the study" (Gall et al, 2000, p. 165). Within the realm of PS, the strategy which was selected for this study was maximal variation sampling (MVS). MVS requires that the researcher identify the specific characteristics which are being investigated and then to find individuals who exhibit contrasting dimensions of that characteristic (Creswell, 2012). The combination of PS and MVS resulted in a deliberate selection of eight participants who would contribute both plentiful and diverse data to attain a better comprehension of how VG might affect learners' WTC and SDL.

Whilst there is no consensus on how to categorize video game players (Manero et al, 2016), Mulligan and Patrovsky (2003) have argued that there are three types of video gamers relating to how much time and money they spend on VG: hard-core (HCP), moderate (MP), and

mass-market or casual (CP). Based on this definition, it can be implied that Martín and Francisco are in the HCP category, Ignacia, Joaquín, Vicente, and Renata are MPs, and Antonia and Sonia are CPs.

3.6.2 One-on-One and Focus Group Interviews

The main goal of both types of interviews was to explore the participants' experiences and perception about how their history of playing video games impacted their WTC and their SDL.

Within the one-on-one and focus group interviews lies the essence of this entire study.

Throughout the interviews, participants were able to express their impressions on how VG has impacted their English learning process and how relevant VG has been in their lives. As Eder and Fingerson (2002) point out, using both one-on-one and focus group interviews simultaneously “can be an effective method for uncovering social phenomena among adolescents” (p. 192).

The interview format consisted of open-ended questions and conversation openers. The questions were tied to five different topics which were linked to the research questions. The responses the participants gave detailed descriptions of how VG influenced their English language learning process. The questions and conversation openers were designed to commence an exchange on which I could collect data that might provide answers to one or more of the research questions. In order to document all the valuable data that was shared by the participants and to ensure reliability, all interviews were recorded. Below are examples of the questions and conversation openers which guided both the one-on-one and the focus group interviews.

1. Bring me back to the time you first started playing video games and tell me about that experience.
2. Talk to me about the languages that you choose to play in and how you make those decisions.
3. You mentioned that you sometimes play videogames in English. How do you find that when it is not your first language?

In order for the participants to answer with information that would respond to the research questions, follow-up questions were designed to deepen their answers and to obtain significant data. It is worth mentioning that the follow-up questions were barely used by the researcher since the exchange between participants and interviewer was robust enough to achieve the expected goal. Following are examples of such follow-up questions related to the effect of video games on learning.

1. Has playing in English had any effect on your English?
2. Has it had any effect or made any difference to how you feel in English class?

An open-ended question and conversation-style interview was favoured over other types of interviews because, according to Creswell (2012) participants could “best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher of past research findings” (p. 218). In order to uncover information about the learners’ perceptions, one-on-one and focus group interviews were arranged in groups with varying number of participants: there were two one-on-one interviews and three focus group interviews.

According to Eder and Fingerson (2002), in order to avoid distorted and scripted responses from adolescents who might seek for the interviewer’s approval (Brown & Gilligan, 1993), researchers must examine the power dynamics between adults and youth. Hence, two ways to confront this problem were taken into account when designing and conducting the interviews. The first was to create a natural context for the participants. When outlining the topics for the interview, only open-ended questions and conversation openers were considered because adolescents then have more possibilities to introduce topics and familiar modes of discourse (Eder & Fingerson, 2002). Also, when conducting the online interviews, I avoided creating situations that might remind the participants of *right or wrong* type questions. Respondents in a research environment might answer what they think are expected of them rather than what they

perceive (Tammivaara & Enright, 1986). The second method to avoid influencing the students' responses was to establish reciprocity as a response to power dynamics (Eder & Fingerson, 2002). When interviewing, participants were treated in a way that they received a greater sense of empowerment from participating in the study. Participants were provided with opportunities to think through situations they were deprived in the past and without the fear of being judged or misunderstood (Taylor et al, 1997).

During the global pandemic of 2020, which coincided with the period of the study, there were highly restrictive opportunities to physically meet the participants. For this reason, the interviews were carried out using real-time online applications and tools. This situation was logistically worrisome. Yet, Silverman (2016) has claimed that real-time online interviews, whether one-one-one or focus group interviews, might help in soliciting unconstrained interactions between the researcher and participants that are common in face-to-face interviews. Also, to conduct synchronous online interviews has become uncomplicated due to the availability of easy-to-use technologies. One problem that might appear when using online interviews is the difference in internet connections between the researcher and participants which could lead to a time lag in the communication. According to Silverman (2016) "the distinction between responding and sending can become blurred or responses brief and made up of very few words" (p. 246). In order to avoid situations in which communication might be disturbed because of internet connection problems, I waited a few seconds once a participant finished her or his statement to ensure the completion of their utterance.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research, despite the views of those who question its legitimacy, is carried out with strict ethical guidelines which guarantee transparency, reliability, and the unique significance that this type of research offers (Shenton, 2004). To this point, Banister (2007)

claims that “using digital data in qualitative study can extend and richen our endeavours. Rigorous and ethical research practices will yield a body of work that will withstand the scrutiny of a global audience” (p. 6).

Once the ethical guidelines were established, the school headmaster was contacted to begin with the data collection methods. It was clearly stressed that the participation in this study was completely voluntary and that, at any time and for any reason, the school headmaster could stop the research from continuing in the school. A letter of intent was sent to the school for the study to commence (See appendix B).

Subsequent to the approval of the letter of intent, and once the school had provided their official approval for the study to be conducted with their school students, consent letters were sent to the learners’ legal guardians in order to gain permission to obtain data from their children (See appendix C). In these letters of consent, the nature of the research, the implications of the study, and the commitment to safeguard the participants’ confidentiality were extensively detailed. Also, within the same letter, the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any time and for any reason was explained.

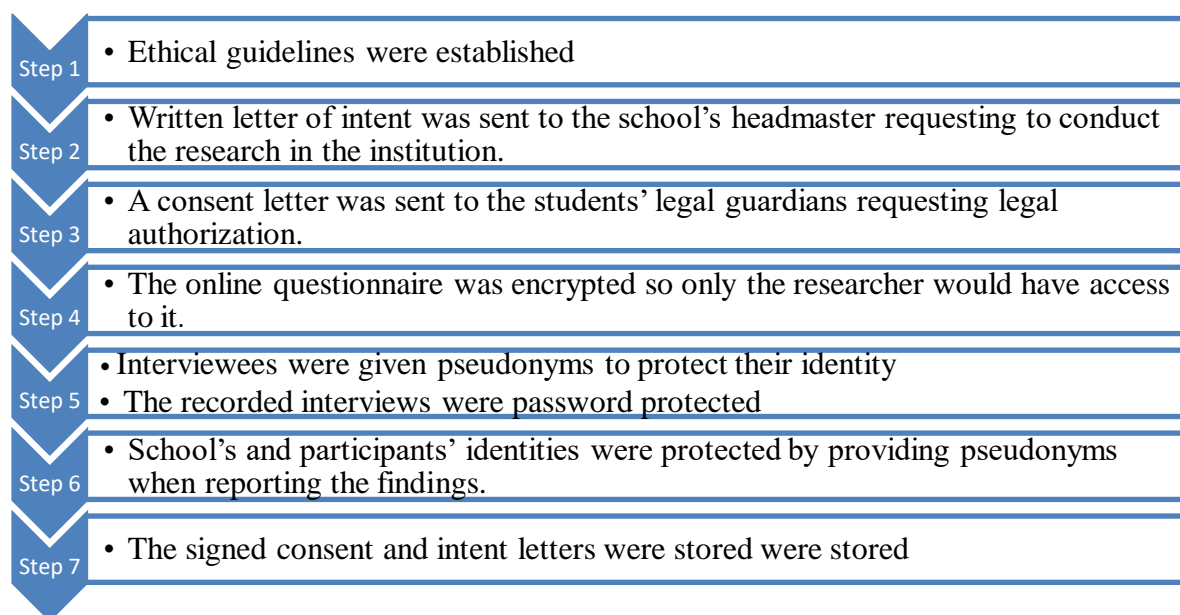
After the signed letters of consent from the participants’ legal guardians were received (see Appendix D), the initial online survey was sent to the participants to obtain the general information data. Although students had to indicate their names, the online survey was encrypted. In this way, I could ensure my participants that only I would have access to the information and that it would be kept exclusively in my own files.

Thereafter, eight participants were selected to be part of the interviews based on their suitability to better comprehend this study’s central phenomena. The interviews, both one-on-one and focus group, were conducted via video conferencing using the application Zoom. As teacher in the school, as requested by the headmaster, I arranged the interviews for after class hours. All

interviews were recorded and kept secure in password protected documents.

Additionally, in order to protect the identity of the participants and ensure confidentiality, only pseudonyms were used during the interviews and in the report. Also, parents and legal guardians were assured that if findings were publicly shared, it would only be so for educational purposes. It is of utmost importance to mention that the intent and consent letters, the online survey, the responses of the online survey, and the interviews have been stored and available for scrutiny.

Table 1 Ethical considerations established for the present study



3.8 Data Analysis

The information collected during the data collection process was analysed inductively. Since the present study was aimed at giving voice to the participants, the findings appeared from frequent, dominant, and significant themes that were inserted in the raw data without constraints (Mackey & Gass, 2015). The purpose of choosing to conduct this type of analysis was to uncover data regarding the participants' perceptions of the effects that VG has on their WTC and SDL. As Kalpokaite and Radivojec (2019) point out, inductive analysis “can be used to analyse data from

the ground up, and they are commonly used to “generate” theories” (p. 46).

This study’s main source of data was collected through interviews. The online interviews were designed to provide a safe space for participants to express their perceptions rather than to seek for answers. Hatch (2002) argues that, for an adequate inductive analysis, data proceeding from interviews must emerge from “comments on specific topics” instead of “answers” derived from questions. Hence, the data gathered in this study was analysed “by multiple examinations and interpretations of the data in the light of the research objectives, with the categories induced from the data” (Mackey & Gass, 2015, p. 231)

3.9 Summary

In this third chapter, the reasons underpinning the decision to conduct a qualitative approach, the general inquiry approach, and the rationale behind the selection of a case study were provided. Also, a detailed description of the various phases of the research design was outlined. The context and participants were described in detail along with the tools used to collect data. Finally, in order to conclude this chapter, the ethical considerations and the type of data analysis were explained.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

“I have learnt so much playing video games that really I can play a game entirely in English and I won’t even notice it”

Martín, Interview, November 2020

In this chapter, I have analysed the data along three themes that emerged from the data sets. These themes are closely tied to the research questions that guided the study. The themes were addressed utilising inductive analysis in order to obtain significant data without any constraints (Mackey & Gass, 2015). The case study involved secondary students from a Catholic school in Santiago during the second semester of 2020. Eight participants were selected to explore different possible outcomes using MVS to gain as much contrast as possible. In order to make the variation greater and more effective to analyse, participants were also separated into different categories according to the type of player they were (Mulligan & Patrovsky, 2003). Martín and Francisco are classified as HCP, while Ignacia, Joaquín, Vicente, and Renata are considered to be MP, and Sonia and Antonia are deemed as CP.

All participants and their subsequent player category were chosen for their uniqueness because different characteristics were appropriate to observe the impact of VG on participants with distinct characteristics. Rather than analysing each isolated participant, all participants were categorised into three groups regarding the type of player they were (hard-core, moderate, or casual). Some of the characteristics of each participant are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Categories of participants

Category	Participants' names	Type of Game	Frequency of VG
Hard-core	Martín and Francisco	Role-playing games, Shooters	Once a day
Moderate	Ignacia, Joaquín, Vicente, and Renata	Shooters, Multiplayer Online Battle Arena, Sports.	Three to four times a week
Casual	Sonia and Antonia	Party Games	Once a week.

Throughout the data analysis, it was noticed that participants who share the same player category would often provide similar responses to the questions during the online interview and questionnaire. In other words, the same topics would emerge from participants in the same category. It must be noted that there were neither opportunities nor reasons for participants to copy others' answers in the online questionnaire.

Three themes emerged from the analysed data. These themes are closely related to the four research questions. The analysis has been organised around these three themes: preferred languages in VG, VG influence on English use, and difference between VG communication and English communication. All three categories were represented in each theme.

4.1 Preferred Languages in VG

All participants represented in the three categories presented a distinct initial response to the language they use the most when playing video games. The participants from the HCP category chose English as their language of preference. MP participants showed no inclination for any of the two languages. They claimed they play half of the time in English and the other half in Spanish. Conversely, CP participants always select Spanish when video gaming. The

reasons behind these decisions are presented in the following analysis sections.

4.1.1 Are both languages the same?

In the case of HCP participants, both Martín and Francisco claimed that the language that they use when playing was an irrelevant decision. Based on the information they shared, as they were becoming so familiar with how video games are designed and structured, their choice of language in VG seemed inconsequential. As Francisco points out “I don’t find much difference because I always play everything in English, or in the native language (of the game); after so many years of me doing this, I don’t find a difference” (Interview 1, November 2020).

Interestingly, Francisco mentioned that VG practice has been a significant factor when it comes to why language has become a minor topic. Martín also believed that constant playing has made his VG experience a bilingual one. Martín added an extra *step*, too, by stating “...I have learnt so much playing video games that, really, I can play a game entirely in English and I even won’t notice it”(Interview 1, November 2020). Although both quotes look similar at first glance, Martín has included a particularly interesting topic: VG causes learning. Rather than viewing VG as a subject that can be studied to improve, importantly, Martín is expressing the notion that VG can play a vital part in learning English as a second language. On the other hand, Francisco provided an alternative reason for his language preference by claiming “...I really like the game in its native language better and, as almost all games are in English, well, I always choose that option” (Interview 1, November 2020). Unlike Martín, Francisco disregarded English learning as a motive for his language selection and proposed that the video game’s original language as an incentive to use the foreign language.

The selection of language when playing was circumstantial for participants in the MP category, specifically for Ignacia and Renata. When playing alone, they prefer doing so in English. Yet, when they share their VG experiences with others, they tend to use Spanish.

Ignacia, for example, stated “when I am with my friends, they tell me to switch it to Spanish and I do it and when I am on my own, I prefer in English” (Interview 2, November 2020). This quote reflects that there are two distinct considerations according to Ignacia when choosing language during VG: Ignacia prefers her VG to be in English yet when playing with friends succumbs to her friends’ requests to switch to Spanish. In the case of other MPs, the other two players in the MP category, claimed that they prefer English voices in games and share Francisco’s opinion regarding the video game’s native language. Yet, they still play approximately half the time in Spanish and the other half in English. Also, Vicente and Joaquín recounted negative experiences that occurred when they were younger. “I remember when I was little... it (understanding the game in English) was too complicated and I even erased the game or progress and I was angry” (Joaquín, Interview 4, November 2020). I understand from these accounts of similar negative memories from their pasts, Vicente and Joaquín were attempting to justify why they play in Spanish instead of English, which is their language of preference.

For participants in the CP category, the selection of language is manifested clearly. Sonia and Antonia always choose to play in Spanish. According to both participants, neither feels comfortable when playing in English and instead they preferred to experience VG in a safer and more efficient manner. Antonia claimed “I would rather understand fast, because otherwise I lose, evidently” (Interview 3, November 2020). As a reason to support their decision of playing in Spanish, Sonia and Antonia expressed that English was an uncommon part of their lives. Sonia, to substantiate her option to play in Spanish, stated “...because I am more used to listening to it in my daily life” (Interview 3, November 2020).

4.1.2 Discussion

In this section, I draw on the data to show how the participants’ experience with VG reflects their choice of language. One of the results emerging from the data is that learners who

play regularly show an inclination to do so in English. All HCP participants claimed that they perceive no difference when playing in one language or the other because they have been practising for a long time. Although both participants agree that the fact that playing video games for a long period of time has enabled them to feel highly comfortable using a foreign language, Martín and Francisco differ about the reasons behind this decision. Francisco stated that he enjoys listening to the characters' voices in the original language. Martín believes that playing video games has provided him with a *good base* on which he can construct his VG. Martín's statement can be related to the results found in Chik's (2011) study which revealed that "gamers learnt through in-game texts, learnt about games on discussion forums, and through online gaming interactions" (p. 41).

MP participants provided varied answers regarding the language of preference when playing a video game. Ignacia and Renata stated that they favour the use of English in their VG, but they select Spanish when playing with other friends. In other words, social pressure could deter them from choosing to play in English and thus become even more comfortable in the language. Vicente and Joaquín claimed that they use the foreign language fifty percent of the time. Negative previous experiences (having problems trying to understand English) were the reasons that Vicente and Joaquín preferred to play only half the time in English. Interestingly, both Vicente and Joaquín revealed that they were inclined to listen to original voices while playing just as Francisco had mentioned. Yet, unlike Francisco and Martín, both Vicente and Joaquín chose to play games with translated voices part of the time. Similar findings by Bown and White (2010) could suggest that past negative emotional events might have an influence on their non-preference for English during VG.

Participants in the CP category disregard the use of English when playing video games. Sonia and Antonia believe they have insufficient capacities for using a foreign language in VG.

These CP participants stated that, as English is an uncommon part of their life, they prefer using Spanish to successfully play video games.

In summarizing, the data uncovered from the VG individuals in all the three categories of players strongly suggests that for this group of participants at least, the more video games are played, the more likely they are to prefer English as the language to use in VG. These results are aligned with those from other studies which suggest that people who play video games can practise and improve their overall performance in a foreign language (Ranalli, 2008; Galvis, 2011; Chen & Yang, 2013; Musa, 2015; Rivas, 2016; Camacho & Ovalle, 2019). Also, Chik (2011) has shown that learners who are game-enthusiasts appear to have a higher motivation to acquire a new language than other students.

Other evidence emerged from the data that underlined the power of past experiences on preferred choice of language. For Vicente and Joaquín past events shaped how they perceive themselves when playing video games and by extension when in language class. Joaquín mentioned he felt anger when he was unable to complete a task in the game. Anger has been found to be a detrimental factor in a learner's motivation (Benesch, 2013) which might have resulted in Joaquín's choice to use English only half the time.

4.2 Influence on English use

In terms of the influence that VG might have on English learning, the analysis of data from all three categories led to diverse findings. Participants in the HCP category evidenced that VG has had a considerable influence on their desire to attain a higher level of English. Whereas, those in the MP category, with the exception of Joaquín, perceive English language learning itself as the primary cause for their wish to obtain a better English level. Like those in the CP category, Joaquin believes that other factors have contributed for him to want a superior English proficiency.

To make the analysis and discussion more comprehensible, the effect that VG has on English learning has been divided into two different sections upon which VG has impact: English classes and SDL.

4.2.1 The more you play, the greater the effect: VG impact on English classes

According to the HCP participants, the effect that VG has made on English classes was substantial. Martín believes that all his years playing video games have influenced greatly how he perceives himself within the English class. In the following excerpt Martín illustrates the effect VG has had in his learning process and his impression of the English class.

Definitely. I believe that being brought up like this has made me have a very good base in English and has made English classes easier, which is something very positive. I mean, video games, in general, have helped me a lot with a foreign language, so it is important to highlight that

Martín, Interview 1, November 2020.

Another interesting topic emerging from this extract is that Martín intertwines the effects VG has in both his English acquisition and his English classes. This inherent connection demonstrates that Martín's VG, English learning process, and English classes have been developing together to improve his positive identity as an English learner.

Similarly, Francisco also connects VG, the process of learning English and English classes as well as a further element, English films to his identity as an English language learner. He believes that being accustomed to listening to people talking in a foreign language has improved his perception about himself in classes. In the following extract, Francisco points out the effect that both VG and films in English has had:

... video games in English or films in English, all of that, it has helped me a lot to learn about the language and the classes, too. Like, many times what I listen to in films or in

video games, then it is said or commented in classes. And, as I already understand it (foreign language), then it is easier

Francisco, Interview 1, November 2020

In terms of the moderate players of VG, they reported a variety of reactions when asked about the connection of VG to their knowledge of English. In the case of Ignacia and Renata, from their perspectives it was their knowledge of English that led to VG rather than the opposite. In other words, the following excerpt illustrates their previous inclination to learn English has impacted their VG:

Interviewer: ... So, has video gaming had any effect on your English?

Ignacia: emmmmm.

Interviewer:... or, do you think it's the other way around? you know English and therefore, it is easier to play videogames

Ignacia: Yes, that! As I am familiar with English, it is easier for me.

Ignacia, Interview 2, November 2020

The other two participants in the MP category stated that they have acquired new vocabulary by playing video games, yet differ in terms of the extent to which they consider VG as an effective tool for learning English. Vicente claimed that VG has been a highly efficient way of learning new words. When asked about the effect of VG on his English language learning process, Vicente replied “one starts to discover words, like one is interested in and, like, one starts to know more words” (Interview 4, November 2020). On the other hand, Joaquín stated that the words he learns while playing video games have a very narrow scope. According to Joaquín, although he learned new words while playing videogames, this new vocabulary was only limited to the game itself. When questioned about the impact that VG had on his language acquisition process, Joaquín answered “I have learnt words in English, but at the end of the day, they are the

one that are more associated to the game and, after that, I haven't discovered much more" (Interview 4, November 2020).

Also, Vicente and Joaquín displayed conflicting views about the effect of any vocabulary learnt on their visions of themselves, their identities as learners, in English class. Vicente believes that acquiring a new word while playing a video game has made classes more relatable. When asked about the effect of learning vocabulary gained from VG, Vicente replies that it makes him a more confident language learner. In the following excerpt, he explains:

I could say that it could be. Because certain words that appear in video games, maybe they can become more familiar when you (the teacher) say them. Or, one understands them better there; more in the context of the words. So, one feels more confident

Vicente, Interview 4, November 2020.

On the other hand, Joaquín claims that learning new vocabulary while VG has a different outcome compared to Vicente's. Joaquín reported that he feels calmed when practising a new word in VG because he could connect the recently learnt word in a context which is interesting for him. On the other hand, he highlighted that using a new acquired word in class still makes him nervous and afraid of making a mistake. In order to contrast his view with Vicente's, in the following excerpt, Joaquín answered:

At the end of the day, in a video game, at least I, if I don't know a word in English, am not afraid of that mistake like I could be in class. Or nervous about it because I can relate it (the new word) to a topic that I am interested in, too

Joaquín, Interview 4, November 2020.

Lastly, the CP participants stated that VG has had no effect on their learning process or their perception about themselves in English classes. This result could have been anticipated because Sonia and Antonia spent very little time in VG. Yet, some topics emerged from this

question which are interesting to consider. Rather than suggesting VG as a tool for learning a new language, CPs think that English classes in the school have been of vital significance.

Antonia, disregarding VG as a learning factor, stated “when I have to speak, I think that English in school have been of great help” (Interview 3, November 2020). Although Sonia’s and Renata’s answers could be considered a compliment for their teacher, we must look at these answers with extreme caution. Brown and Gilligan (2003) have argued that adolescents might seek for the interviewer’s approval by giving distorted and scripted responses.

The importance of films also surfaced in the data as an important influence on language learning. Sonia and Antonia believe that series, another type of audio-visual art, have played a vital role in their language acquisition process. Sonia, as shown in the following extract, overlooked VG as a learning tool and focused on her affinity to watching series by stating:

What makes me talk fluently and enables me to try to speak with other people, what makes it not so complicated, is watching series; it is the best. Watching video in English, watching series in English helped me because I am getting more used to listening to it and I start to understand it [English] in my head

Sonia, Interview 3, November 2020

4.2.2 Discussion

All three categories of players represented corresponding different amounts of time playing video games. Although it was an expected result, it was found that HCP participants, who played for longer periods of time, perceived that VG has a greater impact on how they regard English classes. In the MP category, players varied in their perceptions of the degree to which their playing had on their English learning in class. Although it can be deduced that the MP participants give less importance to VG than HCP, in this group as well they acknowledge some influence of their playing on some aspect of their English learning. Lastly, participants in the CP

category claim that that they perceive no impact of VG on their classroom learning, not surprising given the relatively little time playing video games. These results could be relatable to the ones obtained by Ebrahimzadeh and Sepideh (2017) who suggested that motivational engagement experienced in VG might be transferred to classroom settings. Hence, the participants who spent more time playing videogames could be more motivated to partake in class (Aaberg, 2020).

Francisco also considered films to be an important feature in his English learning. Although this particular element is outside the scope of the present study, the inclusion of audio-visual material as a helping tool to improve English acquisition is noteworthy because it was mentioned by participants in both HCP and CP categories. It can be concluded that series, as opposed to VG, are a contributing factor in English learning regardless of the type of player or the current level of English that the participants have. The involvement of series and films for English learning has been deemed beneficial for language competencies and for non-verbal communication and cultural issues (Seferoğlu, 2008). Similarly, Pujadas and Muñoz (2019) conducted a study to explore the effects associated to television viewing. Their primary results suggested that participants learnt new vocabulary by being exposed to audio visual input. However, the results from the present study are not aligned with the secondary results put forward by Pujadas and Muñoz (2019) which posit learners with higher proficiencies seem to obtain a higher gain in vocabulary acquisition. In the case of this research, the CP, who were also the students with lowest proficiency, pointed out this feature as greatly helpful.

4.2.3 How VG shapes the desire to learn English: VG impact on SDL

Participants in the HCP category deemed VG to be of the utmost importance in their desire to learn English. Martín and Francisco stated that they were interested in acquiring a second language because VG acted as an enabler for learning. Francisco even suggested that VG

has been the sole reason he has become keen to acquire a second language. He claimed “if it weren’t for video games, I don’t know if I would have been interested in learning the language” (Interview 1, November 2020). Martín was more cautious when establishing the causality of his wish to learn the foreign language by stating “I like video games a lot and that, rebounding, made me to like English more” (Interview 1, November 2020).

Martín and Francisco also pointed out that any HCP would be eager to learn English because acquiring the second language would enable the player to obtain more possibilities within the same game or to hold a bigger variety of games. The following extract was selected to vividly reflect these two participants’ points of view:

If people play, like, video games more regularly, they will be more interested the language because they are going to have more options in terms of more video games and more things like that. And there are many games that are not translated into Spanish, so you, who have been playing for a lot of years and all that, become more interested

Francisco, Interview 1, 2020

Francisco is showing a connection for players between learning English and having a wider diversity of games from which to choose. By getting access to different types of video games, as a result, players would become more interested to acquire a second language.

As shown elsewhere in the discussion of other themes, participants in the MP category have provided distinct topics for this theme. Ignacia, Renata, and Vicente believe that their desire to learn English came before they even started playing video games. Possibly, the most extreme case could be Ignacia, who mentioned that, apart from being an entertaining experience, she only plays in English in order to learn the language. Renata and Vicente have prior motives for acquiring the language. Both have siblings who speak the language and would like to be able to communicate with their relatives. Vicente also advanced the *necessity* to learn the foreign

language because it has reached a global significance. He claimed that “I have always wanted to learn English because it is the language that is used in the whole world” (Interview 4, November 2020). Renata even suggested that her VG in English is an incidental aspect by stating:

I like being able to talk in a second language and be able to manage other things, too.

And, perhaps, it is like a “plus” to be able to use English in other instances such as playing video games and speaking with other people from other parts of the world. Yet, wanting to learn English, I wanted from before

Renata, Interview 4, November 2020

In the case of CP participants and Joaquín, VG has made no effect on their desire to learn English. Sonia and Antonia, presumably because of how little time they play video games, claimed that they have become more involved in acquiring a second language due to watching series and the English classes in school. Also, the CP participants have disregarded VG entirely as a contributing aspect to language learning. Sonia even stated that “I wouldn’t see video games as a support to my English; I would consider them more as a entertaining thing, a hobby” (Interview 3, November 2020). Interestingly, Joaquín, who belongs in the MP category, thinks that VG has had no impact on his learning process or his desire to acquire a second language. At the same time, Joaquín ranks *knowing* English as elemental and he remarks that he might be interested in learning the foreign language someday. His determination to acquire the English language, although low-resolved, has come from his inclination to music.

4.2.4 Discussion

According to participants in the HCP category perceptions, VG has been regarded of vital importance for them to desire to learn English as a foreign language. For Ignacia, Renata, and Vicente the role that VG plays in their wish to acquire the language is secondary or incidental. In the case of CP participants and Joaquín, VG has been overlooked as a factor for them wanting to

learn English. Instead, music and series were mentioned to have played a dominant role.

These results could be mirrored with the ones obtained by Chik (2011). She has suggested that players who spend large amounts of time playing video games show “certain degree of learner autonomy to overcome linguistic barriers for gaming purposes” (p. 41). In addition, according to Ebrahimzadeh and Sepideh (2017), students who present a high engagement in VG could also display a great deal of motivation to acquire a second language. Yet, there are others who contradict the results in this study. Research has indicated that low-achievement learners are more benefited by VG since students are provided with a safe environment within which to practise (Gee, 2007; Vasileiadou & Makrina, 2017). As discussed above, only participants with a high English language attainment consider VG to be of importance to acquire a second language.

4.3 Difference between VG Communication and English class communication

Contrary to the other themes, participants from the three categories seem to struggle when communicating in class. On the other hand, interaction in VG appears to be more active for participants who spend more time playing video games and lower for those who devote fewer hours for VG.

4.3.1 Let us talk, but in the game

In the case of HCP participants, both Martín and Francisco claimed they communicate actively while playing video games. Although the main focus was on the completion of the game, participants in the HCP category stated that learning English has been vital to being able to accomplish such a goal. Martín remarked the significance of *knowing English* by saying “I have played many games like those, role games, and I know how to play the character in English within the game” (Interview 1, November 2020). Also, Martín and Francisco highlighted the importance of interacting in RPGs, the type of games they play the most. Francisco, for example, commented “I also play a lot of role games and things where you have to speak with other

characters to uncover missions or secrets” (Interview 1).

Yet, communication seems important for these HCP individuals, but only during VG. Both participants claimed that they feel highly comfortable when speaking in the video game, but nervous when in class or with other people. Martín and Francisco believed that VG and their EFL class context are largely different. The following excerpt illustrates the difference that Francisco perceives between communicating in class and in VG:

I notice a huge difference between video games and classes, because, to be honest, classes are much more formal where how to make English is taught, how to formulate it.

Normally in video games, they don't tell you what this is for or the other. They just talk and you have to learn it by yourself

Francisco, Interview 1, November 2020

Participants in the MP category provided a variety of answers within this theme. Ignacia and Renata shared that they felt very comfortable when communicating both in English classes and when VG. Yet, despite the fact that Renata believes she needs to improve her English, she shared that she can interact with other people in the foreign language. Although Ignacia reported that “I get myself understood” (Interview 2, November 2020), she doubted herself sometimes. When asked about how she felt communicating in English during VG, Ignacia expressed hesitation in her English speaking capacity by stating “what if I am not saying it right, but, at the end, they always understand me” (Interview 2, November 2020). Vicente only interacted when it was strictly necessary and felt insecure about his level of English.

Despite the fact that Joaquín is in the MP category, he provided answers that can be related to the topics emerging from the CP participants. Sonia, Antonia, and Joaquín avoid all types of communication in English both while VG and in class. According to these participants, the main reason behind this decision is because they believe they have an insufficient level to

properly interact. The following excerpt from Joaquín's interview summarizes these three participants' impressions:

I don't live many situations like those because I mostly avoid them due to I consider that my level of English is pretty low; in video games and in everything. I remember one time when I was with a person who always spoke in English and I tried not to talk to him

Joaquín, Interview 4, November 2020

4.3.2 Discussion

In this section, an account of the participants' views on the type of communication that happens in VG and in class is revealed from the data. The HCP participants displayed a great deal of interaction and comfort in VG yet still showed hesitancy when in class. Martín and Francisco are still afraid of making mistakes in front of their peers. For the MP participants the situation is particularly dissimilar. Ignacia and Renata are comfortable when communicating in VG and in class while Vicente only interacts when it is absolutely necessary. Sonia, Antonia, and Joaquín avoid all type of communication in both scenarios.

There are several studies which suggest a certain effect playing video games could have in WTC (see Chik, 2011; Vasileiadou & Makrina, 2017; Horowitz, 2019; Rachayon & Soontornwipast; 2019). Importantly, the results of the analysis I have reported above conflicts with the findings from those previous studies. HCP, who were the participants with more time spent in VG, communicate massively when playing video games, especially in RPGs, which require a great deal of interaction (Zhao & Lai, 2009). At the same time, as Martin and Francisco attest, they seem to engage in interaction far less in class similar to CP participants Joaquin and Vicente.

Indeed, participants in all categories expressed nervousness when communicating in class. Interestingly, Ignacia and Renata, two in the MP category, shared that they feel comfortable when

speaking with others in VG and in class.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed analysis of the data collected from the various data sets over the course of the inquiry. This account presents the positive and negative results of the data analysis unveiled throughout the realization of this study. Generally, the participants who spent more time playing video games were more likely to select English as the language in which to play. Also, according to the participants' perceptions, the effect that VG might have on this group of learners varies in terms of the extension of time they have been playing and other factors which were outside the scope of this study. Lastly, communication in VG was found to be highly different than communicating in a classroom.

The findings were organized under three main themes which emerged from the data: preferred languages in VG, Influence on English use, and difference between VG communication and English class communication. Impressions from participants in all three categories were presented in each of the themes.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

Conducting and developing a qualitative research has been a challenging and time-consuming task. There have been many occasions in which I have questioned my decision to carry out such an investigation. The online survey that was applied to the participants would have given me enough data to conduct a decent quantitative research and, as many others before, confirm or deny certain assumptions based on the numerical data I would have obtained. It would have been much easier to conduct such a research and to finish with the Master's program. However, the more I kept unravelling topics and themes from the data, the more I felt I was making a solid and sound contribution to understanding how English as a foreign language is learnt and how it would be better taught. Ultimately, I thought, my goal in enrolling in the MATESOL program was to attain a deeper insight and understanding of the process of language learning. I realised that this objective could have only been achieved by exploring a phenomenon deeply, as opposed to simply examining the possible relationship among variables.

5.1 Responding to the Research Questions

In Chapter four, the findings of this study have been described and organised around three themes: preferred languages in VG, influence on English use, and difference between VG communication and English class communication. In this section, these same summarized findings are aligned with the research questions in order to provide answers. For that purpose, each research question has been assigned as a heading under which final reflections are discussed.

5.1.1 RQ1: What are the reasons behind the decision to choose to play videogames in one language over another for a small group of secondary students in a Catholic school in Santiago, Chile?

Although the three categories of players in this group of participants provided distinct

answers to this research question, the amount of time that participants spend VG and the years of practise playing video games of all sorts was revealed as the most salient influence on whether to choose English or Spanish. The participants who have a higher preference to play in English are the ones who spend more time in VG and have been engaging in playing for the longest time. On the other hand, the participants who spend little time playing and have been involved in VG for less time prefer to use Spanish as their main language while playing video games.

Despite the fact that the participants at all three levels of gaming involvement claimed that they enjoy VG, their past experiences appear to be of great importance. Two participants from the MP category provided negative events that occurred to them when playing video games in English in their first years of VG. Also interestingly, two participants from the same category seem to be adaptable to either language when playing video games. Ignacia and Renata prefer English as the language in which to play, yet they regularly use Spanish when playing with friends per their request.

5.1.2 RQ2: From the perspectives of this small group of students, what are the effects that VG has on their English classes?

Similar to the answers in the previous question, the amount of time spent VG was shown to be the main determinant of how VG has affected their English classes. For individuals in the HCP category, English classes were easier to follow because of the wide extent of vocabulary and familiarity with various accents that they had acquired during their VG history. On the other hand, participants in the CP category, who spent less time playing video games, perceived no effect on their impressions of their English classes. As was common throughout the study, participants in the MP category revealed a variety of answers in response to this question. Half of the participants in this category believe that VG has impacted their perception about English classes. Yet on the other hand, the other half claimed that in their case the cause and effect were

the other way round: their desire to learn English in class was the reason they started playing video games in English in the first place. Also, a further realization arrived at in the data analysis and that coincided with the literature, was the fact that in some cases, although not in all, vocabulary acquisition can be affected by VG (Chen & Huang, 2010; Peterson, 2010; Chen & Yang, 2013; Rudis & Pošćić, 2017; Janebi Enayat & Haghighatpasand, 2019).

Interestingly, one topic emerged from the two most extreme types of players. For those in the HCP and CP categories, the inclination to watch audio visual materials has been highly influential in their desire to learn English as a second or foreign language. Series, films, and YouTube videos were mentioned to have a great impact on the perception they have of themselves within the English classes. One cannot ignore the fact that VG and this kind of audio-visual materials share similar characteristics so that support for the latter in terms of language learning could be applied in some way to the appeal of VG as well.

5.1.3 RQ3: In what ways does the communication that occurs in VG relate to the one in English classes?

Out of all the themes emerging from the raw data and the answers to the research questions, communication was the most difficult feature to explain with regards to VG. The players who spend larger amounts of time playing would be assumed to have a more developed WTC than the other participants (Chik, 2011; Vasileiadou & Makrina, 2017; Horowitz, 2019; Rachayon & Soontornwipast; 2019). However, for all participants, communicating in VG and in English classes is highly unique. For example, those individuals in the HCP category who interacted without difficulty when playing video games and, according to their testimonials, at the same time would struggle to communicate in English classes. There were others who reported avoiding all type of communication in both scenarios or feeling nervous when interacting with others. Interestingly, two participants from the MP category claimed that they were perfectly

comfortable when communicating in the foreign language in both the English classes and in VG.

These findings could offer strong insights into how better guidelines could be established in classrooms for improving students' WTC. Although participants remarked on the importance of playing video games in acquiring a second language, in their case communication in VG is unrelated to communication in English class, at least for this particular group of EFL learners. Further research might uncover other connections between WTC and VG. Despite the fact that this study was not intended to explore the emotional influence of past events, participants expressed some negative experiences that occurred prior to the investigation that could have impeded the effects of VG on their WTC. Emotions have been deemed as a salient influence on foreign language learning in classroom instruction contexts (Garret & Young, 2009; Imai, 2010; Méndez & Fabela, 2014; López, 2016), hence this area could be a great starting point to further research of this topic.

5.1.4 RQ4: How does VG influence this small group of students into becoming better language learners, if at all?

As was seen in response to R2 above, the findings clearly indicate that for the individuals who spend considerable time at VG, there is also a strong desire to improve their English language skills. Indeed, the players in the HCP category were the ones to express the connection they saw between their VG and their desire to develop in English. Individuals in the MP and CP category, on the other hand, disregarded VG as an influential factor in their aspiration to become better English learners. Instead, these individuals mentioned series, music, and personal reasons as their main impulse to acquire a second language.

Importantly, these findings both support and at the same time contradict previous research. For example, Chik (2011) as well as Ebrahimzadeh and Sepideh (2017) have claimed that players who spend a large amount of hours VG develop a higher level of autonomy and

display a great deal of motivation to learn a second language. Yet, the results of the present study show that the low-achievement learners would be more invested into considering VG as an important tool to learn English because it provides a safe environment. Further, only high-achievement participants deemed that VG has played a significant part in their English acquisition process.

5.1.5 Conclusions

Although all research questions were provided with an answer and themes in the data were recognized and analysed, it is of importance to highlight further information obtained from the interviews. Taking into account all participants and their responses, it could be concluded that the players who spend more time in VG are the ones who are more invested in their English acquisition. This phenomenon might be explained because the English language is a tool that can enable learners to expand their possibilities in VG (Chik, 2011).

There are also negative aspects that were revealed in the analysis chapter. VG is only considered critical for SLA to those learners in the study who spend many hours playing video games (HCP). This group of individuals only represents one quarter of the total number of participants. Hence, the benefits that come from playing video games applied solely to a small percentage of the learners in this particular study. Also, it is significant that according to the perceptions of this group of learners, their views conflict with those scholars who claim that VG makes a positive impact on students' WTC (Chik, 2011; Vasileiadou & Makrina, 2017; Horowitz, 2019; Rachayon & Soontornwipast; 2019). Indeed, participants across all categories stood opposed to the idea that VG affected their WTC within the classroom.

5.2 Implications

In this section, the implications are arranged to address suggestions to the various stakeholders in EFL education that might best benefit from the knowledge uncovered in the

inquiry, i.e., teachers, parents or legal guardians, educational institutions, governmental authorities, and myself.

The results obtained in this study provide teachers with a better understanding of the fact that learners might have different needs and starting points in terms of their language learning process. Additionally and increasingly, a greater number of adolescent students have become video game players which according to this research and others like it can have a strong influence on their English acquisition. Yet, despite the fact that the numbers of gamers is expanding exponentially, educators must be aware that each learner is unique and may not enjoy VG. Still, teachers have the responsibility to acknowledge that technology, and in many cases VG, is an essential part of all learners' lives these days. Hence, the inclusion of these tools must be considered a vital part of students' learning process.

In the case of parents and/ or legal guardians, in light of these findings, they should be encouraged to look at VG with fresh eyes without dismissing these new technologies as just a waste of their children's time. VG is an enjoyable way to learn whether the player is aware of the learning or not, especially with regards to second language learning (Prensky, 2004).

It is important to mention that the possibility for learners to be video game players is strictly related to their economical status and whether their parents or legal guardians are able to afford such devices or not. However, the results obtained from this study might provide important information for educational institutions (especially the ones who are similar to the private school upon which this study was based) and also for governmental authorities to favour methods or educational policies that are in accord with what current learners actually require for their learning process. Although the use of technological devices has come to be more standard in classrooms these days, schools and policy makers must take into account that learning occurs outside of the classroom, too. VG, particularly in English language, has been proven to be a

valuable and effective tool for learners to practice and improve their performance in the target language (Ranalli, 2008; Chik, 2011; Galvis, 2011; Chen & Yang, 2013; Musa, 2015; Rivas, 2016; Camacho & Ovalle, 2019).

Finally, I have also reflected upon my own teaching practises and how the process of conducting this research has impacted my beliefs as a teacher of English as a second language as I move forward in my profession. Apart from the findings and implications outlined above which are never to be forgotten, I have realised that, as an instructor, I have not paid sufficient attention to my students' preferences and whether they are acquiring the language outside the classroom that we share. Similarly, and especially regarding the learners who spend less time playing video games, I have become aware that I have overlooked the needs of those students in my classes in terms of communication and that I have neglected the relevance of this matter as an educator. Hopefully, as I finish this research process, my practice as an English teacher will be more attentive to those needs and more appropriate for the times we are living.

5.3 Limitations of the study

While the implications drawn from this inquiry are highly valid and offer suggestions to teachers, parents, institutions, and policy makers, there have been limitations in the study which must be noted.

Firstly, the students who participated in this study attended a private Catholic school. Private schools represent 8.1 percent of the totality of schools in Chile (Madero & Madero, 2011). Although the small percentage from which this school and its students come makes the results from this study unlikely to be generalizable to the reality of most Chileans learners, children from all walks of life play video games. Hence, the results of the study can tell us something about their interests and how we can tap into those interests for language learning.

Additionally, in the inquiry, I considered only the extent to which learners are in front of a

screen playing video games without taking into account all the other personal traits which are as important or more relevant to the English language learning process. In my preoccupation with gathering and analysing data, information about other individual characteristics was appearing which might have affected the participants' second language acquisition process as much as their VG experiences. Despite the fact that measures to safeguard the validity and reliability of this study were taken, certain challenges involved could be considered to have affected the results. One of those challenges was the fact that as a researcher and at the same time a long-time avid gamer who used VG as a tool to learn English, some might construe bias in the research report. Yet, this background, besides being a driver in initiating a much needed inquiry in this area, also allowed the adoption of an important emic- etic stance in the data collection and assured more robust results. In any case, in my role as researcher, I made a concerted and deliberate effort to preserve high ethical standards at all stages of the research, to adopt a critical stance including remaining open to emerging ideas and findings that may be contrary to my own or previously established beliefs about VG.

5.4 Final Reflections

Along with acquiring a wider knowledge about how VG can impact on learners' WTC and SDL, which were within the scope of this study, I also gained a better understanding of what academia as a whole should be aiming, according to my personal beliefs. Also, I came to the realisation that instructors of all areas of education ought to embrace the use of technologies in and outside the classroom.

5.4.1 Welcoming Technology in Education

The most relevant part of teaching a language, whether it is the first or a foreign one, is to be able to communicate in that language. This objective, along with a focus on students' pragmatic interests, in my view has been consistently ignored by current teaching practices and

thus fails to respond to the necessities of students that are essential to consider for promoting their interest in learning. In my limited years of experience, I have witnessed many educators who disapprove of young people overusing their mobile phones or computers and have tried to purge these devices from classrooms deeming them as *anti-pedagogical*. Yet, from my vantage point, none of these educators has attempted to use those devices as a means to make the learning experience more relatable and meaningful. On the other hand, the inclusion of technological devices, which are common among learners that are currently school students, has translated into higher levels of participation, students expressing more motivation, and, most importantly, a greater sense of belonging; they are more than just a learner, they are the class (Galvis, 2011; Ebrahimzadeh & Sepideh, 2017; Hung, 2018; Rachayon & Soontornwipast, 2019; Aaberg, 2020). Instead of fighting for preserving an old model of teaching, which has no meaning nowadays, teachers from all subjects should embrace and welcome the new technologies and adapt to the learners' necessities and interests; not the other way round.

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ANNEXES

Appendix A

Online Questionnaire

Students' perceptions about English Learning and Video Gaming
Students' Questionnaire

Select the alternative that fits you more appropriately.

Section A: English classes

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
1. I like learning English as a second language					
2. I like English classes in my school					
3. I always participate in English classes					
4. There are a lot of opportunities to participate in class					
5. The contents that we learn in class are related to my interests					
Comments and suggestions:					

Section B: How you feel when speaking in class

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
1. I like participating in English classes					
2. I always ask for instructions/clarification when confused about a task or an instruction.					
3. I feel comfortable when speaking English with the teacher in class.					
4. I feel comfortable when speaking English with my classmates in class.					
5. I feel confident when performing a speaking task in class.					
Comments and suggestions:					

Section C: Video Gaming

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
1. I play video games online					
2. I play videogames online with other people who are not my friends.					
3. I have to use English when playing videogames					
4. I am comfortable when playing videogames and communicating in English.					
5. I play videogames regularly (once a day).					

Please respond the following statements:

- 1) Your name (all of your information and answers that you gave in this questionnaire are completely confidential)**
- 2) If you play an online video game, please mention said game.**

Appendix B

Letter of Intent

28 de Septiembre, 2020.

School Name

X,X, Chile.

Estimada (Name):

Como bien sabe, actualmente estoy cursando el Magíster en Enseñanza del Inglés como Idioma Extranjero en la universidad Andrés Bello. El propósito de esta carta es pedir su autorización para realizar investigación educacional sobre el impacto que tienen los videojuegos en la adquisición de una segunda lengua.

Planeo comenzar a contactar a posibles candidatos y sus apoderados quienes tienen la opción de poder aceptar o rechazar estar en dicha investigación. Luego de conseguir el consentimiento de los estudiantes y apoderados y, además, todas las implicaciones éticas estén tomadas en consideración, comenzaré a recolectar información el 5 de Octubre. Para este proceso, ocuparé variados tipos de herramientas tales como encuestas, entrevistas y análisis de un diario que tanto el investigador como los participantes tendrán que completar. Los datos obtenidos en este estudio proveerán resultados que serán de gran ayuda para poder comprender el impacto de los videojuegos en la enseñanza de una segunda lengua.

Los resultados que se obtengan de este estudio serán presentados en publicaciones y en variados contextos para propósitos educacionales y sociales. Es de vital importancia que sepa que la confidencialidad de los participantes, de los apoderados y del colegio será siempre anónima. Además, los participantes podrán retirarse de la investigación en cualquier momento sin ninguna explicación y no tendrán repercusión alguna.

Si es que tiene alguna duda sobre el estudio o quiere comunicarme algún tipo de preocupación, por favor, escríbame a pablo.iturriaga@cicv.cl o a mi número personal +56 9 71990250. Como profesor y como investigador, me gusta mantener la puerta abierta para comentarios y críticas antes, durante y después del estudio. También, una vez que esta investigación esté completa, me comprometo a ofrecerles una copia íntegra del reporte del estudio.

Y por último, quisiera agradecer que se tome el tiempo para, incluso, considerar mi petición de realizar esta investigación. Estoy ansioso por comenzar con la recolección de datos y, últimamente, poder contribuir con un grano de arena al mejoramiento de nuestras prácticas profesionales.

Nombre

Firma

Desde ya le agradezco por cualquiera sea su decisión.

Saludos cordiales,

Pablo Iturriaga Morales

Firma

MA in TEFL (2019-2020)

Universidad Andrés Bello

Santiago, Chile

28 de Septiembre, 2020.

Appendix C

Letter of Consent

29 de Septiembre, 2020

Estimados apoderados,

Mi nombre es Pablo Iturriaga Morales, soy profesor de Inglés y soy candidato del Magíster de Enseñanza del Inglés como Idioma Extranjero de la Universidad Andrés Bello. Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación sobre el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua para poder terminar mis estudios.

Planeo en comprender el impacto que tienen, en estudiantes de educación media, los videojuegos en la adquisición de un segundo idioma. O sea, para saber cuáles son las posibles ventajas y desventajas de los videojuegos con respecto al aprendizaje del inglés.

La opinión de su(s) hijo(s) o hija(s) es muy importante para este estudio y, asimismo, para poder aprender sobre su visión y percepción, les explicaré cada paso de recopilación de datos. Primeramente, los estudiantes realizarán una encuesta la cual tiene como fin dar una idea general de sus opiniones. Luego de analizar los resultados de dicha encuesta, algunos estudiantes serán seleccionados para ser entrevistados por mí de modo de conocer más a fondo su visión sobre el tema. Además, los estudiantes que sean seleccionados mantendrán un diario con sus percepciones.

La información que sea resultante de este estudio podrá ser divulgada en publicaciones que tengan relación con el área de educación. Es de vital importancia que sepan que la identidad de los participantes, las suyas y la de la institución serán completamente anónimas en todo momento. También, sus hijas(os) podrán ser retiradas de dicha investigación en cualquier momento, sin ninguna explicación necesaria y tampoco tendrán repercusiones por hacerlo.

Espero que acepten ser parte de esta investigación ya que, últimamente, tiene como fin poder ayudar a comprender de mejor manera el proceso de aprendizaje de un idioma extranjero tanto de los participantes, como de todos los estudiantes.

En la siguiente página, encontrarán la carta de consentimiento la cual deben firmar si es que deciden participar de este estudio. Si tienen cualquier tipo de dudas con respecto a la carta de consentimiento o sobre la investigación, no duden en contactarme para poder clarificar.

Pablo Iturriaga Morales

p.iturriaga.m@gmail.com

MA in TEFL (2019-2020)

Universidad Andrés Bello

Appendix D

Certificate of Consent

Parte 2: Carta de consentimiento

Yo, _____ (nombre completo), a través de este documento doy el consentimiento para que mi hija(o) _____ (nombre del estudiante) participe en la investigación conducida por Pablo Iturriaga Morales de la Universidad Andrés Bello. Este estudio tomará lugar durante Octubre y Noviembre del 2020. Entiendo que el estudio se enfoca en comprender de mejor manera las percepciones de mi hija(o) con respecto al aprendizaje del Inglés como idioma extranjero.

La participación de mi hija(o) requiere que sea entrevistado y grabado (no filmado). Entiendo que el investigador no identificará a nadie por nombre de tal modo de proteger la confidencialidad de los participantes ni tampoco se harán referencias a la institución. Además, entiendo que la información que sea resultante de esta investigación será guardada privadamente y solo será informada como un reporte colectivo y combinado.

Entiendo, también, que es mi derecho retirar a mi hija(o) de este estudio en cualquier momento sin ninguna sanción y que no existen riesgos en la participación.

He leído y comprendido lo anteriormente dicho y voluntariamente acepto la participación en la investigación.

(Nombre del Apoderado)

(Firma)

(Fecha)

Muchas gracias por ser partícipes en este proceso de investigación.

Saludos cordiales,

Pablo Iturriaga Morales

(Firma)

MA in TEFL (2019-2020)

Universidad Andrés Bello

29 de Septiembre, 2020