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Playing vernacular video games to enhance English learning in an extramural educational context: *Gameful English* - A case study

Francesca D'Adamo



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TESI DOCTORAL

Playing vernacular video games to enhance English
learning in an extramural educational context:
Gameful English - A case study

Francesca D'Adamo

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Playing vernacular video games to enhance English
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*To all those girls and women who always
wanted, never could, and still can't.*

Here comes the sun.

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Nobody can do it alone.

Abstract

Vernacular video games may significantly impact second language teaching and learning (L2TL) for motivation and learning because they are engaging and promote affordances. In Italy, 3.7 million players are aged between 15 and 24 (IIDEA, 2021). At the same time, Italians' competence in English as a foreign language (EFL) is among the lowest in Europe. To find an effective tool to reduce this gap, the qualitative explorative case study *Gameful English*, which is the object of this research, conducted in a public secondary school in Italy among 27 students aged 15-18, presents extra-curricular and extra-mural activities to enhance English as a foreign language using the video game *Minecraft* as a teaching and learning tool. According to a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) perspective, both game-enhanced and game-informed theories are the theoretical backgrounds that support using video games as wraparound materials to improve speaking, listening, and vocabulary through a task-based approach. Gamification elements (a leaderboard, points, and badges) are also part of the design to promote a different assessment method to make students more involved in achieving their goals, reducing stress and anxiety caused by the current Italian evaluation system. The qualitative research method adopted involves the use of an anonymous survey, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. Results show positive and promising feedback for the research: using *Minecraft* as a learning tool impacts the students' motivation and learning positively, with no adverse effects on gameplay. Playing a vernacular video game can be an effective and engaging means of language learning, thanks to its immersive and interactive nature. The study also finds that gamification impacts the students' motivation and reduces stress caused by assessment, promoting gameful learning. Results show much more can be done to investigate how video games may have a leading role in daily school classes, and this case study offers new possibilities to rethink assessment and different language learning tools to use in educational contexts.

Keywords: EFL, gamification, video games, Minecraft, secondary school

Resumen

Los videojuegos vernáculos pueden tener un impacto significativo en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de segundas lenguas para la motivación y el aprendizaje porque son atractivos y promueven *affordances*. En Italia, 3,7 millones de jugadores tienen entre 15 y 24 años (IIDEA, 2021). Al mismo tiempo, la competencia de los italianos en inglés como lengua extranjera es una de las más bajas de Europa. Con el fin de encontrar una herramienta eficaz para reducir esta brecha, el estudio de caso exploratorio cualitativo *Gameful English*, objeto de esta investigación, realizado en un centro público de enseñanza secundaria de Italia con 27 estudiantes de entre 15 a 18 años, presenta actividades extraescolares y complementarias para mejorar el inglés como lengua extranjera utilizando el videojuego *Minecraft* como herramienta de enseñanza y aprendizaje. Las teorías de la gamificación y del juego, según la perspectiva del aprendizaje de idiomas asistido por ordenador (CALL), son los fundamentos teóricos que apoyan el uso de videojuegos como materiales envolventes para mejorar la expresión oral, la comprensión auditiva y el vocabulario a través de un enfoque basado en tareas. Algunos elementos de gamificación (una tabla de clasificación, puntos e insignias) también forman parte del diseño para promover un método de evaluación diferente que haga que los estudiantes se impliquen más en la consecución de sus objetivos, reduciendo el estrés y la ansiedad causados por el actual sistema de evaluación italiano. El método de investigación cualitativa adoptado consiste en el uso de una encuesta anónima, entrevistas semiestructuradas, grupos de discusión y observación participante. Los resultados muestran una respuesta positiva y prometedora para la investigación: el uso de *Minecraft* como herramienta de aprendizaje tiene un impacto positivo en la motivación y el aprendizaje de los estudiantes, sin efectos adversos en el modo de jugar. Jugar a un videojuego vernáculo puede ser un medio eficaz y atractivo para el aprendizaje de idiomas, gracias a su naturaleza inmersiva e interactiva. El estudio también descubre que la gamificación repercute en la motivación de los estudiantes y reduce el estrés causado por la evaluación, fomentando un aprendizaje basado en el juego. Los resultados muestran que se puede hacer mucho más para investigar cómo los videojuegos pueden tener un papel protagonista en las clases escolares diarias; este estudio de caso pretende dar nuevas posibilidades para repensar la evaluación y las diferentes herramientas de aprendizaje de idiomas en contextos educativos.

Palabras clave: ILE, gamificación, video juegos, Minecraft, secundaria

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List of acronyms

ALM = Audiolingual method

CALL = Computer-Assisted Language Learning

CEFR = Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CLT = Communicative Language Teaching

DDA = Dynamic Difficulty Adjustment

DGBLL = Digital Game-Based Language and Learning

EF SET = Education First Standard English Test

EFL = English as Foreign Language

ESL = English as a Second Language

FL = Foreign Language

GT = Grammar Translation

VoIP = Voice over Internet Protocol

L1 = First Language

L2 = Second Language

L2TL = Second Language Teaching and Learning

LAN = Local Area Network

LOL = League of Legends

MC = Minecraft

MMOG = Massive Multiplayer Online Game

MMORPG = Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Play Game

NLG = New London Group

NPC = Non-Player Characters

PBL = Points, Badges, Leaderboard

RPG = Role-Playing video Game

SDT = Self-Determination Theory

SIE = Synthetic Immersive Environment

SLA = Second Language Acquisition

TBLT = Task-Based Language Teaching

ZPD = Zone of Proximal Development

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1. Introduction

1.1 Beyond the game

Despite my personal interests, everything around me tells me stories of digital games, as an English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher, and a mother. Undoubtedly, in popular culture, their presence has become pervasive. My students and my kids spend most of their time playing video games and talking about them. They show proficiency in vocabulary they had not learned in class or at home. I am frequently asked about words and expressions I have never heard and, when questioned about where they had heard them, they would answer that they had found them in the video games they were playing. Moreover, the same students show better and more confident fluency while speaking in English at school. Over the years, the frequency with which this has been happening in my classes made me start wondering how it could have a place in the school curriculum.

My students, even those who seem not to be such school-engaged, spend time with “walkthrough” videos to understand how to go through the game successfully until they can finish it. At first, I just thought it was simply something they had fun with, and something much more motivating than the boring English grammar classes; then I realized they are in fact using metacognition in class to refer to the vocabulary and speaking they gathered from playing. Using cognitive tools while playing, they are provided with lots of input because of the multimodal environment, leading not only to EFL reading and listening comprehension but actually to EFL acquisition. They show motivation I have never seen in my classes because they can select an activity they are really interested in. The “fear” of speaking English during a gameplay session simply disappears, because the affective filter¹ will be low, as the primary purpose is not the language itself, but going through the game instead. Language is just a means to it (Horowitz, 2019).

¹ Stephen Krashen (1981) declares that a student’s anxiety, low self-esteem, or lack of motivation may cause a mental block precluding the successful acquisition of a second language. If the “affective filter” is lowered by developing a learning environment where students are more motivated and suffer from less anxiety and low self-esteem, the possibility of achieving second language acquisition (SLA) is greatly enhanced.

It was looking at my students and my kids' passion that challenged my personal bias towards the world of gaming: what if I could transfer a bit of that gaming enthusiasm, engagement, and motivation to language learning?

I am not a “gamer”, but I can see how engaging, challenging, and fun is to play video games. This was one of the reasons why I had a strong motivation to carry out this research. I wanted to give my students a chance to put their world in the school classes and me to experiment with a new (and hopefully successful) methodology.

I was tired to see my students anxious and bored with oral and written tests, stressed because of the evaluation which did not reward their efforts but only a temporary performance. This is not the school I have in my mind as a teacher. So, I wanted to try something different. What we have now in our classes still is not enough to promote authentic and lasting learning. How can teachers promote learning if students are afraid of speaking because of a bad mark that can attempt good results?

Students live surrounded by technology, which is part of their lives. This may represent a valid alternative for board and chalk classes. Different media provide students with different amounts of information from a dynamic world outside the classroom. Therefore, teachers have new tools to work with to offer more dynamic and motivating classes. When students find in their class what they do at home, they notice the utility of the English language for that purpose, they gain in learning, self-confidence and motivation to learn. The “learning by doing” leads to autonomy and interest in foreign language (FL) learning (Nagehan, 2015).

It is now widely agreed that the digital gaming experience constitutes a training ground for learning (Anastasiadis et al., 2018; de Freitas, 2018; Schrier, 2019; Chang & Hwang, 2019; Plass et al., 2020). The cultural debate has, therefore, shifted to defining the areas and margins of benefit for school learning and the need to familiarise oneself with digital products and the culture behind them, both teachers and parents alike. Moreover, the recent painful experience of the pandemic has rekindled interest in video games and learning based on them (Kriz, 2020).

Moving from the idea of mixing the strong impact of video games on youths and new teaching methods, some educational software companies have developed plenty of

educational games (edugames) in the last two decades. These games were born to train, investigate, simulate or advertise, and they mainly consist of problem-solving mechanics. It would be Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)² in a technological version, but also a combination of the pedagogical value of a bad video game and the entertainment value of a bad textbook, according to Jenkins (2006). I do agree with him. I have played different edugames, and I could immediately realize “it is not a real video game”, as my students say. The result is quite obvious: motivation is lost most of the time.

In my attempt to use video games as learning tools, I must admit that using commercial video games in the FL classes would help improve digital literacies as well as certain skills difficult to teach in a standard class.

In a video game session, students are exposed to different codes, such as oral, written and audio-visual discourses. Moreover, it is not just a simulation of interaction in the target language: it is real interaction itself! Playing video games means using real-life language, which is one of the purposes of studying a foreign language, especially English as an FL, to understand and communicate in globalized technology (Crystal, 2003). Online gaming is promoting international communication more than ever. Players use text chat and voice chat, speaking to other gamers to coordinate events in real-time; for the most part, these players communicate in English, and they chat even out of the game on forums and websites.

This means learners should be engaged in using the language, not talking about the language; the communicative use prioritises structural language drills (Horowitz, 2019).

My choice to use vernacular video games, *Minecraft* in the specific, and not a well-designed-and-fit edugame, lies in the assumption that players are motivated to play when they can choose what they like to play. Only if they are motivated, incidentally, they will learn in order to play.

The concept of "learning to play" has been contrasted with "playing to learn" (Arnseth, 2006). Playing to learn emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge or skills through game

² Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) proposes the notion of “task” as a central unit of planning and teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The definitions of a task in TBLT can be different; in general, a task is an activity or goal that is carried out using language. A task can be reading a map and giving directions, making a telephone call, a reservation, writing a letter, or reading a set of instructions to assemble an object.

playing, with learning being treated as an outcome. In contrast, learning to play places emphasis on the activity of playing, where the play experience motivates players to learn. In this case, learning is seen as an integrated part of mastering the gameplay (Arnseth, 2006). The former approach aligns with a cognitive approach to thinking and reasoning, where cognition is understood as a mental process that occurs in the mind (Bransford et al., 1990; Gardner, 1985). This approach is often associated with educational digital games that may lead to failure (Arnseth, 2006; Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013). However, the success of game-based learning depends on how it is incorporated into classroom practices, including social, material, and cultural contexts (Arnseth, 2006).

After reading Paul Gee (2008), I gained a better understanding of how gaming activities allow individuals to construct social identities, relationships, competences, and languages. Gee emphasizes the importance of situating thinking and problem-solving in a meaningful context within computer games. In these games, players encounter various signs and tasks in a multimodal environment that intertwines words, images, actions, and sounds. As players progress through the game, some of their thinking and knowledge is retained. Learning occurs not by going from isolated elements to complex structures, but by interleaving between the two depending on the activity being accomplished. Players also learn basic skills in a genre by playing games, as games are adapted to players' expertise and provide feedback appropriate to their level. Moreover, most games value an exploratory approach, non-linear models of action, and multiple solutions to problems, in line with an activity-oriented approach to learning (Gee, 2008).

This study aims to avoid the dichotomy of learning to play vs. playing to learn, teaching and learning EFL with vernacular games, while the learners-players develop and retain a “learning to play” mindset. Digital games are not only valuable as a means to an end but are the end itself: in the learners’ minds, they are learning something in order to play a game, not playing the game in order to learn something. The learning that happens as part of gameplay is at the core of the learning process and should be integrated with curricular goals, and not be seen with the end of learning content.

Digital games can serve as both the means and the end of learning. Learners often engage in gaming to learn something, rather than playing a game to reinforce what they have learned. Therefore, integrating gameplay with curricular goals is necessary to optimize

learning outcomes. That is to say that the game should be seen as a resource embedded in the activity of both learning and teaching English. According to Reinhardt (2019), balancing gamefulness and learnfulness is essential, as enjoyment and persistence are critical factors in successful learning. In the context of second language (L2) education, digital games can facilitate learning by providing task-relevant communication and relationship-building opportunities (Purushotma et al., 2009).

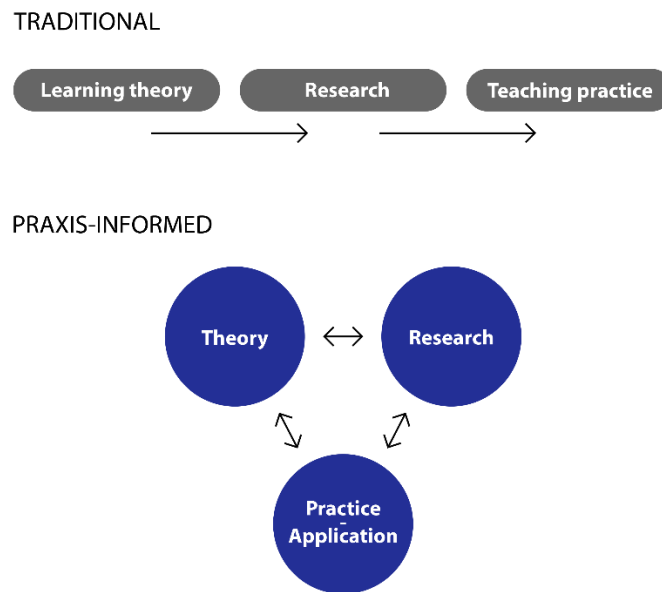
I wanted my students to play and have fun. I wanted my students to learn and be engaged. So, the question was: if the goal is “play”, how can I assure learning?

Overall, gaming should be seen as a resource embedded in the activity of both learning and teaching English. The challenge lies in how to make gaming relevant to formal learning tasks and how to balance gamefulness and learnfulness to achieve optimal learning outcomes. By assuming a praxis-informed perspective, educators can overcome traditional one-way visions and create an integrated approach to theory, research, and teaching practices that optimizes learning through play (Reinhardt, 2019).

Taking a praxis-informed perspective implies surpassing the conventional one-way perception where theory leads to research and teaching (see Figure 1). The concept, advocated by Freire (1970) and Bernstein (2000), promotes a dialogue between action and reflection, based on reasoning and experience (see Figure 1). Furthermore, teaching constitutes a vast domain for research and theory, as praxis acknowledges that research and teaching are both informed by and inform theory (Reinhardt, 2019).

Figure 1.

Relationships between L2 learning theory, research, and L2 teaching practice.



Note. Adapted from Reinhardt (2019)

The approach of praxis has been a common and successful practice in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) since its inception in the 1970s. Teachers have utilized commercial technology for L2 teaching, developed their own educational applications, tested them with students, and shared their findings, making it a tried and true approach (Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

I found in praxis the answer to my question and this study aims to offer a reflection on the practices of a teacher and gamer/learner, thinking about how theoretical concepts of games, L2/EFL learning, gamification, and L2/EFL pedagogy may be connected to the gameplay experience.

Once I established that, through practice, I could have assured learning, another huge dilemma came to my mind: if I can learn better only if I play learnfully, will the gamefulness diminish using commercial video games for learning? Could “school” impact the gameplay? These questions worried me: if there’s no fun while playing, gamers are allowed to quit; if they abandon the game, how can they learn?

Despite my concerns, I knew it was worth taking the risk. If I wanted to take the best for my students from the amazing world of gaming, I also needed to know what the impact on the gameplay was.

1.2 Gamefulness as a framework for teaching and learning

As a teacher, I must admit I see anyone born after about 1980 recognizes digital gaming as a formative experience. The use of Digital Game-Based Language and Learning (DGBLL) has significant potential in the field of teaching and learning. It serves as a bridge between pre-digital theories and current game-based practices, which is why it has gained attention from both researchers and practitioners.

Today, digital gaming is recognized as a legitimate practice for teaching and learning a second language (L2TL). The renewed interest in this field, in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in particular, is evidenced by special journal issues (Cornillie et al., 2012a; Reinhardt & Sykes, 2014; Reinhardt & Chik, 2016), edited volumes (Reinders, 2012), and books (Peterson, 2013; Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013; Reinhardt, 2019) that have been published on the topic.

The term “gameful”³, as defined by Jane McGonigal (2011), implies that learners and teachers need to adopt a gameful disposition towards language learning and a learnful disposition towards gaming (Reinhardt, 2019). The term “gameful” initially meant “playful,” but it has evolved to mean being aware of and engaged in the game-like elements of a particular activity. It deals with a disposition towards structured activity rather than playful ones, and it complements learnfulness, which is a disposition towards finding learning opportunities in activities not explicitly designed for learning, like vernacular gaming (Reinhardt, 2019). Because in English the terms “play” and “game” have different meanings (a game is more structured than play, which is more open-ended), a gameful disposition does not imply non-seriousness, and it challenges the notion that

³ Jane McGonigal used the term “*gameful*” in her book, *Reality is Broken* (2011), where the sentence “to be a truly *gameful* person” meant “to act like a gamer.” The word had already been in circulation in a similar context since at least May 2009, when an Urban Dictionary entry contributed by “avantgame” gave this definition: “Having a gamer’s mindset or attitude. Like playful, but more oriented toward achieving goals, trying out different strategies, and taking on new challenges.” “Gameful” is not a 21st-century neologism: the word appeared by the early 1200s, according to the OED. For many centuries it meant “full of pleasure or enjoyment,” and, a little later (and longer), “playful, sportive, light-hearted, jesting, humorous.”

good learning is necessarily heavy. However, a gameful disposition by itself may not be enough to promote learning if learnfulness is absent.

This case study has been strictly driven by the fact that too often practitioners (students) are left out of the design and development processes and are meant simply to receive and use the final product. When dealing with games, practitioners are a fundamental part: they play the game as well as the designer (teacher) does. You cannot play alone; for this reason, students have been involved in all stages of the process, and the development has been informed by theories of play and game design as well as by practice.

As all good teachers know from experience, to motivate learners you may personalise the content of lessons and make what you do inside the classroom relevant to their lives outside of it. According to Dörnyei (2001), people usually enjoy a task if they play an essential part in it. To make learning stimulating and enjoyable, creating learning situations where learners are required to become active participants seems to be a valid solution. Smooth interaction, then, is at the base of both the negotiation and the co-construction of meaning in a language learning setting (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013), as well as the creation of a cohesive learner group (Dörnyei & Ottò, 1998).

If a language teacher is able to empower his or her students in the way video games do, then the students will be more likely to experience autonomy and willingly engage in the learning experience. At the same time, the teacher should be aware of the motivational power of interaction and provide multiple opportunities for it to happen, both as a means and a goal of the learning process (Lombardi, 2013).

With a desire to be as precise as possible, reference to the use of video games and gamification as part of DGBLL will not be found throughout this study, but more specific terms will be used to better contextualise the choices made and to encourage greater differentiation between video games and gamification.

In this regard, Reinhardt and Sykes (2012, 2014) have proposed the terms game-enhanced (using vernacular games not originally intended for L2TL), game-based (using games intentionally designed for L2TL), and game-informed (using instruction informed by the theoretical principles of play and game) to overcome the term “game-based” included in DGBLL and applied to the use of games in L2TL.

This terminology clarifies and helps to better understand that all games are intentionally designed, and it is easy to tell the difference between a vernacular game (e.g. *World of Warcraft, the Sims, Minecraft*) that was not designed for L2TL, but may be used in game-enhanced instruction or for informal learning (Thorne et al., 2012), and game-based or edugames (e.g. *Babbel, Quest Atlantis, Duolingo*). The term game-informed itself encompasses what has been named “gamified” teaching and learning, because, according to Reinhardt and Sykes (2012) it refers to the application of game concepts to contexts outside of what we traditionally define as games.

These three terms are useful for conceptualizing the field and the practice of this case study, as well as the term “gameful” which is the overarching term of this research, and the core of the EFL course I designed for the implementation, *Gameful English*.

To better define the boundaries of this research, I find it necessary to further clarify the three terms in detail:

- *Game-enhanced*

Vernacular games are not purposefully designed for teaching and learning a second language. On the other hand, with an intentional adaptation in practice, they represent great potential as L2 learning resource. The use of game-enhanced applications in pedagogy involves understanding how L2 dynamics emerge from gameplay and identifying and evaluating the game mechanics that support them: players can learn from their interactions during gameplay, as well as with other gamer communities and their resources.

Reinhardt (2019) suggests that pedagogical mediation is necessary to create and implement supplemental materials, wraparounds, to enhance and focus learner attention on the language used in and around the game.

Using *Minecraft* as a game-enhanced tool has been the core of this research and has driven all the interventions and pedagogical mediation adopted in *Gameful English* course and design.

- *Game-informed*

The application of theories of games and play to the practice of teaching and learning aims to inspire general L2 pedagogical practice with insights and understandings both from theories of game and play and SLA. How can gamefulness be incorporated into instructional practices?

According to Reinhardt (2019), vernacular games that were not specifically designed for teaching and learning a second language (L2) can be adapted and utilized as effective resources for L2 learning. Although the vernacular game industry does not primarily focus on their games as learning environments or resources, many games have the potential to be successfully incorporated into L2 learning. The narratives in games can be leveraged as L2 learning resources, and players can learn from their interactions during gameplay and with other gamer communities and their resources.

Gameful principles of goal-oriented game task design can be applied to L2 learning tasks, gamifying a course through game elements (gamification).

Until now, little research on its effectiveness for teaching and learning a second language has been carried out (Zainuddin et al., 2020), though several studies which considered other school subjects have shown its efficacy, like the study of Aguilar et al. (2018): gameful design can support student autonomy and promote engagement, and gameful courses might offer students the opportunity to engage with their courses in a deeper way that encourages mastery over performance.

That is why the idea with *Gameful English* was to explore the efficacy of gamification in building intrinsic motivation in L2 learners through materials and curriculum design, lowering stress and anxiety during the assessments.

- *Game-based*

Despite the potential benefits of using games for L2 learning, the educational technology industry has not invested heavily in developing games specifically for this purpose. Unfortunately, many of the games currently available on the market have not been thoroughly evaluated by the CALL community. Habgood and Ainsworth (2011) note that these educational games suffer from what they call the "chocolate-covered broccoli" problem. In other words, learners are often put off by the unengaging and ineffective

educational content that is hidden behind the surface level of the game, which they compare to the unpleasant taste of broccoli hidden beneath a layer of chocolate.

1.3 Background to the study: Italian EFL contemporary context

Gameful English case study, which is the core of this research, was thought and designed considering my experience as an EFL teacher of Italian students, and it was implemented in a public secondary high school in Italy, with 27 students.

To understand the context which drove my decisions, I consider worth of attention the background this study moves from.

In Italy, English is currently taught compulsorily from the age of 6 to 16 years old, plus the last three years of high school and, in some cases, a few years in kindergarten. It is, in any case, a very long period of study which does not seem to be sufficient to guarantee pupils an acceptable level of competence⁴, which often leads to a sense of frustration (and consequent demotivation) the first time they face the real language. It is therefore evident that the system, despite the time spent, does not lead to the desired and desirable results (Santipolo, 2016).

EFL programs in Italian secondary high schools are designed for five years of study and are not assessment based. It means classes correspond to the student's age, not to the different levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Moreover, language programs are not always effective⁵, because although Italian schools have focused on matters related to the most effective methodologies, they did not consider the real possibilities schools can offer, thus concentrating exclusively on grammar skills as an end in themselves, giving little room to the speaking activities, to

⁴ According to the annual report of the EF EPI 2020 (English Proficiency Index), the body that assesses the level of knowledge of English, Italians' language competence is among the lowest in Europe. It is 30th in the world and 30th in the EU, more than 90 points behind the leading group (Holland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark) but also more than 50 points behind countries that have implemented language study in their school curricula only in recent decades, such as Poland and Portugal. <https://www.ef-italia.it/epi/>

⁵ In 2019 EF EPI data on Italian schools, only 30% of students in public secondary schools, middle schools and high schools, reach level B2, i.e. the minimum learning level required by the labour market and the initial entry requirement for many foreign universities. Moreover, while in urban areas 40% of students reach B2, in provincial schools the percentage drops to 25%. <https://www.ef-italia.it/epi/>

the matter of which English should be taught, and the teachers' training and upgrading (Santipolo, 2016).

What are the plausible causes for the marginal learning outcomes from school-based English language instruction? Gan et al. (2019) obtained participants' feedback on the factors affecting learning EFL from a language program and one of the causes can be addressed to the limited opportunities to speak English in class. This is what happens in Italy, too. In a 60 min class of about 25 students, it is difficult to let all the students participate actively in the speaking activities, as the teachers are more concentrated on finishing the course program (not considering unpredictable constraints).

Moreover, according to Dörnyei (2001), the problem is that in school environments most tasks are imposed on the students; they are not involved in designing their own learning schedules or choosing which activities to engage in. Most of the time, extrinsic motivation (the need to pass exams, get a better mark, etc.) is used by teachers to motivate learners. These "carrot and stick" methods can extinguish any intrinsic motivation, diminish performance, crush creativity and foster short-term thinking (Dörnyei, 2001).

In Italy, according to recent studies (D'Agostino et al., 2022), and from the reality I can experience as a teacher and a mother, students feel so much pressure during oral and written tests that it is the predominant cause of anxiety and stress at school.

We should find a solution. How can teachers engage their students and make them feel comfortable and confident? Flores (2015) thinks rewards (and gamification in general) complete an educational process, generating positive socio-emotional reactions which facilitate learning. Mawer and Stanley (2011) suggest engaging students in the classrooms as if they were engaged when playing a computer game.

Considering 3.7 million players aged 15-24 in Italy (IIDEA, 2021), using video games at school should not be seen as a stranger practice. Video games represent a consistent part of a teenager's life, and schools should take it into account.

In Italy, the crescent number of courses on gamification and game-based learning for teachers, and different theoretical studies (Swacha, 2021) on the theme show a growing interest in the field and its applications⁶.

In 2015, the Ministry of Education promoted the National Digital School Plan⁷; in May 2019, the Official Journal of the European Union published a seven-page document entitled 'Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to language teaching and learning'⁸. The objective invoked by the Council of the European Union is as simple as it is fascinating and ambitious: EU citizens must know at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue. To achieve it, one of the recommendations (#6) encourages research and the use of innovative, inclusive and multilingual pedagogical methods.

How can FL teachers reach these goals?

According to Martínez-Pérez et al. (2021), using technology in education makes learning processes more dynamic, facilitates learning processes and allows the teachers to decide what knowledge they want to expand according to the user's actions.

Moreover, what is a contender for a methodology that is central to the world of both technology and language learning is blended learning (Motteram & Sharma, 2009). This methodology is still being developed but, when managed best, it is an excellent resource for a starting point for getting teachers to work with technology in their practice as well as for students' learning outcomes.

An extended classroom (Motteram et al., 2013) is one that allows learners to engage in material beyond the regular class period, enhanced by technology. An extended class may

⁶ Competitions ([Game@school](#), BYOEG – Bring Your Own Educational Game) as well as using video games as part of the learning process (Minecraft Edu, Gran Sasso Videogame) are highly recommended, according to the Italian National Digital School (action #15, innovative scenarios for the development of applied skills, and action #7, creative workshops). https://www.istruzione.it/scuola_digitale/progetti.shtml

⁷ The National Digital School Plan (PNSD) is the guiding document of the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research for the launch of an overall strategy for the innovation of the Italian school and the new positioning of its educational system in the digital era. It is a fundamental pillar of La Buona Scuola (Law 107/2015), an operational vision that reflects the Government's position concerning the most important innovation challenges of the public system: at the heart of this vision, there is the innovation of the school system and the opportunities of digital education. www.istruzione.it/scuola_digitale

⁸ Gazzetta ufficiale dell'Unione europea, C 189, 5 giugno 2019 (2019/C 189/03).

also be considered playing video games out of school, although this activity has always been considered not in line with good learn but a harbinger of distraction.

Choosing to use vernacular video games for this research was a real challenge for me because video games have always been seen as distracting from 'real' study and as time wasters. They have often been associated with many stereotypes and accused of negatively affecting players' physical and mental health. Many teachers still believe it.

When I started my research, finding a public school interested in the project was not easy. It was the word “video games” which puzzled head teachers and EFL teachers. Nobody seemed to be interested in the project but the Liceo Scientifico “Fermi” in Gaeta (Latina, Italy).

I could understand the bias people had toward video games. The concern is not totally groundless. Several studies have shown that digital games, if played over a reasonable threshold of time, like many other activities, can have negative effects on gamers and this aspect has been certified by the recent classification of gaming disorder⁹ by the World Health Organisation. However, gaming disorder is believed to affect only a small portion of gamers¹⁰. At the same time, many studies have repeatedly shown that if healthy gaming habits are followed (e.g., time, frequency, environment, the use of a moderator for online games, etc.), video gaming can be considered a safe and fulfilling activity that can bring several health benefits to gamers (Granic et al., 2013; Hernández-Jiménez et al., 2019; Pallavicini & Pepe, 2020).

Moreover, video games can also have an emotional impact on players (Kovess-Masfety et al., 2016; Pallavicini & Pepe, 2020). They can improve players' self-esteem, provided that the right degree of control is exercised, and allow them to participate in socialising activities. Playing can have a calming effect on the participants, just like other entertainment activities (e.g., watching a film), inducing a wide range of emotions in a safe and controlled environment. The emotions experienced during play can be many: joy, empathy, anger, frustration or triumph. This succession of emotions keeps players

⁹ For further detail <https://www.who.int/features/qa/gaming-disorder/en/>

¹⁰ <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/addictive-behaviours-gaming-disorder#:~:text=Gaming%20disorder%20is%20defined%20in,the%20>

immersed in the experience. Furthermore, studies have shown that emotions can aid the memorisation process (Tyng et al., 2017), especially if the emotional content or tone of the material to be learned matches the learner's emotions. By inducing different emotions in players, digital games can be a valuable aid in remembering information vividly, thus supporting the cognitive process. Games can also increase players' self-confidence. This objective can be achieved by keeping success, ensuring that the learning curve is appropriate to the player's degree of ability, and offering timely feedback on the progress.

As I showed in the previous paragraph, video games represent a valid, creative, and useful resource in education, and in second language teaching and learning in particular (Thorne et al., 2009). Thorne and Reinhardt (2008) have also proposed the notion of 'bridging activities', which (to be synthetic) is about getting learners to talk about how learners are using technology in their "out of class lives" in the classroom. What they propose is that teachers encourage learners to bring this activity into the classroom with them and they use it as the foundation of lessons.

Moreover, researchers suggest that educators may take advantage of gameplay and gaming features to meet learning goals (Halbrook et al. 2019; Gee, 2008; McFarlane et al., 2002; Slota & Young, 2014). Games can be used as an instructional strategy to deliver content, provide second language practice, and teach skills, strategies, and information literacy. For instance, games motivate language practice (Crookall & Oxford, 1990; Rankin et al., 2009).

Despite the growing interest in gaming as an educational tool and the numerous theoretical studies supporting it, few scientific studies on the subject in Italy have been produced yet, and, among them, fewer (Cinganotto, 2019) have dealt with vernacular games played for "learning" and gamification as an assessment method in a language program (Zainuddin et al., 2020).

It was, therefore, necessary to practically investigate the real potential of commercial video games for foreign language learning and the feasibility of using such tools in an Italian context. It was also urgent to look for a different strategy to prevent students from feeling too much pressure due to assessment, which often sees them penalised in actual learning.

This study stemmed from real needs daily experienced in the classroom and a strong desire to seek possible solutions for the benefit of the students.

Strategies to make this project operational therefore considered the use of vernacular video games as the foundation of lessons in a high school class to enhance EFL, and to use gamification to reduce the affective filter in EFL acquisition and the stress and anxiety caused by the assessment. The implementation was developed as a supplemental virtual course, called *Gameful English*, based on game-enhanced and game-informed CALL theories, to standard school classes.

Gameful English aims to give a contribution to the research, by exploring practical solutions to make students closer to real L2 contexts to avoid the sense of frustration in communicative practices, improve vocabulary and listening comprehension as well as diminish anxiety during assessments.

Considering the practical needs that prompted the birth of this study, the possible implications of the use of video games and game elements in an educational curriculum, and the students' responses to their use, this research wanted to investigate how using vernacular video games may impact learning English as a second language, how students perceive a gamified course in an educational context, and how the gameplay changes using vernacular video games in an educational context.

The objectives of the research, to achieve its goal, were at first to design and implement a gamified and gameful EFL course, using vernacular video games, and to provide effective, efficient, and exciting extramural learning opportunities for EFL students bypassing formal EFL instruction. During and after the implementation, to verify students' communicative competence improvements thanks to a gameful context. As for gamification, the first objective was to use it to design the course and to assess the students' progression and achievements, then to verify if stress and anxiety during the assessments lowered thanks to a gameful approach. The last objective was to investigate if and how the gameplay changes using vernacular video games for learning¹¹.

¹¹ In section 3.2, the general and specific objectives of the research will be better detailed and described.

I adopted a qualitative research method to analyse the results of the study, which was intended, designed, and carried out as a qualitative case study on the effects of gameful learning in a secondary school EFL extra-mural course.

1.4 Dissertation: structure

This study consists of five chapters: the introduction, the theoretical framework, the research design, the results, and the conclusions. The introduction (chapter one) explains what this study is about, the reasons for its nature, my connection with the theme, and the objectives. Vernacular gaming, teaching EFL, and the desire to offer the learners a new and engaging possibility to learn English in an engaging environment were the reasons why I embarked on this study. The concept of gamefulness as the overarching term of the study is detailed and related to learning and teaching a foreign language. The Italian educational background for EFL is also described to explain the need for this research.

In the theoretical framework (chapter 2), I point out all those theories that support the study, both on the side of motivation and L2 learning acquisition using video games. Assumptions on the efficacy of game elements in education are also present to promote gamification as an assessment and motivational tool. This review allows me to set the foundation and build the interpretation framework to the research questions of my work, investigating how using vernacular video games impacts learning English as a foreign language, how students perceive a gamified course in an educational context, and how the gameplay changes using vernacular video games in an educational context.

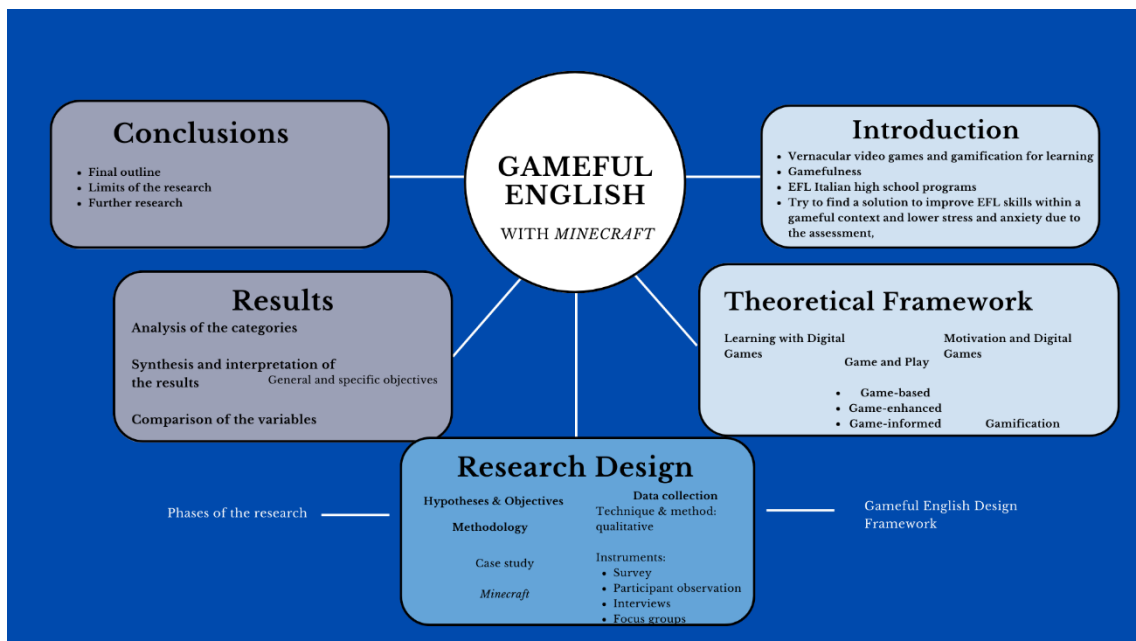
The research design (chapter 3) explains all the steps taken to carry out *Gameful English* case study, which setting is an extra-curricular online course based on the vernacular game *Minecraft*, with its general and specific objectives. The methodology adopted deepens the idea of using “affordances” to choose and promote the video games the students will play (*Minecraft*). The qualitative technique and the instruments used for the data collection (survey, interviews, focus groups, and participant observation) are also part of this section which will close with the *Gameful English* design framework, which is how the online course was structured according to the phases of the lessons and their contents.

The results (chapter 4) present at first the analysis of the categories identified in the data and then the interpretation of the results, detailing general and specific objectives; the comparison of the variables will close this section.

The conclusions (chapter 5) outline how the research questions have been answered, the limits of the research, and possible further studies on the use of vernacular video games and gamification for learning.

To have a general view of this study, the mind map in Figure 2 shows its structure, the topics, and the elements that constitute the backbone of the research.

Figure 2.
Structure of the dissertation.



2. Theoretical framework

Having considered the situation in Italy regarding learning English as a foreign language, the reasons for the stress generated by school assessment and the possibility of finding a solution using vernacular video games, this chapter presents the theoretical framework that supports the reasons for the choice of video games as learning tools and the application of these theories in education. On the one hand, therefore, it will examine those theories that, by video games, promote foreign language learning; on the other hand, it will consider those theories that attribute the use of video games to a strong motivational impact, such that they can promote better learning. The chapter also includes a theoretical reference to gamification as a motivational factor and a possible means of reducing assessment-related stress. The last section presents an outline of the theories connected to the research problem and my interpretation path to build the theoretical approach which guided the whole study.

2.1 How does L2 learning happen with digital games?

To answer the question, I am going to analyse this relation from different points of view, first presenting several key Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theoretical perspectives and the way they would conceptualize L2TL and literacy development, then exploring the concept of motivation and its connections to learning and language development, as well as the ecological dialogical perspective and the importance of “affordances” in CALL, which can be assumed as an umbrella term for related approaches that consider language and learning as involving, situated, contextualized processes that are both cognitive and social; the last part will consider the idea that certain games seem to support the dynamics of L2 use and learning more than others.

The linguistic structure is not separate from meaning, but rather, meaning emerges dynamically through language use. Vygotsky (1978) as well as Lantolf and Thorne (2006) noted that learning is a sociocultural activity, mediated by linguistic and cultural semiosis. Language learning happens through the interplay of the social and the cognitive (Atkinson, 2011) and it is inseparable from enculturation (Duff, 2010; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984). Social activity is fundamental to learning and using language in

socially meaningful ways is the key to developing the most comprehensive repertoire (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013).

2.1.1 SLA and L2TL

Second language acquisition (SLA) is a field that studies the acquisition or learning of second or foreign languages in naturalistic or formal contexts, with or without the use of technology. The research conducted in this field informs L2TL practice and vice versa. SLA is an interdisciplinary field that is typically situated in applied linguistics and draws on theoretical and methodological frameworks from various social sciences and humanities, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, modern languages, and the learning sciences. Due to its interdisciplinary nature, researchers have not yet established a single unifying theory of how SLA works. Instead, SLA has multiple perspectives, each with distinct ontological, epistemological, and methodological implications. While there are several taxonomies for CALL research based on SLA theory, research in this field typically aligns with four major perspectives: structural, conceptual, cognitive, and sociocultural (Kern & Warschauer, 2000; Reinhardt, 2012; Blyth, 2018).

It is interesting to see how these four different perspectives consider language and learning according to a gameful point of view, noticing that most L2 pedagogical applications reflect elements from different perspectives, not avoiding a pragmatic approach based on individual needs.

2.1.2 Structural-behaviourist perspective – Reinforcement theory

According to a structural view of language, it is the result of combinations and recombinations of structures like sounds, words, and grammar to form meanings. The Grammar-Translation method is the most well-known structuralism-informed teaching. It focuses on explicit instruction, memorization of L2 grammar and vocabulary structures, and translation of written texts in the L2. Learners are expected to learn comparing, contrasting, analysing L1 and L2. There is no contextualization in learning, so that it does not work to learn to use the language for communication and creative expression; on the other hand, it may work well to memorize lists of vocabulary and grammar rules.

The main idea in reinforcement theory can be clearly represented by Thorndike's law of effects (1911): behaviours that are followed by satisfaction to the learner are more likely to be repeated in the future under the same circumstances, and behaviours that are followed by dissatisfaction to the learner are less likely to be repeated in the future under the same circumstances. Rewards cause a strengthening of the association between the situation and successful behaviour; on the other hand, punishments cause a weakening of the association between the situation and unsuccessful behaviour.

Reinforcement theory was the first major theory of learning in psychology and education introduced in the early 1900s by the first educational psychologist, Thorndike (1911), and later popularized by Skinner (1938, 1968).

What is the relevance for today's games for learning? On the one hand the role of rewards and punishments is undeniable, as the law of effects is one of the pillars of the psychology of learning; on the other hand, when reinforcement theory is applied to human learning it is important to consider the learner's cognitive interpretation of the learning situation, and in particular, the learner's motivation to learn.

This approach is at the basis of some Apps to learn L2, like *Duolingo*. Its primary design focuses on learning through translation and follows Grammar Translation (GT) pedagogical design. These games usually fail at getting the learner past the beginning stages of proficiency, if another approach is not integrated (Prensky, 2006; Egenfeldt-Nielsen, 2007; Gee, 2008).

According to behaviourism, learning involves forming habits that are strengthened through positive and negative reinforcement. The audiolingual method (ALM) is an approach based on behaviourism, where learners are drilled repeatedly on patterns and forms until they become automatic. This theory assumes that learners can be motivated to learn through rewards and penalties. In fact, feedback is a crucial aspect of reinforcement (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013). Similar to games, players in ALM are motivated to learn from their mistakes, which are punished by losing points, health, or lives. Conversely, they are rewarded when they perform well, which can encourage them to repeat the correct behaviour. The view of learning as a response to strengthening and only forming associations is very limited and can eventually become counterproductive (Mayer, 2014).

2.1.3 Conceptual perspective: the Schema theory

Concepts, models, categories, schemas, principles, and other forms of integrated conceptual knowledge may help students to assimilate new experiences and guide future behaviour because learning involves building a mental model of the parts and the relations among them, allowing making predictions about what would happen under different circumstances.

Building schemas is considered the hallmark of developing expertise in a field (Mayer, 2009; Sweller et al., 2011). Early proponents of schema theory include Jean Piaget (1926), who noticed that children develop progressively more complex schemas as they gain experience, and Frederic Bartlett (1932), who studied how prior knowledge affects learning.

Learning is seen as a process of assimilating incoming information into existing schemas and accommodating incoming information by creating new schemas when needed. This theory can be ascribed to the broader theoretical framework of constructivism, and found popularity in psychology and education since the 1960s.

It also has a place in games for learning because it guides game development, assuming the importance of schemas in the learner's development of expertise in a discipline. However, pure discovery methods are generally inefficient and ineffective ways to promote conceptual learning (Kirschner et al., 2006; Mayer, 2009): simply allowing players to interact with a simulation may not be as effective as providing guidance and instruction.

2.1.4 Psycho-cognitive perspective: Multimedia learning

During the 60s, structural-behaviourism started to be questioned by linguists like Noam Chomsky and psychologists, leading to the 'cognitive revolution': language exists in the mind of an individual as representations and relationships involving form, meaning, and usage. From a cognitive view, learning and literacy development involves decoding, memory access, processing, and active construction. The learner is active, and the mind acts as a processor (Long, 1983; Krashen, 1985; Schmidt, 1990; Swain, 1985). Like in Block (2003), cognitive learning is often depicted as information processing, and the

brain is likened to a computer; feedback assumes the role of a powerful instructional technique in the field of education (Hattie, 2009).

Cognitive SLA research is associated with an Instructed SLA approach to communicative language teaching (Doughty, 2012; Chapelle, 1997).

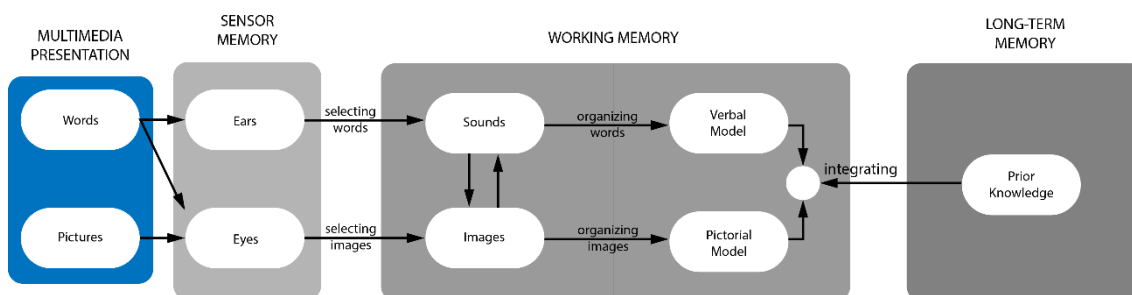
Related to games used for learning, this approach suggests that players learn game rules through experimentation and deduction. Gameplay facilitates cognitive processing and builds associations between concepts, actions, and words used to do them.

On the one hand, an instructed SLA task-based approach would facilitate meaningful game interactions; on the other hand, a cognitive SLA perspective would recognize that the effort required to learn game rules might tax processing and working memory to be overloaded (deHaan et al., 2010). To understand how people learn with games, it is worthwhile to consider how learning works.

Richard Mayer (1996, 2005, 2009, 2014) developed the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which is based on the principle that "People learn more deeply from words and pictures than from words alone." (Mayer, 2005, p.31). Figure 3 shows how the human learning system can be relevant to game learning.

Figure 3.

Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning.



Note. Adapted from Mayer (2014)

The model reflects three research-based principles (dual channels, limited capacity, and active processing) about the human information-processing system derived from cognitive science (Mayer, 2014):

1. *Dual channels:* people have separate channels for processing auditory/verbal versus visual/pictorial material (Baddeley, 1992, 2013; Paivio, 1990, 2006). In the

figure, the auditory/verbal channel begins with information entering through the ears, while the visual/pictorial channel begins with information entering through the eyes.

2. *Limited capacity*: people can only process a certain amount of information in each channel at any one time (Baddeley, 1992, 2013; Sweller, 1994; Sweller et al., 2011). In the “working memory” box only a few items can be processed at any one time within each channel.
3. *Active processing*: meaningful learning occurs when people engage in appropriate cognitive processing during learning, including attending to relevant material, mentally organizing it into a coherent representation, and mentally integrating it with relevant prior knowledge (Mayer, 2009). In Figure 3 the arrows represent the cognitive process of selecting, organizing, and integrating.

To understand how games may promote learning, it is important to recognize that learners need to engage in a lot of appropriate processing (active processing) about words and pictures during the gameplay (dual channels), but they are extremely limited in the capacity they have to do so (limited capacity).

Both sensory memory and long-term memory have unlimited capacity, but working memory is severely limited. This must be taken into account while dealing with video games: it is easy to overload the game player’s working memory, thereby decreasing the opportunity for making sense of the material (Mayer, 2014).

Figure 3 also shows three types (selecting, organizing, and integrating) of the cognitive process during learning:

1. *Selecting*: If the player does not attend to both visual and auditory information, they will quickly disappear from the game player’s cognitive system, and they will not be anymore available for further processing.
2. *Organizing*: The player can mentally organize the incoming sounds and images into a coherent verbal and pictorial representation.
3. *Integrating*: At last, the player can mentally combine the pictorial and the verbal representations with each other, as well as with relevant prior knowledge activated from long term memory.

Only after the new knowledge is constructed it can be transferred to long-term memory for permanent storage.

What are the implications of Mayer's theory of multimedia for learning with games? He wanted to know how games and instructional features affect the process of selecting, organizing, and integrating during learning. In his opinion, designers may need to add instructional features that guide the learner's cognitive processing during gameplay, if the goal of gameplaying is to help learners build learning outcomes based on instructional objectives (Mayer, 2014).

2.1.5 Social-informed perspectives

There is not a single perspective on SLA which is informed by social theories, although they all agree on the fact that sociality is a central element of the activity of learning. Moreover, some social-informed perspectives recognize the important role of individual cognition and the concepts of negotiation or attention, which are typical of psychocognitive theories.

According to Bandura (1977), people learn what to do by watching more experienced people acting, hence, learning is viewed as a cognitive process where one can learn vicariously through viewing others. . Sfard (1998) considers learning as participation, not transmission, as well as Duff (2010) sees learning as socialization. While Bakhtin (1982) thinks dialogic interaction is fundamental to development, Norton (2016) finds in the identity work the same importance. Gee (2008) believes that all symbolic activity, not just language use, is situated in social experience and constitutive of culture.

Sociocultural theory (Atkinson, 2011) sees learning as an activity that is first socially mediated by a peer or expert, and then internalized by the individual.

From a social-informed perspective, L2 Pedagogy should promote and scaffold participation in communities where the learner can practise and develop socially recognized ways of making meaning. Using games in L2 learning would give the chance to interact with game discourses, enact roles, negotiate with other players, and participate

in social practices, which entails learning how to play and be recognized as player (Rama et al., 2012).

The use of a sociocultural perspective in gameful L2 pedagogy does not contradict the promotion of optimal learning conditions according to a psycho-cognitive SLA perspective. For instance, providing comprehensible input, using scaffolding, and providing feedback could help prevent overwhelming the working memory of the learner-player (Reinhardt, 2019). It is important to note that most psycho-cognitive perspectives do not exclude the possibility of social collaboration in L2 learning.

2.1.6 Ecological perspectives

The ecological perspective refers to a set of related approaches that considers language and learning as cognitive and social processes that are situated and contextualized (van Lier, 2004; Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Blin, 2016).

It is seen by some scholars as a new paradigm that transcends the social vs. cognitive debate (Lafford, 2009; Chapelle, 2009; Reinhardt & Sykes, 2012). According to a usage-based understanding of language, where learning involves domain-general cognitive mechanisms like pattern-seeking and statistical learning, the ecological perspective is compatible because it recognizes that language structure is emergent over time and contextually situated (Tomasello, 2003).

Even the concept of embodied cognition, which has potential for virtual reality-based L2 learning, can be related to an ecological perspective, as embodied interactions with virtual resources are perceived as part of the environment (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Shapiro, 2011).

The concept of affordance, which refers to the potential for action made available when an actor and ecological design align (Blin, 2016), is useful for understanding how technology-mediated L2 learning occurs in an ecological perspective. An affordance (Gibson, 2014; van Lier, 2004) is a potential for action made available when an actor and ecological design align: a pencil affords writing by a hand. Games can be conceptualized as interrelated ecologies or dynamic systems of various actors, artifacts, and actions, with game mechanics as affordances that can be seen as potential player behaviour (Reinhardt, 2019).

2.1.7 Affordances and L2 learning

Because of the ergodic and emergent qualities of the games, they must be played to be fully realized. To understand how L2 learning dynamics are afforded by particular game mechanics and features, much research has proved evidence that digital games afford L2 learning. Nation (2011) noticed that L2 vocabulary is most effectively remembered in semantically related groupings; according to Ellis (2003), learning happens when language is used in meaningful, goal-focused ways, that is, when it is narrativised.

The following affordances show the relationship between games and learning:

- *Contextualized language learning*

Game narratives provide graphic and linguistic contextualization and are thematically coherent (Calleja, 2007; Neville, 2010), so to afford in particular form-meaning-function associations (Soderstrom & McCabe, 2011; Franciosi, 2017).

Vocabulary used to narrativise or build personal narratives may be learned more easily and retained longer than language that is not (Shintaku, 2016; Zhao, 2016). This happens even when game vocabulary may be rare in frequency and very register-specific. Jack and Muhammad (2017) found out that their EFL students learned the non-standard gaming language in a mobile game, although it was not particularly useful for them because their proficiency levels were too low. The language of gaming is far more different from what is typically available in a formal L2 classroom, as well as it is different in terms of density, syntactic complexity, and register (Thorne et al., 2012; Ensslin, 2017).

Motivation is a crucial factor in gameful language learning, as it drives players to engage with the game and thus with the language. However, there is no clear definition of motivation, and research on the relationship between game-based learning and motivation has yielded mixed results. McGraw et al. (2009) found that although players were generally more motivated to learn with the game, motivation did not have a significant effect on learning outcomes. In contrast, Hitosugi et al. (2014) attributed vocabulary retention to game motivation. Additionally, Calvo-Ferrer (2017) found that students' pre-game motivation had a greater impact on their learning than the enjoyment they experienced while playing the game.

Research shows that there is still need to investigate on a variety of gameplay contexts, learner-players, and game design that explores how L2 learning is related to game designs.

- *Time*

Players are aware that game design can manipulate time, either by freezing it, slowing it down, speeding it up, or jumping back and forth between times. The manipulation of time mechanics in games may offer an opportunity for successful language comprehension, processing, and production. Controllable time mechanics, when combined with contextualized, multimodal, and interactive narratives, can be a powerful affordance for L2 learning, as it can increase a sense of agency and reflective awareness (deHaan, 2005). Ibrahim (2016) found that pausable time mechanics in the simulation-management genre were beneficial for developing language awareness and cultural competences.

Repeatability is another affordance that games offer, as it allows players to repeat an activity, providing additional opportunities for comprehension, clarification, reflection, or composition of the correct response (Swain, 2006). A gameful design needs to find the right balance between player-controllable and game-controlled time mechanics, as well as between motivation, agency, and awareness, on one hand, and fluency, risk-taking, and automaticity on the other. Therefore, game designers need to balance the use of time mechanics and affordances to ensure that players have a successful and meaningful L2 learning experience (Reinhardt, 2019).

- *Space*

The design of games often separates gameplay into different areas or phases based on the player's proficiency level. This structure aligns with the idea that instruction should be targeted according to proficiency level to be effective. Lessons should be scaffolded and graduated from less to more difficult (Vygotsky, 1978). In many games, players are separated according to level, and they can only fight up to or slightly above their level. However, there are also games that allow lower-level players to team up with more advanced players, who can train them as experts and teach them how to manage the level. Additionally, almost all digital games have tutorials (walkthroughs) that introduce players to the objects and rules of the game incrementally, scaffolding them into gameplay. The

tasks are often broken down into manageable, practicable sub-tasks, in order to filter and concentrate the desired input. As they build on one another, mastery experience leads to a sense of confidence and self-efficacy (Bandura & Watts, 1996), and they are structured at intervals and in amounts just enough to be noticed (Gee, 2005).

However, when dealing with vernacular games, they do not necessarily scaffold the complexity of language use. Furthermore, the language used in these games may be too complex or rarefied for some proficiency levels, as well as overwhelming and anxiety-inducing while interacting with experts or native users. Excessive anxiety may inhibit successful L2 learning, as research on the affective filter (Krashen, 1985), willingness to communicate (Macintyre et al., 1998; Reinders & Wattana, 2015), and emotion (De Costa, 2016; Dewaele et al., 2018) has found.

One possible solution could be to design gameful environments to provide a sheltered, low-anxiety space for learning, while effectively targeting learners' needs. Reinders and Wattana (2015) modified the massive multiplayer online role-play game (MMORPG) *Ragnarok Online* for playing only by their EFL class, reporting higher willingness to communicate and less anxiety. Hwang et al. (2017) created a problem-based English listening game with tasks, rewards, levels, and a fantasy narrative, noticing outcomes improved more for high-anxiety learners, even though the game did not lessen their anxiety.

Multiplayer game designs can provide a supportive environment for learning through apprenticeship by allowing players to observe and model the behaviour of more experienced players while also promoting a sense of protection (Gee, 2005). By providing opportunities for novices to learn from experts in a low-stakes environment, multiplayer games may facilitate language learning by creating a space for learners to engage in authentic communication and experimentation (Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008). Additionally, the social nature of multiplayer games can foster a sense of community and belonging, which may increase learners' motivation and engagement (Dörnyei, 2014).

However, it is important to note that multiplayer games may not be appropriate for all learners, as some may find the social pressure of interacting with others to be anxiety-inducing (De Costa, 2016). If a game is thus pedagogically mediated, modifications and

wraparound materials (see 2.5.2) may lead to more effective learning by lowering inhibitory responses.

- *Feedback and goal-oriented learning*

Games structure gameplay into manageable and scaffolded tasks within sheltered spaces, progressively organized into quests and levels. This design promotes not only mastery learning but also goal-oriented behaviour, as learners are rewarded with points or other game resources upon completing tasks of varying difficulty levels. Learning tasks in games are goal-oriented, much like L2 learning tasks, and are made authentic and meaningful by integrating aspects of narrative, play, and social connections. This integration makes tasks more engaging and promotes active learning (Purushotma et al., 2009). Feedback systems are also integrated with tasks and goals, providing real-time, individualized feedback to the learner, geared towards improvements rather than punishment. Sykes and Reinhardt (2013) believe that goal-orienting in games is driven by the player and supported by feedback systems, as it should be in L2TL by the learner.

A learnful disposition towards L2 gaming may be crucial for receiving such feedback as useful rather than distracting. Bygate et al. (2001) and Ellis (2003) argue that L2 learning tasks should be goal-oriented, and games can provide an effective way of achieving this.

- *Languaging*

Meaningful, social language use can be facilitated in multiplayer games through rule learning and negotiation, and task design that encourages collaboration. This type of cooperative task design is reminiscent of jigsaw and information gap L2 learning tasks (Sykes et al., 2010), which allow for interaction and negotiation for meaning (Pica et al., 1993). Well-designed educational games can also facilitate meaningful interaction and negotiation for L2 meaning. In-game language use for problem-solving, negotiating meaning, and relationship-building can be conceptualized as "languaging" (Swain, 2006; Niu & Li, 2017), which is not just cooperation, but also involves realizing shared values of collaboration and empathy. Languaging can contribute to collective action and may be referred to as private speech or dialogic language. Studies show that affordances for L2 can emerge from different players and game configurations, and that learners tend to learn and enjoy games more when doing cooperative, conjunctive tasks with other players in

their in-group (Zheng et al., 2012). High gaming proficiency seems to counterbalance low L2 proficiency, so shared affinities and learnful dispositions with group members may be essential for languaging to occur.

Silva and Mousavidin (2015) coined the term "social strategic thinking" to describe the cognitive processes involved in inferring from partial information, setting telescopic goals, and utilizing external resources. When this type of thinking is externalized and contributes to collective action, it can be defined as languaging in Swain's sense. However, it is important to note that languaging can also refer to private speech and is not necessarily social in nature, as learners may draw on dialogic processes when playing games on their own to explore and narrativize experiences (Ibrahim, 2016).

Several studies have explored the dynamics of social collaboration, languaging behaviour, and collaboration mechanics in games, showing that affordances for L2 learning can emerge from various player and game configurations (Pirainen-Marsh & Tainio, 2009). Additionally, players/learners seem to learn best and enjoy it most when participating in cooperative, conjunctive tasks with other players in their in-group (Peng et al., 2016).

Rama et al. (2012) found that high gaming proficiency may counterbalance low L2 proficiency, but shared affinities and learnful dispositions with group members are crucial for languaging to occur.

- *Identity work and play*

L2 gaming has the potential to foster the development of L2 learner identities through identity work and play, according to research. Learner-players can engage in identity work and adopt fictional identities that may not be available in real life, while experiencing and integrating L2 learner, L2 user, and L2 gamer identity stances. The success of an L2 learner, according to Norton's theory of identity investment, is related to their investments and commitments in different ascribed and enacted identities and roles, leading to their bilingual and L2-speaking identity (Norton & Gao, 2008).

Identity work refers to actions and behaviours that integrate the learner's new L2 identity with their existing identities, and participation in and around games and gaming practices can facilitate this process (Neville, 2010). Games can afford identity work, as narrative

mechanics involve stance-taking, role negotiation, and expertise. Even in multiplayer games that do not differentiate roles or distribute resources, players can engage in identity work as they negotiate, take on roles, and collaborate with other players (Piiirainen-Marsh & Tainio, 2014).

Games also afford identity play, which involves experimenting with new identities without fully committing to them. Players can experience and embody gameplay from first, second, and third-person perspectives through an avatar, shifting between their out-of-game stances, their stances as a player, and the stances of the avatar. In MMOGs, anonymity is afforded through the username and avatar, allowing players to invest in intercultural identities, develop intercultural awareness, and participate in global arenas for intercultural exchange (Rama et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2009; Jeon, 2015; Thorne, 2008).

- *Place*

Playing digital games, either alone or with others, provides learners with time and place-independent (or dependent) opportunities to learn. For instance, in massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), players can participate from anywhere in the world, at any time, and interact with others. Similarly, in *Fortnite Battle Royale*, players can join the game with other players online, form squads with friends, and compete against each other to survive. This creates a competitive team-based context where interactional language is directive, tactical, and focused on coordinated actions. Such an environment is highly authentic and hard to find in L2 classrooms.

Educational apps like *Duolingo* have also integrated game-informed L2 learning activities that are short in duration, require low cognitive effort, and can be completed at the learner's pace. These apps encourage learners to log in at their convenience, using mechanics like waiting and gifting.

Place-dependent pedagogies, on the other hand, reflect principles of situated (Lave & Wenger, 1991), experiential (Kolb, 1984), and embodied learning (Stolz, 2015). These principles emphasize the importance of doing and experiencing an action for learning. Analytical and abstract learning of action is bound to fail.

- *Extramural learning*

The use of new technologies offers opportunities for autonomous L2 learning that were not available before, mainly because of the flexibility in time and place that Internet practices provide. The rise of the Internet has disrupted the traditional monopoly that formal education had on L2 learning, providing learners with access to authentic socio-literacy practices and affinity spaces (Reinhardt, 2019). However, schools may not recognize or adapt their learning structures accordingly, and learners need autonomous learning skills to make critical use of the variety of resources available to them. This means that learners must learn how to self-direct, regulate, and assess their own learning through both individual and social means.

Studies have shown that extramural, informal gameplay is associated with the development of autonomous learning skills, and L2 learners who engage in L2 gaming perform better in formal L2 assessments compared to non-gamers (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012; Jensen, 2017). In Hong Kong, many gamers have informally learned English through various game-related socio-literacy practices because they wanted to play the latest games before they were translated (or because they would never be translated) into Cantonese (Chik, 2011, 2014).

Many learners/players get more exposure to English autonomously than in the formal classroom, and the use of Internet provides access to a wide variety of resources for learning. However, it is important to note that learners need to develop autonomous learning skills to make the most of these resources, and autonomous learnful L2 gaming practices may be facilitated and supported by direct formal instruction¹².

2.2 How games affect motivation to learn

This section will consider different theories on the efficacy of games on the motivation to learn. It will close with an analysis of the terms "engagement" and "flow", which are fundamental and decisive in understanding the potential of using video games in education.

¹² In this study, much attention will be paid to the role the teacher plays in the use of video games for learning purposes. Indeed, in the design, the teacher plays a central role in choosing the materials and thus fostering learning, that is targeted to the level of the class and the learning objectives on which the course is based. Moreover, the teacher will provide continuous feedback on the tasks accomplished and guide the students to understand how to use the information gained in the gameplay for learning.

2.2.1 Motivation in learning and gaming

Defining what motivation is has always been a hard task.

Dörnyei (2014) sees motivation as both an emotional and a cognitive element, an element within the learner but also determined by the social and cultural organisation of the environment. Motivation is the factor responsible for the reason a person decides to do something, and for how long and how intensively the same person decides to keep on doing it; a motivated learner is a subject who is activated by a need, a desire, a particular interest or an external cause and takes a certain path to reach a goal (Caon, 2020). Motivation is personal because it takes place within the learner; it is directed because it is aimed to reach a goal; it is also activating because it makes the learner persist and engage with intensity.

The important role of motivation in L2/EFL learning and digital gameplay experiences is unmistakable, but the complex factors associated with it in both areas are numerous, intertwined, and difficult to tease apart.

Understanding motivation in these areas is thus fundamental to inform decisions about their use and, as a result, allow teachers to tap into their motivational power.

Sykes and Reinhardt (2013) believe that traditional approaches have conceptualized motivation as fixed, binary, predetermined in nature, and a pre-existing variable that learners bring to the classroom, as well as something resulting from an activity.

Stewart (2011) proposes models that are more oriented to describe relationships among motivational factors and do not claim to be predictive. From a sociocultural perspective, motivation is not something that precedes or results from an activity, but something that emerges with it.

The following motivational theories concern both with the question of what motivates people to exert effort in learning and what motivates people to exert effort in playing a video game. They are arranged around four kinds of cognition that learners bring with them: interests, beliefs, goals, and needs. Motivation in L2 learning, in particular, has also been explored in order to relate it to the use of video games for learning.

2.2.2 Interests: Interest theory and Value theory

Both interest theory and value theory propose that people are more likely to give their best effort when they enjoy (Dewey, 1913) and value what they are doing (Wigfield et al., 2009).

In his “Interest and Effort in Education”, John Dewey (1913) states that compulsory education rises or falls according to the ability of the educators to make school life an interesting and absorbing experience. Students tend to learn more deeply when they study topics that interest them (Hidi, 2001; Pintrich, 2003). How does interest affect learning? Interest causes learners to engage in appropriate cognitive processing during learning such as building cognitive connections with relevant prior knowledge (Mayer, 2014). It is not adding interesting elements per se which makes a lesson more interesting: irrelevant facts may even detract from learning (Mayer, 2009). Game elements and instructional elements should be combined to interest as well as to tap the values that learners bring with them.

2.2.3 Beliefs: Self-Efficacy theory

If learners, and people in general, believe they can succeed in a learning task, they are likely to persist when things get difficult and to work intensely when needed (Schunk, 1991).

Research on self-efficacy reveals that students who have high self-efficacy for learning Maths actually learn better than students who have low self-efficacy for it (Schunk, 1991; Schunk & Hanson, 1985). Chemers, Hu, and Garcia (2001), as well, prove that students who believe they can do well in their first year of college obtain higher grades than students who do not believe they can do well.

The theoretical model shows how high self-efficacy leads to stronger task engagement, which in turn leads to higher achievement, which then leads to positive efficacy cues, thereby leading back to higher self-efficacy beliefs (Pajares & Schunk, 2001).

This type of motivation theory could be relevant when learners, who might have low self-efficacy for school-based learning tasks, may find high self-efficacy in game-based learning tasks. If school content could be embedded in the use of vernacular games,

students may persist and try hard to learn the same school content in such games; they would not otherwise exert much effort in school.

2.2.4 Goals: Goal-orientation theory

Maehr and Zusho (2009) believe people bring goals to any learning experience; this can affect their motivation to learn and in turn be affected by the learning experience itself.

They point out three types of goals:

1. a performance-approach goal if the aim is to show others how well you perform;
2. a performance-avoidance goal if the aim is not to be the last in a performance you are engaged in;
3. a mastery goal if the aim is to develop competence on a task.

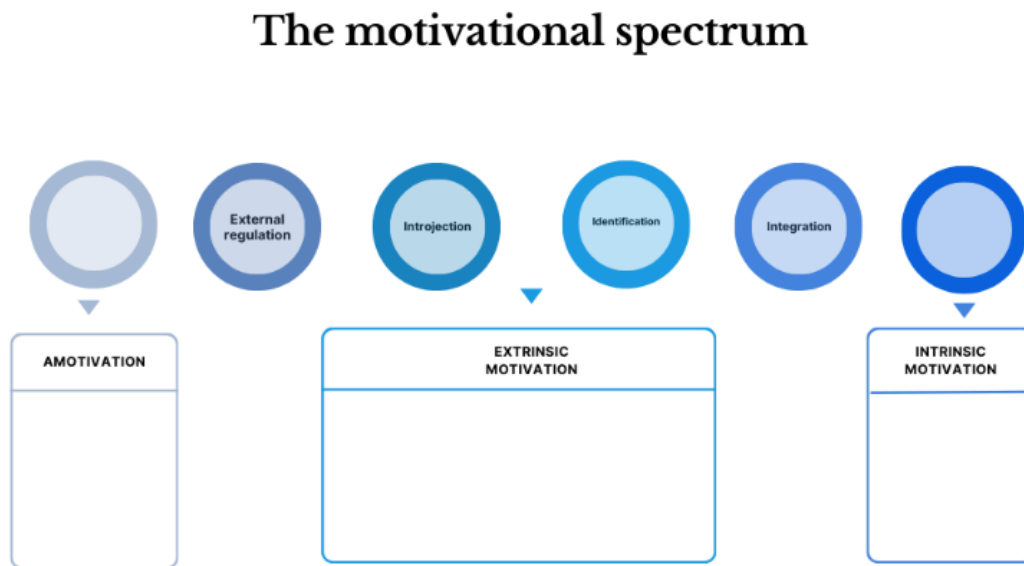
Research evidence shows that having mastery goals is related to higher success in academic learning, while having performance-avoidance goals is related to lower success in academic learning (Maehr & Zusho, 2009). Game playing offers an excellent venue for studying how games could be designed in ways that make players want to achieve mastery for their own sake.

2.2.5 Needs: Self-Determination theory

People are born with an inherent motivation to learn, which is based on psychological needs for competence and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2009). Overall, in their “Promoting self-determined school engagement: motivation, learning, and well-being” Ryan and Deci (2009) show that students work harder when teachers support students’ autonomy by allowing them some control over their learning experiences. If we compare students to gamers, they will perceive successes and failures as simply information that they can use on the way to becoming fully competent based on intrinsic motivation (Malone & Lepper, 2021).

To better understand self-determination theory, we should consider a spectrum of motivational types (Figure 4).

Figure 4.
The motivational spectrum.



At one end of this spectrum, there is amotivation, which is when a person is totally indifferent to the activity. At the other end of the spectrum, there is intrinsic motivation, the strongest form of motivation, because it takes nothing external to get a person to do an activity.

In the middle, there is the broad category of extrinsic motivators: people do something because someone else is asking for it (external regulation), they feel motivated to demonstrate an ability to maintain self-worth (introjection), or they see some value in it (identification). The closest to intrinsic motivation is integration, where personal goals and the “thing” are completely aligned, though the goals they are trying to be achieved derive from reasons extrinsic to themselves.

All these aspects may be relevant in a gamified system supporting learning (Rigby & Ryan, 2011). How to use these different kinds of motivation? What does it actually take to make something intrinsically motivating? This is at the heart of self-determination theory.

Under self-determination theory, there are three characteristics of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), that, when present, suggest that an activity will be worthwhile to people, in and of itself.

1. Competence is related to the person's sense of ability. They feel they are accomplishing something, solving problems, and surmounting obstacles within the activity.
2. Autonomy makes the person feels they're in control because they are making the choices, which are meaningful; it is not someone else who tells what to do.
3. Relatedness: the activity is connected to something beyond the self, to a sense of meaning or purpose. Social interaction is an element of relatedness, which can be clearly related to games.

2.2.6 Motivation and L2 learning: the integrative-instrumental orientation model

The longest-standing and most discussed theory of motivation in L2 learning is the integrative-instrumental orientation model (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) where a learner can be motivated by the desire to learn about or integrate into a new culture (integrative orientation) or to attain other goals (getting a job, getting a raise, translating a document, etc.) for instrumental reasons. A learner's integrative or instrumental orientation, combined with his or her perception of the learning situation, determines motivation.

Research has shown that the model is not perfect: although integrative orientation seems to be more conducive to sustained success in L2 learning, in some cases instrumental orientation proves to be a strong motivator (Gardener & MacIntyre, 1991; Lamb, 2004; Warden & Lin, 2000).

People decide to study and learn other languages for different reasons, not just two diametrically opposed ones: there is no reason why one can't hold the two perspectives simultaneously, among other orientations. Moreover, the reasons why one decides to learn a language are not always the same as motivation through more advanced study: over time, one's motivations may change.

In response to Gardener and Lambert and thanks to advances in psychological research, leading L2 motivation researcher Zoltan Dörnyei (2001, 2009, 2014) proposed two useful, interrelated models: the process model of learning motivation and the L2 motivational self-system model. Both these models do not claim to predict how motivation causes learning; they describe how motivational factors are interrelated in complex ways and recognize that motivation is dynamic and associated with identity.

In the process model (Dörnyei, 2001), motivation is seen as a dynamic process that can shift over time: a learner may start an activity with an initial choice motivation; while completing the activity he or she may be driven by an executive motivation. Once finished, reflecting on the activity may lead to a motivational retrospection, re-establishing orientation toward new choices.

In the self-system model, Dörnyei (2009) presents motivation as multi-dimensional. The model is composed of three components: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 experience.

The ideal L2 self refers to the ideal speaker the learner would like to become. The ought-to L2 self refers to what an individual believes she or he ought or ought not to be, while the L2 experience refers to the environments in which the L2 learning is occurring (the classroom, the teacher, peer group, and the curriculum) and their relationship to motivation.

Any of these contextual features may impact, and be impacted by the ideal, the ought-to L2 selves of the learners and other factors involved. This model clearly shows the complex relationship between intrinsic factors (motivational factors that seem to occur for their own sake, with their origin in the individual), and extrinsic factors (external factors aimed to attain an external reward). To avoid the similar integrative-instrumental model trap, internal and external may not be considered predictive: motivations are quite complex and difficult to identify, and an external motivation to learn a foreign language can easily develop over time into something more intrinsic.

2.2.7 Sociocultural perspectives

Further insights on the role of motivation in L2 learning are related to sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and the notions of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), scaffolding, and learner agency.

From a sociocultural theoretical perspective, all activities are socially mediated and originally external to individual learners (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006): learning comes first through regulation by others (peers or experts), then to self-regulation by internalization and participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Learning happens only when the processes of

mediation are sufficiently scaffolded and within a learner's ZPD, leading the learner toward self-regulation, causing a sense of agency and the ability to realise one's goal.

A sociocultural perspective considers motivation an epiphenomenon rather than a prerequisite or a result of learning. Motivation emerges from meaningful engagement with the material, not from the material itself.

No learning activity can occur without a situated context that influences its effectiveness, as well as no learner comes to learning without a history.

The relations among factors are dynamic and complex and it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish the exact cause-effect relation between motivation and L2 learning. What educators can do is give meaningful choices¹³ to their learners to lead to successful learning (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013); the same choices are given to players to lead to a sense of engagement and flow.

Play motivations and L2 learning motivations interact in ways that have yet to be explored by the research.

Game industries well know how motivation is essential for a good game to work: if players decide to play and keep playing, the game company and designers make money. Complex mechanisms are used, such as goal orientation, interactivity, and feedback. There are two key concepts these mechanisms rely on, and they are engagement and flow. Both are important features of a motivating play and/or learning environment.

2.2.8 Engagement

As a theoretical concept within the field of learning and games, it is the quality of an activity that maintains attention and investment by those participating in it (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013). Engagement motivates players to interact with digital games in intense ways for long periods of time (Gee, 2005; Prensky, 2006; Taylor, 2006) and is the primary goal game designers seek in their designs.

¹³ Choices should be meaningful and directly impact the outcome of the game/learning. This requires a careful balance between the number and type of choices given and their direct impact. Triangularity can help achieve this balance (i.e., low-risk choices equal lower rewards, whereas high-risk choices result in higher rewards).

Prensky (2001) identified twelve elements of games that engage players, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Prensky's twelve engagement elements

GAMES			
	ARE	HAVE	GIVE
1	A form of fun		Enjoyment and pleasure
2	A form of play		Sense of passionate involvement
3		Rules	Structure
4		Goals	Motivation
5	Interactive		Doing
6		Outcomes and feedback	Learning
7	Adaptive		Flow
8		Win states	Ego gratification
9		Conflicts/competition/challenge/opposition	Adrenaline
10		Problem solving	Creativity
11		Interaction	Social groups
12		Representation and story	Emotion

It is not important that all these features are present in every game, but most played or most interesting games tend to show the majority of these characteristics (Browell, 2007), as also discussed by Tekinbas and Zimmerman (2003) though with different terminology.

In his study on the interaction of university students and *World of Warcraft*, Browell (2007) asserted that many of Prensky's principles, especially mentoring and collaborative practices, should be used in the development of new educational models at the university

level. Jabbar and Felicia (2016) confirmed the positive impact digital games have on learning via engagement and flow with and around the games.

Well-designed systems of goal orientation, interaction, feedback, and context are key features of an engaging game. In addition, engagement is a key prerequisite to a flow state.

2.2.9 Flow

Motivation in ESL/EFL learning and video games share a certain affection, the flow, originally proposed by the psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihaly (1990), and fundamental to understanding players' experiences and their real-time motivation to continue playing.

This theory has eight main components that combine to produce enjoyment: manageable tasks, deep concentration, clear goals, immediate feedback, effortless involvement, learner autonomy, metamorphosis of self, and suspension of time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). These components can occur during the gameplay once the gamer begins to become successful. Clarity, centring, choice, commitment, and challenge are the characteristics necessary for a unified flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Csikszentmihalyi noted how flow occurs differently for different people. For example, individuals who are not good at playing games, or find the game uninteresting, would not experience flow during gameplay. This is the reason why for the nature and the aim of this case study only gamers have been involved: only for them the flow, during gameplay, has the potential to increase the amount of time on task and subsequent FL acquisition.

Green and Seitz's (2015) report on videogames and brain behaviour, and state that reinforcement promotes significant time spent on task, which is the best single predictor of positive learning outcomes. McGonigal (2011) refers to gameplay as urgent option with blissful productivity. However, as Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and Gee (2008) pointed out, this bliss/flow would only apply to some.

A flow state is a particular state of mind in which the person involved achieves a high degree of focus and enjoyment (Tekinbas & Zimmerman, 2003). Flow is a rich and meaningful experience that can occur in different contexts and is different for each individual. According to Sykes and Reinhardt, the flow is "the ultimate manifestation of motivation" (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013, p. 97).

The flow state is possible when an activity involves escalating yet manageable challenges, options, decisions, risks, feedback, and achievable goals. It is an intense state of pleasure, incorporating focus, euphoria and high levels of motivation (Carr et al., 2006).

Game designers well know the flow is a key aspect of motivating gameplay experiences (Myers, 1992; Bryce & Rutter, 2001; Tekinbas & Zimmerman, 2003; Fullerton, 2014).

In their “Rules of play: game design fundamentals”, Tekinbas and Zimmerman (2003) noted that the eight elements of Csikszentmihaly’s concept correlate to components of meaningful game design and provide a useful model for describing player motivation in digital games. They highlight four of Csikszentmihaly’s characteristics as prerequisites of flow in videogames (which actually are the ultimately elements of the digital game itself): a challenging activity, clear goals, clear feedback, and the paradox of having control in an uncertain situational.

According to Tekinbas and Zimmerman (2003), games become meaningful when they create or encourage flow states. Challenges, goals, feedback, and perceived agency are the prerequisites of these states. As for the challenge, Fullerton (2014) discusses the need to maintain a balance between challenge and ability: a player may become frustrated if a game task is too *challenging* or bored because it is too easy, so to abandon the game.

A player always needs to know what the *goal* of the activity is. This quality not only maintains flow but also the learning that comes with it (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013).

An adequate, accessible *feedback* is necessary to the player to assess his or her capacity: knowing how one is doing while playing will allow to progress at the appropriate level, rate, and amount of challenge (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013).

Finally, if the player feels to have *control* in an uncertain situation, even without knowing for certain the outcome of the situation, he or she may experience a state of flow.

After having considered how the state of flow can be reached, what are its effects? Tekinbas and Zimmerman (2003) also analyse four elements as effects of flow: merging of action and awareness, intense concentration, loss of self-consciousness, and transformation of time.

At first, while entering the flow, a player feels that *action* and *awareness* have merged and becomes unaware of himself or herself as separate from the action: the mind is so fully engaged in an activity that the game and the player seem unified, and the performance is at its peak (in sports, it is called “in the zone”).

When the player has complete focus on the task at hand, *concentration* helps to meet a true challenge completely. As a result, the player becomes part of the system, losing his or her self-consciousness. The fourth effect can be seen as a result when the consciousness of the self is lost: time is transformed.

A flow state may optimize learning (Egbert, 2004) wherever learners have a sufficient challenge, clear goals, meaningful feedback, and a sense of agency in a learning activity. It is perhaps in these “un-self-conscious moments” (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013), when awareness is heightened, that language learning flows, so to speak, as easily as when a player is fully engaged in a game¹⁴.

This may also help explain the pleasure that some players take in game-related activities, including the production of online fan sites, art, and fiction. People learn best when they have an opportunity to talk about what they are learning/playing (Gee, 2005; Carr et al., 2006).

2.3 Game and play

This section explores the conceptual and practical differences between Play and Game and how both are necessary for making a learnful and gameful disposition towards learning English as a second or foreign language. The notion of multiliteracies as the need to overcome the term “literacy”, which seems quite restrictive when dealing with the digital world, and an outline of what game elements and game types may favour the acquisition of ESL/EFL will close the paragraph.

¹⁴ I started from these assumptions to state research hypotheses 1.3 and 1.4 (see section 3.2.1).

2.3.1 What is Play?

Play is a human, as well as an animal¹⁵, social and fundamental activity in which they engage even though it doesn't seem to be required for survival. Sociologists, biologists, anthropologists, and linguists have been studying it throughout history.

In his 1950 book *Homo Ludens*, Johan Huizinga assumes that play is key to culture and is thus connected to learning as cultural participation: the things we learn through play, like knowledge, beliefs, and behaviours, are not biologically inherited.

Summing up the formal characteristics of play, Huizinga (2016) defines it as a free activity, standing quite consciously outside ordinary life, absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It's an activity connected with no material interests: no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space, according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner.

It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy, and to stress the difference from the common world by disguise or other means.

To get at the distinction of different kinds of play, in his book "Man, Play, and Games", Roger Caillois (1958) borrowed from Latin to explore and contrast *paidia*, free or open-ended play, and *ludus*, goal oriented play. In digital games, *paidia* is facilitated by the design of open-ended virtual worlds, like *Second Life* or sandbox games like *Minecraft*, where there is no win state. *Ludus* on the other hand is more inherent to games with set rules and clear win states, like the first-person shooter *Call of Duty*, although many other games appeal to both kinds of play.

Caillois proposed a taxonomy of four forms of gameplay that has been frequently applied in games studies and game designs, in addition to the distinction between *Paidia* and *Ludus*. Although his categories were formalized before the invention of video games, his taxonomy can be applied to digital games as well because of its comprehensiveness. The four forms of gameplay include *agon* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimesis* (mimicry or imitation), and *ilinx* (vertigo) (Caillois, 2011).

¹⁵ Play has been observed in many animals like in most mammals, birds, reptiles, and cephalopods (Burghardt, 2005).

Agon is a key element to most sports and multiplayer games, as well as in language use. When we engage in conversation and negotiate meaning with other people, there are aspects of conflict, competition and cooperation involved. TBLT reflects elements of *agon* because setting and achieving goals is essential to it. Reflecting the notion that language learning comes from meaningful language use, TBLT advocates goal-driven, real world, authentic tasks as the backbone of formal L2 syllabus design (Reinhardt, 2019).

Alea is a key to what makes play playful in many people's mind; risk taking is associated with it. Caillois notes that *agon* and *alea* are both complementary and opposed, for the players, in the creation of conditions of pure equality denied in real life, having the same chances of winning (Caillois, 2011).

At school, language is taught as a system of predictable patterns; in fact, language in use is very dynamic, emergent, and often unpredictable. If learners have never been given the possibility to experience an open ended and creative language use, for example in free conversation, they have been deprived of the opportunity to develop comfort risk taking and to learn to face potential failure (Mawer & Stanley, 2011).

Mimesis, as per Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), is the basic means by which a learner internalises a process model by another. Simulation is inherent in activities such as drama, storytelling, role play, and modelling, which are universal means of teaching and learning.

Caillois (2011) argues that simulation is incompatible with chance and does not necessarily involve win or lose states¹⁶. Narrative invites perspective taking, which helps learners see themselves as users of the L2 (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Role play in simulation pedagogy provides learners with problem-based scenarios and real-world identities to rehearse and perform (Crookall & Oxford, 1990). In global simulation, learners create a fictional world in the L2 and take on the role of characters in it, interacting with texts and

¹⁶ For this reason, some consider games and simulations separate (Sauvé et al., 2007).

each other (Crookall & Oxford, 1990; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Magnin, 2002; Levine, 2004; Michelson & Dupuy, 2014).

Ilinx, the physical or psychological disorientation that play brings through upsetting the status quo and experiencing the unexpected, is a fun element of play that directly relates to emotional response (Caillois, 2011). It provides opportunities for escape, transformation, and renewal. When a player or learner is convincingly immersed, they may feel that all of their actions are a part of the system with which they are interacting (see Csikszentmihalyi's flow in 2.2.8). Immersion is recognised in general as an effective means of learning another language (Reinhardt, 2019).

A playful disposition is associated with development, and language play (playing with the formal qualities of language) may facilitate learning (Cook, 1997; Lantolf, 2000; Bell, 2005). Although language play does not necessarily occur in digital games, game-mediated environments can be designed to promote a playful disposition and language play (Belz, 2002). Reinhardt (2019) cautions that clear-cut taxonomies should be taken with a grain of salt, as play is a matter of a player's disposition and the acknowledgement that these activities happen within a particular bounded time and place where the rules are different from those of the world outside the game.

2.3.2 What is Game?

What constitutes a game is easy to recognize, yet difficult to define.

The aim of this case study is not to settle debates on what qualifies as a game or not, but to identify the key characteristics of games that are critical to game-enhanced and game-informed practices. For the purposes of this study, a game is defined as a rule-structured activity (Juul, 2005) that can be transformed into a narrative form of play (Murray, 1997; Wardrip-Fruin & Harrigan, 2005). Although games share many of the same qualities as play, such as being voluntary, self-contained or delimited, extraordinary, and unproductive, the subjective nature of the concept means that many activities that lack one or more of these characteristics are still referred to as games.

In short, what defines a game is gamefulness, and whether its players recognize and accept it in the activity they are playing.

In order to examine games from different points of view, I chose three main areas: rules, narrative, and Media to relate to both teaching and learning a foreign language.

- *Game as rules*

Jesper Juul, a ludologist, describes a game as a formal system that involves both the player and the game. On one hand, a game is a system of rules that players must learn and follow to achieve a particular outcome, while on the other hand, the player exercises agency in goal-driven play, within the limits of those rules. This sense of agency contributes to engagement and is illusory to some extent (Juul, 2005). The rules of gameplay give ordinary activities extraordinary meaning within the "magic circle" of the game, defined by Huizinga (2016). The "magic circle" is a powerful space, creating new and complex meanings only possible in the space of play and requires constant maintenance to keep it intact (Tekinbas & Zimmerman, 2003).

A game is fully experienced only when it is played meaningfully, and actions and outcomes are distinct and integrated into the larger context of the game (Tekinbas & Zimmerman, 2003). The game responds with feedback that can be positive, negative, or neutral to player actions. Comprehensible feedback is necessary to maintain a meaningful relationship and sense of interactivity.

The concept of games as systems of rules can be applied to school classes. Goal orientation (see Agon in 2.3.1) is a key tenet of TBLT, and rules and goals can be related to educational structures. The idea that agency is key to game engagement has its parallel with the notion of L2 learner agency, as game rules allow for certain choices within the limits of the game, and L2 instructional designs offer individualized learning pathways within the boundaries of instructional goals and objectives. This gives the possibility to make meaningful choices to the learner, building confidence and promoting autonomy.

The concept of the "magic circle" finds a parallel in the concept of authentication or task buy-in, as learning is more effective when learners accept that the tasks they are doing is worthwhile and meaningful (van Lier, 2004). While learning a language is learning the rules of a language, games are more than just rules, and language is more than just grammar.

- *Games as Narrative*

The aspect of narrative is important to consider when dealing with digital games, as they can be experienced in many ways as a story (Wardrip-Fruin & Harrigan, 2005). Players are immersed in a fictional world and can create their own unique personal narratives as they physically interact with designed narratives (Calleja, 2007). The designed narratives provide a context by which players learn the rules of the game and then play by them.

What makes games different from other media is that they are not only cognitively interactive like films or novels, but they are also ergodic. According to Aarseth (1997), an ergodic text, like a game, requires a non-trivial effort to traverse it. Linear cybertext and literature are noetic but not ergodic, as they only require page turning or clicking to move forward the story. Branching cybertext and interactive fiction games are ergodic because they involve making meaningful choices that influence the story's outcome. Gameplay occurs as rule-determined action because it involves representation, and it is experienced as a narrative (Neitzel, 2005).

Rules engage players by appealing to their agency and ability to make choices, while narratives engage players by appealing to their identities and inviting them to invest in game-mediated identities, giving access to new identities, perspectives, affinities, and socio-literacy practices.

Similar to how players cannot fully know a game until they play it, ESL/EFL learners cannot fully comprehend the abstract rules of grammar until they use them to make meaning. Merely memorizing de-contextualized rules¹⁷ is not enough to learn a second or foreign language; it is through experience, application, and experimentation that learners can truly understand and invest their identities in new narratives (Nunan, 2004).

- *Games as Media*

Digital games are a form of media that are more than just systems of rules and texts; they are socio-cultural practices and important popular media (Apperley, 2010). The gaming

¹⁷ What Kolb (1984) calls "assimilation" through observation, conceptualization, and analysis.

industry is a global and everyday practice for players, and it has transformed from simply being “consumed” to “prod-use”, which involves creating and extending discourse around the game (Bruns, 2009; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2019). Players are not just consumers but creators who engage in various forms of expressions, agency, and visibility, such as sharing new forms of media related to the game and dialoguing with developers (Hjorth, 2011).

Gaming has become a pervasive part of everyday life and culture, with its representations and ideologies impacting society (Bogost, 2008). Multiplayer and massively multiplayer games are increasingly popular with the expansion of broadband and internet accessibility, creating high participatory gamer cultures where players affiliate themselves as gamers (Pearce, 2010). These communities of play, also called affinity spaces, provide opportunities for voluntary and dynamic participation (Gee, 2005; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

As games, language use, and learning are individual and social, and situated in local and/or global practices, schools, teachers, and learners are treated as “consumers” and “prod-users” of educational media. Thus, games provide opportunities for learners to actively engage with the language through “prod-using” media, instead of just consuming it (Bruns, 2009; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2019). That is why a digital literacies pedagogy is so urgent: we need to develop learner awareness of how media should be used critically and responsibly¹⁸.

2.3.3 Multiliteracies

In contemporary multiliteracies paradigms, the importance of situating language use within socially complex multimodal contexts has totally substituted the vision of literacy as a synonym of reading and writing, as it was in the early days of communicative language teaching.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, comprehension-oriented models dominated the discussions of reading or literacy. Reading was considered an important source of comprehensible input that necessarily preceded speaking and writing language production (Krashen et al.,

¹⁸ These assumptions guided the formulation of hypotheses H1.1 and H2.2.

1984). As reading comprehension was aimed to foster the natural acquisition of language, reading was disconnected from the social contexts of use.

The role of background knowledge (Melendez & Pritchard, 1985; Hauptman, 2000) was recognized only in the mid-80s: to understand written or spoken information learners should first try to fit it into what they already know about the world.

In sum, at first literacy was only defined as the ability to read and write, considered as separate linguistic and cognitive processes. During the 90s, the integrative approaches set the stage in many important ways for the discourse-oriented models of literacy (Warner & Dupuy, 2018) but it was only in the last decade of the 20th century, with the phenomena of mass migration and the emergence of digital communications media, that the New London Group (NLG) presented a broader view of literacy and literacy teaching in its 1996 manifesto, “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures”.

According to the group, the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of the contemporary globalized world had to be reflected in literacy pedagogy in education: the new kinds of texts and textual engagement that emerged in the new information and multimedia technologies had to be considered. In order to better grasp the plurality of discourses, languages, and media, they proposed the term multiliteracies. According to NLG’s pedagogy of multiliteracies, language and other modalities of communication can be seen as dynamic resources (“available designs”) for meaning making that undertake constant changes in dynamics acts of language use (“designing”). Learners try to achieve their own purposes contributing again to the cycle of available designs (“the redesigned”). Within this broader view of literacy and literacy teaching, learners can no longer be seen as “users as decoders of language” but rather “users as designers of meaning.” (Warner & Dupuy, 2018, p. 4). Meaning doesn’t reside in texts; rather, deriving meaning is considered an active and dynamic process where learners combine and in a creative way apply both linguistic and other semiotic resources (visual, gesture, sound, etc.) with an awareness the already known conventions connected to a semiotic activity in a determined social space (New London Group, 1996).

From then on, L2 programs have begun to welcome multiple modes and media included not only film, images, and posters, but also the many new literacy practices enabled through digital communications media. Thorne and Reinhardt (2008) proposed an

approach that could bridge not only the lower and upper levels of a language curriculum but also more academic genres with vernacular language, which is increasingly dominated by technology-mediated literacy practices. Within the context of German as a foreign language, Reinhardt et al. (2014) and Warner and Richardson (2017) have demonstrated that integrating digital gaming and digital social media into a genre-based multiliteracies course can help both instructors and learners to be more engaged with texts within a larger nexus of social practices and discourses.

As digital communications enable new spaces, media often bring together participants from different countries and different language communities; moreover, new literacy practices are also pushing ESL/EFL teachers to confront the multilingual reality of the contemporary communities in which learners take place (Androutsopoulos, 2014; Warner & Chen, 2017).

Future research will need to continue to explore the possible affordances of digital literacy practices in the L2 classroom (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Gramling & Warner, 2016), and this case study aims to do so.

2.3.4 Game types and L2TL

Another way to approach games, from a game design point of view, is exploring how games are comprised and categorised.

If we consider their formats, there are many different types of games, from sports, playground games, tabletop games, word games, digital games, to pervasive games (including augmented reality games). The format of a game affords different game design and play styles; with digital games in particular, different platforms offer different possibilities for game designs.

The theme is the fictional setting or subject which provides the imaginary contexts of the game, and basically includes any popular concept that can be narrativised. Many game themes are spin-offs of popular films, comics, or other fiction.

Game genre can be defined as a category for games that have similar mechanics, player behaviours, and themes, although it is difficult to identify because genre categories are dynamic, fluid, and socially defined. Moreover, new genres emerge out of hybrid games,

and there is not a general agreement on which are the main genres and which are subgenres. Wolf (2002) lists 42 distinct digital play genres by their objective and associated mechanics. Among them, however, there are some genres (like text adventure, training simulation, puzzle, and obstacle course) which are meant like subgenres by others. To make this definition more complicated, game developers sometimes describe their games using genre names that go beyond the traditional genre definition.

The video game *Minecraft* (used in the implementation of this case study) is a sandbox game; technically, it is not a genre but rather a set of mechanics or features that adds emergent gameplay possibilities to a simulation. In the same situation are action-adventure games (like *Assassin's Creed* or *Red Dead Redemption*), or role-play games (like *Elder Scrolls*) by providing an expansive, open-ended world for building, adventure, and exploration.

The use of video games in language learning has been explored by researchers across different game genres, including action, adventure, role-playing, simulation, and strategy games. These games offer various dynamics and mechanics that can facilitate language use and learning, such as comprehending rules, making decisions, interacting with other players, and strategizing (Schrier, 2019).

deHaan (2005) and deHaan et al. (2010) conducted studies on action games, such as *Announcing Powerful to Baseball 6* and *Parappa the Rapper*, which involve movement, coordination, and time pressure, and are usually related to fighting, platform, shooter, and survival. Adventure games, on the other hand, involve exploration, following stories, and developing characters, and are often related to science fiction, fantasy, and mystery. Shintaku (2016) and Lacasa et al. (2008) conducted studies on adventure games, such as *Mysteries in a Haunted House* and *Tomb Raider*.

Role-playing video games (RPGs) involve the ongoing development of a character or characters, interaction with an extensive game world (and often other players), and completion of quests and goal-oriented tasks. MMORPGs are a well-known hybrid genre. This genre has been explored by several researchers like Thorne (2008), Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio (2009), Zheng et al. (2012), Reinders and Wattana (2015), Schrier (2015), Zhao (2016), and Peterson (2016).

Simulation games involve building or managing a representation of a system, like a city in *SimCity*, a theme park (*Roller Coaster Tycoon*) or even a life or a society (*The Sims*). Comprehending rules, planning, organizing, weighing outcomes, and strategizing may support language use and learning. Research has focused on *The Sims* (Purushotma, 2005; Miller & Hegelheimer, 2006; Ranalli, 2008; Lacasa et al., 2017), *Farmville* (Reinhardt & Zander, 2011), and *Ba'alty* (Ibrahim, 2016).

Strategy games are centred on planning and strategizing victory against an opponent, and they are often war-based or history-based so that comprehending rules, long-term planning and tactics, and coordinating with other players may facilitate L2 language and learning, as noted in the study on *Forge of Empires* (Reinhardt et al., 2014).

Some game genres are specifically about language structure (crossword puzzle or word find games) but language use and learning dynamics are involved in many other genres. Moreover, playing multiplayer or any genre socially in the foreign language may have good results in its use and possibly learning, as rules and roles are negotiated, and personal narratives are constructed.

Like other kinds of genres (literary, films, music, etc.), game genres evolve, merge and divide, to the point that today's most popular games do not claim to be one single genre. Genres are social constructs and whether something belongs to a particular genre is not absolute and objective; rather, it is a social convention.

2.3.5 Game elements and L2/EFL learning

Game mechanics, features, and dynamics are key to designing and researching L2/EFL learning because they can be directly associated with L2 affordances and gameplay dynamics which are related to L2 use and learning (Sykes, 2008; Cornillie, 2017). Mechanics can be seen as the game rules, while features deal with the aspects of the game that structure gameplay, and dynamics emerge when the actions the players can take within the space of possibility created by rules, mechanics, and contexts interact.

Game dynamics emerge when the actions the players can take within the space of possibility created by a rule (Sicart, 2008), mechanics, and contexts interact. L2 use and learning can be seen as the dynamics associated with L2 teaching and learning, along with dynamics like interaction, engagement, and motivation (Reinhardt, 2019).

In this case study, game elements have been considered in a game-enhanced and game-informed L2 pedagogical mediation, whereas the functional language needed to interact with, through, or around *Minecraft* was the focus of instruction. *Minecraft*'s mechanics required comprehension and the use of particular words or phrases. Moreover, in the design of *Gameful English*, the course was imagined as a game and the mechanics as various online classroom rules and tasks procedures. Mechanics like building, collecting, and negotiating were built into materials and curricula using points, a leaderboard, levels, and quests.

2.4 Game-based learning

From a CALL perspective, game-based learning refers to the use of educational games as sources for formal or informal (self-directed, intentional) L2 learning (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013; Reinhardt, 2019). Players of educational games are aware they are playing for educational purposes: this is the main difference between a vernacular game and an educational one.

Game-based L2 learning programs, environments, and Apps are available in a wide range of type, aim, and quality: some may be designed for specific needs and learner populations, while others are commercial products designed for any L2 learner anywhere. There are commercial CALL programs, sites, or Apps like *DuoLingo*, *Busuu*, *LingroLearning*, or *Babbel+*; some may focus only on specific aspects like vocabulary domain, proficiency level, or skills area, while others may be more comprehensive. Some may resemble digital flashcards, while others may be like an MMORPG, with avatars, multiplayer interaction, quests, and complex narratives.

Key questions focusing on game-based learning and teaching ask how specific game design may afford L2 learner behaviours, and how game-based environments can be designed to incorporate and/or complement L2 pedagogical uses.

The potential for digital games as learning tools was already recognised in the 1970s when L2 tutorial applications were programmed into educational computer systems like PLATO (Dear, 2017), and they mainly focused on grammar and vocabulary. In the late 1970s, then, some L2 educators started to explore game-enhanced L2 teaching (see 2.5.4).

The advent of broadband expansion and the rise of online multiplayer games during the 2000s, along with the "social turn" in second language acquisition (SLA) (Firth & Wagner, 1997), prompted a fresh look at educational games specifically for second language (L2) learning (Reinhardt, 2019). Consequently, educators began collaborating with game programmers and educational publishers to create synthetic immersive environments (SIEs). In these SIEs, players create avatars to complete tasks that simulate real-life situations they may encounter while studying abroad (Sykes et al., 2008).

In educational L2 games, the language structure is the focus of learning because the game itself is structure-focused.

Research (deHaan et al., 2010) shows that learning both the rules of play and the language of the rules and narratives of a game at the same time can result in cognitive overload for L2 learners, leading to frustration and failure. To reduce the risks of failure, Berns et al. (2013) suggest working on the design to find the right balance between the story and the structure focus; Neville (2010) argues that L2 learning game designers should carefully balance fixed narratives with more open-ended narrativisable resources; Reinders and Wattana (2015) highlight the importance of sheltering for practice as well as controlling with whom the players can interact and the tasks that they do.

Researchers and developers of game-based applications must be aware of game-enhanced practice and research to better understand the benefits of working with vernacular games; likewise, those who work on game-enhanced L2 teaching and learning should pay attention to the benefits of the educationally focused game-based available. These two perspectives may inform their ongoing development.

2.5 Game-Enhanced learning

Vernacular, non-educational digital games can be valid resources for formal or informal L2 learning. This case study aims to be a practical example of how high school EFL learners may play *Minecraft* in an extramural context using language-focus supplemental materials designed by the instructor for formal L2 learning.

2.5.1 Pedagogical interventions

In the 1980s, interactive fiction games such as simulation and text adventure games were recognized as compatible with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT) (Baltra, 1990). CLT emphasizes engaging language learners in authentic scenarios and texts that involve meaningful tasks (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1983), with the goal of using language for communication rather than simply memorizing grammar rules. Instruction should be designed around objectives-oriented tasks that promote meaningful language use as the outcome.

In 1990, Taylor noted that simulation games like SimCity could provide contexts for meaningful learning and interaction (Taylor, 1990). However, teachers may face challenges in finding appropriate "wraparound" activities to supplement these games. The next section will delve into what wraparound materials are and how they can facilitate language learning.

2.5.2 Wraparound activities

Wraparounds, which supplement gameplay with pedagogical mediation, are an important aspect of game-enhanced language learning. These activities follow the communicative language teaching (CLT) principles, where L2 instruction should engage learners in meaningful tasks using authentic texts and scenarios (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1983). Meskill (1990) described how the commercial game *Where in the world is Carmen Sandiego?* could be used for ESL instruction by using the game as authentic realia. To prepare learners for gameplay, the instructor would first provide preview and analogue activities, such as paper versions of the game. After gameplay, learners would debrief each other about the content and language they learned, challenges they faced, and what they thought about the activity. These formal activities frame gameplay as a learning activity and combine CLT with simulation and role-play pedagogy (Bullard, 1990), which can promote a learnful disposition towards vernacular games.

According to Whitton (2009), when students understand the purpose of the game, they can relate about the activities that have taken place during the game, and intended learning outcomes emerge from gameplay.

Game journaling¹⁹ is a technique where players talk about their last game session, focusing on what they did and learned. When using authentic materials like vernacular games, pedagogical mediation is particularly important, as it develops and implements wraparound materials according to learner needs that scaffold comprehension and focus attention on language.

Pedagogical mediation can promote learnful awareness of video games as a learning resource and is fundamental because of their ergodic interactive form. Ergodicity may afford autonomous incidental learning if a player can apply game literacies developed elsewhere onto L2 gameplay (Reinhardt, 2019). Mediation can be as basic as a list of gaming vocabulary to review ahead of time. Miller and Hegelheimer (2006) found that ESL learners who received pedagogical mediation by vocabulary activities retained more vocabulary than those who did not.

Wraparound activities can also balance the focus of what the vernacular game offers. In Lacasa et al. (2008), complementary activities using wraparounds were used to compensate for the limitations of the game. Writing and speaking activities were added to the reading activities the game offered. Pedagogical mediation is thus strictly required if video games are to be used as an effective, formal learning resource.

The designer or instructor needs to evaluate what the game can offer, what can be leveraged or taken advantage of for explicit learning, and how to use wraparound material to draw learner attention to the language use associated to the game²⁰.

2.5.3 Frameworks for game-enhanced activity design

When designing game-enhanced wraparound materials to support curricular structures or any sort of pedagogical mediation, we may refer to different frameworks, that can even be applied in combination in a single design.

- *Gaming literacies*

¹⁹ Game journaling is also one of the activities promoted in *Gameful English* to promote self-directed gameful learning.

²⁰ Steven L. Thorne's opinion in Wang, D. (2014).

The use of video games in language learning can promote the development of multiple types of literacies, ranging from gaming literacies to systems literacies. The New London Group's (1996) multiliteracies approach (Kern, 2000; Kalantzis & Cope, 2005) can be applied to the design of video game instruction, where video games can be recognized as texts or artifacts and gaming as socio-cultural practices mediated by language use. According to Kern (2000), the notion of design assumes that both language teaching and learning involve active creation and interpretation of meanings. Tekinbas and Zimmerman (2003) align with the same concept of game design literacies, where the designer creates a context, to be encountered by a participant, from which meaning emerges. There are different studies on the processing of designing and implementing games to full fruition, and they involve the practice and development of a variety of literacies, showing all its complexity.

DeHaan (2011) highlights the importance of game design literacies in language learning and suggests that game design principles can be leveraged for L2 learning. In his study (2011), students were encouraged to think about the design of the games they played as a lever for L2 learning, which involved analyzing mechanics, elements, and narrative techniques. Additionally, students used a tool designed to help author interactive stories, chose additional game elements like music, and analyzed scripts from comparable vernacular games, which contributed to the development of multiple literacies.

The development of gaming literacies can involve active creation and interpretation of meanings, and the design of video games can promote the development of socio-cognitive and systems literacies. The use of video games in language learning offers a complex and multifaceted approach to instruction, with the potential to foster the development of a variety of literacies.

- *Games discourses and function framework*

Sykes and Reinhardt (2013) proposed a game discourse approach to define the objectives for a game-based learning activity, taking into account the different types of language involved in and around gaming, such as words, phrases, varieties, registers, genres, and texts, including the language functions that arise from in-game tasks and wraparound task design. As games are texts that embed discourses about the world through their design rules and narratives, emergent discourses are produced through situational practices.

Interaction around and about gaming as sociocultural practices generates attendant discourses in various forms. Thus, the game is both an experiential and an analytical learning tool, where debriefing can help reflect on game discourses.

This framework is particularly useful when designing supplemental activities that promote both experiential and analytical learning. When considering the language functions that gameplay affords, we refer to all the pragmatic activities done with language in and around the game. According to Reinhardt (2019), possible functions include achieving a game-integrated goal, negotiating tasks with peers, practicing communication strategies, and engaging in imaginative play, as represented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Reinhardt's language functions to achieve a game-integrated goal

Asserting, defending, and persuading	Comparing, contrasting, and evaluating	Describing people, places, and relationships
Expressing likes and dislikes	Expressing opinions, agreeing, and disagreeing	Greeting, welcoming, leave-taking
Inviting, refusing, thanking, excusing, and apologizing	Making claims and predictions	Making requests and giving advice
Problem-solving, hypothesizing, and guessing	Showing solidarity and giving compliments	Telling and recounting stories

On the same basis, Lim (2009), through the observation of learners in the virtual world *Second Life*, developed six “learnings” that might be enhanced by game-enhanced wraparound tasks focusing on the language use around them. The six “learnings” focus on the topics elicited and shown in detail in Table 3.

Table 3.
Lim's six "learnings"

TOPICS	HOW/WHAT
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Exploring	The players gather or collect information by navigating the game world
Collaborating	The players share or exchange information they find in jigsaw or information gap fashion
Being	The players assume different roles or perspectives about a game narrative-as-designed
Building	The players describe the qualities of something they build or create in the game
Championing	The players extend game content to real world projects
Expressing	The players create game-related texts and share them with the player community.

All the activities would require extensive preparation, as well as different genres or mechanics would favour different types of learnings over others.

- *Narrativisation*

Narrativization plays a crucial role in game design as it involves language use. Therefore, it is a promising approach when designing supplemental materials and incorporating pedagogical mediation in game-enhanced activities because it recognizes the significance of narratives in certain games, such as open-ended and sandbox games.

The story-mapping process includes settings, characters, props, and triggering events, as well as the storyline to be followed (Neville, 2010, 2015). Zheng et al. (2009) suggest designs that balance or integrate action and perception to facilitate this process. Players can make sense of an object by creating a role and narrativizing it if they can manipulate it and do something meaningful with it. Reflecting on a player's alter-biography (Calleja, 2011) and a story map provides the player with an opportunity to integrate the experience with their identity as an L2 learner or a player.

Several scholars have utilized this framework in their studies to propose practical activities for game-enhanced L2 learning, such as identifying with new perspectives, extending and elaborating on stories, and transforming modalities and formats (Lacasa et al., 2008, 2017). Additionally, Reinders (2009) suggests inventing and presenting avatars

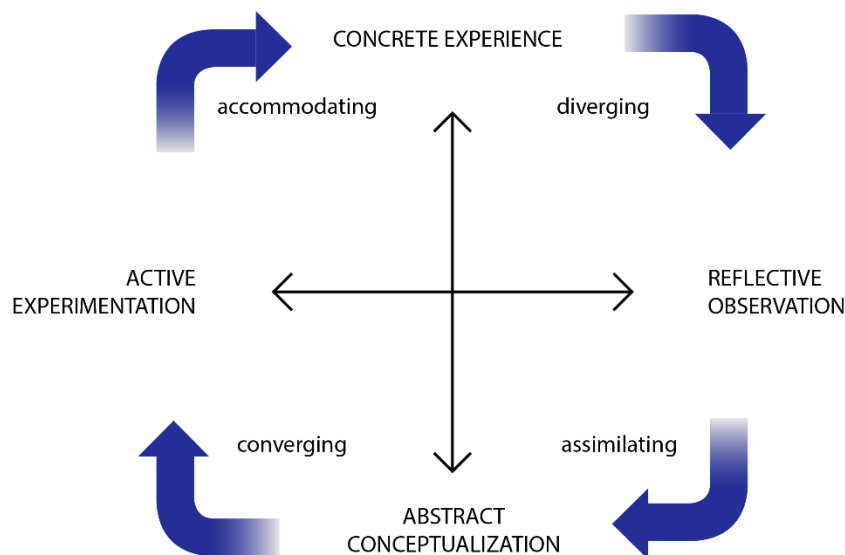
or other game characters' biographies and appearances as a way to practice attributive adjectives and descriptive language.

- *Experiential Learning*

An approach based on experiential learning provides a set of guidelines for designing activities that balance all aspects of learning and cater to different learning styles. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory can be applied to the design of game-enhanced learning activities. This theory posits that instruction should be designed to facilitate dialectical processes that involve concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

The model (Figure 5) is divided into four parts: learning primarily involves perceiving the world through concrete experience and abstract conceptualization and processing it through active experimentation and reflecting observation.

Figure 5.
Kolb's learning styles.



Note. Adapted from Kolb (1984)

The praxis-based action-reflection model integrates theory development, research practice, and teaching application. According to Kolb's experiential learning theory, learning involves dialectic processes of concrete experience, reflective observation,

abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Kolb's learning cycle (Figure 5) illustrates the growth process through which students modify their internal map (or knowledge) based on information and responses obtained from previous actions.

In video games, the educational phases experienced by players can be compared with Kolb's learning cycle. Players experience something dissonant or a failure, which prompts them to reflect and identify the reason for the defeat. Following this analysis, they formulate hypotheses on the cause(s) of the failure, plan actions that help them overcome the problem, and then test and evaluate these hypotheses.

To incorporate all experiential learning phases, a game-enhanced wraparound L2 learning activity should provide an opportunity for concrete experience (playing the game), reflective observation (taking notes and reflecting on what happened, including language used), abstract conceptualization (providing guidance and more active pedagogical mediation), and active experimentation (players testing out their hypotheses and deductions, maybe by playing again).

Although the cycle should be in order, in practice, the phases are likely to emerge in a non-linear sequence. However, the cycle will be fully enacted as long as all the phases are involved at some point (Kolb, 1984).

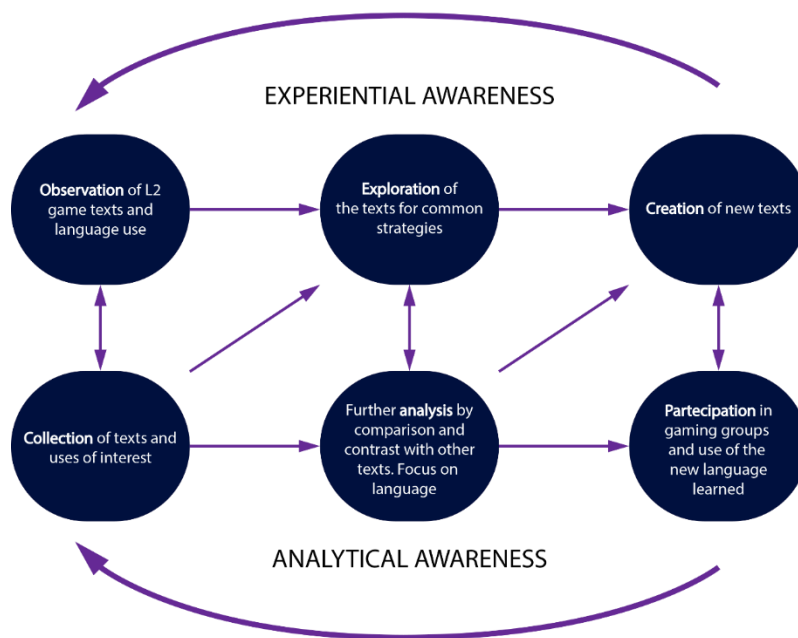
- *Bridging activities*

Thorne and Reinhardt (2008) proposed a framework called the Bridging Activity Framework (Figure 6) informed by literacies and experiential frameworks, with the aim of helping learners become aware of vernacular digital language conventions that can serve as a bridge between in-class activities and the wider world of mediated language use.

Figure 6 shows the phases of their framework. The first phase focuses on the observation and collection of texts and practices, followed by exploration and guided analysis of them, and ends with the creation of new texts and participation in new practices. The cycle then goes back to the observation phase, with the first phase of each pair (observation, exploration, and creation) focused on situated, experiential learning, while the second

phase (collection, analysis, and participation) is focused on reflection and analytic learning (Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008).

Figure 6.
Thorne and Reinhardt's Bridging Activity Framework.



Note. Adapted from Thorne (2008)

According to the students' language levels, the teacher might combine the experiential and the analytic phases, as well as creation and participation, even considering that the phases might not be always so clearly distinct.

2.5.4 A brief history of digital games in L2/EFL teaching and learning

In the 1970s, digital games were introduced, and educators quickly recognized their potential as learning tools, leading to the examination of the relationship between learning and games by instructional technologists and educational theorists (Malone, 1980; Jones, 1982). Several educational games were designed in the 1970s and 1980s, such as *Oregon Trail*, *Lemonade Stand*, and *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?*, to teach subjects like History, Maths, and Geography. Initially, educational games were limited to school computer labs and not connected to local networks. When game consoles and PCs became more affordable, they became part of home activities.

Although second and foreign language teachers and CALL researchers recognized the potential of games for L2 learning early on (Lee, 1979), digital games specifically designed for language learning were not yet available. This lack of development led scholars to consider how vernacular games could be adapted for second/foreign language practice and facilitate meaningful language use (Baltra, 1990; Meskill, 1990). Researchers at that time recognized the potential of digital games, but their limited use was due to the specialized vocabulary that was challenging to integrate into formal L2 classrooms, and internet accessibility was rare and expensive, making the use of games for networked social interaction impossible (Phillips, 1987; Hubbard, 1991).

It was only in the mid-2000s when broadband became more accessible, and game design became technologically advanced that CALL took a renewed interest in games. The new possibilities for game-mediated socio-collaborative L2 learning using Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs) became a new area of study (Peterson, 2010; Lai et al., 2012). Digital Game-Based Learning, a new field in CALL, began to mature thanks to special academic journal issues, edited volumes, and books (Cornillie et al., 2012a; Reinhardt & Sykes, 2012; Peterson, 2013; Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013; Reinders & Chik, 2016; Reinhardt, 2019). Digital gaming was recognized as a legitimate second/foreign language learning practice worth academic attention.

2.5.5 Video games in L2/EFL teaching and learning

The use of digital games in second language or English as a foreign language (L2/EFL) teaching and learning has been the subject of many theoretical studies, which address both game-enhanced and game-based practices. Sykes et al. (2008) focused on the benefits of different types of game-mediated spaces, while Thomas (2012) situated game-based learning in the area of language learning. Purushotma et al. (2009) and Ahmed et al. (2022) discussed the principles of game-mediated design for L2 learning and teaching, and Sykes et al. (2010) examined goal-orientation and feedback in both game-enhanced and game-based environments. Filsecker et al. (2012) explored the role of video games in communities, and Reinhardt & Zander (2011) studied the potential for language socialization via digital game-enhanced pedagogy. These are only some of the different perspectives on the many potential benefits of video games for learning a second or foreign language.

Several empirical studies have also emerged on the use of vernacular, off-the-shelf digital games for language learning. Bryant (2006) and Peterson (2010) analyzed the use of guilds in massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) for social and collaborative work in language learning. Reinders & Wattana (2015) and Piirainen-Marsh & Tainio (2009) looked at collaborative gameplay, Zheng et al. (2010) explored ecological psychology, and Purushotma (2005) and Sundqvist & Kerstin Sylvén (2012) examined vocabulary acquisition.

Regarding language learning, researchers have studied the construction of narrative structure (Neville, 2010), L2 pragmatic development (Sykes, 2008), corrective feedback (Cornillie et al., 2012b), learner behaviour patterns (Sykes et al., 2010), and teachers' behaviours and beliefs towards digital-based learning (McNeil, 2018; Blume, 2019; York et al., 2021).

Hung et al. (2018) surveyed 50 studies and found that most studies used mixed methods, that MMORPGs were the most common genre, that most games were custom-built, that English was the most common language of learning, that most studies were on English, university level, and of mixed proficiency, and that most featured positive outcomes were both on motivation and on improved language learning outcomes.

In his qualitative study, Vasquez-Calvo (2018) focused on game-related activity in the wild²¹ and represented the potential of gameful learning to extend beyond gameplay itself, while Dixon (2022) examined the differences in language in game titles from different genres. He found that there were more similarities among language registers associated with mechanics across game titles, rather than within individual game genres or titles. Perry (2021) built games and tested them out with learners to design game tasks and mechanics that led to the most collaborative dynamics. According to Ahmed et al. (2022), implementing game-based learning had the potential of reducing EFL learners' anxiety to improve their English learning. They conducted a study in which 29 Iranian EFL learners showed increased language motivation compared to a control group,

²¹ With the expression “in the wild”, gamers and designers refer to commercial video games.

demonstrating that using games in language teaching and learning can provide a relaxed setting for EFL students and teachers.

2.5.6 MMOGs- Massive Multiplayer Online Games

According to Chen (2015), massive multiplayer online games (MMOGs) provide virtual environments that allow for synchronous interaction and collaboration, sometimes in multiple languages. These games feature real-time communication between players, interactions with non-player characters, and task completion through quests. While text chat has traditionally been the primary mode of communication, recent developments in voice communication tools have enabled players to use both visual and auditory channels during communication (Peterson, 2010), which can foster social dynamics that are conducive to second language (L2) learning (Lai et al., 2012; Peterson, 2016).

Although *Minecraft* is defined as a sandbox game, in this study the participants were asked to play the Multiplayer modality and interact with an external server to make new alliances. This is the reason why *Minecraft* can also be ascribed to the MMOGs category.

Sykes and Holden (2011) summarize the benefits MMOGs may provide according to their characteristics:

- Goal orientation and goal-directed activity: The architecture of gameplay in MMOGs relates to a task-based approach to language learning, where completing quests is analogous to goal-directed activity (Purushotma et al., 2009).
- Social consequences and interconnectedness: Players must make choices from hundreds of quests and often collaborate with others for successful completion. MMOGs are perceived as high-stakes, meaningful spaces with social consequences for the players involved (Squire & Steinkuehler, 2006; Thorne et al., 2009).
- Potential for language socialization: Collaborative behaviours and social relationships in these virtual worlds are seen as real and meaningful. MMOGs communities offer potential for language socialization, as learners are drawn towards dynamic, complex,

and intimate relationships in about-game contexts and in-game activities (Thorne et al., 2009).

- Complex, meaningful feedback: feedback in MMOGs is complex and meaningful, as it is given to gamers at multiple levels in a way that allows for experimentation and fail states critical to successful advancement and skill building (Sykes et al., 2010).
- Engagement: engagement in MMOGs leads to a rewarding experience in the long term, despite the challenges involved (Purushotma et al., 2009).

According to Van Eck (2009), MMOGs can be used in game-enhanced practices to facilitate constructivism, as students are guided through their gameplay efforts in making sense of the subject at hand. MMOGs require players to demonstrate what they know or think they know in order to progress through the game, and all knowledge is demonstrated within the boundaries of the game narrative and structure. In addition to facilitating constructivism, MMOGs can also contribute to the development of communicative competence in language instruction (Canale & Swain, 1980). L2/EFL learners need to know how to use various language functions according to the sociocultural characteristics and norms that may regulate different environments to achieve sociolinguistic competence, and MMOGs can provide students with diverse, authentic, differentiated language challenges within a virtual environment (Vialpando et al., 2005).

Blénessy (2016) argues that the interactive structure of MMOGs makes the target language more comprehensible to learners, and they provide a constructivist medium for socially mediated learning. Gamers need to understand the directions of the quest to win, and proficiency in the English language can contribute to success in the game, generating a two-way source of intrinsic motivation for SLA and gaming. MMOGs can offer multiple opportunities for L2 learning and socialization, which can help L2 learners to enrich their L2 vocabulary and enhance their communicative competence in the target language (Jueru et al., 2019). These interactions work as a catalyst for SLA through informal learning opportunities, and as a constructivist medium for socially mediated learning because of the relations among the players in-game (Blénessy, 2016). Gamers need to understand the directions of the quest to win; the more proficient they are in the English language (or their alliances are), the more successful they will be in the game. This generates a two-way source of intrinsic motivation for SLA and gaming, which feeds

upon one another (Blénessy, 2016), and provides socially supportive and emotionally safe low language anxiety (Jabbari & Eslami, 2019).

MMORPGs, which are a type of MMOG, are rich with fictional stories that can be managed at three different levels: narrative-as-designed, narrative-as-perceived, and narrative-as-social-organizer (Slota & Young, 2017). Byers and Crocco (2016) note that video games provide opportunities to practice language functions within a variety of virtual contexts, occurring within an overarching theme with various task-based quests, as they are “a new contemporary form of narrative” (Blénessy, 2016, p. 3) They provide meaningful language tasks in gameplay for developing communicative competence, with instrumental language functions being particularly prevalent (Rahman et al., 2014).

For L2 learners, sense-making during gameplay helps them at building their communicative competence (Garcia-Carbonell et al., 2001).

Chatti et al. (2010) argue that video games, especially MMOGs, can individualize content for differentiated instruction, scaffolding play according to a gamer's ability level through increasingly difficult challenges via embedded features like non-player characters (NPCs) and player characters (PCs) assistance, multimodal feedback, and walkthroughs. In *Minecraft*, for example, in survival multiplayer modality, NPCs will not allow you to gain access to the Ender dragon regions if you are not prepared and well-equipped. This individualization can contribute to the development of comprehensible input and output, closing gaps in the learner's language proficiency (Swain, 2006).

In his observer-as-participant analysis, Gee (2008) discovered that video games offer opportunities to engage in important semiotic domains (multiliteracies in a CALL perspective), which include critical thinking, active problem-solving, and unique language functions (design grammar), in-world as an avatar, and in life as a gamer who's playing the game. Learners discover how they may react in new situations, and they can replay the situation to manipulate outcomes. This means that learners can make corrective actions on their own or through resets by termination (death in the game) in their gameplay; they can try new experiences without “losing face”.

Fear of failure is reduced for L2 learners in online gaming environments and contributes to increasing participation because of the focused attention on the game, not on language

production (Berns et al., 2013; Dourda et al., 2014; Blake, 2016). Video games offer a low-stress learning environment which would be best for maintaining comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981) and subsequent comprehensible output (Swain, 2006); moreover, they usually have a built-in tolerance for errors, which can reduce stress at all levels of gaming experience and language ability.

2.6 Game-informed learning

Sykes and Reinhardt (2013) use the term "game-informed L2TL" as a broad term that encompasses the various applications of game and play theories in the practice of teaching and learning a second language. The concepts of game and play have been present in many L2 teaching practices and learning theories, such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). TBLT emphasizes the goal-oriented nature of formal learning activities, while CLT stresses the importance of meaningful contextualization of language use. The use of game-informed practices is not limited to video games and technology, as they have always been associated with learning processes and pedagogy.

Plato himself suggested not to keep children to their studies by compulsion but by play²².

2.6.1 Affordances for game-informed practice

Research on the affordances of games in L2 learning has important implications for game-informed L2TL practice.

- Contextualized language learning

Crookall and Oxford (1990), Magnin (2002), Levine (2004), Mills and Péron (2008), and Reinhardt and Ryu (2013) have advocated for thematic structuring of classes, activities, units or curricula around narratives or sets of narratives, such as role play and simulation pedagogies, which create meaningful contexts for language learning. Learners always do something meaningful with the language they are learning.

²² Plato recounts the importance of play in *Laws*, Book I. According to him, proper training leading to education happens through play.

- *Time*

When learning a second or foreign language, time is important because it affords both language use and learning. Offering learners time and/or multiple opportunities to rehearse performances or language productions is game-informed, because it means promoting and rewarding spontaneous language use and measured risk-taking. If learners know, before they begin a task activity, exactly what they have to complete and how much time they have, it is another game-informed practice.

- *Sheltered practice*

Research shows that willingness to communicate, fundamental to use a new L2, requires a certain level of confidence and perceived confidence (MacIntyre et al., 1998) and it can be lower by anxiety or fear of embarrassment. Manipulating the parameters of implementation, as a game-informed activity may offer, playing off-network, with known friends or anonymously, can provide a metaphorical shelter that encourages L2 use and reduces risk-taking.

- *Goal-oriented learning*

Goal-oriented tasks are fundamental to task-based language teaching (TBLT), and game-informed practices recognize the power of languaging and social collaboration to promote interaction, identity work, and place-dependent, locally sensitive designs. An activity not only is aimed to use the language but to use the language to do something meaningful and authentic.

- *Languaging and social collaboration*

TBLT and Instructed SLA are, among other pedagogical approaches, game-informed because they advocate task designs that promote interaction through information gaps and distributed knowledge that must be shared in order to achieve a task. In multiplayer games, players can choose and have both individual and shared goals, setting up the conditions for collaboration and mutually beneficial exchange.

- *Identity work and play*

According to research, learning how to express one's own feelings, opinions, and ideas in a new language facilitates the integration of new and existing identities into a new whole.

Additionally, identity play can be facilitated by imagining and seeing a story, event, or place from another perspective, which helps learners develop empathy (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2012).

- *Place*

Game-informed L2 instruction recognizes the flexibility of L2 learning and acknowledges the potential for place-dependent, locally sensitive designs. Formal L2 instruction in schools is often constrained by traditional structures developed in the nineteenth century, such as the teacher-centric classroom setup and fixed schedules. While teachers do attempt to bring cultural elements into the classroom, the implicit message conveyed by these structures is that L2 learning is an academic pursuit, not an informal one. It is important to recognize that old pedagogical designs cannot be directly applied to new contexts, and new designs must not simply replicate the world outside the classroom. Digital technology provides a way to counteract the notion that all or most learning takes place within the classroom (Pegrum, 2014; O'Dowd, 2016).

- *Autonomous, extra-mural learning*

Although games are typically designed to be self-contained learning objects, many games and gamers rely on game communities and external media resources available through the internet.

Informal, decentralized game-learning communities emerge around many vernacular games, and these communities offer a valuable resource for L2 learners looking to become proficient in their target language. To that end, students may be taught not to rely only on the instructor and formal resources because extramural L2 learning resources are possibly correlated with L2 learning success, as demonstrated by Sundqvist and Sylven (2012). Additionally, the possibilities offered by the internet are immense, as noted by Sockett (2014).

Students deserve to understand how to study effectively on their own, how to find and evaluate resources, how to become aware of their motivations and preferences, and how to be able to achieve and assess their learning goals²³.

2.6.2 Gamification

What is gamification? Gamification means purposefully applying game design elements to non-game contexts (Deterding et al., 2011; Mora et al., 2015).

Gamified programs such as user rewards, photo opportunities, and location-based social media have become commonplace (Huotari & Hamari, 2012). Educators, too, have explored gamification as a means of bridging generation gaps, fostering motivation, and meeting students where they are, that is, online and immersed in games and gamification (Huang & Soman, 2013; Buckley & Doyle, 2016). As a game-informed practice, Kapp (2012) treats the term as a broad one to cover all game-enhanced, game-informed, and game-based activities for teaching and learning because, according to him, an explicit goal of the gamification process is to gain a person's attention and to move him or her in the process the educator has created, so that the engagement of an individual is the primary focus of gamification.

Gamification, or gamified learning, may suggest embellishing an existing course by adding game elements, such as leaderboards (to provide incentives), points or a score (to track progress on leaderboards), trophies, badges, or achievements (to reward productivity), and quests (to scaffold tasks). In this case study the term has been intended in a more restricted sense: game elements have been intentionally applied in ways (with points, badges, and a leaderboard) and a context (at school, in an extra-curricular course) they are not normally used; it is a "gameful learning" because it refers to integrating the underlying mechanics, or properties, of games, including elements such as user choice, emotional narratives, immediate feedback, and learning from failure, into the fundamental design of a course (Fishman & Deterding, 2013).

²³ See research hypotheses H1.1, H1.2, and H2.2.

There are many common misconceptions about gamification and gameful learning. Despite their names, neither focuses on the use of games in the classroom: neither technology nor computer games are required to design a course in a gameful manner.

Gameful learning primarily concerns the psychology of gaming, and these motivational strategies can be adopted with or without the assistance of technology (Madigan, 2016).

The use of game-related strategies in education is not new. Before digital badges, for example, there were gold stars and lollipops, to similar effect. That effect (an external reward as an incentive) has led to criticism of gamification as devaluing the significance of intrinsic motivators (Mekler et al., 2013). Similarly, the identification of such strategies with games has led some to question the connections between fun and student learning (Dale, 2014). On the other hand, proponents of gameful learning focus on driving student motivation toward several cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes (Hanus & Fox, 2015; Huang & Hew, 2015; Lister, 2015). They think students can be empowered by introducing choices, creating opportunities, and fostering critical and creative thinking.

I totally agree with the metaphor proposed by Reinhardt and Thorne (2016) to conceptualize gamification as a game-as-method. Gamification entails the re-conceptualisation of teaching methods (learning objectives, materials, procedures, outcomes, and assessments), without implying what was done before was not gameful. This metaphor is an additional one, considering the traditional metaphors tutor-tool-ecology often used to conceptualized CALL (Higgins, 1983; Levy, 1997). A game can be intended as CALL tutor if the language designed into games is the object of learning and the game itself works as the instructor; a game can also be seen as a tool if the learner/player uses the game for learning purposes; moreover, a game can be an ecology if it is conceptualized as a literacy practice (involving a variety of actors, gameplay, participation in game communities, etc.).

According to the cognitive self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which is one of the cornerstones of gamification, every person is naturally oriented towards those processes that can lead to personal improvement. Consequently, motivation is born as an internal movement (intrinsic motivation) and seeks support from the outside (extrinsic motivation) as a continuum. The emergence and variables of motivation are linked, in Deci and Ryan's hypothesis, to three fundamental needs: autonomy, competence, and

relatedness. Autonomy is the need to have control over a choice, an activity, or an event; competence is the ability at solving problems and achieving something within the activity; the impulse towards relatedness underlies social connectivity: family, friends, and the world. Games, Werbach et al. (2012) argue, are the perfect representation of the self-determination theory: even the simplest of them is an autonomous activity, because it is chosen, not imposed (as Huizinga said in the 1950s and in Caillois' definition of a game of 1958), and whose outcome depends more on the player's skill than on external factors such as luck and chance.

Comparing SDT fundamental needs with the common school practice, Lombardi (2013) pointed out some interesting discrepancies from the student's point of view:

- *Autonomy* plays a little role in a traditional lesson: the curriculum and syllabus are predetermined, the presentation of content is one-sided, and the sphere of influence of the individual or groups on the learning is limited. This factor underlines the substantial ineffectiveness in increasing motivation.
- *Competence* is a founding pillar of the school; it is conceived as a point of access to future knowledge. However, the exercise of competence is often not followed by adequate feedback. After all, the only real marker of progress in school is the grade-and the grade, while basically a score, is a demotivating marker. It does not signal progress towards competence, or mastery; on the contrary, it decreases with each error, highlighting not achievements, but shortcomings. It is inadequate to emphasise the constructive effort of learning. While it provides important feedback to the teacher on the results of the learning unit, it can easily demoralise the learner, as the orientation of the process tends downwards.
- *Relatedness* is perhaps the strongest aspect we can experience at school. In a language class, the most motivating techniques are almost always those involving the group: they are competitive and collaborative mechanics. Unfortunately, the focus on relatedness alone fails to make the analysed model an activating paradigm at a motivational level. At school, the influence of the relationship among students (acceptance, aggregation, and mutual aid) and between students and teachers seems to be an important but not a foundational element (Eseryel et al., 2014).

There has been a lack of research on the use of gamification in second/foreign language learning.

However, a significant study by Cruaud (2018) stands out as an exception. In this study, the author gamified her L2 French course using a framework developed by Silva (2008) that promoted conditions for playful learning. Through the gradual introduction of gamification elements (starting with playful objects, then playful structures, and finally playful contexts), Cruaud's students achieved a state of playful frames that was associated with learner autonomy. Cruaud's study is a remarkable example of how gamification can be used in L2 learning, and how its outcomes can be analyzed using play theory: it aims to demonstrate the importance of learners adopting a gameful disposition for gamification to be effective.

Gamification, with its elements, is itself a tool designed to increase involvement, channelling the person's effort towards their goal (Bandura's perceived self-efficacy, 1996), stimulating their motivation by making the process explicit with feedback, recognition and rewards, and redrawing the narrative framework of the situation (Lombardi, 2013).

Play and learning motivations can be complex and multifaceted. Whereas adopting gamification elements, we might always consider that not all individuals are motivated in the same way: some people could not be motivated by sharing their achievements with others in the forms of badges and leaderboards, for instance. Motivation must be considered if we want the practice to be effective (Kapp, 2012; Hanus & Fox, 2015).

Mekler et al. (2013) isolated and tested how gamification elements associated with learning and goal causality orientation correlated with intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, and performance. Extrinsic rewards can lower intrinsic motivation. If feedback (whether positive or negative) is perceived as informational rather than controlling, though, some people (autonomy-oriented individuals) may not be subjected to lose or low their intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, if control-oriented individuals perceive the feedback as controlling they may lose intrinsic motivation. They also found that gamification elements motivated players (especially autonomy-oriented ones) to complete different tasks (more than those in a non-gamified control condition). However,

only quantity, not the quality of production increased, and performance feedback was not recognized as informational.

To conclude, Mekler's study offers a model for isolating and testing out game mechanics and elements to integrate the exploratory, descriptive work of Cruaud (2018).

A more recent study by Anisa et al. (2020) shows the effect of gamification on students' motivation in learning English as foreign language at secondary level. Results are promising because they notice stronger intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn English and a more enjoyable classroom atmosphere. What they suggest is to be careful with the design of the gamified task because gamification is not simple. To find out a solution, Rivera and Palmer Garner (2021) propose a "Gamification for Student Engagement Framework". It should enable practitioners to design gamified learning experiences, selecting game attributes according to the desired student experience, and consequence of, engagement. The framework aims to gather much empirical evidence about the effectiveness of the approach on desired outcomes.

Student motivation is highly complex, and some gameful-learning strategies may work for some and not for others. The successful adaptation of gameful learning to one's course depends on the degree to which it conforms to the experiences and interests of students and the teacher's needs. Gamification and gameful learning are not right for every teacher or classroom. Although the teacher does not have to be a gamer to integrate these mechanics, experience with games may affect an instructor's comfort level (Lombardi, 2015).

Gamification and gameful learning have contributed to a greater understanding of the psychology of games and how they motivate players and learners (Przybylski et al., 2010). The advances do not primarily concern games' most externally facing features, such as leaderboards and badges, but the diversification of engagement and finding just the right mixture of strategies to optimize participation. This is a difficult and often incalculable balance. Game designers know that if you make a game too difficult at the outset, most players choose to opt-out rather than rise to the challenge. But they will also stop playing a game if they have achieved mastery too early or easily (Castronova, 2008). Gameful learning challenges us to consider the complexities of how we might create different instructional mixtures and strike similar pedagogical balances as we engage our students.

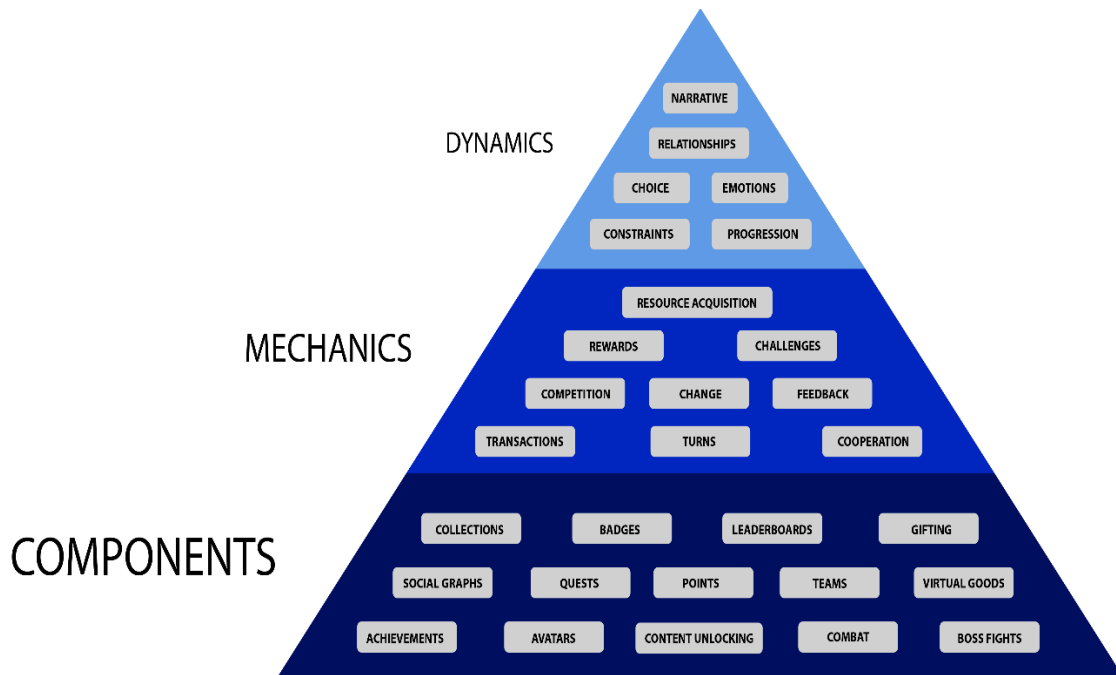
The challenge is not simply a pedagogical one, but also a technological one. Gamification is often associated with a high degree of technological integration, which can serve as a barrier for institutions with limited time and resources. Many studies suggest that gameful learning strategies can be effective at promoting engagement, motivation, self-directed learning, critical thinking, attendance, satisfaction, and more (Lee & Hammer, 2011; Hamari et al., 2014; Dicheva et al., 2015; Seaborn & Fels, 2015; Caponetto et al., 2016; Martí-Parreño et al., 2016), whether a computer is switched on or off.

2.6.3 Elements of gamification

Gamification is the explicit application of game design elements to systems and contexts not normally recognized as games, like courses, lessons, and activities (Becker, 2021). Whether or not gamification is effective has much to do with the motivations and gameful dispositions of learners: it requires buy-in (Cheong et al., 2014; Hamari et al., 2014; Turan et al., 2016; Báez, 2020).

According to Werbach, Hunter, and Dixon (2012), the game design elements we may consider when gamifying an activity can be represented as a pyramid, where the game dynamics are at the top, followed by the game mechanics, and the game components at the bottom (Figure 7).

Figure 7.
Werbach, Hunter, and Dixon’s gamification pyramid



Note. Adapted from Werbach et al. (2012)

Game dynamics are the most high-level conceptual elements in a game or a gamified system. Every game has some constraints because games create meaningful choices (Nicholson, 2015) and interesting problems by limiting people's freedom. The notion of “what” constraints is an important dynamic that any game designer needs to think about (Lee & Hammer, 2011).

Games can produce almost any emotion, from joy to sadness to everything in between. There are a variety of emotional levers that can be pulled, that can make the experience richer: the joy, the sense of accomplishment, and the emotional reinforcement that pushes people to play more are important in most examples of gamification (Becker, 2021).

When considering progression as a game dynamic, we may not only think about passing the levels but also that a game can change its level of difficulty responsively, often in real-time (Dynamic Difficulty Adjustment -DDA). It means it is possible to adjust content in such a way that it is always challenging without being too difficult (Werbach et al., 2012).

DDA represents a fundamental shift in thinking about the shared educational experience. Rather than expecting all students to achieve the same outcomes at the same level by the end of the course, this dynamic supports differentiated outcomes based on effort, interest, and achievement (Hanus & Fox, 2015). To promote equality among gamers/learners, designers know they need to moderate the different experiences by grounding them in fundamental game structures, such as a narrative, that frame the activities constructively (Cheong et al., 2014; Turan et al., 2016; Armstrong & Landers, 2017).

The narrative is the structure that pulls together the pieces of the game, or the gamified system into some coherent feeling. The narrative can be explicit (the storyline in a game) or it can be implicit (Armstrong & Landers, 2017).

Gamification doesn't necessarily have the richness of the aesthetic experiential aspect of games to put the work into creating a narrative. It has to rely upon things like consistent graphical experiences, creating a sense of flow and alluding to certain kinds of practices or certain kinds of story ideas that may be in the players' heads to tie together the individual pieces (Armstrong & Landers, 2017). If there's no sense of narrative, then the risk is that the gamified system will just be a bunch of abstract elements (Armstrong & Landers, 2017).

The challenge in conceptualizing classrooms as narratives is that, unless they simply follow a predetermined script, students may choose alternative paths (Armstrong & Landers, 2017).

Most examples of gamification (Caponetto et al., 2016) give the players a sense that they're going to have the opportunity to improve, or at least to move from where they started, as opposed to just doing the same thing over and repeatedly. Progression doesn't necessarily require specific examples like levels and points, but those are typical game components that get used to instantiate that dynamic.

Relationships are game dynamics too: people interact with each other, friends, teammates, and opponents; social dynamics are very important to the experience of the game (Hanus & Fox, 2015).

If the dynamics can be thought of as the grammar, the game mechanics are the verbs of the game or gamification, the elements that move the action forward (Werbach et al.,

2012). Challenges, chance, cooperation, competition, feedback, resource acquisitions, rewards, transactions, and turns, are various tools that can be used to figure out how to move the action forward, to get the players in the game, to go from one state to another. Game mechanics are defined by Sicart (2008) as methods requested by agents and designed for interaction with the game state. In the education field, this could be revisited as methods requested by instructors and designed to increase student interaction with the subject matter (Alexander et al., 2019). Awarding points for the completion of homework is an example of a game (or gameful) mechanic, but gameful learning transforms pedagogy through the application of various distinctive game mechanics at the design level.

By giving the students agency, teachers allow their students to choose which of the assignments proposed suit their strengths and schedule, which lets them balance their workload while maximizing their opportunity to succeed. However, there are some risks involved. If students take on the advanced challenge and succeed, they earn more points toward their final grade, but if they fail the challenge, they have less time to complete the other opportunities available to them. Will the risk be worth taking? Risks should be low to medium stakes; anything more, and students may never take them (Adelson, 2007). High-stakes risks can also destroy student creativity (Berliner, 2011; Pandina Scot et al., 2008; Taylor et al., 2008), leading to a virtually life-or-death situation in which students focus on doing well on only those high-stakes assignments, avoiding additional opportunities for learning. The gameful learning structure may enhance student self-efficacy, or the belief that they can manage their own learning process, which has been seen as a key component in fostering motivation and improving student persistence through tasks (Zimmerman, 2000; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013).

Gameful learning allows students to take risks, make mistakes, and use their new knowledge to master the tasks they face (Kapur & Bielaczyc, 2012). Students can grow from failure if given the tools and opportunities to do so (Alexander et al., 2019). Giving the player an opportunity to learn from mistakes and recover from them is the core concept behind both a save in a game and the emerging interest in adversity education, a part of the growing movement to explore how we teach the so-called non-cognitive attributes such as grit (persistence), positive (growth, mindsets), and curiosity (Dweck, 2008; Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015; Catalano et al., 2018). Several seminal studies have

suggested that such attributes may be more indicative of student success than conventional markers, such as grades or test scores, but it remains unclear how or the degree to which such behaviours can be taught (Gutman & Schoon, 2013). Intentional integration as well as a solid research base for teaching strategies may be provided by gameful learning (Alexander et al., 2019).

Going back to Werbach's pyramid (Figure 7) there are a few dynamics, a larger number of mechanics and a big number of components.

Some examples of components can be summed up considering: achievements (that give the player some reward attached to doing a specific set of things), avatar (shows the player a visual representation of their character), boss fights (at the end of a level, of some part of the game, a really hard challenge, a high-level monster that you have to defeat in order to get to the next level), collections (pulling together a bunch of different things, assembling certain pieces or certain examples of something), combat, content unlocking (you need to do something, maybe an achievement, maybe some levelling up, in order to get access to certain new content in the game), gifting (giving things to other people can actually make people want to play the game more because it feels like fun), leaderboards (lists of players in order of their score), quests, teams, and virtual goods.

Game levels are structurally like chapters in a book or sections in a lesson plan. Traditionally, lessons follow a linear structure, and timing determines when a student moves from one lesson to another. Although moving between levels requires mastery of the content or goal of that level, moving between lessons in a traditional classroom does not, which can leave weaker students behind, unable to build a stable foundation (Alexander et al., 2019). A refocus on mastery instead of linear progression has shown positive effects on students across education levels, especially weaker students (Kulik & Bangert Drowns, 1990).

The structure of the pyramid (Figure 7) shows, first, that it goes from narrow at the top to broad at the bottom. It means there are fewer dynamics than components, but it also shows how the lower levels are examples of progression, and they may also be examples of narrative (Armstrong & Landers, 2017).

There are some game elements that are more common than others and that are more influential in others in shaping typical examples of gamification, which are represented by the acronym PBL (points, badges, and leaderboards).

Points are a way of keeping score: they are our way of determining how well someone is doing in the game. They can also connect with rewards and are a feedback mechanism because they display progress (Báez, 2020): they show you in real-time exactly how you're doing in the game.

They also provide data: the game designer can see how many points you're earning, where you're earning them, how fast you're earning them and so forth, and that can be used to enhance the game or the gamified system. At last, points are all equal.

Badges are representations of achievement (Cheong et al., 2014). They are a visual indication that you have reached a certain level, or you've accomplished some set of objectives that were set for you in the gamified system. They are flexible (Deterding et al., 2011): anything can be represented in a badge.

Because the gamified system is trying to motivate certain behaviour (Nicholson, 2015), the badge can be a great way of conveying that, focusing on what the gamification designer wants to motivate.

Badges can also convey style (Huang & Hew, 2015): they can represent and communicate the vibe, or the overall aesthetic of the gamified system. They also work as a signal and credentials (Mekler et al., 2013): a badge designates what things are significant in the game and tell anyone who's looking what has been done.

They may support collections: many players want to have the full collection and so people may feel more and more engaged to play the game in order to collect all the badges available because they also work as status symbols (Mekler et al., 2013).

Leaderboards are other gamification elements where you display the ranking and scores of all the players for various activities. The idea behind boards is that some players may be motivated by competition and may benefit from looking at their achievements and comparing them to others (Buckley & Doyle, 2016). As it is not a general rule, sometimes leaderboards only focus on the top performers not to embarrass and de-motivate the

others. Using pseudonyms may also give learners some anonymity and the possibility to share their names with classmates or not (Cruz & Penley, 2014; Hanus & Fox, 2015).

Game elements are a starting point for gamification; they are raw materials and tools that the designer can use and deploy but they are not enough. What makes the elements successful is the way they are all tied together (Hamari et al., 2014; Cheong et al., 2014; Mora et al., 2015). Points, badges and leaderboards are service-level components, and they do not make the experience fun and engaging just by using them.

Focusing on the elements, especially on the PBLs, overemphasising rewards, can, actually, demotivate (Deterding et al., 2011): receiving a reward does not necessarily mean that the experience is fun. And the fact that the experience is fun doesn't necessarily mean that there's some reward in it somewhere.

Rewards themselves are not necessarily wrong. But if they are the only thing that the designer focuses on as the objective, then there is a great danger that the system will not actually generate the true results which come from real engagement (Nicholson, 2015).

If the focus is only on these elements, what about those meaningful choices which make something game-like? Similarly, challenges are not necessarily puzzles.

Community and social interactions are tremendously powerful in games, and often these PBL-type sites have no notion of interaction with other people. Finally, people are different (Hanus & Fox, 2015).

So, if there's just one kind of structure that gives people a set of tasks to overcome, is it really going to pull in people with different sorts of motivations?

Points are a popular means of gamifying learning activities. In a gamified point system, learners are given multiple choices and options to reach their goal; classroom behaviour can also be gamified to achieve a certain final score. In any case, gamified point system and how points are awarded should be made clear and/or negotiated from the outset of the course (Mekler et al., 2013).

The major difference between a traditional course and a gamified one is that in the former the students have full points at the beginning of the course, and they can be removed; in the latter, points are incremental and build slowly over time (Dicheva et al., 2015).

Gamified activities are sometimes organized as challenges or quests. Challenges are problem-based activities that must be solved through collaboration, role-taking, or organizing. Quests are sequences of interrelated activities that lead to solving a challenge through a scaffolded, progressive design. Language learning is facilitated as the challenge provides a coherent context for meaningful languaging (Galbis-Còrdova et al., 2017). Because of its progressive design, a quest can integrate target vocabulary, grammar, and other language objectives more directly than a challenge.

Rewards can be awarded for the completion or winning of challenges or quests. In gamification, they motivate learners incrementally and extrinsically (Huang & Hew, 2015), and include badges, available to anyone who completes specific challenges or quests, and trophies, limited in quantity and one-of-a-kind.

Gamified courses may also be split into levels that are achieved as a learner accumulates a certain number of game points, so to unlock new activities, harder challenges, and more complex quests with more points and better rewards (Pappas, 2015).

After considering the theories underlying video games as learning tools, the role of motivation and the possibilities offered by the use of gamification to foster learning in a clear, conscious and fun way, the next paragraph will clarify how these theories have found application in the making of *Gameful English* course and guided the research.

2.7 Summary of the analysis dimensions: interpretation path

The theories presented in the previous sections show how much interest scholars and studies have put in gaming. They demonstrate that using video games does not necessarily mean only playing but taking advantage of what is behind the façade: mechanics, components, structures, narratives, logic, designs, etc.

All the elicited theories have been considered for the making of this study. This section gathers interpretation of those theories that found application in the field work to support and find possible solutions to my research questions.

The idea that video games could be an efficient learning tool has been reviewed from a conceptual, psycho-cognitive, structural, behaviourist, and ecological point of view.

This study considers it fundamental to learning social activity and for using the language in socially meaningful ways. That means language learning is acquired and learned in both naturalistic and in formal instructed contexts. Here is the idea to use video games (a naturalistic context) at school (a formal instructed context).

Reinforcement theory (Thorndike, 1911) contributed with its notions of feedback and rewards as keys to reinforcing and improving correct learning. In the gamified structure of *Gameful English*, students always receive feedback for their participation and work. The schema theory showed the importance of schemas in the learner's development of expertise in a discipline; that is why all the activities have been designed from the easiest to the most difficult. The cognitive learning promoted by multimedia learning (Mayer, 2014) reinforced the notion of feedback as a powerful instructional technique and gameplay as a facilitator for the cognitive process. People learn more deeply from words and pictures than from words alone. Moreover, as Mayer (2014) suggested, *Gameful English* was provided with instructional features that guided the learner's cognitive process during the gameplay (specific tasks and assignments).

Sociality is a central element in the activity of learning. Bandura (1977) believed people learn what to do by watching more experienced people act. In *Gameful English*, as we will see, the students were asked to play *Minecraft* multiplayer with foreign English-speaking gamers. Moreover, most of the activities were based on watching and understanding more expert gamers (You-tubers) in their gameplays, considering what Atkinson (2011) said about learning as a socially mediated activity by a peer or expert and then interiorized by the individual. This idea was also central in Gee (2008), who suggested facilitating and scaffolding participation in communities.

The ecological perspective (van Lier, 2004; Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Blin, 2016) promoted the concept of affordances which was inspirational for this research. The contextualized language learning affordance considers L2 vocabulary most effectively remembered in semantically related groupings (Nation, 2011) and that learning happens when it is narrativised. Tasks in *Gameful English* were based on vocabulary acquisition and its use in narrativised speaking activities. Moreover, time afforded additional opportunities for comprehension (Swain, 2016): students could take all their time to play and learn because playing was at their pace. Instructions were targeted according to the

proficiency level to be effective, as the “space” affordance suggests. The lessons were scaffolded and graduated from less to more difficult (Vygotsky, 1978): they were divided into levels (from 1 to 10), and the tasks were often broken into manageable parts or subtasks to build on one another. The students had sheltered and low-anxiety space to practice the language, favouring a more relaxed atmosphere with wraparound materials.

As already said, feedback played a fundamental role in the design of *Gameful English*: games promote mastery learning and goal-oriented behaviour. Students completed a task which led them to another, building on the finished one. Feedback is instructional and not punitive because it is geared towards improvements.

Languaging is the other affordance that received attention in this study because the students played *Minecraft* multiplayer during the implementation: it means the tasks were designed to encourage collaboration. The aim was to use the language for the strategy and to realize shared values of collaboration and empathy. The affordance of the identity of work and play helped the students to integrate their identities with the new L2 identity; the last task was actually to become a Youtuber commenting on the gameplay; moreover, using an avatar while playing in multiplayer, the students had the chance to lower the affective filter when speaking in English.

Thanks to the affordance of the place, the students could play whenever they wanted. Extra-mural L2 gaming was supported by direct formal instruction thanks to blended learning: *Gameful English* was implemented after the school courses with an online format.

Although video games may afford language learning, if motivation is not part of the learning process, results could be compromised. Simplistically, motivation is the reason why a person decides to do something, such as learning.

In this study, I wanted to consider what motivates people to exert effort in learning and playing video games to see if both aspects could find a synthesis in *Gameful English*.

The interest and value theory (Dewey, 1913) was the premise for this work: students learn deeply when they study topics that interest them because they can build cognitive processing. If learners think they can succeed in a learning task, they persist even when things get difficult and hard work is required. This idea, promoted by the self-efficacy

theory (Schunk, 1991), was helpful to introduce *Gameful English* course even to those students who were not interested in “school”. Games may provide a valid alternative because gamers know they can afford challenges during the gameplay. School content could be maintained using a different tool. Goal-orientation theory came to help to suggest that games could be designed and used in ways that make players achieve mastery for their own sake.

With their self-determination theory, Ryan and Deci (2009) offered an enlightened vision of teacher/student relation, which inspired the design of *Gameful English*: students work harder when the teacher supports the autonomy of their students by allowing them some control over their learning experiences. The gamified structure of the course tried to make students responsible for their choices, giving them the freedom to choose which path to follow. This theory was accompanied by the process model and the self-system model by Dörnyei (2001) and supported by Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development: giving meaningful choices arises motivation which is an epiphenomenon, rather than a prerequisite or a result of learning. Students make choices as well as players to lead to a sense of engagement and flow. Prensky’s (2001) twelve elements to promote engagement have always been considered when planning the lessons, and Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) notion of flow guided my attention to understand the impact school had on the gameplay and the importance of having accessible feedback. Fullerton’s (2014) advice to maintain a balance between challenge and ability helped me design the tasks: if a game task was too challenging or too boring, students could have been frustrated.

A game is fully experienced when it is played meaningfully, so comprehensive feedback is necessary to have a meaningful relationship and a sense of interactivity.

Debriefing activities were a fundamental part of the lessons because the students/gamers could talk about their last game session, focusing on what they did and learned, as Whitton (2009) suggested.

A pedagogical mediation was crucial to compensate for the limits of the game in terms of language: four different frameworks for game-enhanced activities were used in this implementation: the function framework (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013), narrativization (Reinders, 2009), experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), and bridging activities (Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008).

Gamification, as a game-informed practice, affords EFL learning because it offers contextualized learning, time, and sheltered practice. Gameful learning integrates the properties of games into the design of a course: it can be effective at promoting engagement, motivation, self-directed learning, critical thinking, attendance, and satisfaction.

In particular, thanks to DDA (Dynamic Difficulty Adjustment), it is possible to adjust content so that learning may be challenging without being hard taking. DDA supports differentiated outcomes based on effort, interest, and achievement. *Gameful English* design allowed the students to choose alternative paths, as Armstrong and Landers (2017) suggested.

Moreover, having the gamification principles in mind, another aim of the course was to balance risks and allow learning from mistakes: I tried to build affordable tasks with reduced possibilities of complete failure. Using points, badges, and a leaderboard was a strategy to investigate if using a different structure with different premises (a growing path and not an average) could lower stress and make learning more challenging.

I wanted *Gameful English* to refocus on mastery instead of linear progression to avoid that sense of frustration and anxiety towards assessment which is often the predominant cause of demotivation at school.

Table 4 shows how the different theories contributed in the making of this research, to have a brief outline.

Table 4.
Theories and their relevance in Gameful English

THEORY	REFERENCES IN <i>GAMEFUL ENGLISH</i>
Reinforcement theory Thorndike, 1911	Feedback and rewards as keys to reinforce and improve correct learning
Schema theory Piaget, 1926; Bartlett, 1932; Mayer, 2009; Sweller, 2011	The importance of schemas in the learner's expertise in a discipline
Multimedia learning Mayer, 2014	Feedback as a powerful tool + gameplay as a facilitator for cognitive process

Social theory Bandura, 1977; Atkinson, 2011; Gee, 2008; Norton, 2016	People learn what to do by watching more experienced people act Scaffolding participation in communities
Ecological perspectives Van Lier, 2004; Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Blin, 2006	Affordances
Socio-cognitive theory Vygotsky, 1978	Scaffolding Zone of proximal development
Interest and value theory + Self-efficacy theory Dewey, 1913; Schunk, 1991	People learn deeply when they study topics that interest them
Goal-orientation theory Maehr & Zusho, 2009	Games could be designed and used in ways that make players achieve mastery for their own sake
Self-determination theory Ryan & Deci, 2009	Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations
Process model + Self-system model Dörnyei, 2001	Giving meaningful choices arises motivation
Flow theory Csikszentmihalyi, 1990	Accessible feedback Gameplay experience Engagement
Gamification theories Werbach, Hunter, & Dixon, 2012; Armstrong & Landers, 2017	Dynamic Difficulty Adjustment Importance of debriefing activities Supports differentiated outcomes based on effort, interest, and achievement

3. Research design

This chapter aims to set out, justify and explain the decisions about the research process and the assumptions and principles that guided its implementation and data analyses (the methodology, methods and techniques chosen). Firstly, starting from the research problem and the research questions, I define the research hypotheses, identifying the variables that will be used in the study. On this basis, general and specific research objectives are elicited. Next, the chosen methodology determines how the study will be conducted.

The following section will detail the participants, the language, the context and the game used to carry out the fieldwork.

The data collection techniques and instruments employed in the research are then described, explaining the typology of the data provided and the development process of each one of them. The last section relates *Gameful English* design framework and the gamified structure of the implementation.

3.1 Premise

Considering the context of gaming, the essence of play, the proper characteristics of the video games, and the interdisciplinary nature of the field, researching video games requires theory and research practices of different areas: CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), applied linguistics, L2 learning, L2 methods and material design, game studies, and educational gaming (Reinhardt, 2019). For the same reason, there are many designs the researcher may use: descriptive observations, experiments with control groups, design-based projects, pedagogical interventions, and qualitative case studies.

Gameful English is a pedagogical intervention which uses gamification and commercial video games in an EFL class to enhance speaking, listening, and vocabulary and to diminish stress and anxiety during the assessments. It is also an explorative qualitative case study. Its structure, therefore, is affected by the two designs.

As pointed out in the theoretical section (chapter 2), this case study can align with a range of SLA approaches, from behaviourist to interactionist to sociocultural theory. In particular, using vernacular video games aligns the EFL framework with the pedagogical

method: the design distributes resources among learners. It facilitates socio-collaborative languaging to complete shared quests, aligning with socio-cognitive frameworks. Using gamification aligns the theories of games and play with the practice of L2 teaching and learning thanks to the affordances of games; that's why I also considered the established theory of learning, the self-determination theory (SDT), as one of the underlying theoretical frameworks. According to Seaborn and Fels (2015), SDT is the most frequently used psychological theory in gamification research. Buil et al. (2020) provide empirical evidence based on SDT that uses game design elements to motivate students and satisfy their need for competence, autonomy and relatedness. The other theory this study moves from is the flow theory, proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1990): people who are immersed in a challenging activity like gaming can experience the 'flow' when they achieve peak performance. Flow theory may also contribute to promoting active engagement and effective learning. In the study of Rachels and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2018), the authors found that when game elements are embedded in gaming activities, they can potentially lead individuals to a state of flow if the challenge is appropriate to the skill level of the individual.

Other important contributions I considered essential in the gamified design of the implementation were scaffolding, individualised learning and social interaction. The concept of scaffolding can be referred to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) and the basic principles in SDT: the learning process can be augmented thanks to these motivational affordances when learners interact with their more proficient peers.

3.2 Gameful English: a case study

Gamification and game-enhanced learning have rarely been considered in a single study (Zainuddin et al., 2020) and the two terms are often misunderstood as interchangeable. Moreover, most studies of gamification instruction focused on higher education, while few studies investigated gamification at the secondary school level (Zainuddin et al., 2020). This explorative and qualitative case study aimed to overcome these tendencies to analyze if and how these fields can be interrelated to enhance EFL skills and to give students a more relaxed approach toward assessment.

Before designing and carrying out the study, I had experience in the field teaching English to my students and noticed the enthusiasm and motivation they had for the gaming world. One study, conducted by deHaan (2011), interested me in particular. DeHaan incorporated considerable opportunities for discussion and reflection on game design and L2 learning in his EFL class with Japanese students. He also pointed out that effective game-based second language teaching and learning is more likely to occur if practical conclusions can be drawn from empirical evidence.

Once established vernacular video games would have been used for this research, I found there seemed to be a general agreement (Peterson, 2016) that some genres, specifically massive multiplayer online games (MMOs), were better for L2 learning than other genres. Simone Bregni (2018) used the video game *Assassin Creed* to teach Italian to his American students. He found out that including MMOGs in the curriculum helped students improve their skills because such games offered opportunities to use their target language to achieve concrete goals. He noted that by the end of the semester, the students developed their fluency in the use of idiomatic expressions, interjections and fillers, as well as expressions of joy, excitement and frustration. Sandra Annette Rogers (2017) prescribed EverQuest® II (2016) with the SLA optimizing strategic gameplay to 15 participants for four hours a week for a month after school. She gave very interesting suggestions on the way video games should be used for educational purposes; for example, she suggested not to schedule playing video games after school but at the participants' most preferred time. Moreover, according to her, it was not useful to play the video games without using SLA optimizing strategic features and activities.

I also found relevant for this study Zainuddin's (2020) literary review on the impact of gamification on learning: the general findings suggest that gamification may be effective in facilitating and enhancing learning performance, motivation, engagement and socialization amongst learners. Moreover, Ajlen, Plummer, Straub, and Zhu (2020) showed the results of 48 programs at the University of Michigan which employed gameful pedagogy impacting over 10,000 learners in 2019. Considering that students' final grade was a sum of all their assignment grades rather than an average of those grades, gamification allowed students the freedom to fail because there was room to recover from setbacks by completing additional work. Students were encouraged to take learning risks and to step outside comfortable zones. According to Zainuddin et al. (2020), with this

innovative concept, students could learn to associate learning and assessment with curiosity and joy instead of fear. Starting from these positive outcomes, *Gameful English* (Figure 8) found the right motivations for its implementation.

Figure 8.
Gameful English logo.



3.2.1 Research questions, hypotheses, and objectives

The objectives and design of this explorative case study were based on theoretical propositions translated into hypotheses, which in turn reflected the research questions. The propositions also helped to focus attention on certain data, organize the entire case study, and define alternative explanations to be examined (Yin, 2003). This strategy is the foundation for the descriptive analytical procedure of pattern matching which compares an empirically based pattern with a predicted (or several alternative predicted) one (Trochim, 1989). If the patterns coincide, the results can help a case study strengthen its internal validity.

According to the theoretical framework, playing, as an attitude and as an activity, is a powerful driver of human motivation and interest. Moreover, it promotes affordances with learning facilitating characteristics. Motivation, interest, and the good results obtained using gamification in a school curriculum, in particular in EFL/ESL classes, were key in the approach to the initial problem from which the questions of this research (RQ), recovered below, were based:

RQ1: How does using vernacular video games impact learning English as a foreign language?

RQ2: How do students perceive a gamified course in an educational context?

RQ3: How does the gameplay change using vernacular video games in an educational context?

Considering the previous studies, the results obtained, and the theoretical assumptions, the following conclusions were made:

- It was necessary to harness the power of video games in order to create materials capable of creating motivation and interest in secondary school students to enhance ESL skills.
- A gamified structure could be a solution to reduce stress and anxiety in the assessment.
- It was important to understand the impact on the gameplay when using vernacular video games for learning.

As a result, I expected that the use of gameful elements could make a positive change in the educational experience of the students at two levels:

- Using vernacular video games could lower the affective filter and help students to more and better interact in English, and consequently promoting learning.
- Gamification could give a clear and accessible resource to understand assessment measures and give fun so to lower the sense of anxiety and frustration.

Hypotheses were so elicited, starting from the previous assumptions and the expected outcomes (Table 5). Moreover, as *Gameful English* is a qualitative case study whose patterns relate to dependent variables for each hypothesis, it was necessary to establish the variables to consider and how to make them operational. The independent variable was represented by the gamified *Gameful English* course, which was also an active variable. Dependent variables were defined on the students' expected changes after the implementation (Table 5). Trying to reduce internal validity threats, a non-equivalent, dependent variables design (Campbell & Cook, 1979) was adopted. Considering this model, pattern matching occurs as follows: if, for each outcome, the initially predicted

values have been found, and at the same time alternative patterns have not been found, strong causal inferences can be made (Yin, 2003).

Table 5 shows the hypotheses (H) and variables (V) for each research question (RQ).

Table 5.
Research questions, hypotheses, and variables.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	HYPOTHESES	VARIABLES
RQ1 How does using vernacular video games impact learning English as a second language?	H1.1 Students think they are learning more and better	V1.1 Acquisition of new EFL skills
		V1.1.2 Acquisition of new vocabulary
		V1.1.3 More engagement in doing homework and during the lessons
	H1.2 Students are more motivated to speak English during the lectures	V1.2.1 More speaking interactions
	H1.3 Students are more confident and relaxed while speaking English	V1.3.1 More relaxed and confident speaking
	H1.4 Students feel they are improving their fluency and comprehension.	V1.4.1 Improvements in fluency
		V1.4.2 Improvements in comprehension
RQ2 How do students perceive a gamified course in an educational context?	H2.1 Students are less under pressure during the assessments	V2.1 Gamification reduces pressure during the assessment
	H2.2 Students are more conscious and confident about their abilities and results	V2.2.1 Gamification is more egalitarian than a standard course
		V2.2.2 Students talk about their abilities with confidence and consciousness

RQ3 How does the gameplay change using vernacular video games in an educational context?	H3.1 Gamefulness does not change because students can always experience the fun	V3.1 Playing Minecraft was always engaging during the implementation
		V3.1.2 School did not influence the gameplay
		V3.1.3 Video games are useful tools for EFL acquisition

On the basis of these hypotheses, it was possible to orientate the process to carry out and determine the objectives of the research. I considered appropriate to distinguish between general objectives and specific objectives. General objectives focus on the fundamental aspects necessary to carry out the research (i.e. to confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses). Specific objectives, on the other hand, are those more concrete and focused on the subject of the research, which can be obtained laterally or additionally in the course of the research process and can provide additional information and conclusions to the research.

3.2.1.1 General objectives

The main and general objectives of this research were defined as follows:

1. To design and implement a gamified and gameful EFL course using vernacular video games.
2. To provide effective, efficient, and exciting extramural learning opportunities for EFL students bypassing formal EFL instruction.
3. To verify students' communicative competence improvements thanks to a gameful context.
4. To use Gamification to design the course and to assess the students' progression and achievements.
5. To verify if stress and anxiety during the assessments lowered thanks to a gameful approach.
6. To investigate how the gameplay changes using vernacular video games for learning.

General objective number one refers to the creation and the implementation of *Gameful English* course, from its design to the selection of the wraparound materials. The aim was to use a vernacular video game the students already could play with (even to avoid extra

costs for the students) adapting it to educational goals (enhancing speaking, listening, and vocabulary) to reduce the affective filter in oral interaction, adding gamification elements in the assessment. The general design of *Gameful English* can be so distinguished in two different sections:

- the game-enhanced structure, which used a commercial video game as a foundation of ten lectures and used video game as Realia in the creation of wraparounds;
- the game-informed structure, which used gamification elements to design the whole course and in the assessment method.

These two frameworks work together to give a more involving gameful experience to the students.

General objective number two aims to investigate whether school-bound EFL students can improve their English skills and increase fluency, listening, and vocabulary by playing an MMOG sandbox with prescribed second language teaching and learning (L2TL) optimizing features and activities, as a language learning extracurricular activity.

General objective number three wants to understand the students' perceptions on their learning outcomes after the implementation. The aim is not to have quantitative results but an evaluation of the learning experience and the way it changes the perception of EFL acquisition. It wants to evaluate the impact of vernacular games in the learning process and how the students perceive it.

General objective number four wants to test the efficacy and the applicability of gamification principles in a school curriculum. In *Gameful English*, gamification was the method used to structure the course and to assess the students' assignments and tasks. It was the first time students experienced such method, so it was important to understand its limits and possibilities. Using a gamified design engages and motivates using game elements and helps the students/players to achieve their goals, fostering autonomy (the player chooses autonomously) and mastery (gamification is getting better at something). The implementation was designed to change the students' behaviour (stress and anxiety during the assessments, afraid of speaking, low motivation in oral interactions) and to develop some skills (speaking and listening in particular). Moreover, using Gamification in a school context drives innovation bringing innovative ideas.

General objective number five is strictly connected to objective number four and finds in a gameful environment its reasons: if students feel free to express their ideas talking about things they like with a teacher who helps them as a coach, using gameful elements to enhance their skills, they are expected to be more relaxed, motivated, and happier during the lectures.

General objective number six investigates how and why the gameplay may change using a vernacular video game for learning. This is a crucial point to investigate. To make a gaming experience relevant for learning, students must continue to have fun. A vernacular video game is made to entertain. If it loses its primary goal, people will get bored and abandon the game. Therefore, choosing a vernacular game to use in a class is risky; that's why one of the general objectives wants to investigate what may limit or deny its use as a learning tool.

3.2.1.2 Specific objectives

Once established the six general objectives, useful and necessary to justify the research, specific ones were defined too. Their aim is to give more concrete details about the topics of the research. They are:

1. To verify if the students feel more motivated using a gameful approach than a standard one.
2. To establish if, according to the students' perceptions, gamification may be applied to other educational contexts (subjects, programs, terms, etc.).
3. To determine which aspects influence the gameplay in an educational context.
4. To understand how to improve technical, methodological, and design issues, according to the students' feedback.

Specific objective number one consists of analysing the students' perceptions and comments on *Gameful English*. It is important to determine the impact this method and video games had on their motivation, comparing this experience to a standard course, to understand what elements favoured a possible more positive attitude toward an EFL course.

Specific objective number two wants to investigate possible applications of Gamification to other school realities. It is important to understand its limits in the design and the application, according to the students.

Specific objective number three focuses on what practical elements may limit the gameplay. The students' answers will guide future decisions, especially in the game choice.

Specific objective number four refers to identifying aspects, either technical or design, which have room for improvement. This information can be very useful when planning future versions of the didactic resource, if necessary. To achieve this objective, information on the defects or problems that users identify during the implementation will be collected either through the users' feedback or the researcher's perception.

The research hypotheses and the definition of the objectives guide the most appropriate methodological approach, which in turn will suggest the determination of the participants and the choice of data collection instruments.

These stages of the process are addressed in the following sections.

3.3 Methodology

There are many methodological frameworks research can address to be considered scientific. Despite the pluralism of options, choosing the most appropriate alternative to the interest of the work remains the best option and the fundamental decision the researcher makes.

The research problem and questions should guide the selection of a methodological paradigm that can best answer the questions posed. Therefore, the nature of the research problem and the related research questions also condition the type of methodology to be used to gain the knowledge that is useful for action (Scurati, 1999).

With this premise and the review of the general process (from the definition of the research question to the definition of the hypothesis and objectives), the variables to be observed dealt with concepts such as motivation, interest, the feeling of immersion in the gameplay, and the emotional responses of the students. These are generally elements difficult to deal with in a quantitative approach.

The nature of the data to be collected and the objectives pursued naturally suggested an interpretative and qualitative methodological approach.

The qualitative approach abandons the attempt to quantify all human reality, aware that quantification can often be irrelevant, and focusing on other aspects such as context, function and meaning of human acts. It stresses the importance of reality as it is lived and perceived by the participants, which aligns well with the objectives of this research. Working with a qualitative orientation means prioritising understanding the meaning of social phenomena, rather than their scientific explanation, and focusing more on the peculiarities of the subjects than on the achievement of general laws. It implies an express search for subjectivity to explain and give meaning to social phenomena, to understand how people experience, perceive, create, modify and interpret the educational reality in which they are immersed (Arnal et al., 1994).

The first and most important condition to differentiate among the various research strategies in social sciences (experiment, query, archive analysis, story, and case study) (Yin, 2003) is to identify the type of research question. The research questions for this study focus on the question word “How”, and they do not need behavioural control on the participants. Moreover, they pay attention on the contemporary events. The questions 'how' and 'why' are suitable to favour the use of case studies, experiments or stories. Considering, therefore, the type of research question, the margin of control the researcher has over actual behaviour, and the degree of focus on contemporary rather than historical events, the case study seemed to be the right choice to carry out this study.

Although the case study is a particular form of empirical investigation, a major concern has been the lack of research rigour in the case study. For this, it is crucial that the evidence is reported in an unbiased manner.

A second common concern about case studies is that they provide little basis for scientific generalisation. Case studies are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. The case study does not represent a 'sample'; the purpose of the researcher is to develop and generalise theories and not to enumerate frequencies. The purpose of the case study is to make a 'generalising' and not a 'detailing' analysis (Lipset et al., 1956).

The case study investigation technically addresses the particular situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data problems. Consequently, it makes use of multiple sources of evidence, with the necessary triangulation of data. It follows that the case study benefits from the development of the previous theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

To sum up, the choice of the case study as the research strategy for this study constitutes a method that incorporates everything in the logic of the project (which implies specific data collection and analysis approaches). It is therefore intended to be a comprehensive research strategy, not a data collection strategy or a project feature.

The choice of the methodological approach also determined the sample of participants who took part in the study. In this sense, a qualitative case study does not usually claim to provide explanations for the high generalisability of the results, emphasising validity rather than replicability of the results. However, the fact that it is not an approach obsessed with the pretension of generalising the results, is not entirely incompatible with moving in that direction. Even if the immediate objective is to create a realistic and accurate picture of the group under study, it can also contribute to the understanding of broader population groups. In the case of this research, as explained in the following section, the sample selected is intentional and based on criteria that move towards but are not subordinated to representativeness.

Based on this methodological justification, this study was conceived as an experimental field research design, between the descriptive and the evaluative, which would follow the following general outline of action:

1. Selection of the participants.
2. Design and elaboration of *Gameful English* course.
3. Implementation.
4. Collection of qualitative data.
5. Data processing and analysis.

Although this chapter devotes an entire section to describing this aspect, it is worth noting that the data collected had to come from different instruments to favour triangulation between them and that the information should be collected as completely as possible. The

data collection techniques used were: an anonymous end of the implementation survey, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation.

3.3.1 Participants

The participants for this study were 27 Italian public high school students aged 15-18. Among them, 26 were male students and only 2 of them female students. At the time of the implementation, they attended from the second to the fifth year of the Liceo Scientifico²⁴ “Enrico Fermi” (www.iisfermigaeta.edu.it), located in Gaeta (LT), a seaside city in the centre of Italy on the Tirreno sea.

The students joined the course because they had positive attitudes towards gaming, as they defined themselves as casual or pro-gamers. Although it could seem the sample is not representative of the whole community of students, the choice to have a class of “gamers” aligns with the theoretical sampling practice: it offers more guarantees of representativeness of variables (Marradi, 1984; Rositi, 1993). The study wants to investigate the impact of using video games for “learning”, the use of game elements (gamification) in a school class, and the effects on the gameplay too. A theoretical sample (gamers), therefore, could better identify possible changes in the gameplay. Moreover, because of the school constraints (limited time available to carry out the research during the first trimester), there was not enough time to let other students learn how to play *Minecraft* before the implementation started. Last, choosing a game to play is always a matter of choice (Huizinga, 2016): you cannot make playing compulsory; otherwise, it won't be a play but only another duty. Students were left free to make their own choice to join the course.

Before the implementation started, students had their written and listening competences assessed through the 50 min EF SET online test (www.efset.org). The students'

²⁴ The scientific high school curriculum encourages the acquisition of knowledge and methods in mathematics, physics and the natural sciences. It guides the student to deepen and develop knowledge and skills, to mature the necessary competences to follow the development of scientific and technological research and to identify the interactions between the different forms of knowledge, ensuring the mastery of the languages, techniques and related methodologies, also through laboratory practice (Article 8 of Presidential Decree 89 of 15 March 2010). The specific learning objectives for the Liceo Scientifico are contained in Ministerial Decree 211 of 7 October 2010 "National Indications", Annex F. (<https://www.miur.gov.it/web/guest/liceo-scientifico>)

schoolteachers were also asked about the speaking abilities of their students. Results showed all the students were B1/B2 according to the CEFR levels. The students were then divided into three groups according to their preferences on the day of the online lesson/meeting. At the end of the participation, they only received some school credits; the score they got during the implementation did not affect their school marks at any level.

The students had their parents' privacy consent (Annex 9) signed before the implementation started. They were also pseudonymised (S1, S2, S3...), and this distinction was also maintained during the interviews and focus groups so that the same voice could be found within the research.

The school recognized participation in the project as part of the student's extra-curricular activities (PCTO - Percorsi per le Competenze Trasversali e per l'Orientamento)²⁵. The students could obtain a maximum of 40 hours of credits.

3.3.2 School context and contact

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions in Italy during the whole period of the research (September 2021- January 2022), all the activities were done online thanks to Google Suite for Education tools, provided by the school. I was given a formal school account and could use Google Classroom and Meet to share news about the course, post the weekly leaderboard, receive comments and the students' accomplished homework, and have online sessions. I was always in touch with the institution, although I didn't work for it, thanks to a strong collaboration with the EFL teachers whose students took

²⁵ The definition of pathways for the attainment of transversal skills and the development of the ability to orient oneself in personal life and social and cultural reality is clearly defined by the guidelines formulated by the MIUR under Article 1, paragraph 785, Law No 145 of 30 December 2018, which partially modified school-to-work alternance, as defined by Law 107/2015. The legislation currently in force establishes 210 hours as the minimum three-year duration of PCTOs in vocational institutes, 150 in technical institutes and 90 in high schools, but does not abolish their compulsoriness, as they are a condition for admission to State examinations, as established by Legislative Decree No. 62 of 13 April 2017. The pathways are framed in the broader context of the entire didactic planning, clarifying that they cannot be considered as an occasional experience of applying school knowledge in external contexts but constitute a fundamental aspect of the curriculum. This way of understanding experiences entails a reversal of traditional teaching methods, redesigning teaching starting from transversal competences as described in the Recommendation of the Council of the European Parliament of 22 May 2018, i.e. in the definition of an agreed project for the solution of a problem and simulated training enterprise, i.e. in the development of entrepreneurial activities as they exist in reality, naturally with the fundamental contribution of the territory (companies, cultural bodies, research centres, etc.). For further information, <https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/1306025/Linee+guida+PCTO+con+allegati.pdf>

part in the implementation and the school staff (secretariat, head teacher, and contact person for extra-curricular activities). Thanks to this cooperation, I could have a close contact to the environment and data which helped me to establish a good relation with the students and to obtain useful information during the implementation. Data was always accessible because all the students' works were stored in the school repository and I could manage the meetings and the interviews thanks to the school's availability.

As for the tools I needed, I planned to have two screens during the classes: one for the presentation and the other to maintain an eye-contact with my students. I used a tablet with the lesson of the day presentation upon, sharing the screen with my PC where I could see and visually interact with all the 27 students.

During the implementation, I had an EFL teacher at the school to help me to contact the students and to collect the parents' consent forms. The teacher was headed by the school headteacher to facilitate the students' participation in the programme and to be the school reference for the project. The meetings were in the afternoon, after school, and were extra-mural and extra-curricular.

Google Meet was also used for the interviews and focus groups; the anonymous survey at the end of the implementation was made with Google Modules.

3.3.3 Language

American and British English were the languages used during the implementation and in all the communications between students and teachers and among students. Students could use informal and gameful language too. The aim was to let the students express themselves with little constraints, facilitating the speaking even for the shiest students. During the meetings, students had the chance to listen to English language varieties and styles thanks to the streamers' comments on their gameplays and the written chats among the players. The teacher/coach/researcher helped the students to fragment the discourse into smaller and more understandable sections to get into the details and adopted the scaffolding method to make students independent in solving the tasks proposed.

3.3.4 Game: Minecraft

Minecraft (www.minecraft.net) is a sandbox video game developed by Mojang Studios, in which players create and break apart various kinds of blocks in three-dimensional worlds. The game can be played in single or multiplayer and has two main modes: Survival and Creative. In Survival, players must find their own building supplies and food. They also interact with blocklike mobs or moving creatures. In Creative, players are given supplies and do not have to eat to survive. They also can break all kinds of blocks immediately. The purpose of the game is simply to build, explore, and survive. Players can connect to thousands of *Minecraft* online games (servers), some of which involve battling other players. Multiplayer in *Minecraft* enables multiple players to interact and communicate with each other in a single world. It is available through direct game-to-game multiplayer, LAN play, local split-screen (console-only), and servers (player-hosted and business-hosted). Players can run their own servers, use a hosting provider, or connect directly to another player's game via Xbox Live. Multiplayer servers have a wide range of activities, with some servers having their own unique rules and customs. Moreover, it can run on many different platforms (Play station 3, 4, and Vita, Xbox 360 and One, Microsoft Windows, Wii U, Nintendo Switch and 3DS, macOS, Linux, Android, iOS): which means it was available from all the students involved in the research.

Evaluating and choosing *Minecraft* as a potential vernacular game to use as a tool for this case study needed attention and a principled way. First, I played the game for at least a few hours, trying to play it from an EFL learner's perspective; then it was fundamental to apply an evaluation rubric (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013) to evaluate if and how the game matched with goals, in-game tasks, interaction, feedback, context and narrative, and motivation.

In addition, this case study considered:

- EFL learning affordances of the game;
- the CALL appropriateness of the game, using Chapelle's framework (2001)²⁶;

²⁶ Other SLA researchers have used Chapelle's criteria to verify video game selection for their CALL research (Jamieson et al., 2005; Miller & Hegelheimer, 2006; Rogers, 2017).

- the game preferences and dispositions of the learners.

Affordances

As suggested by Reinhardt (2019), gameful affordances for L2/EFL learning can be applied as a framework for evaluating potential games, because they regard what game mechanics are related to L2 learning. These affordances have been applied to Minecraft to better understand its potential in this case study.

1. In its Multiplayer modality, *Minecraft*, which is basically a sandbox game, offers the possibility to be played as an MMOG. This means it can offer narratives that contextualize language learning and afford form-meaning-function associations. Wraparound materials can be designed to focus learners on language use by previewing it, reviewing it, and extending it into new contexts of use post-play.
2. When using wraparound materials, controlling time must always be considered. During gameplay, the learner may be distracted from the game if he/she has to focus on supplemental materials. If the game is played in pairs or groups, players can assume different roles (Meskill, 1990). Otherwise, most activities are better to be done pre- and post-play. Using *Minecraft*, the players have the possibility to experiment with different modalities. Recording the multiplayer sessions, and then working on them, has been considered the best way to use the game in post-play activities, as well as having specific missions to complete has been used as a pre-play activity.
3. Some games can be modded to create a sheltered space for L2 learning aligned with specific objectives (Reinders & Wattana, 2015), others have password-protected or private machines or networks to provide tutorial areas for mastery learning, and they do not force players to interact with other players. *Minecraft*, thanks to the Creative modality, gives the player the chance to get familiar with the mechanics of the game, and progress step by step in building and interacting with the other players. There are different levels of play, and you are never forced to take one.
4. In-game tasks and feedback mechanisms, learning can be scaffolded if the games are well-designed. *Minecraft* offers the possibility to design many wraparound tasks to complement and support goal orientation and attention to feedback because it is rich in different environments to explore (biomes) and offers different possibilities to play with (Creative, Survival, and Multiplayer). The activities proposed in this project are

mainly part of debriefing and reflection because the aim was to allow the players/learners to narrativise their goal-oriented activities.

5. Socio-collaborative, goal-oriented language use (languaging) is another important affordance to consider. *Minecraft* can be both multi- and single-player: it may facilitate in-game collaboration as well as be used in post-play activities using the vocabulary the players used to collaborate and negotiate during play. Even when playing single-player, learners could switch roles (i.e, controller and observer), taking advantage of different role-related opportunities.
6. Although *Minecraft* is not an RPG and narrative mechanics are not the fundamental aspects of the game, affordances for identity work and play can be enhanced with wraparound materials because when you play *Minecraft* you are given the possibility to customize your Avatar.
7. *Minecraft* has its mobile version game. This allows the player/learner to have the possibility to play it whenever and wherever. Wraparound activities may take advantage of this double possibility. For this case study, the learners' choice to play the console or PC version of *Minecraft* allowed the designer not to consider the mobile version of the game.
8. As for the autonomous affordance, *Minecraft* is full of active, accessible help sections. There is also a specific session on Wikipedia totally devoted to *Minecraft* (www.minecraft.fandom.com), as well as loads of Youtube walkthroughs, tutorials, player guides, Twitch streams, and other practices.

CALL appropriateness

Chapelle (2001) offers six categories that can be adapted for game-enhanced L2 learning game evaluation, and his criteria are recognised for CALL appropriateness. This framework comprehensively considers variables of learning, learners, and implementation. Although these categories offer implications for the choice of game, pedagogical mediation may always balance certain shortcomings.

Analysing what *Minecraft* may offer in terms of CALL appropriateness, the six categories have been related to *Minecraft* gameplay.

1. Language learning potential.

Considering the L2/EFL learning affordances of the game title is the first step required when planning activities using video games. The potential of a video game can be best deduced by playing the game being considered. Playing Minecraft is not difficult to learn; moreover, you have many options to better understand the mechanics of the game and how to play it. The potential of the game for learning has been an object of studies and researchers (York, 2014; Bradshaw, 2014; Cózar-Gutiérrez & Sáez-López, 2016) and has received really good outcomes from a pedagogical point of view (York, 2014).

2. Learner fit.

Vernacular games are targeted at specific age groups. Considering learner backgrounds, gaming experience, and L2 learning have great importance. Introducing a game for young children to adolescents may be considered too childish from the adolescent/learner/player perspective.

Learners' gaming proficiencies and play preferences must be taken into account.

In this case study, the choice of Minecraft has been assessed through a survey and discussion. Different game titles were offered to the students, and they decided what to play through a survey. It was very important to let them decide what to play, considering that learners with strong feelings about a particular title or genre might react strongly against using it for formal learning purposes (Reinhardt, 2019). Rama (Rama et al., 2012) showed that a player with high gaming proficiency may be able to leverage it to play the game and learn L2, while a player with low gaming proficiency may find it much harder to learn to play an unfamiliar game in the L2 because of cognitive overload.

Game language also varies greatly in complexity and reading level depending on the title (Šuster, 2015).

3. Meaning focus.

Assessing the narratives and tasks in the game is important to determine whether learners might find the activities engaging and how to use wraparound materials for explicit L2 learning purposes. Thanks to the different modalities (Creative, Survival, and Multiplayer) Minecraft offers, it is easy to plan specific tasks according to the learner preferences, levels of L2 competences, and expected outcomes.

4. Authenticity.

This category refers both to whether the learner will authenticate the game as a valid L2 learning tool, and whether the language and cultural representations in the game are genuine, or originally meant for native and expert L2 users (and not for learners). Choosing Minecraft avoided this risk because it is played worldwide, and it is not typical (or rather stereotypical) of a specific culture.

5. Positive impact.

A vernacular game should have a positive impact on L2 activities to be used as a learning tool, although it is not designed for educational purposes. At first glance, a game might be irrelevant and unrelated to objectives and goals. It is with pedagogical mediation and wraparound activities that game tasks can be aligned with specific lesson objectives. Whether playing Minecraft can have a positive impact on EFL learning has played an important role in driving this research. Although Minecraft for Education is the accepted and recognized version for educational purposes, because of the nature of this case study, the commercial version has been chosen to analyse the impact this vernacular tool may have on an EFL class.

6. Practicality.

When making choices about what game is more appropriate for education, a real consideration of the costs of the game has to be taken into account. Some good games can only be played on machines with certain technology, others may require monthly subscriptions. Costs and limited uses of a game may make it prohibitive for most formal, in-school uses. This point has been a strong limit for this case study. The list of the games proposed in the initial survey considered three fundamental conditions: a) the game could be downloaded for free; b) if it had a cost, the gamer already possessed it; c) the game could be played with different consoles and PCs. Another important condition was that the player already knew about the mechanics of the game; it didn't matter if it was a casual or pro gamer; it was important to know about the game mechanics. All the students very well knew how to play Minecraft and no extra costs were asked the participants.

Play preferences and dispositions

Because of the subjective nature of the concepts of game and play, considering the learner's interests and disposition is important for the design of any L2 activity: learner-player buy-in is necessary and crucial for learning efficacy.

Some learners may not accept that they can learn certain informal L2 registers and genres in formal contexts, whether vernacular games are useful resources for L2 learning or a learnful disposition can shift preferences in the gameplay.

This case study considered the learners' preferences and disposition in the choice of the game and the pedagogical mediation adopted includes activities that raise awareness and learnful dispositions, providing learners with the agency to develop autonomy. The intent was to lead learners to try new approaches to learning and gaming.

Taking advantage of an L2 learning affordance approach, the first step has been to understand what game mechanics in *Minecraft* relate to L2 learning affordances and how. Chapelle's framework (2001) in CALL has been useful because it comprehensively considers variables of learning, learners, and implementation. Game preferences and disposition of the students were also important to consider because of the subjective nature of game and play and the need to have the learners/players totally involved in the process.

3.3.5 Ethics of the research

Research in the social sciences and humanities is carried out within a process which, although activated by the individual researcher, is concretely realised in its various stages thanks to the contribution of the many actors in the research system.

In this study, I put in place measures that would concretely protect the dignity, autonomy, safety and well-being of the participants, according to the UB principles based on the principle of beneficence, the principle of respect for the autonomy of individuals in giving consent to participate in research, the principle of justice, the maxim that the welfare of the research subject must prevail over all other interests, the protection of non-autonomous persons and vulnerable populations, and the Italian (lgs. N. 101/2018) and European legislation (GDPR 679/2016).

Therefore, the guiding principles that inspired the conduct of this case study were those of benefit to society, integrity, prudence, respect, dignity, inclusion, competence, responsibility, accessibility and independence.

The students' participation was on a voluntary basis. As the subjects involved were minors, the parents filled in and signed an informed consent regarding the contents of the research, the timing, manner and processing of the data (Annex 9). The teachers involved in the interviews also signed an informed consent form (Annex 10).

I took great care to avoid misleading information that could condition the answers or the spontaneity of the behaviour under observation.

Furthermore, data collection avoided the risk of acquiring significant sensitive information (incidental findings) as much as possible.

The participants were treated fairly, and I tried to avoid any psychological subjection (which could induce passivity towards the researcher's demands).

To avoid the latter possibility, my role within the school of the implementation was of total non-involvement. My regular work was in another city, and the results obtained were only for research and did not impact any school grades.

In organising the research, I assessed the risks of conducting the field study. In the informed consent, I included references to the responsibilities of the project manager concerning data processing and implementation management; also, given the health situation due to Covid-19 during the phase of data collection, students and families were informed about the possibility of conducting the interviews online, and not in person. The communication between the researcher and the students was managed using the tools provided by the school (Google suite for education) with institutional accounts.

The implementation, its contents, related documentation and data collection tools were reviewed and approved by the head teacher of the school²⁷ where the study took place.

²⁷ Mrs Maria Rosa Valente (mariarosa.valente@istruzione.it).

3.4 Data collection: techniques and instruments

This section presents the data collection strategies and instruments used during the fieldwork research. It explains the theoretical basis that justifies them, the criteria used to design them, their elaboration process, and their application in the classroom.

To favour triangulation in data collection and analysis, different sources of evidence were used: an anonymous end-of-the-implementation survey, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation.

3.4.1 Rationale for data collection instruments

According to Cardano (2003), data collection, or the application of the observation instruments, is an operation that consists of gathering the prescribed information from the participants in a concrete form.

In social research, this process focuses on the indispensable data for the verification of the hypotheses, the so-called relevant data, and to exclude all other data. Scholars recommend that data collection should be carried out not only on the variable included in the hypothesis but also on several indicators of the hypothesis (Yin, 2003). An observation instrument can produce adequate information if the questions are formulated as precisely as possible and refer to each of the previously considered indicators. In this sense, elaborating an analysis model as clearly, precisely, and explicitly as possible would be very useful.

In particular, for case studies, the most important use of documentation is to corroborate and support evidence from other sources (Yin, 2003).

The choice of the observation instrument and the data collection should be part of the research's overall objectives and methodological approach. For this reason, the variables included in the hypotheses and the research objectives were considered before the development of the strategies and instruments.

Table 6 shows the instruments used to investigate the general and specific objectives, according to the hypotheses related to the research questions, considering the need for triangulation between different instruments. Detailed questions presented in the survey, interviews and focus groups, the observation categories for the participant observation,

and general and specific objectives to guide the research have been reported to give a comprehensive overview of the research method.

Table 6.
Instruments.

Objective	Research questions and hypotheses	Instruments			
		Final survey	Semi-structured interviews	Focus groups	Participant observation
Gen. #2 Spec. #4	RQ1 How does using vernacular video games impact learning English as a foreign language?			- Based on your experience, what are the possibilities students may have using vernacular games to learn English? -What activities did you find more challenging and valuable? -What would you suggest to improve the use of video games to learn English?	ADEQUACY OF THE PROPOSAL MEANINGFULNESS OF THE CONTENT
Gen. #2 Spec. #1	H1.1 Students think they are learning more and better	-I think this course helped me acquire new English skills -I think I learned more English vocabulary with this method than with school methods -I could learn more English grammar with previous methods -I enjoyed more doing my	- What did you enjoy the most? -What did you find boring? -What difficult? - What skill/s (reading, listening, speaking, writing) do you feel more confident with after the course? - How do you think you can learn more vocabulary playing video games? - Let's focus on grammar. What do		

		homework with this project than school methods -I would recommend this way of learning to other students	you think you learned? -Could you point out the main differences between this course and the standard one in the approach toward the language? -What assignment/s did you enjoy more? Why?		
Gen. #2-3 Spec. #1	H1.2 Students are more motivated to speak English during the lectures	- I spoke more English in this project than in school methods	- What was the activity you liked the most? -Did you feel more motivated? Why/why not? - What helped you to speak more?		SPACE MEANINGFULNESS OF THE CONTENT ENGAGEMENT AND FUN INTEREST AND MOTIVATION
Gen. #3-4 Spec. #1	H1.3 Students are more confident and relaxed while speaking English	- I felt more relaxed and confident speaking English with this method than with school methods	- How did you feel during the meetings? - What made you feel more relaxed?		SPACE ENGAGEMENT AND FUN MEANINGFULNESS OF THE CONTENT INTEREST AND MOTIVATION
Gen. #3	H1.4 Students feel they are improving their fluency and comprehension.	-I think I improved my fluency and comprehension	- Do you think your fluency has improved after this course? How? - What about listening? Can you understand more clearly people speaking during the gameplay? -What task/s helped you to improve these skills?		
Gen. #5	RQ2			-What did/didn't you	DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY

Spec. #2	How do students perceive a gamified course in an educational context?			<p>like about gamification?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think it is more egalitarian and fairer than a standard course? -How can you evaluate the course game rules (the points assessment grid) defined before the sessions started? -What could be possible limitations of using a gamified approach in your standard school curriculum? 	<p>ADEQUACY OF THE PROPOSAL</p> <p>ENGAGEMENT AND FUN</p>
Gen. #5 Spec. #2	H2.1 Students are less under pressure during the assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I enjoyed the points, badges, and leaderboard elements -I felt under pressure looking at the leaderboard and points structure -I would recommend this type of structure and assessment to other courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How did you feel checking your score on the leaderboard? -Did gamification help your motivation at learning, in your opinion? 		ADEQUACY OF THE PROPOSAL
Gen. #2 Spec. #2	H2.2 Students are more conscious and confident about their abilities and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I found gamification more learning challenging than previous methods -I think a gamified course is fairer and more egalitarian than a standard course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How can PBL (points badge leaderboard) make you more confident and conscious about your performance/task? 		<p>ADEQUACY OF THE PROPOSAL</p> <p>MEANINGFULNESS OF THE CONTENT</p>

Gen. #6	RQ3 How does the gameplay change using vernacular video games in an educational context?			-How did "school" impact your gameplay? (If no impact: How could external factors impact your gameplay?)	SPACE ADEQUACY OF THE PROPOSAL MEANINGFULNESS OF THE CONTENT
Gen. #6 Spec. #3	H3.1 Gamefulness does not change because students can always experience the fun	-When I played Minecraft, I found it less attractive because it was "for school" -It was fun to play the game -I think I will keep on playing Minecraft Multiplayer after this course	-What was your perception of the gameplay while using Minecraft for your school assignments? -Has your gameplay changed compared to the past?		ENGAGEMENT AND FUN
Gen. #2			Do you want to add something else?		SPACE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY ADEQUACY OF THE PROPOSAL CLASS INTERACTIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

As shown in Table 6, the instruments used to collect the data were an anonymous survey, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. Apart from the directors of the dissertation, the instruments have been revised by Dr. Jaume del Campo, from the Department of Research Methods and Education Diagnosis (MIDE) of the University of Barcelona, and by Dr. Raffaele di Fuccio, specialist on game-based learning, from the University of Foggia (Italy).

While all 27 students answered the survey, only 26 of them participated in the interviews and focus groups²⁸. To obtain a more complete report on the impact of the implementation on EFL skills, I also interviewed two schoolteachers whose students took part in the implementation.

All data was processed with Microsoft Excel, finding categories to help decode the answers according to the specific research question and hypotheses (section 4.1). The results were then compared and associated with the other research questions and hypotheses, finding correlations.

In the following paragraphs, the instruments will be presented in detail justifying their choice and pointing out the type of data provided for the research.

3.4.1.1 Survey

When designing a survey, it is essential to bear in mind the purpose of the survey, and it is necessary that the questions or issues asked are representative of the content and meaningful to the respondents. For this research, the five points Likert scale survey (Annex 11) was designed to catch an immediate and non-conditioned feedback (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014) to record the students' opinions and feelings about their experience with *Gameful English*.

It was possible thanks to Google Modules and was sent to the students the same day the implementation finished. All the students sent their anonymous answers.

The survey was analysed from a qualitative point of view, as the questions focused on the students' feelings toward the learning, gamification, and the gameplay. It wanted to investigate the learning, emotional, and motivational impacts on the students.

It was divided in three main parts, and each part was based on a research question and the general and specific objectives previously identified for that section. All the statements proposed wanted to prove if the variables could be validated, considering the hypotheses. The survey consisted in 18 scaled statements and an extra (not mandatory) open question on personal opinions on the course. The students could give their feedback on the course

²⁸ One of the students had health problems and could not take part in the interview and focus group.

and their perceptions on learning (8 statements), gamification (5 statements), and the gameplay (5 statements) choosing among five points scale (completely disagree, disagree somehow, neither agree nor disagree, agree somehow, completely agree).

The survey responses were displayed as pie charts and analysed according to the established categories to be later interpreted and compared with the other instruments' results.

This data collection instrument provided the research with information on various aspects relevant to the study, such as the level of motivation and interest of the students; the meaningful learning of the contents; the gamification elements as assessment tools; the feeling of having improved communicative skills; the reduced stress and anxiety thanks to a gamified approach; the possibility of application in other subjects; the impact of learning on the gameplay; and the possibilities for improvement of the course. These data were then compared with those provided by other instruments.

3.4.1.2 Participant-observation

Participant observation is another source of evidence used in this case study in order to collect the students' feelings and interest in the video game as a learning tool and in gamification to promote a better environment for learning.

The choice of this strategy is justified by the fact that it makes it possible to describe the social reality, the perceptions and experiences of the people involved and the meaning of their actions. In the same way, it can be useful for assessing the implementation and effects of a programme or intervention.

The use of participant observation in a case study shows its strengths in considering events in real time and context; moreover, it is intuitive for behaviour and interpersonal motivations. Of course, it also shows weaknesses, due to selectivity (in the absence of completeness), the cost of the observer's hours required, and reflection (the event may proceed differently because it is ongoing).

Furthermore, one must always consider the bias due to the manipulation of events by the researcher. Nevertheless, participant observation was fundamental to this case study, as this documentation was used to corroborate and support evidence from other sources.

During the online sessions, the researcher observed and noted events considered relevant to the study.

By entering and being part of the social context, first-hand experience makes it possible for the researcher to use personal knowledge, reflection and experience as sources of information that allow him/her to understand and interpret the dynamics of the studied reality (Cardano, 2003).

The role of the researcher became more closely aligned with the so-called observer as a participant: observing for short periods, openly, without being totally involved in the dynamics of the group under observation. He/she presented him/herself to the students as a researcher, providing all the necessary explanations and assisting during the implementation (Jorgensen, 1989).

When the area to be observed is susceptible to coding, as is the case in this research, the information collected can be systematised using a template.

The researcher's record of these observations generates written material called field notes. This is a narrative account of the observations, reflections and reactions to what the researcher perceives. It is intended to capture the picture of the situation, people, conversations and reactions observed as faithfully as possible (Cardano, 2003).

A series of categories were previously established to guide the observation of certain phenomena pre-established by the research, but open to possible emerging aspects that could not have been anticipated.

These categories would then be retrieved in the qualitative data analysis with Microsoft Excel. This process is explained in more detail in the next section (3.4.1.2.1).

Participant observation provided the research with information on aspects related to three of the general research objectives of the research: the level of motivation and interest of students, the meaningful learning of the content, and their perception of the gameplay. These data could be compared with those provided by other instruments.

3.4.1.2.1 Features and details of processing

For the development of the project, ten teaching units were developed, which were then submitted to the students and also used as observation space for data collection by the observer during the treatment.

A list of 8 categories and related sub-categories was drawn up in order to facilitate timely and useful observation for comparison with other research tools.

Context: characteristics of the class group according to their EFL level and gameplay preferences.

Space: favourable and/or unfavourable conditions for carrying out the activity: technical resources, environmental conditions.

Development of the activity: timing, sequencing, incidences, etc.

Teaching practice: about the development of the activity.

Use of technology: obstacles or facilities in the development of the activity related to the use of video games.

Additional resources: the need for the incorporation of some additional elements for the correct development of the activity.

Adequacy of the proposal: adaptation of the materials used to the didactic objectives and the level of the class group.

User: favourable and/or unfavourable conditions for the acquisition of the targets related to the handling of the materials by the user.

Meaningfulness of the content: the degree to which students perceive the content as useful and relevant to their everyday reality.

Engagement and fun: the degree of participation and involvement in gameplay during implementation.

Interest and motivation: predisposition towards carrying out the activity, enthusiasm, interest in the subject, ability to sustain effort and attention.

Class interaction and environment: appropriate learning environment: coexistence in the classroom, respect for rules and others, gender awareness, teacher-pupil relations.

The categories thus defined are clearly related to the objectives and variables of the case study, concerning motivation, interest, school life and the perception of video games and game elements in an educational context. There was also a desire to consider the role of the teacher during the research in the relationship with the students and as a fundamental part of the success of the project. Also, of interest was understanding the impact on the gameplay of the proposed method and the limits imposed by the game itself for the correct execution of the proposed tasks.

Once the categories had been defined, a summary scheme (Annex 15) was created to take field notes during the meetings. The outline was first filled in manually (during the lesson) and then put into a text file adding extra comment (after the lesson).

Each note presents the date, time, number of the lesson, and group. For each meeting, the degree of participation of each student was recorded (which in turn was entered as a score in the course gamification scheme). Only the most significant problems or events were noted down.

It was not considered appropriate to film and record all the meetings to prevent the students from feeling under pressure. The notes were therefore written during the meetings and reviewed and expanded on the same day, at the end of each session.

Thirty field notes were collected and grouped into two documents: one with details of student attendance and participation, the other with notes of a more narrative nature concerning the selected categories.

3.4.1.3 Interviews

The interview is the most widely used empirical documentation instrument in the social sciences (Fideli & Marradi, 1996). It allows subjective aspects of people: beliefs and attitudes, opinions, values or knowledge, that would otherwise not be available to the researcher. Thanks to the interview, it is possible to observe and interpret aspects of reality that are not directly observable. It adds an insider's perspective that allows for the

interpretation of behaviour, providing a source of meaning and a complement to the observation process (Del Rincón et al., 1995).

Interviews can be of different types. Most commonly, case study interviews are open-ended interviews, in which the interviewees may be asked to talk about the facts of an event or give their opinion on it (Yin, 2003).

For this research, interviews were semi-structured: the interviewer conducts the conversation by following an outline that gathers a set of themes, in this case, questions, arranged in an order that may change according to the interviewee's answers. The questions punctuate and guide the cognitive path of the interviewee (Cardano, 2003). As not all questions were necessarily asked in the pre-established order, the interviewee was allowed to express him/herself, although it was important to refocus the interview on the objectives as naturally as possible each time he/she moved away from them. Each question must be relevant, both from the thematic dimension (concerning the research topic) and the dynamic dimension (the interpersonal relationship during the interview).

The interviewer should elaborate on the answers, give support and acknowledgement to the interviewee, be neutral and always remain in control of the interview (Cardano, 2003).

All the students who took part in the implementation were asked to be interviewed: among 27 students, 26 of them were interviewed²⁹. The questions tried to investigate the personal outcomes and the impact the implementation had on them toward learning, gamified applications in their school curriculum, and on their gameplays.

Students answered 23 questions (see Table 6 and Annex 12) in Italian, to facilitate the formulation of their discourse. The choice to ask a wide range of questions wanted to better investigate the general outline provided by the survey. Interviews took place online in a calm and relaxed atmosphere and the students were not overwhelmed by the questions (at the beginning of the interview I asked the students to tell me if they needed a pause; no one asked for it). An extra question was asked to those students (8s) who had not passed the threshold level (“Why do you think you did not pass the threshold?”). Interviews lasted an average of 40 min each and took place on Google Meet because of

²⁹ One student had health problems that did not allow him to answer the questions.

the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions in Italy. Interviews were at first video recorded with the student's permission, then transcribed and categorized (see 4.1).

Two teachers whose pupils participated in the implementation were also interviewed with the same format (Google Meet and video-recording) to find out if and what changes they had noticed in their students after the treatment and what their students had reported to them about the implementation. These interviews aimed at gaining a broader view of the results obtained and minimising the influence of the researcher (who also ran the course) on the student's answers. The teachers' answers will be referred to as T1 and T2. They were asked four questions:

1. What did your students tell you about *Gameful English*?
2. How did they perceive gamification?
3. Did you notice any improvements or changes in your students?
4. What do you think about *Gameful English*, as a teacher?

This data collection instrument provided the research with information on various aspects relevant to the study, such as the students' level of motivation and interest; meaningful learning of the contents; the perceptions on gamification as an assessment and useful tool to reduce stress and anxiety; evaluation on possible changes on the gameplay; feedback for further studies and next iterations; perceptions on the role of the teacher; and possible applications of gamification in the school curriculum.

On the whole, interviews are an essential source in evidence of a case study. Since they are considered verbal evidence (subject to common problems of bias), it is necessary for the data obtained to be corroborated with data from other sources.

3.4.1.4 Focus groups

The focus group is an observation technique applied to small groups formed and animated by an observer who prompts the discussion of a specific topic. It makes it possible to detect attitudes, beliefs and value orientations of the group members on the topic under study and thus to grasp the reasons given in support of the beliefs, attitudes and values of each.

The focus group aims not only to find out what people think about a particular issue but also why they think that way. It adds a clearer representation of similarities and differences of opinion to the discursive interview that could be obtained by juxtaposing and comparing an even congruous set of interviews, in which the respondents do not talk to each other but to an interviewer (Morgan, 2002).

There are different ways of conducting a focus group and they depend on the moderator's role in leading the discussion. For this case study, three focus groups were conducted following a well-defined path, punctuated by prompts and questions, to ensure homogeneity in the conduct of all the groups.

The canonical form of the focus group is based on the constitution of homogeneous groups, groups of people who recognise that their experience is related to the topic under discussion. The homogeneity between the people constituting the group facilitates the discussion. In the specific case of this study, all students were invited to participate in the focus groups. Given the high attendance (26/27), the participants were divided into three groups of 8/9 students³⁰. It was not essential that each group corresponded to the group defined for implementation. In this way, homogeneity of the group was ensured but also mutual strangeness because the students might not know each other (Krueger, 2014). Furthermore, research practice suggests that in order to reach the theoretical saturation condition, it is necessary to conduct at least three focus groups for each relevant category to ensure at least 'transferable' results (Guba & Lincoln, 1982).

The questions asked in the focus groups (see Table 6 and Annex 12) were formulated according to the norms of 'good technique' developed in the sample survey: brevity, clarity and precision (Corbetta, 1999), directing the discussion towards the concrete experiences of the participants and not on abstract questions (Merton, 2008). The focus groups were carried out one week after the end of the single interviews and recorded via Google Meet, with the consent of the participants. Anti-Covid-19 regulations did not allow them to be conducted in person. The discussions were then transcribed in full and coded in categories.

³⁰ Mature research practice suggests placing the number of people to be recruited for conducting a focus group within the range of six to ten (Krueger, 2014; Morgan, 2002).

This data collection instrument provided the research with information on various aspects relevant to the study, such as the students' level of motivation and interest; meaningful learning of the contents; the perceptions on gamification as an assessment and useful tool to reduce stress and anxiety; evaluation on possible changes in the gameplay; feedback for further studies and next iterations; and possible applications of gamification in the school curriculum.

The combination of the focus group with the other research techniques highlighted for this case study offers considerable benefits to the triangulation; the validity of the study results can be increased, helping to dispel the doubt that the results obtained are a mere artefact due to the use of this or that observation technique (Cardano, 2003).

3.4.2 Phases of the implementation

- *Presentation of the research and search for participants.*

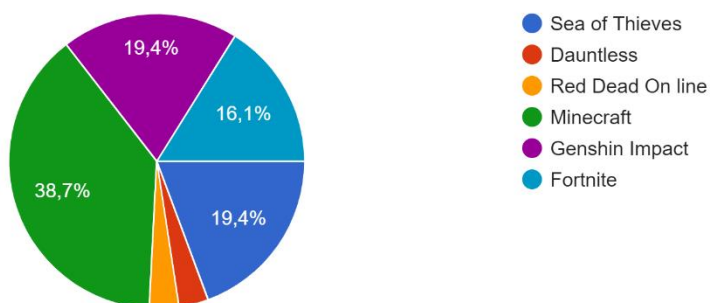
This study started in April 2021 when the project was accepted by the local school and I could have two online meetings with three classes to explain the aim of the research and find the participants.

In May 2021, 31 students were interested in the project and during a pre-session meeting I showed the phases and contents of the research. A list of games with specific characteristics for language learning, according to the involvement framework model by Calleja (2007), was also proposed, and the students' most voted game to play was *Minecraft* (38.7%) (Figure 9).

Figure 9.
Students' video game selection.

What videogames would you like to play? (multiple responses allowed)

31 risposte



The students chose playing *Minecraft* mainly because everyone could play it and already had it at their disposal. I also gave them the parental consent to be signed.

- *The implementation*

The implementation started at the beginning of the school year 21/22, in September; it ended just before the Christmas holidays. From September to December 2021, the number of students was fixed at 27 and they attended 10 weekly gameful classes of one hour each with me as a coach and could play *Minecraft* at their own pace, at home. Playing was not mandatory. They were only asked to play *Minecraft* Multiplayer with English speaking players they could find on the web thanks to Discord VoIP³¹ to accomplish some tasks they had already practiced during the class online session.

As far as I could have evidence, because only 4 students filled in the game journal and the others just related orally about the time spent playing *Minecraft* Multiplayer, they played approximately from a minimum of 10 hours to a maximum of 77 hours. This huge range depends on the fact that some students were more into *Minecraft* than others, who eventually preferred playing other video games, and played *Minecraft* just to accomplish the assignments.

³¹ Topic based channels where people can collaborate, share, or just talk without clogging up a group chat, www.discord.com

The tasks were different and involved mainly oral (on Discord VoIP servers), written chats with English-speaking players, and Youtubers' edited gameplay comprehension to entice students to practice English. The tasks accomplished had to be sent before the next session started and were aligned with literacies, language areas, and possibly competences. Moreover, each task was aligned with assessment measures (points) and displayed on a leaderboard (Annex 4). Points were assigned not on the student's actual performance in the gameplay, but on the wraparound activities and assignments, according to specific evaluation grids given during the initial session (Annex 8).

Students got points for accomplishing the tasks to top the leaderboard (max 100 points), pass the threshold (60 points), and gain badges (Full Attendance, school extra-curriculum credits, min 60 points, voluntary peer assignment review, more than 80 points, the full accomplishment of the assignments given, and the best player/s) (Annex 3). Thanks to Google Classroom, the students could read all the news about the course, send their works, and check their scores on the leaderboard. The updated leaderboard was posted weekly, and all the tasks accomplished received comments and evaluations. The participation was good: 84% of the students attended at least 9/10 sessions; only 16% less than 7/10 sessions.

To avoid any influence on the participants, the researcher was not part of the school where the implementation took place, and the final evaluation/score of the course did not influence the student's school marks at all. Students just received some credits for their participation.

- *Data collection and analysis*

At the end of the course (Dec. 21), students filled out an anonymous survey with Google Modules. In January 2022, single semi-structured interviews and focus groups were carried out. The schoolteachers were interviewed too. Two documents with field notes were also part of the data to be analysed. All the data was stored on my Drive. The anonymous survey was processed with Microsoft Excel, and pie-charts were elaborated for every statement. The interviews, in Italian, were transcribed manually and then coded using categories I had previously identified (see 4.1), which referred to the hypotheses, the research questions and objectives. Field notes were coded too

according to the categories and became part of the analysed data. All data were processed with Microsoft Excel and, in some cases, conceptual maps were elaborated to give a visual outline of the results.

3.5 Design framework of *Gameful English*

The design for this project considered the principles of gamification and game design. During the design phase, I was supported by the game designer and programmer Claudio Vincis who could validate or reorient my choices in terms of applying game elements to an educational context and tasks. It was vital to maintain the gamefulness in learning as if it was a game: challenges, growth in expertise, time for training, and meaningful choices were essential elements to preserve, and the expert in the field was helpful and of great inspiration to maintain the gaming environment.

Gameful English started with an initial session (level 0) and ended with a follow-up session (level 10). Between them, there were nine gameful sessions, each of which consisted of pre-play, during-play, and post-play phases (Table 7).

Table 7.
Structure of a gameful session.

PRE-PLAY	DURING-PLAY	POST-PLAY
Introduce wraparound tasks and do preview subtasks (i.e., vocabulary preview)	Get knowledge of the task	Do post-play tasks (assignments based on <i>Minecraft</i> recorded gameplay)
Review the past play session and debriefing tasks (post-play phases, usually given as assignments) with a focus on new goals and strategies for the next during-play phase	Play <i>Minecraft</i> Multiplayer (creative, survival, mini-games) No time limitation	Debriefing (opportunities for reflection and integration of what students have learned about the game rules, narratives, and language used while playing)
	Record the gameplay (15-20 min)	
Class	Home	Home/Class

The pre-play phase introduces the topic of the session with wraparound tasks (acronyms in web chats, exploring biomes, watching different gameplay styles, commenting on Youtube videos, etc.) and reviews vocabulary and the debriefing tasks (assignments). This phase is done in class and requires the active participation of the students who are asked about their opinions and solutions on the topic proposed. The during-play phase is done at home, individually, and it is a voluntary action: the student decides whether he or she wants to play, which modality to adopt, and to accomplish or not to accomplish the task given. Students mustn't accomplish the task while playing. They must record 15/20 min of their gameplay and only after played they will use their records to accomplish the task. This choice aimed to preserve the flow and the engagement students have while playing. The post-play phase is done both at home when accomplishing the tasks and in class with the debriefing, when the students could integrate and discuss what they had learned in and around the game (game rules, narrative, vocabulary, etc.).

The initial session (level 0) outlined what to do before, during, and after each play session of Minecraft: getting knowledge of the task, playing the video game, and accomplishing the task. Some gamification components (leaderboard, points, and badges) were also introduced as a different assessment method³², and the structure of the gamified course, adapted from Ajlen et al. (2020), was explained in detail (Annex 1), showing some of the dynamics (narrative, progression, and constraints), and the mechanics (rewards, feedback, and challenges) the students had to manage. The follow-up session (level 10) included a general debriefing with the presentation and revision of the final products (edited live comments of the students' gameplays).

In the following tables (Table 8), the 10 levels that the students had to face will be presented and the topic, tasks, and assignments specific to each meeting/level will be highlighted, regarding the different stages.

³² See Annexes 8, 3, and 4 for the written and oral test evaluation grids used for the different tasks and assignments, the badge table and the final leaderboard.

Table 8.
Gameful English levels.

LEVEL 1: Video games	Mission: acronyms use and understanding	Objective: speaking about video games, getting knowledge of the acronyms, vocabulary acquisition.
Pre-play	During-play	Post-play
Wraparounds: General speaking survey about video games preferences, genres, comparisons; the Geek test; guess the acronyms.	Record 30 min gameplay.	Find the acronyms, guess the meaning.
LEVEL 2: Minecraft biomes	Mission: describing places	Objective: speaking about Minecraft biomes; making comparisons; vocabulary acquisition.
Pre-play	During-play	Post-play
Wraparounds: screenshots of MC biomes	Play MC. Make a world. Take a picture of it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write a description (150-200 words) of your world. - Group debriefing: talking about the acronyms and the game vocabulary
LEVEL 3: Before & After	Mission: guess the changes	Objective: speaking about the changes comparing two screenshots from MC
Pre-play	During-play	Post-play
Wraparounds: Screenshots from MC	Find an MC walkthrough on the web.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Getting knowledge of what a walkthrough is. - Group debriefing: Comments on the different students' biomes.
LEVEL 4: Walkthroughs	Mission: listening and video comprehension.	Objective: speaking of the use and validity of walkthroughs; understanding suggestions, tips, hypotheses, and directions.
Pre-play	During-play	Post-play

Wraparounds: Mojang official MC walkthrough	Free play	- Did you need a walkthrough during your gameplay? How did you solve it? - Group debriefing: what is a walkthrough? Are walkthrough useful?
LEVEL 5: Multiplayer	Mission: making friends testing the different possibilities the servers offer; playing Multiplayer	Objective: speaking of voice servers; listening and video comprehension; finding online English-speaking players and play with them
Pre-play	During-play	Post-play
Wraparounds: Discord; MC Multiplayer modality: videos from YouTube	Free play in Multiplayer	Group debriefing: how to find practical solutions during the gameplay.
LEVEL 6: Minecraft Creative, Survival, Multiplayer	Mission: the quest of details	Objective: listening and video comprehension searching for specific info; speaking of different gameplay modalities
Pre-play	During-play	Post-play
Wraparounds: Youtube video selection: Creative, Survival, Multiplayer	Free play	Group debriefing: what players have you met? What have you done together? Was it difficult to make friends on Discord?
LEVEL 7: Text chat	Mission: interact with the community using the written chat; understand what type of player you are.	Objective: Speaking: how to use a text chat in Minecraft: pros and cons; players types: achiever, killer, socializer, explorer
Pre-play	During-play	Post-play
Wraparounds: the Bartle test; screenshots of Minecraft text chats	Play Minecraft Take a screenshot of your text chat	- Analyse your screenshot and send a brief description of its contents, focusing on acronyms, gameplay vocabulary and the players' behaviours. - Group debriefing: talking about the students' favourite modality of the week: pros and cons

LEVEL 8: Voice chat	Mission: talk with the community	Objective: listening and video comprehension; talking with English-speaking players
Pre-play	During-play	Post-play
Wraparounds: You-Tube video selection	Play Multiplayer Record 15 min of your gameplay while you are speaking with the other players	- Analyse your gameplay: What was happening? What were you going to do? Was it easy to talk? Why? Why not? - Group debriefing: written chats, vocabulary of the game, pros and cons.
LEVEL 9: Youtubers and twitchers	Mission: make a live comment of your gameplay	Objective: understanding who streamers are and how they work. Different comment styles. Listening and video comprehension; talking about Youtubers and twitchers.
Pre-play	During-play	Post-play
Wraparounds: web streamers charts; Youtube video selection of streamers with different styles	Record your live comment playing MC in the modality you prefer.	Make a short video of max 5 min. Edit it. - Group debriefing: difficulties on the use of a voice chat and its advantages.
LEVEL 10: You-Tuber!	Mission: comment the students' gameplay videos	Objective: Give opinions and feedback on the "live comments" of their mates
Pre-play	During-play	Post-play
Wraparounds: Watching and commenting the videos of the class	Free play	Group debriefing: comments on the videos of the students; considerations on <i>Gameful English</i> .

4. Results

This chapter presents descriptively and objectively the results obtained through the different data collection instruments used in this research. Their interpretation, synthesis and evaluation will take place in the following chapter.

The presentation of the results includes data obtained through instruments of a qualitative nature, through the establishment of categories and the use of Microsoft Excel for their elaboration. These are the final survey, the semi-structured interviews (students and teachers), the focus groups, and the participant observation.

Results from different instruments have been obtained for the same category. The function and perspective provided by each of the observation instruments are detailed in the corresponding section.

4.1 Final survey, interviews, focus groups, and participant observation results

This section shows the results obtained through the four instruments designed from a qualitative methodological approach. These instruments are the following:

- *End-of-the-implementation survey.*

At the end of the implementation, all the students filled out an anonymous survey based on a 5-point Likert scale in which they gave their opinion on the validity of the course in terms of learning English as a foreign language, the use of gamification in a school context and the impact on their gameplay in using a commercial video game for learning purposes (Annex 11). There was also an extra non-compulsory open question on the student's personal comment on the implementation. 15 students left a personal comment. The results of the survey, created with Google forms, were represented by means of pie charts in order to obtain an initial visual impact on the students' evaluation. All participants answered the questionnaire: 18 diagrams were produced (as many as there were statements to evaluate) and 14/15 students' valuable comments were considered in the data analysis.

- *Semi-structured interviews.*

The interviews involved 26 students and two teachers. The students were asked a maximum of 24 questions each, depending on how detailed their answers were. The

teachers were asked 4 questions each. All interviews were conducted in Italian, to make them less stressful and more authentic, with Google Meet, recorded and transcribed in full. This produced 28 documents entered a digital text archive. For the purposes of the research, 550 answers were examined and divided into categories. The most interesting answers were then translated into English, trying to respect the original text (often juvenile slang) as much as possible.

- *Focus groups.*

The focus groups were conducted, in Italian, after the individual interviews and involved 26 students, divided into 3 groups. The aim was to pick up, from the comparison between the students, new issues and aspects or to confirm what was said in the interviews. Each focus group was recorded, and the interactions were transcribed into 3 text files, one for each focus. The files were placed in a digital archive. For the research, 144 interventions were assessed as valid, which were then coded according to the pre-established categories and included in the general data analysis computation. The most significant interventions have been translated into English and quoted in specific sections.

- *Participant observation.*

The field notes collected by the researcher during the implementation, and for each meeting (for a total amount of 30), were transcribed onto text files, depending on the category they belonged to. During the analysis, two documents were drafted containing all the field notes: one on the course attendance and motivation towards the proposed tasks and the other on the technical, environmental, and didactic factors that could favour or compromise a successful implementation. The results were then entered the Excel spreadsheet, depending on the relevant category.

Twenty-seven surveys were analysed to produce 18 pie charts, and 62 text files (28 interviews, 3 focus groups, 1 document with 14 final-survey students' comments, and 30 field notes) were analysed using Microsoft Excel and categorised (Table 9)

Table 9.

Instruments: number of participants, notes, and documents produced.

	SURVEY	INTERVIEWS	FOCUS GROUPS	PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Number of participants	27 students	26 students +2 teachers	26 students	
Number of collected field notes				30
Type and number of documents produced	18 pie charts + 1 Word file	28 transcriptions (Word files)	3 Word files transcriptions	30 Word files

To facilitate the analysis of the documents using the Microsoft Excel programme and to contextualise the data concerning the research questions, reference categories were established after an initial reading of the materials.

This process yielded a very long list of items of interest to the research, which is shown, grouped by its research question and related hypotheses in Table 10Table 10.

Table 10.

List of the items of interest to the research. First version.

RQ1 LEARNING	RQ2 GAMIFICATION	RQ3 GAMEPLAY
<i>How does using vernacular video games impact learning English as a foreign language?</i>	<i>How do students perceive a gamified course in an educational context?</i>	<i>How does the gameplay change using vernacular video games in an educational context?</i>
H1.1 Students think they are learning more and better H1.2 Students are more motivated to speak English during the lectures H1.3 Students are more confident and relaxed while speaking English H1.4 Students feel they are improving their fluency and comprehension.	H2.1 Students are less under pressure during the assessments H2.2 Students are more conscious and confident about their abilities and results	H3.1 Gamefulness does not change because students can always experience the fun H3.2 Students are more aware of the possibilities video games may have on learning a foreign language.
Better learning	Positive aspects in gamification	Gameplay experience
Novelty	Novelty	Fun

Protagonism	Protagonism	Engagement
Acceptance	Acceptance	Protagonism
Indifference	Indifference	Technical aspects
Good design	Good design	Relational aspects
enjoyed the most	Leaderboard	Design aspects
boring activities	Points	What limits the gameplay
EFL skills	Badges	Possibilities in the use of vernacular video games for learning
difficult activities	Assessment	Limits in the application of vernacular games for learning
Vocabulary	Performance mindfulness	Gameful teacher
Grammar	Limits of gamification	Comparisons with traditional teachers
Assignments	Emotions	
Standard course vs. <i>Gameful English</i>	Motivation	
Motivation to speak	Comparisons with traditional methods	
Emotions	Mistakes	
Fluency		
Listening		

As the number of items was too large to be managed efficiently, I decided to group all these aspects into a series of broad categories which would allow the data to be covered more conveniently. Table 11 shows a list of the broad categories connected to their research question, and the items from the previous list (Table 10) that were grouped into each category.

Table 11.
Broad categories.

RQ1	RQ2	RQ3
Factors that promote learning (novelty, emotions, motivation, protagonism)	Gamification: positive aspects (novelty, motivation, performance mindfulness)	Gameplay experience (fun, engagement, protagonism)
Tasks assessment (most enjoyed difficult/boring assignments and activities)	Gamification: limits in its application in the school curriculum	What limits the gameplay (technical, relational, and design problems)
EFL skills assessment (vocabulary, grammar, fluency, listening)	PBL (Points, Badge, Leaderboard, acceptance, indifference, good design)	Use of vernacular video games at school (possibilities and limits)
General assessment of the course (acceptance, indifference, good design, comparison with conventional methods)	Gamification AND Assessment (comparison with conventional methods)	

Other two categories were then added to these eleven, that concern the development of the project (the role of the teacher, the context, the schedule) and possible actions that can be taken to improve the course in future iterations. The general categories that were used in the qualitative analysis using the Microsoft Excel programme can therefore be summarised as follows:

1. *Factors that promote learning.*

Characteristics of the implementation that are valued by students as positive for EFL learning.

2. *Tasks assessment.*

Evaluation of assigned tasks and proposed activities on their effectiveness for learning, the degree of motivation and acceptance by students.

3. *EFL skills assessment.*

Evaluation and perception of students' improvement in listening, speaking, vocabulary and grammar.

4. *General assessment of the course.*

The positive or negative evaluation of the learning experience, method and tools used.

5. *Gamification: positive aspects.*

Positive elements highlighted by students on the use of gamification on motivation, course organisation, stress level and learning awareness.

6. *Gamification: limits.*

Issues arising from the use of gamification in a school curriculum, motivation, emotions and relationship management.

7. *PBL.*

Evaluation of the use of points, badges and leaderboard.

8. *Gamification AND assessment.*

Perceptions and considerations of school and learning assessment in a gamified context.

9. *Gameplay experience.*

Students' feelings related to the use of vernacular video games for learning purposes and impact on gameplay.

10. *What limits the gameplay.*

Technical, game design and relational issues that can alter gameplay.

11. *Use of the vernacular video games at school.*

Evaluation of commercial video games at school as a learning tool: possibilities and limitations.

12. *Development of the project.*

Aspects relating to the role of the teacher in a gameful context, the use of available tools and time.

13. *Suggestions for improvement.*

Aspects to be improved in the course at the design level.

Having established this list of categories, which can be applied to all qualitative analysis tools in this research, the best way to present the results seemed to be to organise them precisely according to these categories.

The following paragraphs will present the results for each category, specifying the data collection instrument used where necessary. Significant student interventions are reported in translation (English) and the original language (Italian).

4.1.1 Factors that promote learning

Gameful English received very good feedback by the students. No one ever felt under pressure or bored. To give a general outline on the course, the more recurrent adjectives describing the students' physical and psychological sensations during the implementation were: relaxed (76.9%), calm (38.5%), fun (61.5%), motivated (50%), careful (26.9%), and intrigued (15.4%).

When they were asked about what factors of *Gameful English*, according to them, could promote learning, five main reasons have been identified:

1. The method (30.8%)
2. No consequences determined by bad marks (19.2%)
3. The teacher's attitude (30.8%)
4. The topic (46.1%)
5. The environment (34.6%)

The communicative and task-based approach and the way the course was gamified helped students to feel more relaxed and comfortable during the interactions. Curiosity about the method adopted, sharing the novelty with friends, and the different activities helped too:

S7: I definitely felt amused. I never felt stressed or anxious, on the contrary I was always amused and curious about what we were doing that day, also because I was together with all my friends, even those I didn't know from other classes, however my age; so I was able to have fun with them, to see new things; also because every week there was always something new, nothing was ever the same, so the curiosity increased from week to week. (*S7: Mi sentivo sicuramente divertito. Non mi sono mai sentito né stressato né ansioso, anzi ero sempre divertito e curioso su cosa facevamo quel giorno, anche perché ero insieme a tutti i miei amici, anche chi non conoscevo di altre classi, comunque della mia età, quindi riuscivo a divertirmi con loro, a vedere nuove cose; anche perché ogni settimana c'era sempre qualcosa di nuovo, non era mai niente uguale, quindi la curiosità aumentava di settimana in settimana.*)

S12: When I joined the class I always thought: let's see what happens now. Will she show us a picture, a video, will she give us a test? I was intrigued. (*S12: Quando entravo in lezione pensavo sempre: vediamo adesso che cosa succede. Ci farà vedere una foto, un video, ci farà fare un test? Ero incuriosito.*)

The results obtained in *Gameful English* did not impact the evaluation of the standard English course. This made learning less risk-taking:

S11: It was always very calm, but serious because in any case it is work, a commitment, and therefore it must be taken seriously; but not that seriousness that gives pressure, or anxiety. And that you end with a test, like at school. (*S11: Sempre con molta calma, ma con serietà perché comunque è un lavoro, un impegno e quindi va preso con serietà; però non quella serietà che mette magari pressione, mette ansia. E che devi concludere con un compito di verifica, come a scuola.*)

S13: It was an overall evaluation; there wasn't the usual anxiety when you go to school, of the grade: if you don't get that grade then maybe a mess happens. (S13: *La valutazione c'era, era complessiva; non c'era la solita ansia di quando si va a scuola, del voto: se tu non prendi quel voto magari poi succede un casino.*)

The role of the teacher as a guide, a coach, and a facilitator was clearly recognized and appreciated by the students who felt more relaxed and risk-taking than in a curricular class. They appreciated someone who trusted, encouraged, and stimulated them. They knew they could try because there were no bad consequences for their mistakes. Mistakes were useful to understand more and helped better learning:

S21: When you asked me to speak, you put me under pressure, but this helped me, because I had to improve anyway. This is another positive aspect of these lessons: always being urged by the teacher to be participative, then you improve, unconsciously, often. (S21: *Quando lei mi chiedeva di parlare, mi metteva sotto pressione, ma aiutandomi, perché comunque dovevo migliorare. Questo è un altro aspetto positivo di queste lezioni: essere sempre spronati dall'insegnante ad essere partecipi, poi ti fa migliorare, inconsapevolmente, spesso.*)

S3: I felt relaxed and also stimulated to learn English, also thanks to your behaviour; in the course I was always stimulated to listen. (S3: *Mi sono sentito tranquillo e anche stimolato a imparare l'inglese, anche grazie al suo comportamento; nel corso ero sempre stimolato ad ascoltare.*)

The topic, the video games, was another factor which gave a contribution to learning. Students could talk about something they were really interested in, and they had a basic vocabulary they were comfortable with, and which helped them to express their opinions. While speaking in class, they thought they were chatting with friends about what they liked, despite the school environment:

S19: I participated with a lot of pleasure because it's the topic I liked, not so much Minecraft, but video games; then also because I got to know a lot of guys and even better those I already knew. And that was nice, because we realised that we all had the same passion in common. It wasn't a normal school lesson, which creates a bit of anxiety. It was just a chat between friends, without grades. (S19: *Partecipavo con molto piacere perché è l'argomento che mi piaceva, non tanto Minecraft, ma i videogiochi; poi anche perché ho conosciuto molti ragazzi e anche meglio coloro che già conoscevo. E questo è stato bello, perché abbiamo capito che tutti abbiamo la passione in comune. Non era una lezione di scuola normale, che crea un po' d'ansia. Era proprio una chiacchierata tra amici, senza voti.*)

S19: I had an easier time speaking, because I was spurred on to speak; the other years, in class, I never expressed my opinion. With this course I felt more spurred to speak my mind even on topics beyond school and the course topics we did. It helped me because of the topic. (S19: *Avevo più facilità a parlare perché ero proprio spronato a parlarlo; gli altri anni, in classe, non esprimevo mai la opinione. Con questo corso mi sono sentito più spronato a dire la mia anche su discorsi che vanno oltre la scuola e gli argomenti del corso che abbiamo fatto. Mi ha aiutato il tema.*)

Something that made students relaxed and collaborative, favouring learning, was the human environment too. Some relate *Gameful English* classes were a sort of “chat among friends” about video games; others had a lot of fun sharing ideas and competing in the activities. Some of them made new friends, others were just happy to sit and see what was new that week. The general atmosphere was friendly, and the competition was in the game itself. They did not want to be the best English speakers but the best *Minecraft* players.

S26: The first few times I was a little bit... not doubtful... but I wanted to understand how it worked. The first lesson I was very much on: OK let's analyse everything, how it works, so I can understand. But already from the second lesson onwards I started to enjoy it, because there were other guys, we talk a little bit among ourselves, we see pictures, we see things... and so it was a lot of fun. There wasn't a moment when I felt a little down, I mean it always gave me something new and I was enjoying it. (S26: *Le prime volte ero un pochino... non dubbioso... però volevo capire come funzionasse. la prima lezione ero molto su: ok analizziamo tutto, come funziona, così capisco. Ma già dalla seconda lezione in poi mi sono cominciato a divertire, perché c'erano altri ragazzi, parliamo un po' tra di noi, vediamo le immagini, vediamo cose... e quindi è stato molto divertente. non c'era un momento in cui mi sono sentito un po' giù di tono, cioè mi ha dato sempre qualcosa di nuovo e mi stavo divertendo.*)

S16: The environment that had been created, the group with the same young people, with whom we talked. The same theme, but with different topics each week was also nice. When I had my afternoon English lessons two years ago, I used to say no!!!!... whereas now I say: ah in 10 minutes is gameful... good! (S16: *L'ambiente che si era venuto a creare, il gruppo con gli stessi ragazzi, con cui parlavamo. Lo stesso tema, ma con diversi argomenti ogni settimana era anche bello. Quando due anni fa avevo le lezioni di inglese pomeridiane, dicevo di no!!!!.. mentre adesso dicevo: ah tra tra 10 minuti c'è il gameful.. buono!*)

S17: Compared to being in the classroom I felt much better, much more integrated into the group and the lesson. Then it was also nice to compare myself with others who have the same passion for video games as I do. Maybe a particular group is more stimulating. I felt relaxed. (S17: *Rispetto allo stare in classe mi sentivo molto meglio, molto più integrato nel gruppo e nella lezione. Poi è stato anche bello confrontarsi con gli altri che hanno la stessa passione dei videogiochi che ho io. Magari un gruppo particolare è più stimolante. Mi sono sentito rilassato.*)

S10: Definitely happy, interested in the course, happy anyway to be with other people doing this course; doing this course with 8 -10 other people I really enjoyed it, I had fun. If I had problems with something else, school, friends, sport, that hour a day on Monday that I was doing this course I didn't think about these problems, I only thought about the course, I had fun, I relaxed. (S10: *Sicuramente contento, interessato al corso, felice comunque di stare insieme ad altre persona a fare questo corso; fare questo corso con altre 8 -10 persone mi è piaciuto molto, mi sono divertito. Se avevo problemi che riguardavano altro, la scuola, gli amici, lo sport, quell'ora al giorno di lunedì che facevo questo corso non ci pensavo a questi problemi, pensavo solamente al corso, mi divertivo, mi rilassavo.*)

A relaxing atmosphere was also one of the factors which contributed to a more active participation in speaking tasks. When the students were asked if they had been more motivated to speak English during the on-line activities, only 2 students told they had not enhanced their level of motivation, at least they did not enjoy more to speak English in this course than what they did in their standard classes. 92.3% of the students, on the other hand, agreed on the fact that *Gameful English* really motivated them at speaking English, and gave different reasons why their motivation was arisen.

38.5% of the students enjoyed the topic and the fact they could interact in English with other players:

S14: I really enjoyed talking about video games. The fact that I also had to talk to foreigners gave me an extra boost. (S14: *Mi sono trovata davvero bene a parlare di videogiochi. Il fatto di dover parlare anche con degli stranieri mi ha dato una mano, come se fosse stata una spinta in più.*)

It was easier to speak English because students felt comfortable talking about their passion. They were not forced to talk about a topic chosen by the teacher. They were motivated because they loved sharing their ideas, avoiding frustration about vocabulary and pronunciation:

S1: The theme, just the video game. This course was not compulsory. All the people who probably entered this course had a passion for video games, so an interest in video games. In my opinion, it's really the feeling of being enticed by this that led us to speak in English, led us to speak in English much more pleasantly, also removing those little insecurities that maybe there are about pronunciation or vocabulary. *(S1: Il tema, proprio il videogioco. Questo è stato un percorso a scelta, quindi non siamo stati costretti a fare una cosa del genere. tutte le persone probabilmente che sono entrate in questo corso avevano la passione per il videogioco, quindi un interesse nei confronti del videogioco. Secondo me è proprio il sentirsi invogliati da questa cosa che ci ha portati a parlare in inglese, ci ha portato a parlare in inglese molto più piacevolmente, anche togliendo quelle piccole insicurezze che magari ci sono sulla pronuncia o sui vocaboli.)*

The need to speak with other native speaking players not only to accomplish the tasks assigned but to interact with other players to win the game was another important factor which affected their motivation to speak more (23.1%).

S22: Just the desire to play helped me to talk more. You really have the need to communicate, because they are team games anyway, so you need to talk. I generally speak Italian because I play with my friends. I used to do the same thing here but speaking English. So just playing motivated me to speak: the more I played the more I had to speak. It is directly proportional: as one grows, the other must grow too. *(S22: Mi ha aiutato a parlare di più forse proprio la voglia di giocare. Tu hai proprio la necessità di comunicare, perché sono comunque giochi di squadra e quindi hai la necessità di parlare. Io in genere parlo italiano perché gioco con i miei amici. In questo ambito facevo la stessa cosa però parlando in inglese. Quindi proprio il giocare mi motivava a parlare: più giocavo più dovevo parlare. E direttamente proporzionale: al crescere dell'uno deve crescere anche l'altro.)*

S13: When I played online, because having to respond to other people, I wanted to know as many terms as possible and to be able to converse in the best possible way. It was a necessity in that case. *(S13: Quando giocavo online, perché il dover rispondere alle altre persone quando ci parlavo mi voleva far conoscere più termini possibili e saper conversare nel miglior modo possibile. Era una necessità in quel caso.)*

Other students (30.8%) reported the positive feeling they had while interacting with their peers thanks to the method adopted. There was a positive energy which helped the students to share their own ideas.

S3: In general, it was the collective energy of the whole course that helped me to express myself better and to look for new topics, new vocabulary to speak with, in general. One of the strengths of the course was also this: a greater ease in wanting to express myself not only in having to express. *(S3: In generale è stata l'energia collettiva di tutto quanto il corso che mi ha aiutato a esprimermi meglio e a cercare nuovi argomenti, nuovi vocaboli, con cui parlare in generale. Uno dei punti di forza del corso è stato anche questo: una facilità maggiore nel voler si esprimere non solo nel doversi esprimere.)*

S1: I felt motivated to speak in English also because of the challenge we had among us. Even for the approach during the lesson, with the type of lesson, of study, that I was doing. Speaking in Italian seemed to me almost wasting an opportunity; it was such an interesting thing to push a person to at least try. Even if a person might not have a very good pronunciation or a broad vocabulary knowledge, we were still enticed to try to speak in English. *(S1: Mi sono sentito motivato a parlare in inglese anche per la sfida che si era creata e anche proprio per l'approccio che c'era con la lezione, col tipo di lezione, di studio, che stavo facendo. Parlare in italiano mi sembrava quasi sprecato per una cosa del genere perché era una cosa talmente interessante da spingere una persona almeno a provarci. Anche se magari una persona non ha una pronuncia molto spiccata o comunque una conoscenza dei vocaboli ampia, veniva comunque invogliato a provare a parlare in inglese.)*

S24: I was immersed in video games; I was watching people speaking in English, so it was almost 'natural' for me to act as if I were answering them. *(S24: Ero immerso nell'ambito dei videogiochi; guardavo persone che parlavano in inglese, quindi mi veniva quasi "naturale" fare come se gli stessi rispondendo.)*

Some students (11.5%) were helped by the fact groups were levelled. They reported they felt less under pressure and more equal to the other students who shared the same difficulties. They did not feel judged.

S26: Usually, when I'm in class and when I must talk to the teacher in class, I tend to use Italian. Moreover, in class... I don't like it...because we are a small group at the mediocre/sufficient level and the others at C2 level. And I don't want to be interrogated with the good ones. Here I felt much more comfortable; here there were other people, like me, who had more or less my level, so I felt comfortable talking to them. (*S26: Solitamente quando sto in classe e quando devo parlare con la professoressa in classe tendiamo di base ad usare l'italiano. Poi in classe non mi piace...perchè siamo un gruppetto sul mediocre/sufficiente e gli altri a livello C2. Ed io non voglio essere interrogato con quelli bravi. Qua io mi sono sentito molto più a mio agio; qui c'erano altre persone, tipo me, che avevano più o meno il mio livello, e quindi mi sentivo a mio agio a parlare con loro.*)

S2: In this course you were with people more or less at the same level as you; I thought that people were not better than me and I was not better than them, so even if I made mistakes I didn't care. Consequently I was also motivated to speak English. (*S2: In questo corso stavi con persone più o meno del tuo stesso livello; pensavo che le persone non sono migliori di me e io non sono migliore di loro, quindi pure se sbagliavo non mi importava. Di conseguenza ero anche motivato a parlare in inglese.*)

At school, students feel the pressure because they know they will receive a mark for their performance and this, most of the times, inhibits the performance itself, especially at speaking. In *Gameful English*, because of its nature of something “extra” school, two students report they were more ready to take the risks of a bad speaking. They could not lose anything.

S25: [...] also because there were no consequences, like bad grades or penalties; being in a team, in a group, of classmates was a lot of fun, I felt more and more motivated to improve collectively. There was no numerical evaluation, which impacted in some way on academic success, like a report card at school. So, let's say it was more relaxing, I didn't feel under pressure. (*S25: [...] anche perché non vi erano conseguenze, tipo brutti voti, quindi delle penalità; stando appunto in un team, quindi in gruppo, di compagni è stato molto divertente, mi sentivo sempre più motivata e appunto a migliorare collettivamente. Non vi era una valutazione di tipo numerico, che andasse a pesare in qualche modo sui successi scolastici, come una pagella a scuola. Quindi diciamo che è stato più rilassante, non mi sono sentita sotto pressione.*)

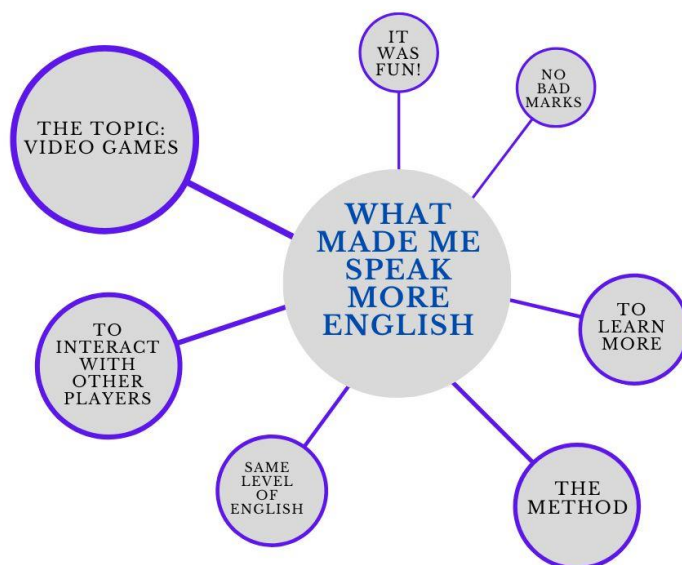
Other students (15.4%) found in the learning opportunity the right motivation to speak more English. They “used” this course to rehearse their skills and to learn new words and expressions they recognized would have helped them to improve their speaking and in general EFL acquisition.

S17: It was more motivated by the fact that I could learn a language I already know, but on my own speaking level, that I could improve my speaking, playing, doing something I normally enjoy. (*S17: Mi ha fatto sentire più motivato il fatto che potessi imparare una lingua che conosco già, ma a livello di speaking proprio, che potessi migliorare il mio speaking, giocando, facendo una cosa che mi diverte normalmente.*)

Figure 10 shows the main factors which affected the positive motivation to speak more during the on-line meetings and that for this reason promoted learning, according to the students.

Figure 10.

Factors affecting motivation to speak more in English during the classes.



4.1.2 Tasks assessment

This category wants to evaluate the tasks proposed based on their learning efficacy, the level of engagement, and the feelings towards them.

At first, the students were asked what class activity/ies as well as what home assignment/s they enjoyed more doing during the implementation. All the activities done were aimed to enhance oral communication and improve listening abilities.

Among the class activities, the students (42.3%) appreciated watching videos from Youtube dealing with *Minecraft* gameplay with different modalities (survival, creative, and multiplayer) and commenting their actions. Although it was challenging, because the streamers spoke fast and with different accents, thanks to the teacher's intervention in segmenting the videos, they could easily understand them and leave their personal comments.

S25: I really enjoyed analysing the clips of the videos and understanding what was going on, because not only is it a method of learning, so it's a new technique to learn English, but because it was really a game, pure fun; also comparing myself with my friends. We had fun, we created challenges among ourselves, who could guess the most things; so it was very stimulating. (S25: *Mi è piaciuto molto analizzare gli spezzoni dei video e capire cosa stava succedendo, perché non solo è un metodo per apprendere, quindi è una nuova tecnica per conoscere l'inglese, ma perché è stato proprio un gioco, cioè quindi un divertimento puro; confrontandomi anche con i miei amici, ci siamo divertiti, abbiamo creato sfide fra di noi, a chi indovinava più cose; quindi è stato molto stimolante.*)

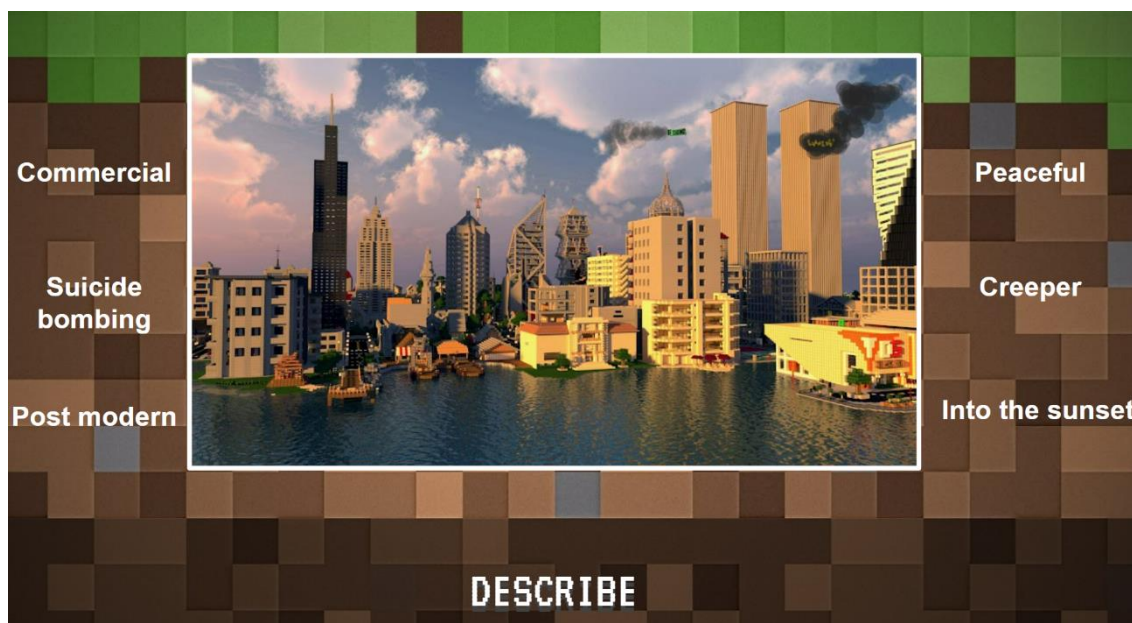
S19: In class when we watched Youtuber videos and had to comment, we listened to various types of accents and ways of speaking and we could learn something. For example, there was one time we watched a video of a Youtuber who was talking really fast, and we slowly got into it and understood what he was saying. I really liked that one because I learnt a lot. (S19: *A lezione quando guardavamo i video degli youtuber e dovevamo commentare abbiamo ascoltato vari tipi di accenti e di modi di parlare e si poteva imparare qualcosa. Per esempio, c'era una volta che abbiamo visto un video di uno youtuber che parlava velocissimo, e noi ci siamo messi piano piano e abbiamo capito quello che diceva. Quello mi è piaciuto molto perchè ho imparato molte cose.*)

S20: I see foreign videos too, but I don't really analyse the content, I don't understand all the parts. The kind of analysis we did in class made it easier for us to understand the content, we were able to grasp the different aspects that I might not have seen when I watched the video alone. (S20: *Anch'io vedo dei video stranieri, però non mi metto ad analizzarne per bene il contenuto, non capisco tutte le parti. Il tipo di analisi che abbiamo fatto noi lezione ti rendeva più facile capirne il contenuto, riuscivi a cogliere i diversi aspetti che io magari non vedevo quando vedevo il video da solo.*)

Some students (23.1%) found also fun and useful describing some screenshots from *Minecraft* (Figure 11), showing different biomes, where they could learn new words and adjectives and improve their fluency as well:

S7: When we described some images of *Minecraft* that you presented to us, like it could be a farm, a city, and we had to describe them, although it seems trivial, I think it helped a lot. I didn't know a lot of those terms. Now I know them. I also really enjoyed using my imagination to describe a picture, with what we knew. Very different from normal school: there you have to use precise terms to do well. Here you can use your imagination, what you know you try to connect; in case you make a mistake, there's no problem, because you gave us all the tips not to make a mistake. It was much more fun and free to speak in English. I learnt a lot of terms, so I feel maybe even more confident in this subject, in this language. It really helped me a lot. (S7: *Quando abbiamo descritto delle immagini di Minecraft che lei ci presentava, come appunto poteva essere la fattoria, una città, e bisogna descriverle, perché, anche se sono cose che sembrano banali, secondo me aiutano molto. Io molti di quei termini non li sapevo. Adesso li so. Mi divertiva molto anche usare la fantasia per descrivere un'immagine, con quello che noi sapevamo. Molto diverso rispetto alla scuola normale: lì devi usare dei termini precisi per andare bene. Qui puoi usare la tua fantasia, quello che sai cerchi di collegarlo; nel caso sbagli, non c'è problema, perché appunto lei ci dava tutte le dritte per non sbagliare. Era molto più divertente e libero parlare in inglese. Ho imparato molti termini, quindi mi sento forse anche più sicuro in questa materia, in questa lingua. Mi ha aiutato davvero tanto.*)

Figure 11.
Describing biomes task.



Very similar to the landscape description was “Spot the differences” (Figure 12). Some students (19.2%) had a lot of fun watching two images from *Minecraft* to find out the differences between the two pictures.

S16: I liked the lesson when we had to find the differences. I found it fun as a game, just the way it was made, it was really well done. (S16: *Mi era piaciuta la lezione quando abbiamo dovuto trovare le differenze. L'ho trovato divertente come gioco, proprio come era fatto.. era fatto davvero bene.*)

S26: What still impressed with me was finding the differences between two images. Minecraft has a lot of similar textures, so it's easy to find them. When you can't find them, you get hooked. Then even having to say them in English was just one more reason for me to engage. (S26: *Quello che mi è rimasto ancora impresso era trova le differenze tra due immagini. Minecraft ha molte texture simili tra loro, quindi è facile trovarle. Quando non le trovi, ti appassioni. Poi pure fatto di doverle dire in inglese è stato proprio un motivo in più per impegnarmi.*)

Figure 12.
Spot the difference task.



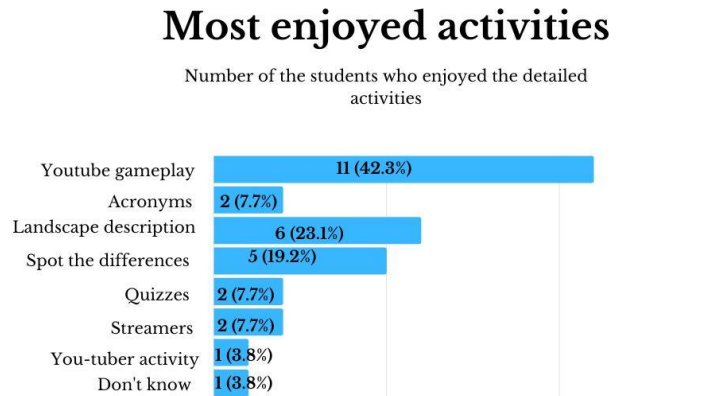
During the meetings, I presented two types of multiple-choice quizzes: a psychological one (the Bartle test³³) and a quiz for *Minecraft* players. Both these tests were the starting points for further discussions on the gameplay style and personality and *Minecraft* as well. Two students mentioned this activity as engaging and fun.

Videos about the most famous streamers on YouTube and Twitch were also used to start lively discussions as other two students pointed out, as well as watching the class videos of the You-Tuber homework activity. The students felt involved in sharing their ideas on the different topics, so that they were more motivated to speak. The figure below shows what were the students' most favourite activities during the meetings (Figure 13).

³³ <https://matthewbarr.co.uk/bartle/>

Figure 13.

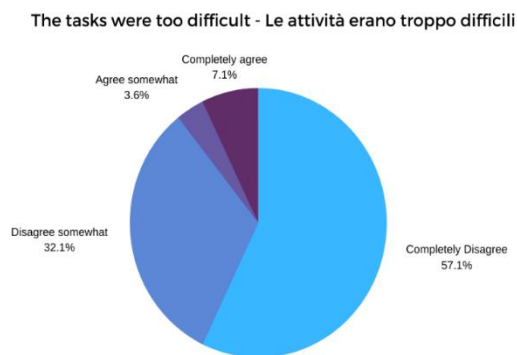
Gameful English activities with the number of students who expressed their preferences.



Once established the most enjoyed activities, the students were asked if they were too difficult to accomplish. The aim was to investigate if the course was affordable. The vast majority evaluated the tasks affordable while about 10% of the students found some or many difficulties accomplishing them (Figure 14).

Figure 14.

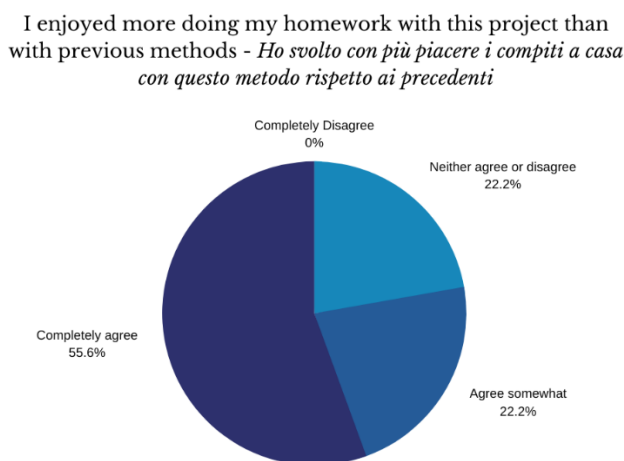
Students' perceptions of the level of difficulty of the tasks



During the course, the students had some assignments to improve their scores, although they were not mandatory. The majority (57.6%) found these assignments more fun and enjoyable to accomplish than those in their standard course. None of them said school assignments were better to accomplish than *Gameful English* tasks (Figure 15).

Figure 15.

Students' evaluations on Gameful English/ standard school course homework.



The five assignments the students were given during the course were based on the activities experienced together during the meetings. Homework was not compulsory but could significantly contribute to top the leaderboard. The response to these activities was pretty good, considering *Gameful English* was an extra-curricular activity, and the students were at the end of their first period. The average was 3.2/5 accomplished assignments per student. Moreover, they did not receive any school rewards for accomplishing them. According to the students' perceptions, the tasks were fun more than an obligation:

S11: Most of the course homework, except for the personal, individual ones, was done in groups. This is precisely why it was fun, because the thought was not about having to do the homework, but more about 'let's have fun, let's record what we are doing and then upload it'. More than an obligation, it was fun. (S11: *La maggior parte dei compiti per casa del corso, salvo quelli personali, singoli, sono stati fatti in gruppo. Proprio per questo è stato divertente, perché non si pensava al dover fare il compito, quanto più al "divertiamoci, registriamo quello che stiamo facendo e poi lo carichiamo". Più che un obbligo era un divertimento.*)

Among the five assignments, the most accomplished (92.3%) was to send a screenshot of the *Minecraft* world they had created and describe it. Other mostly accomplished homework dealt with finding acronyms on the game written chat guessing their meanings

(73.1%) as well as the YouTuber task (65.4%), where they had to record and edit personal gameplay and commenting it like a real streamer to possible followers.

Both chat analyses of written and oral chat were accomplished by 46.1% of the students. Students were asked to record 15 min of their gameplay in Multiplayer and then analysing it focusing on the description of what happened among the players during the gameplay.

In order to gain extra points, at the end of the course, the students were given the possibility to do a “big theme” assignment (Annex 7). Only 19.2% of the students accomplished it, and it consisted in choosing one of the four different tasks proposed: Gameplay diary (accomplished by two students), Vocabulary journal, Multiplayer cooperative play, and Video game review (accomplished by three students).

Another chance to improve the score was to fill in a Game journal (Annex 6), starting from the beginning of the course until the end of it. Only 15.4% of the students accomplished it.

To better understand what activity or task could mostly motivate them, the students were asked what assignment/s they enjoyed more. They could mention the assignment/s even in the case they had not accomplished it/them, but they wished they had.

The majority (65.4%) was enthusiastic of being a YouTuber for a while. There are many reasons according to the students: they felt like the people they love watching on YouTube, the activity was funny, challenging, new, creative, and cool.

S5: The one that could motivate more was the one where we made a video, as if we were youtubers, because it's a different thing, and in your head you know it is cool. *(S5: Quello che poteva motivare di più era quello dove facevamo un video, come se fossimo degli youtuber, perché è una cosa diversa, e in testa c'hai che è già una figata.)*

S7: That of the Youtuber, of impersonating a Youtuber, because it was a lot of fun, because I actually stood there, recorded a screen with a friend of mine, edited. I had a lot of fun, I felt like a Youtuber; in fact I was very passionate, even if it was a task to be done in the afternoon it didn't weigh me down at all, in fact I tried to do it; it was nice because even if it's in English, that I can't speak very well, anyway it was related to a game, so I could describe it well, I could put the images, also because we played Minecraft, so it was fun. *(S7: Quello dello youtuber, di impersonificarsi in uno youtuber, perché è stato molto divertente, perché effettivamente io mi sono messo lì, ho registrato uno schermo insieme ad un mio amico, ho editato. Mi sono divertito molto, mi sono sentito appunto uno youtuber; anzi ero molto appassionato, anche se era un compito da svolgere il pomeriggio non mi pesava per niente, anzi provavo a farlo; è stato bello perché anche se è un inglese che non parlo, là comunque era legato a un gioco, quindi riuscivo a descrivere bene, riuscivo a mettere le immagini, anche perché abbiamo giocato a Minecraft, quindi divertente.)*

S9: In my opinion, the most pleasant and also the most useful one was the Youtuber, because, leaving aside the fact that one has to impersonate a Youtuber, it helps us to approach foreigners. The task was really to entertain our fans, using English. So it was a real speaking test. *(S9: Secondo me quello più piacevole e anche più utile era quello dello youtuber, perché, tralasciando il fatto che uno si debba impersonificare in uno youtuber, ci ai uti ad apprezzare con stranieri. Il compito era proprio quello di intrattenere i nostri fan, utilizzando l'inglese. Quindi era un vero e proprio test di speaking.)*

Motivation could also arise because other students found the activity fun and pushed their friends to participate at the challenge:

S8: Seeing that everyone was getting involved in being a Youtuber, then I decided to do it too. It was fun. It took me a while because of the audio, to edit and re-edit the video, but in the end I liked it. It was good. *(S8: Vedendo che tutti si mettevano in gioco nel fare lo Youtuber, poi ho deciso anch'io di farlo. È stato divertente. Ci ho messo un po' di tempo a causa dell'audio, per modificare ed editare il video, però alla fine mi è piaciuto. È stato bello.)*

Although the task was challenging and demanding, it was fun too. According to S13 it was worthy of the effort because he did it with a friend and they enjoyed a lot:

I think the video; it was actually one of the things that was a bit more challenging, and you had to invest a lot of time in it, but at the same time it was a fun thing, because I for example did it with my friend, we played and had fun. *(S13: Io penso il video; in realtà era una delle cose un po' più impegnative e bisognava investireci molto tempo, però allo stesso tempo era una cosa divertente, perché io per esempio l'ho fatto con il mio amico, abbiamo giocato e ci siamo divertiti.)*

Despite S16 had to retake five times the video, he enjoyed the activity and was proud he was able to fluently interact with his public:

That of recording a video as if I were a Youtuber. I did like five takes, because when I was speaking, I didn't like it; yet when I was recording, I felt fluid! I enjoyed the fact that I heard myself speaking, because when I speak, I don't realise how I'm speaking in English. During the video, the time I couldn't remember a word, I said to my public: 'OK guys just a second' and while I was recording, I went to Google translate, looked up the word, read it, then went back to the video and said it. *(S16: Quello di registrare un video come se fossi uno youtuber. Ho fatto tipo 5 retake, perché, risentendomi, quando parlavo, non mi piaceva; eppure mentre registravo mi sentivo fluido! Mi ha divertito il fatto di sentirmi parlare, perché poi quando parlo non mi rendo conto di come sto parlando in inglese. Durante il video, per tutto il tempo non mi ricordavo una parola, e quindi ho detto: "ok ragazzi un attimo solo" e nel mentre registravo sono andato su Google translate, ho cercato la parola, l'ho letta, poi sono tornato in video e l'ho detta.)*

S18 noticed the possibility to listen to his voice and understand his mistakes. He had fun because he felt like a real Youtuber, playing while speaking English:

That in my opinion was the funniest and most interesting one. You could also listen to yourself again and see how you spoke. Saying things you don't realise if you're wrong, but if you hear it again, maybe you realise that you got something wrong; but then also the fact that you feel like a real Youtuber and so you play speaking English all the time. *(S18: Quello secondo me è stato quello più divertente e interessante. perché potevi anche riascoltarti a vedere come parlavi. Dicendo delle cose tu non te ne accorgi se sbagli, però risentendole, magari, ti accorgi pure che hai sbagliato qualcosa; ma poi pure il fatto che ti senti come un vero youtuber e quindi giochi parlando sempre in inglese.)*

Students appreciated the creative aspect of the task: editing, choosing the best moments, performing like a Youtuber helped them to speak fluently with little constraints:

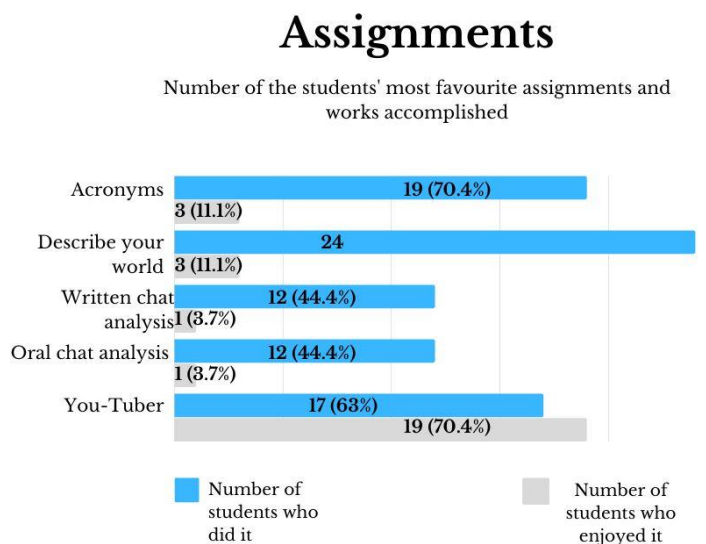
S25: I enjoyed the gameplay (Youtuber) the most, the one where I had to play and talk. I enjoyed it because for the first time I felt like a kind of Youtuber, so it was a lot of fun to create, edit the video and capture the funniest moments of my video. Thinking about it, it could also be an activity to consider in the future. It was a lot of fun. *(S25: Mi ha divertita di più il gameplay (youtuber), quello in cui io dovevo giocare e parlare. Mi ha divertito perché per la prima volta mi sono sentita una specie di youtuber, quindi è stato molto divertente creare, editare il video e cogliere i momenti più divertenti del mio video. Pensandoci potrebbe essere anche un'attività da riprendere in futuro. È stato molto divertente.)*

Another task the students (92.3%) found motivating, fun, and useful even for grammar was describing the world they had created on *Minecraft*. S1 said describing a biome needed accuracy in the description and this helped to be grammatically correct too:

Describing the landscape of the house; it was very useful from a grammatical point of view because a description has to be done with rigour, with a certain precision and so that was also very useful at the grammar level. (S1: *Descrivere il paesaggio della casa; a livello di grammatica è stato molto utile perché una descrizione deve essere fatta con rigore, con una certa precisione e quindi quello è stato utile molto anche a livello di grammatica.*)

To have a general overview of the students' most enjoyed assignments, Figure 16 shows the students' most favourite assignments and the number of students who accomplished them.

Figure 16.
Students' most favourite assignments and works accomplished.

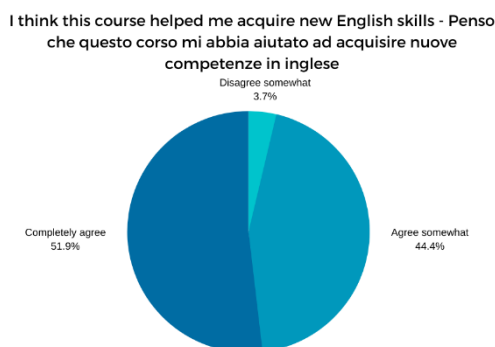


4.1.3 EFL skills assessment

To understand the impact on learning *Gameful English* had on the students, they were asked if they thought they had acquired new EFL skills, after the implementation. The majority (53.8%) completely agreed or partially agreed (46.1%) they felt they learnt something new after the implementation. Only one student disagreed somewhat in the survey (Figure 17).

Figure 17.

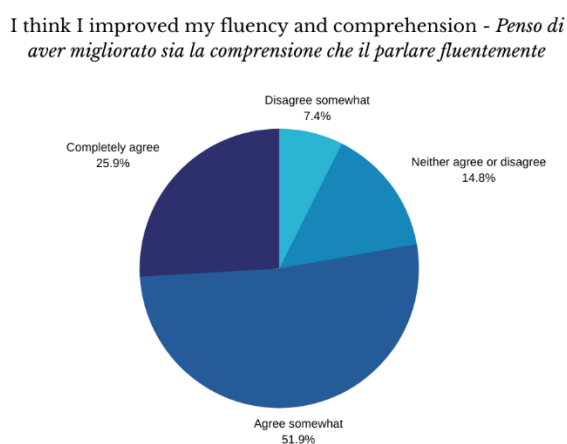
Students' perceptions on possible acquisition of new language skills.



As for the skills that *Gameful English* wanted to promote during the implementation, they were mainly focused on speaking and listening, favouring oral interactions and free comments on the gameplay and video games in general; listening activities were mainly based on YouTubers *Minecraft* gameplays. The students noticed improvements both in speaking and listening, as shown in Figure 18. Only two students didn't see a clear change in their skills and four of them (14.8%) could not make a decision.

Figure 18.

Students' perceptions of fluency and comprehension after the implementation.



The majority (69.2%) said they felt more confident at speaking, as the fear of making grammar or pronunciation mistakes slightly disappeared because they had to be ready and fast at answering the other gamers' questions, as well as in the interaction with the teacher and the class. The students were left free to express their own ideas and the teacher's

correction was made after the intervention to explain other possible solutions or to give some grammar/pronunciation hints, only when necessary.

S14: Speaking. This course helped me a lot, because now, even if I make mistakes, I don't care, because it can happen; I am not a native speaker. But I also feel much more comfortable speaking English. (S14: *Speaking. Questo corso mi ha aiutato un sacco, perché ora, anche se sbaglio, non mi interessa, perché può capitare; non sono madrelingua. però mi sento anche molto molto più a mio agio a parlare in inglese.*)

S13: Speaking, because I didn't play online in Minecraft in Multiplayer with strangers, but mainly with other friends in a private world; instead playing in the server and talking to other people you had to be quick to answer, because otherwise people would wonder what happened to you, or they start asking you questions, and then you have to hold a conversation. And then also talking to you. (S13: *Speaking, perché io non giocavo online su Minecraft in Multiplayer con sconosciuti, ma principalmente con altri amici in un mondo privato; invece giocando nel server e parlando con altre persone tu dovevi avere la prontezza nel rispondere, perché altrimenti le persone si chiedevano che fine avessi fatto, oppure iniziano a farti domande, e quindi devi intrattenere una conversazione. E poi anche parlare con lei.*)

S8: [...] Also in speaking, because in the oral chat we met people, we talked. Maybe at the beginning it was a bit more difficult, because you didn't even know what to say, but then after a while you get to know the other person. I met a Sweden and then slowly we talked a bit more. (S8: *[...] Anche nello speaking, perché nella chat orale abbiamo incontrato persone, abbiamo parlato. Magari all'inizio era un po' più difficile, perché non sapevi neanche cosa dire, però poi dopo un po' conosci anche l'altra persona. Io ho incontrato uno svedese e poi piano piano abbiamo parlato un po' di più.*)

S24: I feel more confident at speaking, because I feel that I have acquired new skills to speak more calmly; I can do it better than before I did the course. (S24: *Nello speaking e nel writing. Nello speaking mi sento più confident a parlare, perché sento di aver comunque acquisito nuove competenze per parlare con più tranquillità, perché mi riesce meglio, ecco, rispetto a prima di fare il corso.*)

Half of the students (50%) thought they could understand the videos better, after the implementation. Listening has always been a hard task for the students, and YouTube videos about gameplay are quite difficult to understand because it is real and informal English. This has been a great challenge for the students. The fact they could understand them better, after some classes, gave them a new confidence on their abilities.

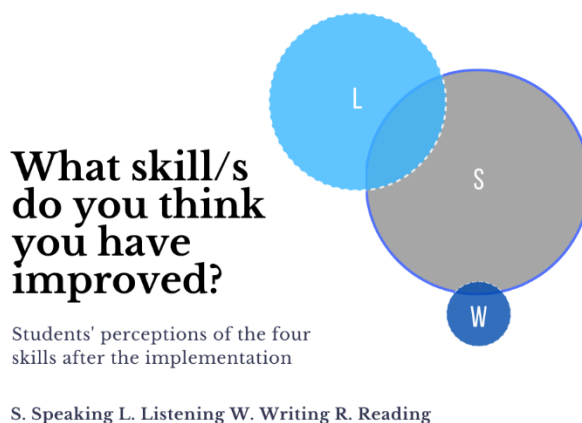
S23: In my opinion in listening, because we listened to a lot of gameplay and listening to gameplay is not a trivial thing, because very often Youtubers talk fast, maybe even use slang and specific words for that situation, to entertain the audience. (S23: *Secondo me nel listening, perché abbiamo ascoltato molti gameplay e ascoltare il gameplay non è una cosa banale, perché molto spesso gli youtuber parlano velocemente, magari usano anche il dialetto, qualche parola un po' più particolare per quella situazione, per intrattenere il pubblico.*)

S6: In listening it helped me. Seeing the other guys who were Youtubers, I realised that I could understand English better, I mean much better than before. (S6: *Nel listening mi ha aiutato. Vedendo gli altri ragazzi che facevano gli youtuber mi sono accorto che riuscivo a capire meglio, cioè molto meglio di prima, l'inglese.*)

The Venn diagram (Figure 19) shows the students' answers about the skills they thought they had improved after the implementation, and the way some of them (23.1%) mentioned both speaking and listening together as well as speaking and writing (7.7%).

Figure 19.

Students' perceptions of the four skills after the implementation.



It is important to notice that the Writing skill could be exercised only with the assignments, which were not mandatory. Overall, they recognized improvements in the most exercised skills (speaking and listening). No one among the students mentioned the Reading skill.

To understand how the students improved their listening and speaking skills and what helped them, they were asked to assess the activities giving a reason for their choice concerning learning English and their observation of their performances.

All the students agreed they perceived their fluency improved after this course, at different levels. They all could see at least a little upgrade at the end of the implementation. The students related they had the perception their fluency had improved mainly because they felt freer and easier at speaking, and they were not afraid of speaking English in front of the class and the teacher (42.3%).

S1: Yes, in being fluent in speaking, therefore in being freer and feeling calmer. (S1: Sì, nell'essere sciolto nel parlare, quindi nell'essere più libero e sentirmi più tranquillo.)

S9: Yes, it has improved. I can understand it not so much because of the pronunciation, I mean that has improved, but I really feel freer, more fluent when I speak English. (S9: Sì, è migliorata. Riesco a capirlo non tanto per la pronuncia, cioè quella sì è migliorata, però mi sento proprio più libero, più sciolto quando parlo l'inglese.)

S15: During the activities I used to speak more and more fluidly, and I didn't do "ahem ahem" anymore. At school when we do interventions, I sometimes get stuck, but here everything is fluid. (S15: Durante le attività parlavo in modo sempre più fluido e non facevo più ehm ehm. A scuola quando facciamo gli interventi ogni tanto mi blocca, invece qui tutto fluido.)

Some students could see a better fluency in their improved vocabulary. They learnt new words and expressions which helped them to be faster and fluent in their interactions (15.4%).

S13: Yes, yes. I speak more fluently; I noticed it even when writing, actually, or replying to some comments on Instagram in English, or speaking to joke. Terms came more easily to the tip of my tongue. *(S13: Sì sì, parlo più fluentemente; me ne sono accorto anche nello scrivere, in realtà, oppure a rispondere a qualche commento su Instagram in inglese, oppure parlare così per scherzare. Mi arrivavano più facilmente i termini sulla punta della lingua.)*

S7: We often have fun with friends. For example, if we play Minecraft, sometimes we also speak in English, and I see that even with games and especially on Minecraft I can speak more fluently, without getting into a foul mood often, because I have learnt new terms. *(S7: Ci divertiamo spesso con gli amici. Per esempio, se giochiamo a Minecraft, alcune volte ci mettiamo anche a parlare in inglese, e vedo appunto che anche con i giochi e soprattutto su Minecraft riesco a parlare più fluentemente, senza andare nel pallone spesso, perchè ho imparato nuovi termini.)*

Because students were in touch with informal English, they became more familiar with informal expressions. They felt they were more fluent in informal situations than in the past (15.4%).

S26: Compared to last year, when a word came out every now and then, so I spoke slowly, slowly, I am now much more fluent; I speak much better in English, also thanks to listening to others. *(S26: Rispetto all'anno scorso, in cui usciva una parola ogni tanto, quindi parlavo piano, lentamente, ora sono molto più fluent, cioè parlo molto meglio in inglese, anche grazie all'ascolto degli altri.)*

A better fluency has been seen even in an improved pronunciation (3.8%) as well as in the new positive attitude the students had in the curricular class (3.8%) and during the gameplay while planning actions with the other players (19.2%).

S16: I definitely also feel a bit more confident in speaking. Sometimes in the game there are people who talk to each other in a difficult way and you feel a bit in awe talking to them. In this I felt improved. *(S16: Sicuramente anche nel parlare mi sento un po' più sicuro. A volte nel gioco capitano persone che parlano tra di loro in una maniera difficile e ti senti un po' in soggezione a parlare con loro. In questo mi sono sentito migliorato.)*

S14: Let's say I'm not ashamed now. Before, I was really ashamed, especially of pronunciation, so I couldn't express myself well in English. I was afraid of being judged in class for pronunciation or simply by the teacher. *(S14: Diciamo ora non mi vergogno. Prima avevo veramente molta vergogna, soprattutto della pronuncia, quindi non riuscivo ad esprimermi bene in inglese. Avevo paura di essere giudicata in classe per la pronuncia o semplicemente dalla professoressa.)*

S8: At the beginning of the course, I couldn't speak English fluently, but afterwards, as I went on with the lessons, with the assignments, with speaking online as well, it slowly got better. I felt it even now, even with English in class, with the interventions I now do. *(S8: All'inizio del corso non è che parlavo inglese in modo fluente, però dopo, avanti con le lezioni, con le cose assegnate per casa, con il parlare anche online, piano piano è andata meglio. L'ho sentito anche adesso, anche proprio con inglese in classe, con gli interventi che ora faccio.)*

As for the listening skill, all the students told they could see some improvements because they could easier understand the other players during their gameplay (76.9%), and they could better identify English varieties (23.1%):

S3: [...] yes, it certainly improved, also because it made us learn not only the various words but also their pronunciation, so various pronunciations; I also learnt how to interpret the pronunciation of a gamer that

may not be perfect. (S3: [...] sì, di certo è migliorato, anche perché ci ha fatto apprendere oltre i vari vocaboli anche la pronuncia di questi ultimi, quindi varie pronunce; ho imparato anche ad interpretare la pronuncia di un videogiocatore che può anche non essere perfetta.)

S4: When we watched the videos, there were different people from different countries, so we heard different accents. Each time maybe the way they spoke, the accent, the speed changed. (S4: Quando vedevamo i video, vi erano diverse persone che venivano da diverse nazioni, quindi sentivamo diversi accenti. Ogni volta magari cambiava il modo in cui parlavano, l'accento, la velocità.)

Once established the students found some improvements in listening and speaking activities, it was important to know what activity/ies helped them more to improve. Three activities were identified as helpful at speaking fluently: You-Tuber assignment (53.8%), class debates (34.6%), and describing pictures and *Minecraft* biomes (11.5%).

The You-Tuber activity seemed to be the most comprehensive and engaging. The opportunity they had to revise their performances made the students more aware of their ability at speaking and helped them to correct their mistakes in order to improve their videos. Although sometimes it was hard (due mainly to a lack of knowledge at editing the videos), the students did not give up and were pretty satisfied of their works.

S18: In the You-tuber video, because in the video you have to try to speak with a certain fluency, you have to be very prepared; if while shooting the video you saw that you were speaking not very fluently, then you could also redo it and thus be able to improve it. (S18: Nel video You-tuber, perché tu nel video devi cercare di parlare con una certa fluidità, devi essere sempre molto preparato; se girando il video vedevi che parlavi in mani era non molto fluida, allora potevi anche rifarlo e quindi riuscire a migliorarlo.)

Speaking English during the meetings, for the whole session, gave the students the opportunity to give their opinions on topics they really enjoyed. They all and always had something to say. Students were spurred to speak:

S26: Hearing others speak in English, I took a little more courage and started to speak too. (S26: Sentendo gli altri parlare in inglese, ho preso un pochino più coraggio e ho iniziato a parlare anche io.)

Some of the activities were based on describing *Minecraft* biomes as well as spotting the differences between two *Minecraft* screenshots. Because of the basic game vocabulary students already had, they were able to interact and enrich their basic knowledge with new words from the other gamers and the teacher:

S15: Describing the picture helped me a lot in speaking and learning the positions (right, above, left). Thanks to that I can now describe something more easily. (S15: Descrivere l'immagine mi ha aiutato molto a parlare e a imparare le posizioni (destra, sopra, sinistra). Grazie a quello ora so descrivere un qualcosa più facilmente.)

S12: The activity that helped me the most was when we had to make descriptions of places because we had to make a speech. (S12: L'attività che mi ha aiutato di più è stata quando dovevamo fare delle descrizioni dei luoghi, perché bisognava comunque fare un discorso.)

Fluency and listening comprehension have been considered strictly connected in the way students could enhance their skills. The chance to interact with friends and teacher helped them a lot experience the language, to learn, and to face difficulties to overcome.

S22: When you are talking to a partner, to a teacher, not only you have to train yourself to understand and to make what you say more understandable for the partner, but you also have to interpret what the partner says in the right way, to understand, to comprehend and many other things; so listening and speaking absolutely top. (S22: *Quando tu stai parlando con un compagno, con un insegnante, non devi soltanto allenarti a farti capire e a rendere quel che dici più comprensibile per il compagno, ma devi anche allenarti a interpretare quel che dice e il compagno nella maniera giusta, capire, comprendere e tante altre cose; quindi listening e speaking assolutamente top.*)

S26: When we had videos to analyse, I had to listen to them, understand them, and then create a speech of my own to tell the class. Because of this, fluency also improved. (S26: *Quando dovevamo vedere dei video da analizzare, li dovevo ascoltare, capire, per poi creare un discorso tutto mio per raccontarlo alla classe. Per questo è migliorata anche la fluency.*)

As for the listening skills, in particular, they were enhanced thanks to different activities, according to the students. What they identified as successful tasks to help them at better understanding other people speaking were:

- how the streamers' gameplays were segmented into sections in order to be commented and analysed (50%):

S10: Each time we watched a video, divided into several parts, and you asked comprehension questions on a certain part. This in my opinion improved listening a lot. (S10: *Ogni volta che vedevamo un video, diviso in più parti, e lei faceva domande di comprensione su una certa parte. Questo secondo me ha migliorato molto il listening.*)

- the teacher's attitude to make things easier to understand, giving some hints or explaining some idioms (19.2%):

S7: You always spoke in English and if someone did not understand, you could explain it. Certainly the things I didn't understand, you would explain them to me. I would write down new terms. (S7: *Lei parlava sempre in inglese e se qualcuno non capiva, lei riusciva a spiegarlo. Sicuramente quelle cose che non capivo, me le spiegava. Io mi segnavo i termini nuovi.*)

- the class debates on specific topics on video games. As students wanted to give their opinions, they had to be quicker at understanding the whole discourse more than any single word (15.4%).

S16: Before, I used to think a lot more, when I heard English being spoken, I used to think a lot more about each word. Hearing my other classmates speak or even you, I learnt to listen more to the general discourse; that is, if before I didn't understand a word, I might pause and think about it; but now it's much more fluid listening too, that is, I understand the meaning and also the sentences. (S16: *Prima pensavo molto di più, quando sentivo parlare in inglese, ragionavo molto di più su ogni parola. Sentendo parlare anche gli altri miei compagni o anche lei, ho imparato ad ascoltare più il discorso generale; cioè, se prima non capivo una parola, magari mi soffermavo e ci pensavo; invece adesso è molto più fluido anche l'ascolto, cioè il senso lo capisco e anche le frasi.*)

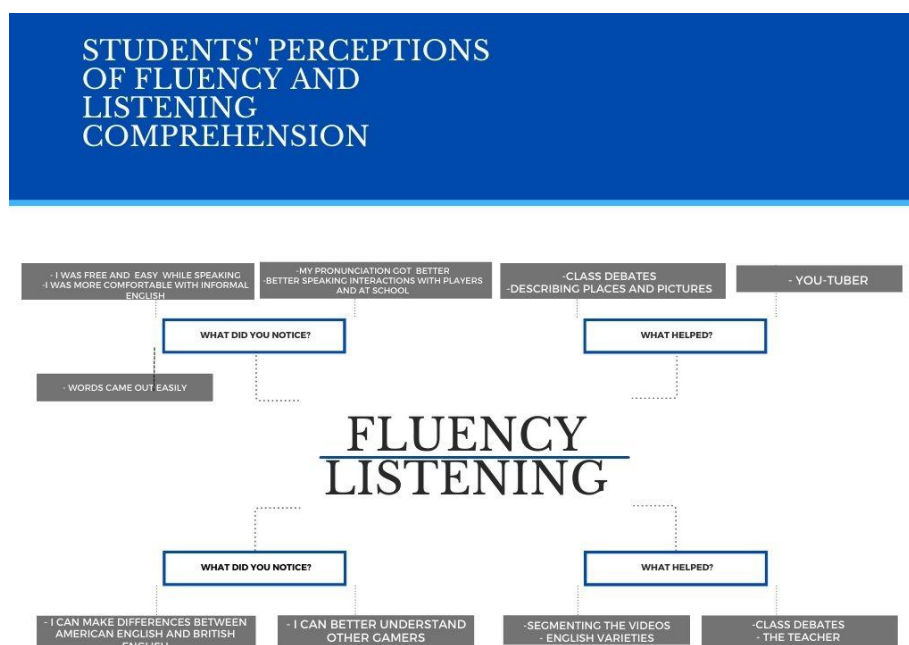
- watching videos with English varieties (11.5%). Some students told they improved their ability at understanding and finding differences between American English and British English:

S1: Before I couldn't really understand the difference between a British and an American pronunciation and also some of the idioms. So in listening it was definitely a useful thing to be able to understand the differences. (S1: Prima io non riuscivo a capire bene la differenza tra una pronuncia britannica e una americana e anche alcuni modi di dire che sono diversi. Quindi nel listening sicuramente è stata una cosa utile per riuscire a comprendere le differenze.)

Figure 20 shows students' perceptions about fluency and listening comprehension and outlines how the students noticed their improvements and what helped them to improve these skills.

Figure 20.

Students' perceptions of fluency and listening comprehension after the implementation with a list of activities that helped them to improve.



Regarding the course design, no specific grammar tasks were designed; it means there wasn't any activity planned with a grammar focus in particular. Students only received feedback on their homework with some grammar tips wherever they made a grammar mistake or an immediate oral correction after their speaking (only if the mistake could compromise the overall meaning of their speech). Moreover, I helped the students build correct sentences when they asked for my help, and I also gave them different options to talk or write about their topics.

This premise is necessary to understand some of the results which were quite unexpected.

Actually, despite the course design and tasks, the grammar factor appeared in different circumstances during the interviews. For this reason, it deserves further consideration.

Figure 21 shows the students' perceptions of possible improvements in grammar after the implementation.

Figure 21.

Students' perceptions of grammar after the implementation.



Many students (61.5%) found they improved their grammar skills after the implementation, thanks to the teacher's grammar corrections and the low affective filter during speaking:

S24: Yes, undoubtedly, I have learnt, because thanks to the various tasks I have done and the various corrections I have received from those tasks, I have fine-tuned some things that were perhaps slightly confusing before, for example, the use of the articles. (S24: Sì, indubbiamente ho imparato, perché tra i vari compiti che ho svolto e le varie correzioni che mi sono arrivate da quei compiti, ho messo a punto alcune cose che magari prima erano leggermente confuse, per esempio l'uso degli articoli.)

S7: I definitely learnt a lot more terms, even when you would rightly correct me when I got a sentence wrong. The things I got wrong, then I would write down and correct them. Often in class, a teacher doesn't correct you, also because I don't expose myself in class, whereas here I was freer, so I would say a sentence, I would get it wrong, you would correct me, I would write things down and I definitely learnt more grammar here than maybe at school, that's it. (S7: Ho sicuramente imparato molti più termini, anche quando lei mi correggeva giustamente, quando sbagliavo a fare una frase. Le cose che sbagliavo me le segnavo e le correggevo. Spesso in classe una professoressa non ti corregge, anche perché io non mi espongo in classe, mentre qui ero più libero, quindi dicevo una frase, la sbagliavo, lei mi correggeva, io mi segnavo le cose ed ho imparato sicuramente più grammatica qui che forse a scuola, ecco.)

S9: Yes, because even though it was a game, we still spoke English and when we did the 'homework', which we sent you, it was still in English and you helped us with some corrections; so the grammar was always there. (S9: Sì, perché, anche se si tratta di un gioco, comunque noi parliamo inglese e quando facevamo i "compiti", che le inviavamo, erano comunque in inglese e lei ci aiutava con alcune correzioni; quindi la grammatica era sempre presente.)

What the students say helped with “grammar” was the awareness of having a public (the other students) to talk. The students were more careful at speaking to be correctly understood:

S25: In grammar, yes, especially when we had to talk to each other, so making a speech on the spot and precisely paying attention to the grammatical aspect. This commitment to speaking in front of so many people also made us focus on grammar. The knowledge that we have an 'audience', even if it is online, is very important, it spurs us to make a speech correctly; so in my opinion this attention to grammar increases. *(S25: Nella grammatica sì, soprattutto nel momento in cui dovevamo parlare fra di noi, quindi creare sul momento un discorso e appunto avere attenzione per l'aspetto grammaticale. Questo impegno anche nel parlare davanti a tante persone ci ha fatto focalizzare anche sulla grammatica. La consapevolezza di avere un "pubblico", anche se online, è molto importante, ci sprona a voler fare un discorso fatto in maniera corretta; quindi, secondo me, questa attenzione nei confronti della grammatica aumenta.)*

Among those who didn't recognize any grammar skill improvements, some students (26.9%) referred they enriched their vocabulary more than their grammar:

S2: More than the actual writing, I learnt new terms that I didn't use before and can now use. Not so much the language structure, but the contextualisation of the vocabulary. *(S2: Più che lo scrivere vero e proprio, ho imparato nuovi termini che prima non usavo e che adesso posso usare. Non tanto la struttura, ma la contestualizzazione del vocabolario.)*

Students think grammar accuracy is not important for oral interactions, especially during gameplay:

S4: Not really grammar rules. Grammar is simply not too closely related to speaking, in my opinion. One can know how to speak but then not know the rules of grammar. We did have a few hints, but I don't remember a single grammar rule being discussed. *(S4: Proprio regole di grammatica no. Semplicemente la grammatica non è troppo legata allo speaking, secondo me. Uno può saper parlare ma poi non sapere le regole di grammatica. Noi qualche accenno l'abbiamo fatto, però non mi ricordo neanche una regola di grammatica trattata.)*

S19: [...] it(grammar) is not something that is taken care of so much on the Internet. People write in a way that is much more comfortable than correct. In our course, I learnt new words. *(S19: non è un aspetto che su Internet viene curato così tanto. La gente scrive in un modo molto più comodo che corretto. Nel nostro corso ho imparato nuove parole.)*

Vocabulary, more than grammar, seems to help fluency. The more you have a rich vocabulary, the more you'll have the chance to use grammar to communicate your thoughts. According to S13, *Gameful English* taught him how to use grammar, not to acquire grammar skills:

Actually, the things that the course has helped me with the most are my readiness to respond and the way I argue; the thing I also noticed at school is that, after this course, I improved my conversation a lot. At school we study a lot of verbs and grammar, in general; but then when a person actually has to speak, to converse, we don't have the vocabulary to express ourselves. This course helped me not so much to know grammar but to use it. *(S13: In realtà le cose in cui mi ha aiutato di più il corso sono proprio la prontezza nel rispondere e il modo di argomentare; la cosa di cui mi sono accorto anche a scuola è che, dopo questo corso, ho migliorato molto la conversazione. A scuola si studiano molto i verbi e la grammatica, in generale; però poi quando una persona deve realmente parlare, conversare, non ha i vocaboli per esprimersi. Questo corso mi è servito non tanto per conoscere la grammatica, più che altro per usarla.)*

2. The role of the teacher as a coach	
3. The relation between video games and English	
4. Room for speaking	
5. An alternative way to meet other people	2. Social aspects
6. The relationship with others	
7. The structure of the course and the principles behind it (gamification)	3. The structure of the course
8. Competence transferability	4. Personal outcomes
9. Vocabulary acquisition	
10. Negative feedback (students who didn't like the course)	5. Negative feedback

1. The method.

Almost all the students (96.1%) enjoyed the methodology and emphasised the novelty of the course and its practical approach, the use of video games as a teaching tool, the role of the teacher as a sort of guidance in the process (and not a censor!), and the possibility to speak freely, without the pressure of the evaluation, about things they were really interested in:

S13: In general, I liked the approach of this course, because it is different from the typical teaching methods of the Italian school. I was not only able to deepen my knowledge of the English language but actually experience different techniques that I think they will also work in the future, in Italy. (S23: *Mi è piaciuta molto l'idea di base del corso. ovvero quella di poter imparare una nuova lingua attraverso semplicemente giocare a un videogioco.*)

S5: It's a different learning method. We are used to the English class where we all sit at our desks, silent, and wait for the teacher to call us; or we don't speak and wait for the teacher to tell us something. Instead, this course was much more interactive, much more engaging. (S5: *E' un metodo di apprendimento differente. Noi siamo abituati alla lezione di inglese in cui siamo tutti seduti ai banchi, zitti in silenzio, e aspettiamo che la prof ci chiami; oppure non parliamo e aspettiamo che la prof ci dica qualcosa. Invece questo corso è stato molto più interattivo, molto più coinvolgente.*)

S10: Perhaps it was the first time that the school combined some teaching with something that is important to us kids, namely playing. (S10: *Forse è stata la prima volta in cui la scuola abbia unito qualche insegnamento a qualcosa che per noi ragazzi è importante, cioè giocare.*)

S22: The thing I enjoyed the most was learning by playing. [...] I improved my English by having fun without thinking, as you do in school, only about grades; here I was only thinking about fun. (S22: *La cosa che mi ha divertito di più è stata imparare giocando. [...] Ho migliorato il mio inglese divertendomi senza pensare, come si fa a scuola, solamente ai voti; invece qua pensavo solamente al divertimento.*)

S7: It is more pleasant to study English this way and it gives Minecraft an extra utility, because as fun as it can be, it is still a game. Instead, this way you combine the useful with the enjoyable. (S7: *E' più*

piacevole fare inglese in questo modo e si dà un'utilità in più a Minecraft, perchè per quanto possa essere divertente, riman e comunque un gioco. Invece così si unisce l'utile al dilettevole.)

To deepen the assessment of the method, students were asked to identify possible tedious activities they had met during the implementation. Most (65.4%) could not relate about any boring activities.

S10 found the course challenging for his own learning; he said it was a chance to understand and learn something new and something more:

Honestly, I found myself captured by the challenge that was there. Many things I could also perceive as a challenge, maybe not a challenge between us, but a challenge for me, a challenge for myself, so to learn something, to understand more. (S10: Sinceramente mi trovavo catturato dalla sfida che c'era. Molte cose riuscivo anche a percepirlle diciamo come una sfida, magari non una sfida tra di noi, ma una sfida per me, una sfida per me stesso, qui ndi per imparare qualcosa, a capire di più.)

The disappointment some students (15.4%) expressed was towards the game *Minecraft*. They would have chosen another one to play during the implementation. Therefore, their effort during the online activities with me, and much more with the homework, was seriously compromised. They recognized the positive value of the course and the fact they liked it. At the same time, they highlighted the fact that there was no pleasure in playing a game you don't like. That is the reason why sometimes they got bored.

S26: Eh, playing Minecraft, because I usually vary a bit; sometimes I play this, sometimes that. Playing Minecraft for a few hours a week, though, not doing it of my own free will, was maybe a bit bad. (S26: Eh, giocare a Minecraft, perché io solitamente vario un po'; a volte gioco a questo, a volte a quello. Giocare a Minecraft per qualche ora a settimana, però, non facendolo per mia spontanea volontà, quello forse era un po' brutto.)

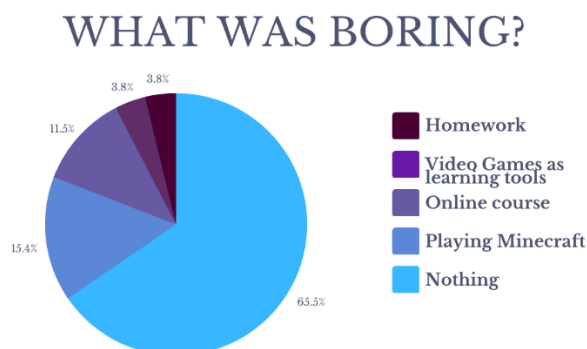
Another reason for concern was to have online classes. A few students (11.5%) in particular, though the sentiment was general, noted how the distance modality was sometimes dull. Just thinking about possible problems with the internet connection was perceived as a very annoying limit.

Other complaints were given by S13, who thought homework was tiresome, and S8, who felt using video games as learning tools was something comparable to school homework and, for this reason, quite boring to do:

S8: Considering video games from the point of view of learning, nothing, this view made it all look like homework and therefore detracted a little from what was the pleasure one had in doing things usually done in the spare time. (S8: Vedere I videogiochi dal punto di vista dell'apprendimento, niente, questa visione rendeva il tutto come i compiti per casa e quindi sminuiva un po' quello che era il piacere che uno aveva nel fare delle cose che di solito si fanno nel tempo libero.)

Figure 23 shows what students found boring during the implementation.

Figure 23.
Students' evaluations of possible boring activities.



Once established the general positive feeling towards *Gameful English* course, another crucial aspect was about the affordability of the course. When the students were asked if they had found any difficulties of any type (understanding the structure of the course, the interaction with the teacher, the language, etc.), their answers (80.8%) were pretty much the same: the course was actually affordable.

Although they could identify something which was a little harder, this did not compromise their participation and the effort to attend the classes and do the assignments. The course was affordable even for those students who were not so good at English:

S7: I've never been very bright in English, I've never done very well. But I haven't found any difficulties, so it's a very nice thing: I, who may not be able to speak English well, I don't understand it well, anyway I haven't found any difficulties, so it means that it's certainly structured very well for everyone. Anyone can participate, and anyone can stay without panicking. (S7: *Io in inglese non sono mai stato molto splendente, non sono mai andato molto bene. però non ho trovato difficoltà, quindi è una cosa molto bella: io che magari non so parlare bene l'inglese, non lo capisco bene, comunque non ho trovato difficoltà, quindi significa che sicuramente è strutturato molto bene per tutti. Chiunque può partecipare, chiunque può stare senza andare in panico.*)

Few students (7.7%) had problems at finding other English-speaking gamers who wanted to play with them using vocal chats. When you play *Minecraft* Multiplayer, it is not easy making friends because there are thousands of players sharing the same platform:

S14: The only thing I had a hard time doing was finding someone who spoke English, who was willing to 'stay' on discord, where we could talk and play together. It took few weeks, even though I had spent the whole summer looking for someone. I found a German in the end. (S14: *L'unica cosa che ho avuto difficoltà a fare è stato trovare qualcuno che parlasse inglese, che fosse disposto "a stare" su discord, dove ci sentivamo per giocare insieme. Ci ho messo un po' di settimane, anche se avevo passato tutta l'estate a cercare qualcuno. Ho trovato un tedesco, alla fine.*)

According to S11, the hardest part was to change his mindset about learning English. He didn't need grammar rules anymore, because the focus was on listening, idioms, and speaking:

The thing that was a bit more complex, not difficult, was perhaps getting into the spirit of having to learn English through a different method, and therefore no longer with the grammar rule, but more from a listening point of view, understanding the mechanics of English, then also reusing the idiomatic phrases we met; therefore, more spoken English than applied rules. That was the only difficulty. (S11: *La cosa un po più complessa, non difficile, forse era entrare nell'ottica del dover imparare l'inglese tramite un metodo diverso, e quindi di non più con la regola di grammatica, ma più da un punto di vista dell'ascolto, capire la meccanica dell'inglese, quindi poi riutilizzare anche frasi idiomatiche, che ci sono capitate, e quindi da un punto di vista più parlato che come regola applicata. Questa era l'unica difficoltà.*)

Other difficult aspects were quite subjective; one student complained about the schedule which was not easy to fit into his personal life and another one admitted he found hard some listening activities about the gameplay of American YouTubers.

Finally, some answers are worth to be mentioned. 15.4% of the students defined this course as not difficult but demanding. They noted the effort required to do the assignments as well as speak English during the lessons:

S21: [...] speaking an entire lesson in English was not difficult but demanding. It was nice even if it was challenging, because anyway speaking in English, which is not our language, is not very easy. (S21: *[...] relazionarsi tutta un'intera lezione in inglese non è che sia stato difficile, ma impegnativo. È stato bello anche se impegnativo, perché comunque parlare in inglese, che non è nella nostra lingua, non è molto facile.*)

S19: Not difficult, maybe challenging, because doing homework required commitment; but not difficult. (S19: *Difficile no, forse impegnativo, perché fare i compiti richiedeva il suo impegno; però di difficile no.*)

The students were also asked different questions to compare *Gameful English* and the traditional school methods; their answers were useful to obtain more insights about the method.

Results show *Gameful English* received more positive feedback from the students than the traditional school method. Students felt more relaxed and confident in speaking English (Figure 24), as the large majority (85.2%) admitted; moreover, they had more chances to speak English in a gameful context (70.4%) than with the traditional methods (Figure 25).

Figure 24.

Students' perceptions on speaking activities comparing Gameful English and the school method. Feelings.

I felt more relaxed and confident speaking English with this method than with previous methods - *Mi sono sentito/a più rilassato/a e sicuro/a nel parlare in inglese con questo metodo rispetto ai precedenti*

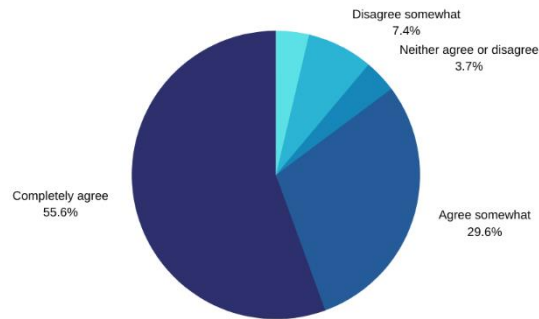
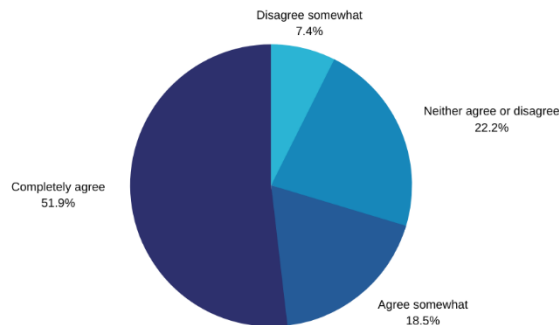


Figure 25.

Students' perceptions on speaking activities comparing Gameful English and the school method. Oral interactions.

I spoke more English in this project than with previous methods - *Ho parlato di più in inglese con questo metodo rispetto ai precedenti*

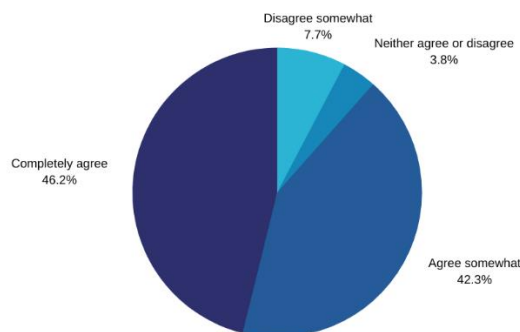


Gameful English was also considered more learning challenging than the standard school course. Positive results show that almost half of the students (46.2%) totally agreed with the statement and almost the other half (42.3%) agreed somewhat. Nobody completely disagreed (Figure 26).

Figure 26.

Students' comparison between Gameful English and the EFL school course.

I found gamification more learning challenging than with previous methods - *Ho trovato la gamification più sfidante nell'apprendimento rispetto ai metodi passati*

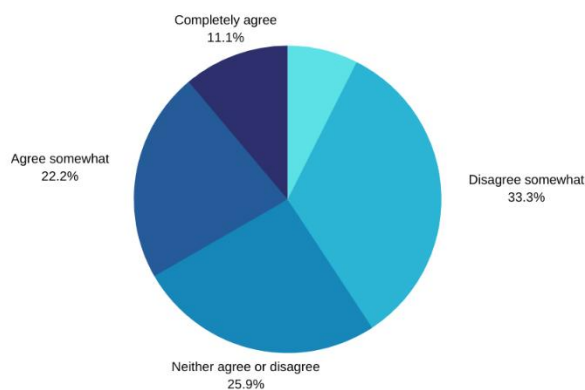


Despite the limited contribution to grammar *Gameful English* could give to the students, as commented before in section 4.3.1, 40.7% of the students thought they could learn more grammar with *Gameful English* than with the traditional method. The results show a wide range of answers, as shown in Figure 27. 33.3% of the students thought they could learn more English grammar with traditional methods, while 25.9% of them could not make a decision. The remaining 40.7% of the students thought they had more chances to learn grammar with *Gameful English*. Answers covered all five Likert scale points.

Figure 27.

Students' evaluations on grammar comparing Gameful English and the EFL school course.

I could learn more English grammar with previous methods -
Sono riuscito/a ad apprendere più grammatica con i corsi tradizionali rispetto a questo

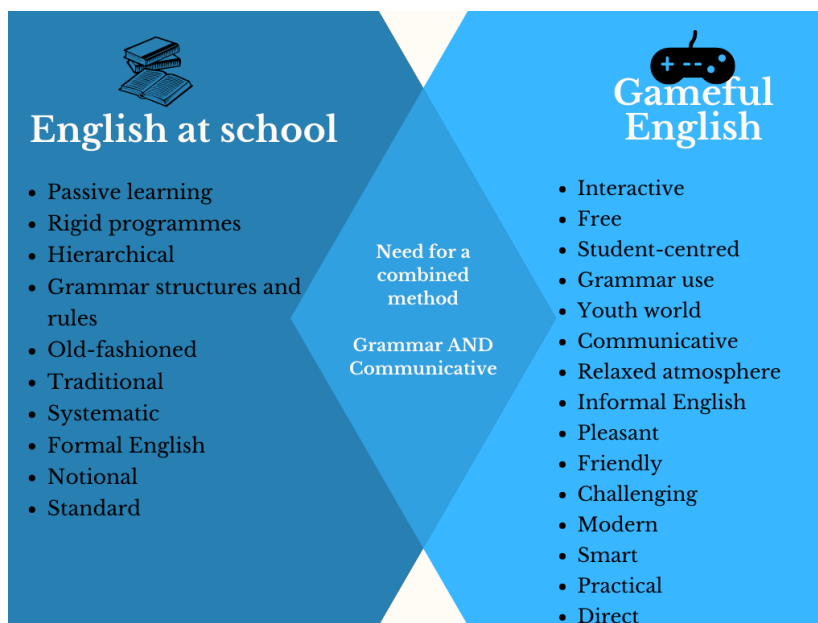


During the interviews and the focus groups, students were asked to make more specific comparisons about the linguistic and the social approaches their school course had towards EFL and *Gameful English*. They were invited to use adjectives to compare them.

Figure 28 shows the adjectives most mentioned by the students on the two different methods.

Figure 28.

Students' comparison between *Gameful English* and the EFL school course.



Although *Gameful English* was really appreciated for its innovative, direct, communicative approach, the students recognized the importance of a systematic and structured method with a grammar focus. The negative adjectives used to describe the traditional method were not aimed to reduce its validity but to point out its limits. Students would like to have both the methods mixed in their school curriculum as they think accuracy is as important as fluency and communication:

S6: I would juxtapose this course with the school, like two parallel lines that ultimately help me together: some grammar and some speaking. (S26: *Io accosterei questo corso alla scuola, come due linee parallele che però alla fine insieme mi aiutano: un po' di grammatica e un po' di speaking.*)

What the students clearly notice in their school curriculum is a lack of the communicative approach in favour of grammar rules and structures first, and then to English literature. They feel they are missing real English to communicate.

S26: English at school is very systematic, so there's not really a direct approach; that is, you learn one thing and then you repeat it; but up to a certain point you understand it, because you won't use all the things you learnt; it's not a conversation between friends. A book may help you up to a certain point. They are written words in black and white, static, whereas in a video game there are speeches combined with animations, which you understand better because of the animation, so you can understand the overall meaning. (S26: *L'inglese a scuola è molto sistematico, quindi non c'è proprio un approccio diretto; cioè una cosa la impari e poi la ripeti; però fino a un certo punto la comprendi, perché varie cose non le utilizzerai; non è un discorso tra amici. Un libro fino ad un certo punto ti aiuta. Sono parole scritte in bianco e nero, statiche, mentre in un videogioco ci sono discorsi uniti ad animazioni, che capisci proprio grazie all'animazione, e quindi riesci a capire in generale la frase.*)

S16: At school there is a purely didactic approach, precisely in the sense of teaching the language; those courses are very useful and very focused on teaching the language, but after a while even the mind can

no longer learn things, after an hour and a half of rules... Whereas this way (*Gameful English*) in my opinion is much better, much easier, much lighter. (S16: *A scuola c'è un approccio prettamente didattico, proprio nel senso di insegnare la lingua; sono molto utili quei corsi e molto focalizzati sull'insegnamento della lingua, però dopo un po' anche la mente non riesce più ad apprendere cose, dopo un'ora e mezza di regole... Mentre così (Gameful English) secondo me è molto meglio, molto più facile, molto più leggero.*)

Students were not the only ones who noticed school methods are too grammar focused and need a more communicative approach. One of the teachers admitted the same:

We do a lot of grammar, but little room is given to speaking because we teachers are anxious to finish the syllabus, and to let students to grasp all the rules... instead, in the end, the kids emphasise the importance, which is true, especially for the foreign language, of speaking. (*Noi facciamo tanta grammatica, viene dato poco spazio allo speaking, perchè noi insegnanti siamo in ansia di finire il programma, che loro acquisiscano tutte le regole...invece poi, alla fine, i ragazzi ti sottolineano l'importanza, cosa che è vera, soprattutto per la lingua straniera, di parlare.*)

Students appreciated the communicative approach because they think it is more functional to the real language. It was more useful when they had to share ideas and talk about everyday life than a grammar approach. They want to learn the language they will actually use when abroad:

S17: In my opinion, such a course is much better, because an English course in a classroom is a standard English course, the one with written books, the one with rules. Instead, a course like this teaches you how to speak English; maybe if you go abroad you need it more, because you understand how people speak; in a school course even the listening is learner-fitted, people speak of course slowly, not like you normally do. *Gameful English* is stimulating, because it introduces you to an aspect of English that I've actually never seen, maybe only from songs, but not too much. (S17: *Secondo me è molto meglio un corso di questo tipo, perché un corso di inglese in classe è un corso di inglese standard, quello scritto sui libri, quello delle regole. Invece un corso di questo genere ti insegna a parlare l'inglese; magari se vai all'estero ti serve di più, perchè capisci come parlano le persone; in un corso scolastico anche i listening sono tutti preparati, parlano ovviamente lentamente, non come si fa normalmente. Gameful English è stimolante, perché ti fa conoscere un aspetto dell'inglese che effettivamente non ho mai visto, magari solo dalle canzoni, ma neanche troppo.*)

The chance to speak with real English speakers gave the possibility to experience the real language, what students think they miss at school:

S24: The 'traditional' approach to English at school is more 'formal', because there, the aim is only to learn the language as well as possible; in *Gameful English*, on the other hand, in addition to this aim, which remains basic and the main one, there is also the opportunity to relate to other people and thus to get to know the language better, because in fact speaking with native speakers is the best way to learn a language. (S24: *L'approccio "tradizionale", quello che viene fatto a scuola, dell'inglese, è più "formale", perché là si punta solamente ad imparare al meglio la lingua; invece in Gameful English, oltre a questo scopo qui che resta comunque di base e quello principale, ci sta comunque il permetterti di relazionarti con altre persone e quindi anche poter conoscere meglio la lingua, perché di fatto parlare con persone madrelingua comunque è il miglior modo per imparare una lingua.*)

The difficulty they encounter when facing the "real language" is that they feel uncomfortable because the language they learn at school is old-fashioned and traditional. School teaches English, *Gameful English* teaches how to speak English, according to student 22. Although *Gameful English* was not grammar-focused, it may help a lot facing the real language.

S22: The school teaches you English. The course teaches you how to speak English, how to make yourself understood. At school they teach you grammar, they teach you vocabulary, they teach you a lot of little things that are necessary, they are absolutely fundamental, but very often the kid who in the Italian school has a grade of 10 arrives abroad and can't make out two sentences one after the other. That's because we're not used to speaking it at all; whereas a course like that (*Gameful English*) gives you less preparation for grammar, certainly so, because I do a lot of it at school, but by speaking a lot during the course, certainly when you get abroad you find it easier, because you've already been used to speaking in a certain way. (S22: *La scuola ti insegna l'inglese. Il corso ti insegna a parlare inglese, a farti capire. A scuola ti insegnano la grammatica, ti insegnano il vocabolario, ti insegnano tante piccole cose che servono, sono fondamentali assolutamente, però molto spesso poi il ragazzo che nella scuola italiana ha 10 come voto arriva all'estero e non riesce a spicciare due frasi una dietro l'altra. Questo è perché non siamo abituati proprio a parlarlo; mentre invece un corso del genere (Gameful English) ti dà meno preparazione per quanto riguarda la grammatica, sicuramente così, perché a scuola ne faccio veramente tanta, però parlando tanto durante il corso, sicuramente quando arrivi all'estero ti riesce più facile, perché tu sei già stato abituato a parlare in una certa maniera.*)

At school students feel the hierarchical pressure of the teacher/student roles and it limits the possibility to make mistakes, and so to learn:

S9: At school, we have a real teacher, it's a bit ugly to say, but there is more of a hierarchy; instead here we can relate better, be calmer, easy-going, and learn English more easily than at school. (S9: *A scuola noi abbiamo un vero e proprio insegnante, un po' è brutto dirlo, però vi è più una gerarchia; invece qui ci riusciamo a relazionarci meglio, a essere più tranquilli, più sciolti e a imparare l'inglese più facilmente rispetto a scuola.*)

School “passive learning” was mentioned by different students (30.8%). *Gameful English* made studying fun and the students had the perception learning was more affordable:

S12: What has been done with *Gameful English* is a relationship with English that is not passive, as it can be at school, i.e. where you have the book and study study study study read read. It's an attracting method, because at a certain point you don't feel like you are studying English, but simply playing; at that point you literally make the subject a game, a fun; then the weight of being there on a book for hours, hours reading writing, studying, you won't feel it anymore. (S12: *Quello che è stato fatto con Gameful English è un rapporto con l'inglese non passivo, come può essere a scuola, cioè dove hai il libro e studia studia studia e studia leggi leggi leggi. E' stato un metodo che prende, perché ad un certo punto non ti sembra di studiare inglese, ma semplicemente di giocare; a quel punto tu letteralmente rendi la materia un gioco, un divertimento; allora il peso dello stare là sul suo libro ore ore a leggere scrivere, studiare, non lo senti più.*)

What many students wanted to share is about how they feel while learning: teachers ask, and they do what they ask. There's no dialectic, no challenge, no freedom. The students' perception towards *Gameful English* has been positive, especially for the student's engagement in the activities proposed and the freedom of personal expression which facilitated vocabulary acquisition too:

S2: The course we did is much more interactive than a regular class. In my opinion, you are more participative in this course than in a classroom lesson. (S2: *Il corso che abbiamo fatto è molto più interattivo rispetto ad una lezione normale. Secondo me in questo corso si è più partecipi rispetto ad una lezione in classe.*)

S14: In *Gameful English* we had a more 'friendly' approach. I felt understood in that sense, speaking English all the time. Speaking English in a school context, I never learnt all the vocabulary that I learnt with this course. (S14: *In Gameful English avevamo un approccio più "amichevole". Mi sono sentita capita in questo senso, parlando sempre in inglese. Parlando inglese a scuola, in quel contesto scolastico, non ho mai imparato tutti quei vocaboli che ho imparato con questo corso.*)

S15 sums up the general feeling of the group: it is easier to learn if you enjoy at the same time:

At school you do it because it is almost an obligation, that is, you have to do it. Even if it's boring, you still have to do it. This course is more fun than the traditional one and also easier. It is easier to learn if you have fun at the same time. (S15: *A scuola lo fai perché è quasi un obbligo, cioè lo devi fare. Anche se è noioso, comunque lo devi fare. Questo corso è più divertente rispetto a quello tradizionale e anche più facile. È più facile imparare se ti diverti allo stesso tempo.*)

2. Social aspects.

The social aspect had relevance too because, according to 34.6% of the students, it was important to be with other gamers and feeling part of a community.

S21: We felt free, we had fun. The idea of the game is also very nice, especially for us who often get together in the afternoon to play; it's nice, we feel right at home, in our own habitat. (S21: *Ci siamo sentiti liberi, ci siamo divertiti. Anche l'idea del gioco è molto bella, soprattutto per noi che ci ritroviamo spesso il pomeriggio a giocare; è bello, ci sentiamo appunto a casa, nel nostro habitat.*)

S3: We saw ourselves as 'all gamers', all people united by the same passion (S3: *Ci siamo visti "tutti gamer", tutte persone accomunate da una stessa passione.*)

S4, in particular, had fun meeting foreigners playing *Minecraft*. It was strange but awesome:

The fact that I could learn English, especially speaking, by playing, maybe even meeting other people; in fact, I had never done it, meeting someone outside of Italy who played *Minecraft*. I found it strange, but fun. (S4: *Il fatto che potessi imparare l'inglese, soprattutto lo speaking, giocando, magari conoscendo anche altre persone; infatti non lo avevo mai fatto, conoscere una persona al di fuori dell'Italia che giocasse a Minecraft. L'ho trovato strano, però divertente.*)

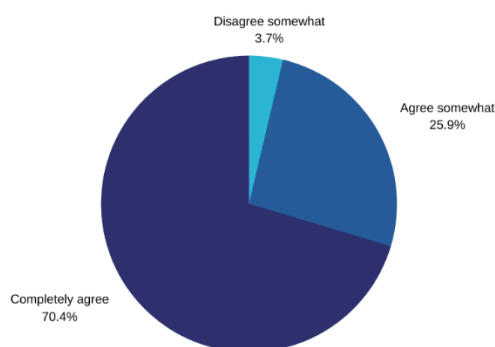
S12, as well, outlined the fact that the tasks were based on playing and establishing social relations with other players, even from other continents:

The possibility to have a task which implies playing, and maintaining social relationships with other players, whether you know them in person or online. Maybe even from other continents. (S12: *La possibilità di avere come compito quello di giocare e di tenere relazioni sociali con altri giocatori, sia che conosci di persona che conosciuti Online. Magari anche di altri continenti.*)

To understand the real impact of an action and verify the positive outcomes, the students were asked whether they would recommend this course to other students. The large majority (70.4%) would recommend it as a different learning method and 25.9% of the students had positive feelings toward its validity. Only one student partially disagreed (Figure 29).

Figure 29.
Students' opinions on the validity of Gameful English.

I would recommend this way of learning to other students
Raccomanderei questo tipo di apprendimento anche ad altri studenti



During the interviews, I also asked them to whom they would recommend this course, in order to get more details about the way the students lived the experience. The answers were different and some unexpected:

- Students who don't know much about video games (7.7%):

S17: I would recommend it especially to people who don't play video games; that's because maybe it can also work on the other side: I learnt English by playing, maybe another person already knowing a bit of English could learn to play, or, when they have learnt to play, they could still improve their English. It's still a win-win in both senses. So yes, I would recommend it, very much. *(S17: Lo raccomanderei soprattutto alle persone che non conoscono i videogiochi; questo perché magari può funzionare anche dall'altro lato: io giocando ho appreso l'inglese, magari un'altra persona conoscendo già un po' di inglese, potrebbe imparare a giocare, oppure, quando ha imparato a giocare, potrebbe comunque migliorare il suo inglese. È comunque una win win in tutti e due i sensi. Quindi sì, lo consiglieri, molto.)*

- Students who are not good at English (7.7%):

S18: I would recommend it because it helps you both in English and because it's a fun thing to do. I would recommend it especially to people who are not very good in English. Anyway, it improves yourself. *(S18: Lo consiglieri perché ti aiuta sia in inglese sia perché è una cosa divertente da fare. lo lo consiglieri soprattutto a chi non è molto bravo in inglese. Comunque ti migliora.)*

- Students who want to learn English in a non-traditional way (19.2%):

S12: I would recommend it to anyone who wants to experience something different from the standard school experience. *(S12: Lo raccomanderei a tutti quelli che vogliono provare una esperienza diversa da quella normale scolastica.)*

- Teenagers (7.7%) for their learning abilities and hobbies:

S7: I would recommend it to students, to an age group just like ours, that is, maybe from the beginning of high school up to third to fourth grade. Those are definitely the years when you have better learning, also better fluency. As far as gaming is concerned: it is precisely the age group that

enjoys playing the play station with friends, it is tied to games, to Youtube. I would recommend it especially to this age group also because it is important for English, to improve your skills for the future. (S7: *Lo raccomanderei agli studenti e lo raccomanderei forse a una fascia d'età proprio come la nostra, cioè forse dall'inizio del liceo fino al terzo- quarto. Sono sicuramente gli anni in cui si ha un apprendimento migliore, anche una fluidità migliore. Anche per quanto riguarda il gioco: è proprio la fascia d'età che si diverte con gli amici a giocare alla playstation, è legata ai giochi, a Youtube. Lo consiglierei soprattutto a questa fascia d'età anche perché è importante per l'inglese, per migliorarsi per il futuro.*)

- Gamers because they are more motivated at playing and so at talking to other players (23.1%):

S20: Definitely those who like video games, because those are definitely the people who are most encouraged to play anyway, so to talk. (S20: *Sicuramente a quelli a cui piacciono i videogiochi, perché comunque quelle sono sicuramente le persone più spronate a giocare, quindi a parlare.*)

Moreover, they prefer learning by doing, and *Gameful English* could be a practical solution:

S22: I would recommend it to the gamer student, who finds it very burdensome to study books; he could enhance what he does with books by using this course. (S22: *Lo consiglierei allo studente gamer, al quale pesa molto stare sui libri; così facendo il minimo indispensabile sui libri potrebbe valorizzare quel che fa sui libri utilizzando questo corso.*)

- Whoever has an intrinsic motivation to learn English (11.5%):

S19: Not just kids who have an interest in video games, but an interest in doing things. If you ask a boy to play a game he doesn't like, at least he needs an interest in doing things, in improving his English and using his time that way. (S19: *Non solo ai ragazzi che hanno un interesse nei videogiochi, ma interesse a fare le cose. Se chiedi ad un ragazzo di giocare ad un gioco che non gli piace, deve avere interesse a fare le cose, a migliorare l'inglese e ad utilizzare il suo tempo in questo modo.*)

- Insecure and shy students because continuous feedback may reassure them as well as talking to other players may improve their fluency because they feel free to interact within the group (11.5%):

S14: To people even like me, who are not confident enough in their fluency, but also in their own personal sphere. I felt really confident when I read that the “big theme” went well, that all the other tasks had gone well. People who are a bit 'fragile', because they carry the burden of not being enough FOR THEMSELVES, for their own person. (S14: *A persone anche come me, che comunque non sono abbastanza sicure della loro fluency, ma anche nell'ambito proprio personale. Mi sono sentita veramente sicura di me stessa quando ho letto che è andato bene il big theme, che erano andati bene tutti gli altri compiti. Le persone un po' "fragili", perché portano appunto il peso di non essere abbastanza PER LORO, per la loro persona.*)

S26: Definitely to those who are a bit shy, because, by playing, you loosen up talking to others and you feel part of a group. (S26: *Sicuramente a quelli un po' timidi, perché, giocando, ti sciogli nel parlare con gli altri e ti senti parte di un gruppo.*)

- Not a specific category because it depends on the interest of a person: some may like playing and learning, others just for curiosity (11.5%):

S3: It depends on the person, really. For example, some people would like to do this course either out of interest or because they want to play and learn at the same time. Then there might be other people who might be just against using a video game to learn, maybe they are even lonelier players than normal, so they want to play alone, and they are not interested in learning with a game. (S3:

Dipende dalla persona, in realtà. Per esempio, alcune persone vorrebbero fare questo corso o per interesse o perchè vogliono giocare e imparare allo stesso tempo. Poi potrebbero esserci altre persone che invece possono essere proprio contrarie ad utilizzare un videogioco per apprendere, magari sono giocatori ancora più solitari del normale; quindi, vogliono giocare da soli e a loro non interessa imparare con un gioco.)

3. The structure of the course.

The way the course was structured, as well as the use of the gamification principles, received positive feedback from 23.1% of the students when asked about what they enjoyed more about *Gameful English*. According to the students, gamification was also referred to as the method applied. They said that accomplishing a task made them aware of what they were doing:

S20: The fact we had to hand in 'homework' because, in the end, they were assignments on the game, still kept everyone's attention on the course. *(S20: Il fatto di dover consegnare dei "compiti", perché alla fine erano degli incarichi sul gioco, teneva comunque l'attenzione sul corso da parte di tutti.)*

Again, the tasks were incentives to pass the levels:

S7: I had a lot of fun doing the 'little tasks' you assigned us, the things we had to do to 'pass the level'. Also, the way you structured it, putting levels: level one, two, etc.. *(S7: Mi ha divertito un sacco fare i "compitini" che ci assegnava, le cose che appunto dovevamo fare per "superare il livello". Anche il modo il modo in cui lei lo ha strutturato, mettendo dei livelli: livello uno, due, ecc.)*

S3, for example, enjoyed the gamified structure as every single step was useful to reach the final goal:

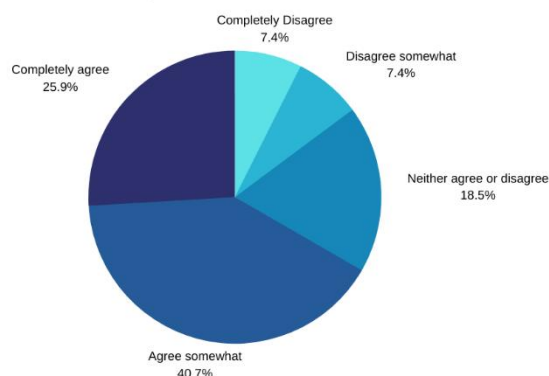
Another thing I really liked was the various goals that were set during the course, so almost like stages, like when you are climbing a mountain and you set stages to reach the top. *(S3: Un'altra cosa che mi è piaciuta molto sono stati i vari obiettivi che ci sono stati durante il corso, quindi quasi delle tappe, come quando si sta scalando una montagna e si stabiliscono appunto delle tappe per raggiungere la vetta.)*

As part of the general assessment of the course, evaluation plays a key role, as it is a fundamental part of the method and the way both students and teachers receive learning feedback. The students were asked if using points and gamification was fairer and more egalitarian than the standard school methods, as one of the most frequent reasons of complaining at school is about marks. The answers were different: although the tendency was to find gamification a way to promote equality and fairness (66.6%), some students couldn't make a decision (18.5%), and about 15% couldn't notice any differences compared to their standard courses (Figure 30).

Figure 30.

Students' comparisons between *Gameful English* and EFL school course. Fairness.

I think a gamified course is more fair and egalitarian than a standard course - *Penso che un corso gamificato sia più equo e chiaro rispetto ai normali corsi scolastici*



More than the half of the students defined this method as more egalitarian and fairer than the school one because they thought everybody had the same chances. Everybody could top the leaderboard. Moreover, even if the score was not high, students could change their strategy to get more points. It was always a growing path:

S24: With the ranking, we all had the same opportunities, in the sense that if that ranking was created it is because we can all reach the top. Even finishing at the bottom of the ranking doesn't mean that you did a bad job, or that you are not worth anything or anything like that, but that maybe you have to adopt a different method next time. So, let's say that the ranking implies a path of growth, even from the last position. (S24: *Con la classifica abbiamo avuto tutti le stesse opportunità, nel senso che, se quella classifica è stata creata è perché possiamo tutti raggiungere il primo posto. Anche finire all'ultimo posto nella classifica non vuol dire che si è fatto un lavoro sbagliato, o non si vale nulla o cose del genere, ma che magari si deve adottare un metodo diverso per la prossima volta. Quindi diciamo che la classifica implica un percorso in crescita, anche dall'ultimo posto.*)

4. Personal outcomes.

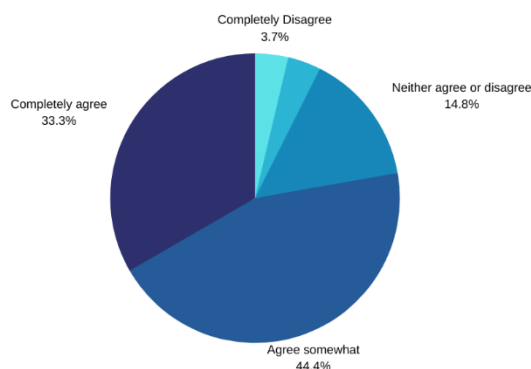
Some students (7.7%) highlighted the positive feedback this course had on their personal outcomes, as they could improve their vocabulary and apply the competence acquired (how to manage a text chat) to other games.

They think *Gameful English* may enhance vocabulary acquisition more than a traditional method (77.7%). In the survey, only 3.7% of the students disagreed and 14.8% of them couldn't make a decision (Figure 31).

Figure 31.

Students' perceptions of vocabulary acquisition comparing Gameful English and the EFL school course.

I think I learned more English vocabulary with this method than with previous methods - *Penso di aver appreso più vocaboli inglesi con questo metodo che con i precedenti*



Game vocabulary was useful to learn new words and expressions. Because students could identify words they already knew, it was easier to catch the general meaning of the sequence or activity, learning new words:

S7: I always had problems with listening and understanding. On the contrary, in this course I improved from this point of view, even when I saw others describing a picture or you explaining something, I felt more confident, I started to understand, also because they were basic terms or in any case related to a game, but I could understand them easily, so I would say I improved. (*S7: Ho sempre avuto problemi nell'ascoltare e nel capire. Anzi, in questo corso sono migliorato da questo punto di vista, anche quando vedevo gli altri descrivere un'immagine o comunque anche lei spiegare un qualcosa, io mi sentivo più sicuro, iniziavo a capire, anche perché erano sì termini diciamo più basilari o comunque legati a un gioco, che però comunque riuscivo a capire facilmente, quindi direi che sono migliorato.*)

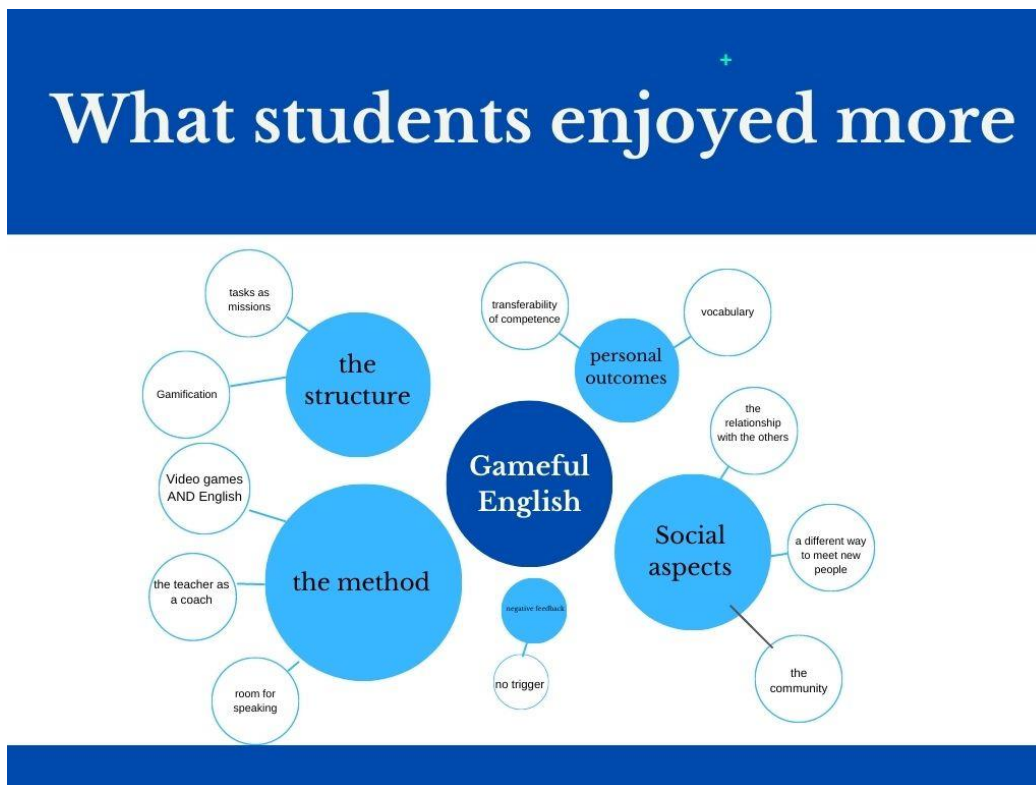
S15: We listened to videos of people playing and so it was easier and easier to understand what they were saying. It was gradually easier to understand. (*S15: Abbiamo ascoltato dei video di persone che giocavano e quindi era sempre più facile capire cosa dicevano. Era via via più facile capire.*)

5. Negative feedback.

Only one student declared this course did not motivate him. The reasons were not clear, as he was pleased with the idea of the course, the teacher, and the methodology. He just declared the course did not trigger him. He also said that at the beginning he took part because he thought it was only a seminar, not a course. He participated in 5 up to 10 lessons.

To sum up the results for this category, Figure 32 shows the positive aspects of the course the students could identify after the implementation of *Gameful English*.

Figure 32.
What students liked more about Gameful English.



4.1.5 Gamification: positive aspects

This category wanted to investigate how students perceived gamification as a motivational and assessment tool. This section points out the positive aspects the students could notice, considering it was the first time they experienced such method.

The students outlined different good reasons why gamification could be a valid motivational tool:

- It is a novelty, so it may motivate to experiment with a new method; it could give a new enthusiasm for learning because the score is always available to be checked, and fair as it is determined by the gamification grid:

S12: It might be more stimulating, it might certainly arouse curiosity, and therefore receive more attention, as opposed to old-fashioned systems that one doesn't even pay that much attention to, because that's how it is now, that's how it's done. [...] There are always quarrels about grading, about the lack of clarity of grades, which maybe are not even said right away, but have to be seen later on a register. Instead with a leaderboard, in a restricted environment like a class, which is updated day by day, there is greater clarity on the grade that will then be the final one, or at any rate on the progress that is being made. (S12: *Potrebbe risultare più stimolante, potrebbe incuriosire sicuramente, e quindi ricevere maggiore attenzione, al contrario di sistemi vecchio stampo a cui uno nemmeno da più di tanto attenzione,*

perché ormai è così, si fa così. [...] Ci sono sempre diverbi sulla valutazione, sulla poca chiarezza dei voti, che magari non vengono nemmeno detti subito, ma si devono vedere poi su un registro. Invece con una classifica, in un ambiente ristretto come una classe, che viene aggiornata giorno per giorno, c'è una maggiore chiarezza sul voto che poi sarà quello finale, o comunque sull'andamento che si sta avendo.)

The novelty of the score as a reward changes the perspective on the school marks which are seen as a sword pending on the student's head. Commitment is rewarded too; it means that even a mistake is part of the game, and they can learn from it to improve the score:

S26: This method undermines the psychological aspect of students, but in a strategic way, in the sense that with grades at school, we have a sword pointed at our head, but with a score as a reward, we have the motivation to do something, even if it frightens us, so instead of procrastinating or giving up at the start, we put ourselves on the line; moreover even through our mistake, we receive a reward for the effort, and then we learn from our mistake and we say: ah! so if I can get this thing I did wrong, right, I can get even more points next time; so in my opinion it's a very clever strategy. *(S26: Questo metodo va a minare quello che è l'aspetto psicologico degli studenti, però in maniera strategica, nel senso che con i voti a scuola abbiamo una spada puntata sulla testa; invece con un punteggio come reward, abbiamo intanto una motivazione per far qualcosa, anche se magari ci spaventa; quindi anziché procrastinare o arrendersi in partenza, ci mettiamo in gioco; ma poi perché, anche attraverso il nostro errore, comunque riceviamo una ricompensa per lo sforzo, e poi impariamo dal nostro stesso errore e ci diciamo: ah! quindi se riesco a far bene questa cosa che ho sbagliato, la prossima volta posso avere anche più punteggio; quindi secondo me è molto intelligente come strategia.)*

- It gives more feedback than the school standard course. There's evidence of the progress and eventually the problems. It is positive psychological feedback:

S6: You see the progression from time to time. It's a continuous update [...]. With continuous, daily evaluation, if there are any gaps, they come out immediately. *(S6: La progressione si vede volta per volta. È un aggiornamento continuo [...]. Con una valutazione continua, giornaliera, se vi è qualche lacuna, viene subito fuori.)*

- It is more challenging, and so more motivating. If you are at the bottom of the leaderboard, you are spurred to do more:

S9: With this ranking method, you can practically see your progress day by day and, if you realise that maybe you are doing badly because you are in a low position in the ranking, you are more stimulated to do better to top the leaderboard. *(S9: Con questo metodo della classifica, tu puoi vedere praticamente il tuo progresso giorno dopo giorno e, se ti accorgi che magari stai andando male, perché sei in una bassa posizione della classifica, sei più stimolato a fare meglio per scalare posti.)*

- It is more egalitarian and fairer. It may avoid complaints about evaluation because the rules are presented at the beginning. No bad surprises are allowed:

S3: According to the rules of the game you know how to act, how you have to organise your work. On the other hand, if you don't know the rules of the game beforehand, there's a surprise, you organise yourself in one way, and then the surprise arrives and upsets everything you had organised beforehand. *(S3: In base alle regole del gioco tu sai come agire, come ti devi organizzare il lavoro. Invece se non sai prima le regole del gioco, c'è una sorpresa, tu ti organizzi in un modo e poi arriva la sorpresa che scombussola tutto quello che ti eri organizzato prima.)*

- There's no anxiety because students don't have any classwork or oral interrogations. Moreover, it is connected to play. Learning is part of the enjoyment of playing:

S8: It was different here because there wasn't that anxiety of having to answer a question or do an assignment. We were doing these things that we might even enjoy. For example, doing the 'homework' was also enjoyable because it didn't weigh you down. (S8: *Qui è stato diverso perché non c'era quell'ansia di dover fare un'interrogazione, un compito. Tu facevi queste cose che magari ti andavano anche a piacere. Per esempio, fare i vari "compiti" per casa, era anche piacevole farli perché non erano cose che ti pesavano.*)

Gamification promotes a longitudinal learning. Each task or assignments is not determinant for itself but in a more general economy. Students learn little by little while playing and having fun. According to S15, you learn better if it is associated to a pleasant moment:

In my opinion, another point in favour of gamification is that many times, when preparing for an oral test, we remember the topics only for that test and, a week later, we almost don't remember them any more, because we were only interested in the grade at that moment. Instead, with points, you slowly learn the game system and learn in general while you are playing; because by remembering the game, a pleasant moment, you remember better what you have learnt. (S15: *Secondo me è un altro punto a favore della gamification è che molte volte, quando uno si prepara per un'interrogazione, si ricorda gli argomenti per l'interrogazione e già una settimana dopo quasi non se li ricorda più, perché quello si è preparato per avere il voto in quel momento. Invece con i punti, tu piano piano apprendi il sistema di gioco e apprendi in generale, mentre stai giocando; perché semmai ricordandoti del gioco, di un momento piacevole, ti ricordi meglio quello che hai imparato.*)

- You don't have to focus only on a specific topic to obtain a good mark. It is a global evaluation, and it is not based on luck:

S21: During an oral test, at the end the teacher asks you those 4 -5 questions, which are maybe the topics that you really dislike, and you haven't studied well. And you do badly. With a task-by-task assessment, over a longer period of time, a person can be assessed more comprehensively and not just for a single test, but even for luck. (S21: *Durante una interrogazione, alla fine ti fanno quelle 4 -5 domande, che sono magari gli argomenti che proprio ti stanno antipatici e non li hai studiati. Evvai male. Con una valutazione compito per compito, in un lasso di tempo più ampio, una persona può essere valutata in modo più globale e non solo per una singola prova, anche di fortuna.*)

- It is more detailed with the marks because it looks at the progression not at an average:

S3: In my opinion, there is a wider room of judgement, so it really is more detailed in judging a person. (S3: *Secondo me c'è un panorama più grande di giudizio; quindi, veramente è più dettagliato nel giudicare una persona.*)

- It is easier to recover a bad mark because marks are not from 1 to 10:

S22: The fact that the points, the marks, are awarded not on a scale of 1 to 10, also makes it easier to recover from a task that did not do so well; for example, getting 2/5 is not a good mark, for goodness' sake, but it is still easier to recover. (S22: *Il fatto che i punti, i punteggi, siano assegnati non in una scala da 1 a 10, rende comunque anche più semplice il recupero di un esercizio che non è andato tanto bene; ad esempio prendere 2/5 non è comunque un bel voto, per carità, però è comunque più facilmente recuperabile.*)

Moreover, it gives a lot of feedback. Students can always clearly see what they are getting for what. It's up to the students using points to improve or just to pass:

S17: Many times, you get a grade, but you don't really understand what that grade comes from; instead seeing point by point what you get is better, in my opinion. Someone who tries harder will get a higher mark; someone who only wants to pass will get a lower mark. *(S17: Molte volte tu prendi un voto ma non capisci davvero da cosa deriva quel voto; invece vedendo punti per punti cosa prendi, secondo me è meglio. Chi si impegna di più avrà un punteggio maggiore; uno che vuole arrivare solo alla sufficienza, prenderà un punteggio minore.)*

- You never feel depressed because you know you can always improve your score. It is not an average; it is a progression and so students are on the same line. There is not discrepancy among students:

S10: With a scoring system, because the score is added up each time, there is always room for improvement. I would see the score and I would say to myself: OK, I got this score, I can improve. there was no averaging and dividing. A score is a growing score. Every time I did something, I gained, and I was closer and closer to my goal. The fact that the score is given for each task, not from 1 to 10, makes it possible not to divide the threshold so much between one student and another. *(S10: Con un sistema a punteggio, poiché il punteggio si somma di volta in volta, c'è sempre margine di miglioramento. Io vedevo il punteggio e mi dicevo: ok, ho preso questo punteggio, posso migliorare. non c'era una media che prevedeva una somma e un dividere. Un punteggio è a crescere. ogni volta che facevo qualcosa, ci guadagnavo, ed ero sempre più vicino alla mia meta. Il fatto che il punteggio sia dato per ogni esercizio, non da 1 a 10, permette di non dividere così tanto la soglia tra uno studente e l'altro.)*

At school students are rewarded if they can maintain a standard average. Although marks at school may be practical, a bad mark could undermine the whole process. Thanks to a gamified approach you are rewarded for your effort and commitment, too:

S12: Frankly, I think the number grades we have now work on a practical level, but on a psychological level on the pupils they are a bit detrimental. Getting a 6, which is a pass, is still not enough. Instead, with points ranging from 0 to 100, perhaps with extra homework that can increase the score, one would be more at ease. Rather, it would be more useful to make a path instead of an average of grades, because maybe at the beginning of the year I do badly in the subject or I have a pass right at the limit, but towards the end of the year I may improve and, let's say, I manage to get an 8 on the test; at the end, the final grade will not be 8, but the average of all the bad grades I got at the beginning of the year, plus that final 8. It's depressing. *(S12: Francamente credo che i voti con numero che abbiamo ora funzionino a livello pratico, ma a livello psicologico sugli alunni siano un po' deleteri. Trovarsi davanti un 6, che è una sufficienza, non è comunque abbastanza. Invece con dei punti che vanno dallo 0 fino al 100, magari con dei compiti in più che possono far aumentare il punteggio, uno si troverebbe più a suo agio. Fare piuttosto un percorso invece di una media di voti sarebbe anche più utile, perché magari io a inizio anno vado male nella materia o ho la sufficienza proprio al limite, però verso fine anno migliore e diciamo riesco a prendere anche un 8 alla verifica; alla fine il voto finale non sarà 8, ma la media tra tutti i brutti voti che ho preso ad inizio anno, più quell'8 finale. È deprimente.)*

Students see a possible development in the progression, which diminishes the possibility of frustration caused by the scoring average. Starting from “zero”, everybody has the chance to reach a goal:

S1: In my opinion, this method of scoring is more linear path than the school method, because in any case there is a development of the student who, starting from zero points, manages to get to a certain goal; whereas at school, no matter how hard you try, because of past grades, a 5 is enough to destroy you, even in terms of self-esteem. This score is fair because there has never been a time when I, and I think others as well, have been regretful about anything, or downcast for going down with the grade. There has always been a development. *(S1: Secondo me questo metodo col punteggio racconta un percorso molto più lineare rispetto a quello della scuola, perché in ogni caso c'è comunque uno sviluppo dell'alunno*

che, partendo da zero punti, riesce ad arrivare ad una certa meta; mentre a scuola, per quanto ti impegni, a causa dei voti passati, basta magari un 5 a distruggerti, anche a livello di autostima. Questo punteggio è giusto perché non c'è mai stato un momento in cui io e credo anche gli altri siamo stati rammaricati per qualcosa, oppure abbattuti per essere andati giù con il voto. C'è sempre stato uno sviluppo.)

- Badges as motivational tools. Students appreciated badges as a personal reward. They found them a nice way to motivate unless they impact the final mark. They should remain for personal satisfaction:

S7: Having recognition from the teacher can generate satisfaction because I know that I gave my best and I was recognised by the teacher for giving my best. The badges, however, should have no bearing on the grade, because those who fail to get these badges may feel demoralised. *(S7: Avere un riconoscimento da parte dell'insegnante può generare soddisfazione, perché so che ho dato il massimo e sono stato riconosciuto dall'insegnante per aver dato il massimo. I badge però non dovrebbero avere peso sul voto, perché chi non riesce a prendere questi badge potrebbe sentirsi demoralizzato.)*

To understand the impact gamification had on motivation towards learning, the students were asked if they were more motivated at improving their performances and learn more with this method. Results show there is not a general trend. Some (34.6%) were motivated to improve their scores to top the chart and to do more. They found the method challenging:

S25: I really liked this method; it is different from the Italian method, which tends to punish students who do not reach a certain level. It was very stimulating. This type of scoring attracted the more competitive side in me, but in a positive way: I was aiming more to give my best, and thus get as close as possible to first place in the ranking. I was striving to achieve this score, and that was also stimulating. *(S25: Mi è piaciuto tantissimo questo metodo; è diverso da quello italiano, che tende a punire gli studenti che non raggiungono un certo livello. E' stato molto stimolante. Questa tipologia di assegnazione dei punteggi ha attirato in me la parte più competitiva, però in senso positivo: miravo più che altro a dare il meglio di me, e quindi arrivare il più vicino possibile al primo posto in classifica. Mi sforzavo per raggiungere questo punteggio; ed è stato appunto stimolante anche questo.)*

Others (23.1%) said this method did not motivate them more than a standard school course: they tried to do their best in any case.

S11: From my point of view, however, that was not the main thing to focus on. My goal was not to be the first in the course but to do that course to the best of my ability. *(S11: Dal mio punto di vista però non è stata la cosa principale su cui focalizzarmi. Il mio obiettivo non era di arrivare primo al corso, ma fare quel corso al meglio delle mie possibilità.)*

4.1.6 Gamification: limits

Once having considered the positive aspects gamification may favour, it was worth investigating the limits it may have in its application in a standard school programme.

The students pointed out the following issues:

- A bad mark you take at school may be stronger advice to be more careful and study more than the points you gain in a gamified system, where you do not feel the pressure of bad results:

S5: Maybe this 'rising' system doesn't make you realise well when you're doing badly, because you don't touch the fact that you got a low grade, so you might try less hard. If I get a 5 it's insufficient and I say: damn! I have to hurry up! If I get 1/5 instead, I just think I got a poor grade. *(S5: Forse pero questo sistema "crescente" non ti fa rendere bene conto quando stai andando male, perchè non tocchi con mano il fatto che hai preso un voto basso, e quindi potresti impegnarti di meno. Se io prendo 5 è insufficiente e dico: cavolo! mi devo sbrigare! se io prendo 1/5 invece penso solo di aver preso poco.)*

- Gamification is a new and revolutionary method. Not all people may be ready for it, especially those who see it as a method for the "young":

S3: It's a new topic; not everyone is ready to accept change. Not everyone is interested in moving towards technology, or at least going along with the younger generation, especially here in Italy. *(S3: E' un argomento fresco, perché non tutti sono pronti ad accettare il cambiamento, semplicemente questo. Non tutti sono interessati ad andare verso la tecnologia, o comunque ad assecondare i più giovani, soprattutto qui in Italia.)*

- Losing a part of the whole path may limit to top the leaderboard. You don't have the chance to overturn the result getting an excellent mark, as it happens at school:

S5: I think it depends on how it is applied. If you miss a piece of the course, you get a low grade; on the other hand, if you follow the mathematical average, a good result can turn the whole thing around, but a bad result can also turn the whole thing around. So each of the two methods has its pros and cons. *(S5: Penso che dipenda da come venga applicato. Se tu ti perdi un pezzo del percorso, prendi un voto basso; invece seguendo la media matematica, un buon risultato può ribaltare tutto quanto, ma anche un pessimo risultato può ribaltare in negativo. Quindi ognuno dei due metodi ha i suoi pro e i suoi contro.)*

- It may cause excessive competition among students:

S9: The only downside it can really lead to is the excessive competition that can arise from a ranking. Then it depends on the kid. *(S9: L'unico lato negativo a cui può portare veramente è l'eccessiva competizione che può nascere da una classifica. Poi dipende dal ragazzo.)*

- You may stop doing the activities as soon as you reach the threshold level:

S22: If you have to reach a minimum score to pass, as soon as you reach it you might as well do nothing. It's a plus for sure for those who don't want to do anything, but it would also lead you to do nothing afterwards. *(S22: Se tu devi raggiungere un minimo di punteggio per essere promosso e passare, appena lo raggiungi puoi anche non fare niente. È un pregio di sicuro per chi non ha voglia di fare niente, però ti porterebbe anche a non fare niente dopo.)*

- Truth can hurt. It may have a bad impact on the students' acceptance of their status:

S14: A ranking eventually shoves the truth in anyone's face, i.e.: you did this one and this one did that one. It is pure objectivity. Obviously, it becomes a problem, depending on the person. The main concept, telling a mean truth, is a very difficult thing, because a truth, rightly so, can also hurt a lot. *(S14: Una classifica alla fine sbatte nero su bianco la verità in faccia a chiunque, ovvero: tu hai fatto questo e quest'altro ha fatto quest'altro. È la pura oggettività. Ovviamente diventa un problema, in base alla persona. Il concetto principale, sbattere la verità in faccia una persona, è una cosa molto difficile, perché una verità, giustamente, può fare anche molto male.)*

- The leaderboard. Some students thought that reaching the top could even improve your motivation to do and want more; on the other hand, other students said some people could feel depressed and less motivated if at the bottom of the chart:

S11: If you're among the best, you try to do everything you can to get as much as possible; at the same time, if you're among the worst, you also tend to not even take into account and therefore perhaps do less... (S11: *Se sei tra i primi, cerchi di fare il possibile per arrivare più in alto possibile; allo stesso tempo se sei tra gli ultimi, magari tendi anche a non darci nemmeno più conto e quindi a fare forse anche meno cose...*)

The perception of the leaderboard is a subjective matter because it has personal psychological implications on the way people react differently to challenges, wins, and failures:

S19: In my opinion, ranking is subjective. A person who is last in the course could either be demoralised or feel stimulated; it's definitely quite subjective. (S19: *Secondo me la classifica è soggettiva. Una persona che si trova ultima durante il corso potrebbe sia demoralizzarsi che sentirsi stimolata; è sicuramente una cosa abbastanza soggettiva.*)

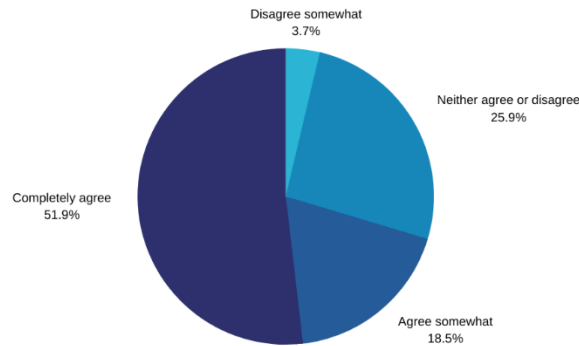
As points, badges, and leaderboards needed a further and more detailed analysis, their results will be presented in their specific section in the next section.

4.1.7 PBL

Although students live under the pressure of good performance and results, in their school career, they had never experienced a gamified course. For this reason, they were asked about their reactions towards points, badges, and leaderboard (PBL). More than half of the students (70.4%) enjoyed PBL. Some of them (25.9%) couldn't make a decision and only one student disagreed somewhat (Figure 33).

Figure 33.
Students' reactions towards PBL.

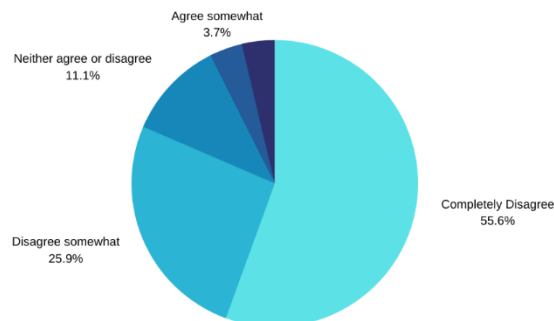
I enjoyed the points, badges, and leaderboard elements - *Ho trovato piacevoli la struttura a punti, i badge e la classifica*



In the PBL structure, the leaderboard could be seen as the most controversial because it may cause anxiety and extreme challenge for a student. The results show that only two students (3.7%) felt totally or partially under pressure looking at the leaderboard. For the majority (81.5%), it was not a cause of stress or disappointment during the implementation (Figure 34).

Figure 34.
Students' perceptions of the leaderboard.

I felt under pressure looking at the leaderboard and points structure - *Mi sono sentito/a sotto pressione in relazione alla classifica a punti*



The general feeling was positive. The students recognized the importance of a visual progression in their learning, the chance for a challenge if they wanted to improve their

score, something they could have fun with (far from the school methods), and a motivation for learning:

S1: It's a, how should I say... transcription of progress as you go along; at school, each question is seen individually, each task is seen individually and not as a whole, so what you do from start to finish, if you're going down if you're going up.[...] This thing of putting everything in writing, marking it and showing it over time, makes the kid realise how he/she was progressing. [...] In the whole of this project, which was also seen as a challenge, as a game, so there was also an incentive to do better if you really wanted to surpass someone or be first. It's also an incentive because it's not seen as a full academic aspect, but as a kind of fun; it's also a way of learning. In putting the fun together with the learning and the challenge, even the personal challenge, you were also more motivated. So, this leaderboard in my opinion was not a bad choice, in fact, it helped a lot overall. *(S1: E' una, come dire.. trascrizione dei progressi man mano; a scuola viene vista singolarmente ogni interrogazione, ogni compito viene visto singolarmente e non come un insieme, quindi quello che fai dall'inizio alla fine, se stai calando, se stai salendo.[...] Questa cosa del mettere tutto per iscritto, quindi segnarlo e farlo vedere nel tempo, fa rendere conto al ragazzo come stava procedendo. [...] Nel complesso di questo progetto, che veniva anche visto come una sfida, come un gioco quindi, c'era anche l'incentivo a fare meglio se volevi veramente superare qualcuno o essere il primo. È anche un incentivo perché non viene visto come un aspetto pienamente scolastico, ma come una sorta di divertimento; però è anche un modo di apprendere. Nel mettere il divertimento insieme all'apprendimento e la sfida, anche personale, ci si trovava anche più invogliati. Quindi questa classifica secondo me non è stata una scelta negativa, anzi ha aiutato molto nel complesso.)*

None of the students told it was a bad instrument or showed disappointment. No one said it was reason of anxiety. Rather, it gave the students the opportunity to proceed at their own pace. It did not cause anger or anxiety. For many, it was an incentive to do better. Despite the challenge and being able to do better than others, it never led to conflict within the group:

S3: On the leaderboard, at the end, I was always calm because there was never that looming fate of having to do something right away; I did what I wanted to do the best I could, and it brought its results. I always felt calm because, even if I knew I wasn't doing the best, I was still happy because I was doing what I liked and learning. I never got anxious; not even real angry; I don't think any of the participants in this course did; because it's true that if crushing a negative result on someone with a leaderboard can be pressing or something like that, but knowing that it's a game, and knowing that it can be improved or recovered from, many people take it more as an incentive to increase their points. *(S3: Sulla leaderboard alla fine ero sempre tranquillo perché non c'è mai stato quel destino incombente di dover fare qualcosa subito; ho fatto quello che volevo fare al meglio, e ha portato i suoi risultati. Mi sono sentito sempre tranquillo perché, anche se sapevo che non stavo facendo il meglio, comunque ero felice, perché stavo facendo quello che mi piaceva e stavo imparando. Al concetto di ansia non ci sono mai arrivato; neanche di vera e propria rabbia, come penso nessun altro dei partecipanti di questo corso; perché è ve ro che semmai schiacciare un risultato negativo addosso a qualcuno con una leaderboard può essere pressante o cose del genere, però, sapendo che è un gioco, e sapendo che tanto si può migliorare o recuperare, molte persone lo prendono più come uno stimolo ad aumentare i propri punti.)*

Half of the students (50%) were enthusiastic because they saw it like a game: competition, meaningful choices, and clear goals were extremely appreciated.

S14: I felt really happy, I mean I felt gratified by my work, because I put in the effort every time anyway to see myself first in the rankings for something. I built myself and it was really nice and just gratifying. *(S14: Mi sono sentita veramente felice, cioè mi sono sentita gratificata del mio lavoro, perché comunque mi sono impegnata tutte le volte e vedermi prima in classifica per una cosa che mi sono costruita da sola è stato veramente bello e appunto gratificante.)*

Others (15.4%) pointed out the subjective reaction towards a leaderboard: students are different, and they react differently when showing their progress publicly as well as when looking at their position on the chart, especially if they are at the bottom.

S4: It also depends a bit on the type of person. There are people who might be bothered by it. For example, it wouldn't bother me, but maybe a person who is at a low point in the ranking feels in awe. *(S4: Dipende un po' anche dal tipo di persona. ci stanno persone a cui potrebbe dare fastidio. Per esempio, a me non darebbe problemi, ma magari una persona che sta in un punto basso della classifica si sente in soggezione.)*

This possibility may also create tension and extreme competition among students (11.5%) because competitive students may be envious of others:

S10: If you create a ranking in the school system, the ranking is always a kind of competition, so maybe you can create tensions between pupils in the class, quarrels, for that very reason. Maybe if a person sees that a friend of his/her is higher in the ranking, he/she doesn't want to talk to him/her anymore because he/she is envious. *(S10: Se tu crei una classifica nel sistema scolastico, la classifica è sempre una sorta di competizione, quindi magari si possono creare tensioni tra gli alunni in classe, litigi, proprio per questo motivo. Magari se una persona vede che un suo amico si trova più in alto nella classifica non vuole più parlarci, essergli amico, perché invidioso di questa cosa.)*

Another game component that was part of the implementation was points. Pointsification received very good feedback too. Almost all the students (92.3%) agreed it was a clear way to show progress and it was less stressful than marks at school because students had the perception they could always improve their scores:

S26: The fact that there wasn't a single grade for each task at home and then averaged, but it was a sum of points that added up slowly, until the end of the course, helped. You don't get demoralised, because you already know that it's a process of accumulating points bit by bit. At school if you get a 5 you get demoralised, because you know you have to get a high grade to get a 6, but here you think you can always improve and increase your score as you go along. *(S26: Il fatto che non fosse un voto unico, che veniva messo per ogni esercizio per casa e poi ne veniva fatta una media, ma era una somma di punti che si sommano piano piano, fino alla fine del corso, ha aiutato. Non ti demoralizzi, perché sai già che è un processo che accumula punti un po' per volta. A scuola se prendi un 5 già ti demoralizzi, perché sai che devi prendere un voto alto per avere 6, invece qui pensi che puoi sempre migliorare e aumentare il punteggio, andando avanti.)*

The idea of the average in the score instead of an increasing in the score made the students more worried about their results. Thanks to gamification, on the other hand, they could improve little by little accomplishing some tasks:

S7: This points scheme for me was very interesting because it's definitely a new method. At school we don't use this score, which is maybe even better than a grade because a grade marks us more, a score is something that you can improve more easily, especially having lessons every week and knowing that even by sending an assignment this score could increase. *(S7: Questo schema a punti per me è stato molto interessante, perché sicuramente è un metodo nuovo. A scuola non si usa questo punteggio, che forse è anche meglio rispetto a un voto perché un voto ci segna di più, un punteggio è un qualcosa che tu puoi migliorare con più facilità, soprattutto avendo lezione ogni settimana e sapendo che anche mandando un compito questo punteggio poteva aumentare.)*

They felt they were working for something, building their knowledge, not only an average of marks. They appreciated the fact they could see what they were doing, thanks to the points given for each task:

S16: I liked it a lot because I really felt that I was working for something, I mean building something. At school maybe I study something and then I have a grade and it stops there, or at most the thing I can try to build at school is an average at the end of the year. The very fact of taking points and so trying to top was fun; that is, it was nice to see what I was doing at specific points, I liked that. *(S16: A me è parecchio piaciuto perché ho sentito proprio il fatto di lavorare per qualcosa, cioè costruire proprio qualcosa. A scuola magari studio qualcosa e poi ho un voto e si ferma lì, o al massimo la cosa che posso cercare di costruire a scuola è una media a fine anno. Il fatto proprio di prendere punti e così cercare di scalare era divertente; cioè era bello vedere quello che facevo proprio in punti precisi, quello mi è piaciuto.)*

Only 2 students reported they could not make any differences between points and marks. To them, the result does not depend on the method because they are not interested in marks in general. It means marks or points do not work as motivational tools for them.

As for the badges, some students (23.1%) found them strong motivational rewards, something concrete to prove their abilities, a recognition for their efforts, and a must-have:

S24: The badges really motivated me a lot, because seeing all the badges telling you: you did well, bravo! *(S24: I badge mi hanno motivato davvero tanto, perchè vedere tutti i badge che ti dicevano: hai fatto bene, brava!)*

S2: The badge is a give and take, it also spurs you on to do well. *(S2: Il badge diciamo è un dare/avere, ti sprona anche a fare bene.)*

S24: Yes. Just seeing it stimulates you because you say to yourself: wow! I like these badges next to my name! I want more of them! and so it encourages you to put yourself out there, that's it. *(S24: Sì. già il fatto di vederlo ti stimola comunque perché ti dici: wow! mi piacciono questi badge accanto al mio nome! ne voglio altri! e quindi ti sprona a metterti in gioco, ecco.)*

S7: It's like an accomplishment, it's like a medal that one gets: by doing this thing, I get a merit, a prize, which there isn't at school, because if someone makes an effort but doesn't make it, maybe they don't get this merit. Here instead there is, I know I have done well, I get this (badge) which is my merit, this medal of mine. *(S7: E' come un traguardo, è come una medaglia che uno prende: facendo questa cosa, io ricevo un merito, un premio, che appunto a scuola non c'è, perché se qualcuno si impegna ma non rende, magari non riesce a prendere questo merito. Qui invece c'è, io so di aver fatto bene, prendo questo (badge) che è il mio merito, questa mia medaglia.)*

For the rest of the students, badges were not particularly relevant as motivational tools, so not worth of attention.

4.1.8 Gamification AND Assessment

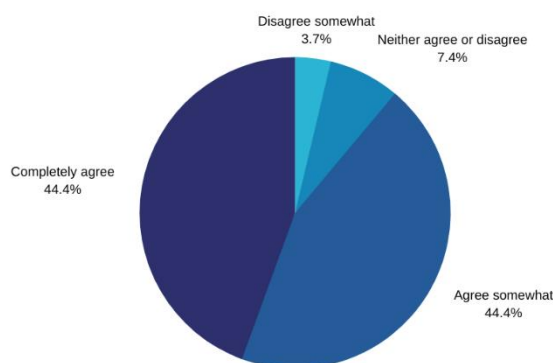
Gamification contributed to giving a different method in the assessment of the students' tasks and learning outcomes. To understand if the students found the tool valid in itself, not only for a language course, they were also asked if, on the base of their experience with *Gameful English*, they would recommend a gamified assessment to other courses.

Results showed positive feedback from the students. Only one of them disagreed somewhat. 89% of the students would recommend applying gamification to other school courses (Figure 35).

Figure 35.

Students' evaluations of gamification as an assessment method.

I would recommend this type of structure and assessment to other courses - *Raccomanderei questo tipo di valutazione e strutturazione anche ad altri corsi*



Moreover, the vast majority (92.3%) recognized gamification as a positive value in giving them positive feedback on their tasks because it is explicit, motivational, challenging, and egalitarian. Students appreciated they were constantly building their learning, step by step, little by little. This visible progress, represented on the leaderboard, gave them the sensation they could manage and control their results. They could understand if they needed to do more to improve their scores or if the strategy they were pursuing was right.

S7: Yes, definitely. Even in the course of the weeks... initially I would see 40 points and I would say no, that's not possible... but as I went on, I would see the score going up, sometimes it would stop because I hadn't handed in a task... Then going up again. I got 72; so I can see perfectly how my path has progressed, how it has improved. That's nice, in the sense that someone can see how they have improved, even over time; in the precise weeks you can see what you did wrong, even through the badges, what you did well, what you improved on compared to something else, so in my opinion the whole structure is perfect. (S7: Sì sicuramente. Anche nel corso delle settimane... inizialmente io vedevo 40 punti e mi dicevo no, non è possibile... invece andando avanti vedevo il punteggio che saliva, alcune volte fermo, perché magari non avevo consegnato un compito.. Poi risalire di nuovo. Sono arrivato a 72; quindi io posso vedere perfettamente un mio percorso come è andato avanti, come è migliorato. Questo è bello, nel senso che qualcuno può vedere come ha fatto a migliorare, anche nel corso del tempo; nelle settimane precise si può vedere cosa hai sbagliato, anche attraverso i badge, cosa hai fatto bene, in cosa si è migliorati rispetto a qualcos'altro e quindi secondo me tutta la struttura è perfetta.)

Students felt it was easier to recover a bad mark because they knew that each task could help them to increase their score. At school students may lose the motivation to make up

a bad mark. Gamification may help because they feel they were guided and more interested in what they were doing:

S19: Here, each grade had less weight than a 2 or 3 at school, because in the next lesson you could interact more and get points, you could do a homework assignment and get more points, easily. Whereas at school it takes a few months to make up a bad failing grade. If you then find the student immediately loses interest, immediately loses the courage to catch up, and is sent back; instead, here, no, because you are much more guided and much more interested in doing what you do. (S19: *Qui ogni valutazione aveva un peso inferiore rispetto ad un 2 o 3 di scuola, perchè nella lezione successiva potevi interagire di più e prendere punti, potevi fare un compito a casa e prendere altri punti, tranquillamente. Invece a scuola ci vuole qualche mese per recuperare una brutta insufficienza. Se poi trovi l'alunno che perde subito l'interesse, perde subito il coraggio di recuperare, e viene rimandato; invece invece qui no, no perché sei molto più guidato e molto più interessato a fare quello che fai.*)

The path was accessible and each part of it was detailed, so there was evidence of the progress, and everything was under the student's control:

S22: The path is comprehensible, yes, because by grading you gradually, not just at the end, you know bit by bit what you can do better, what you can do worse, what you could improve, what you should pay more attention to. (S22: *Il percorso è più chiaro, sì, perché, dandoti il voto gradualmente, non solo alla fine, tu sai pezzo per pezzo cosa puoi fare meglio, cosa puoi fare peggio, cosa potevi migliorare, a cosa dovresti fare più attenzione.*)

Many students (92.3%) consider gamification real and tangible feedback of their progress. They recognized the method as efficient and objective to assess their learning outcomes because rules were intelligible from the beginning; students received continuous feedback on their performances. They could experience their learning, and so their score was only up to themselves:

S2: When you have to do homework and then there are explanations about the scores you got, you understand: so I got 3/5, why? Because maybe I was wrong about this or that. Then you understand. If they give me an evaluation on scores I understand, for example out of 5 I did three, I like this way, because you always have an explanation and you know where to improve. Maybe somehow you understand that it doesn't depend on the teacher, but only on yourself. If you do it badly and you don't do well, it's your own fault. (S2: *Quando hai dei compiti e poi ci sono delle spiegazioni sui punteggi ottenuti, capisci: allora ho fatto 3/5, perché? Perché magari mi sono sbagliato su questo o quello. Allora capisci. Se mi danno una valutazione su dei punteggi che capisco, per esempio su 5 ho fatto tre, a me questa modalità piace, perchè hai sempre una spiegazione e sai dove migliorarti. Magari in qualche modo capisci che non dipende dall'insegnante, ma solo da te stesso. Se lo fai male e non vai bene è solo per colpa tua.*)

Students gave value and liked points and badges as powerful feedback tools. Receiving some kind of reward gave positive feedback and motivated students to give their best:

S25: It worked on me, because sometimes we students get too upset about a negative evaluation, whereas with this method, with receiving some kind of award, we feel more stimulated, even less under pressure, and so we give our best. (S25: *Su di me ha funzionato, perché alcune volte noi studenti ci facciamo troppi problemi su una valutazione anche negativa; mentre invece con questo metodo, col ricevere una specie di premio, ci sentiamo più stimolati, anche meno sotto pressione e quindi diamo il meglio di noi.*)

Students could see their efforts rewarded, strengthening their motivation to be constant during the course. They were perfectly aware that constancy and effort would lead them to top the leaderboard:

S11: [...] The commitment that is rewarded is a constant commitment, not tied to a single task, and therefore gives more satisfaction and more stimulus [...] A constant commitment makes you climb a ranking. It gives more stimulus and also more satisfaction. *(S11: [...] L'impegno che viene premiato è un impegno costante, non legato ad un singolo compito, e quindi dà maggiori soddisfazioni e più stimoli [...] Un impegno costante ti fa scalare un'eventuale classifica. Dà più stimoli e anche più soddisfazioni.)*

The evaluation of every single task was possible thanks to specific evaluation grids (annex 8). They were posted on Google Classroom *Gameful English* course at the beginning of the course. Because the grids were important for metacognition, students were also asked to give their opinions on them. They all appreciated to have the chance to look at them in advance because, although at school they have grids for their evaluation, they usually can consider them only during the classwork or the oral interrogation. Time is not enough to read and understand them:

S19: At school, teachers usually give us the grid during the test. But nobody looks at it, because we have little time during the assignment. It's actually better to show it at the beginning, to specify the various things. Even for questions it would be useful, to understand how to organise yourself. *(S19: A scuola i professori di solito ci danno la griglia durante le verifiche. Ma nessuno la guarda, perchè abbiamo poco tempo durante il compito. In effetti è migliore farla vedere all'inizio, specificare le varie cose. Anche per le interrogazioni sarebbe utile, per capire come organizzarti.)*

When discussing the grids, the students noticed it was easier to understand their mistakes using points, so they were also asked about their perceptions of error correction in a gamified system. Mistakes and errors were seen positively because they were considered input:

S2: In this course, there was always the fact that I could still improve and raise my grade. I saw the mistake as a stimulus. At school, it's different because the assessment is different anyway. *(S2: In questo corso c'è sempre stato il fatto che comunque mi sarei potuto migliorare e aumentare il voto. L'errore lo vedevo come uno stimolo. A scuola è diverso perché comunque la valutazione è diversa.)*

Mistakes were not decisive for the final mark. Students always had the perception they could compensate for their score because there was little difference in the score range:

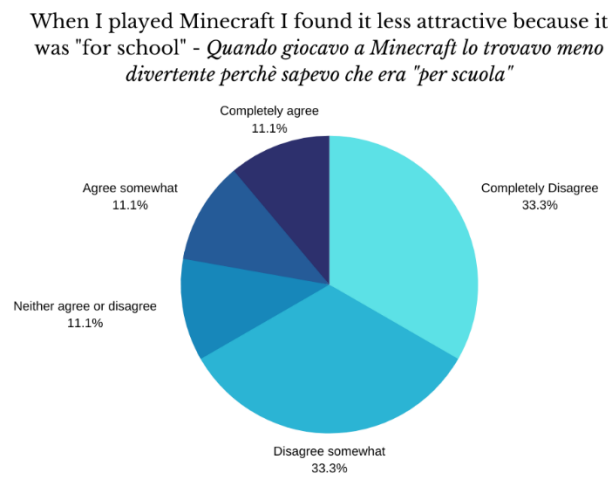
S13: At school for us the error is much more burdensome, because we feel it, it marks us and it is a burden to be dragged through the year. The error, in a scoring system, where the difference between one score and another is minimal, is less felt, and so we already know that we can make it up in the next lesson. *(S13: A scuola per noi l'errore è molto più gravoso, perché lo sentiamo, ci segna ed è un peso da trascinare durante l'arco dell'anno. L'errore, in un sistema a punteggio, in cui la differenza tra un punteggio e l'altro è minima, è meno sentito, e quindi sappiamo già che potremmo recuperarlo nella lezione successiva.)*

4.1.9 Gameplay experience

This category tried to investigate the feelings the students had when they were playing *Minecraft*, conscious they would have used their gameplay for homework.

Most of the students (66.6%) did not notice a lower engagement while playing *Minecraft* “for school”. Among them, a third could not notice any difference at all. Only about 22% could notice less engagement while playing (Figure 36).

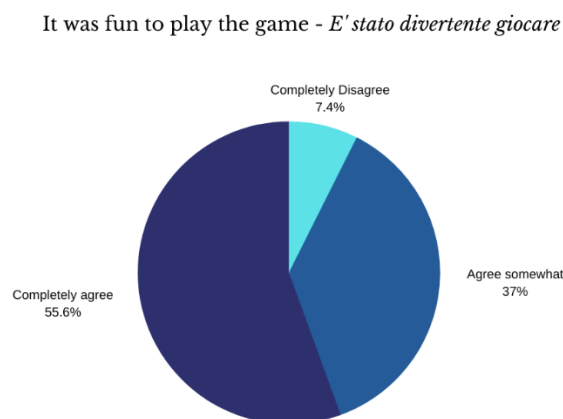
Figure 36.
Students’ perceptions of their gameplay using Minecraft for homework.



According to the vast majority (92.3%) of the students who took part in the focus groups, the school had no negative impact on their gameplay. They played as usual and did not feel under pressure because of the assignments.

When they were asked about the level of engagement playing *Minecraft*, students said they had fun during their gameplays. Only a little minority (7.4%) showed disappointment (Figure 37).

Figure 37.
Students' level of engagement during the gameplay.



Many students thought playing was fun and noticed this course was designed to make them learn with fun. While they were playing, they totally forgot it was a school task:

S17: It was something done for fun. Learning while having fun is more useful than 'normal' because, although I may have thought at the beginning that I had to do this task, while playing I forgot about it. (S17: *Era una cosa fatta per divertirsi. imparare divertendosi è più utile del "normale" perché, anche se magari all'inizio pensavo che dovevo fare questo compito, mentre giocavo me lo scordavo.*)

Although students knew it was a school task, they kept on playing light-heartedness because it was not as demanding and compulsory as school is:

S16: I used to read books a lot as a child; then the teachers started to give them to me for the summer holidays. I got to the point where I was bored because I had to do it compulsorily. In this course, I played with awareness, because it didn't bring me the anxiety I have at school. So I always played with a light-heartedness. (S16: *Da piccolo leggevo tantissimo i libri; poi hanno iniziato a darmeli per le vacanze d'estate. Ero arrivato al punto di annoiarmi, perché lo dovevo fare obbligatoriamente. E invece in questo corso ho giocato con consapevolezza, perché non mi ha portato l'ansia che mi ha portato la scuola. Quindi io giocavo sempre con la spensieratezza di come gioco normalmente.*)

Playing still remained a pleasant experience because the environment where the learning part took place was relaxing and fun. Students did not feel obliged to accomplish the tasks; they did them because they were pleased to do them:

S1: The work aimed to play together with other people. The moment you go to relate with other people and talk, it's also a relaxed environment, a fun environment. You also play to distract yourself: I'm doing it for school, you almost forget about it; distract yourself in a positive sense, so: I'm doing it but I don't feel obliged to do it, because I'm doing it with pleasure, I'm talking with my friends with pleasure, I'm playing with them with pleasure. (S1: *L'obiettivo del lavoro era giocare insieme con altre persone. Nel momento in cui vai a rapportarti con altre persone, a parlare, è anche un ambiente rilassato, è un ambiente di divertimento. Ti vai anche a distrarre con questa cosa: lo sto facendo per scuola, quasi te ne dimentichi; distrarsi in senso positivo, quindi: lo faccio ma non mi sento obbligato a farlo, perché lo sto facendo con piacere, sto parlando con i miei amici con piacere, sto giocando con loro con piacere.*)

Results show that the gameplay did not change for most of them, as well as the engagement. 65.4% of the students did not recognize any changes in their gameplays:

S7: Less fun, never. Certainly, when you played online you had a more specific purpose, which was to see, to converse with another person; but it never took away the fun in my opinion. *(S7: Divertirmi di meno mai. Sicuramente quando andavi a giocare online avevi uno scopo più preciso, cioè quello di vedere, di conversare con un'altra persona; però non ha mai tolto secondo me il divertimento.)*

Some students (23.1%) declared they had even more fun and enriched their gameplay with new perspectives on the use of video games:

S2: The course changed my perception of the gameplay in a positive way: for example, when you gave us the first task of looking up acronyms, it opened my eyes 360° to the game. *(S2: La percezione del gameplay il corso me l'ha cambiata in positivo: per esempio, quando ci ha dato il primo compito di cercare gli acronimi, mi ha fatto aprire gli occhi a 360° sul gioco.)*

Among them, some students had more fun meeting foreign people and making friends. This social aspect enriched the gameplay experience:

S10: Honestly, this didn't make my gameplay heavier, in fact I enjoyed it even more, because instead of always playing with the same people, with the same friends I've been playing with for years, I started to play with people I didn't know; so I also made new acquaintances. *(S10: Sinceramente questa cosa non ha reso il mio gameplay più pesante, anzi mi sono divertito anche di più, perché invece di giocare sempre con le stesse persone, con gli stessi amici con cui ci gioco da anni, sono andato a giocare con persone che non conoscevo; quindi ho fatto anche nuove conoscenze.)*

Others found a new goal with the learning perspective, and it added new motivation to reach it:

S23: For me now it's even more interesting, because you have a goal, so you have to achieve it [...]; you have a goal so it's nice to conclude it. It is more satisfying if you then conclude it. *(S23: Per me ora è ancora più interessante, perché hai uno scopo, quindi devi raggiungerlo [...]; hai un obiettivo quindi è bello concluderlo. È più soddisfacente se poi lo concludi.)*

The added value, for S25, was looking at video games from a different perspective: you can enhance your listening and speaking thanks to the gameplay:

S25: After this course, my perception has changed, because I used to play video games out of boredom or just to try things out, whereas now, while I play, I also focus on other aspects, like learning new things and taking advantage of a certain video game to learn techniques such as listening or speaking; so I try to educate myself through gameplay. *(S25: Dopo questo corso la mia percezione è cambiata, perché prima giocavo ai videogame per noia o semplicemente per provare, mentre adesso, mentre gioco, mi concentro anche su altri aspetti, come imparare cose nuove e approfittare di un certo videogame per imparare appunto tecniche come l'ascolto, oppure lo speaking; e quindi cerco di istruirmi anche attraverso il gameplay.)*

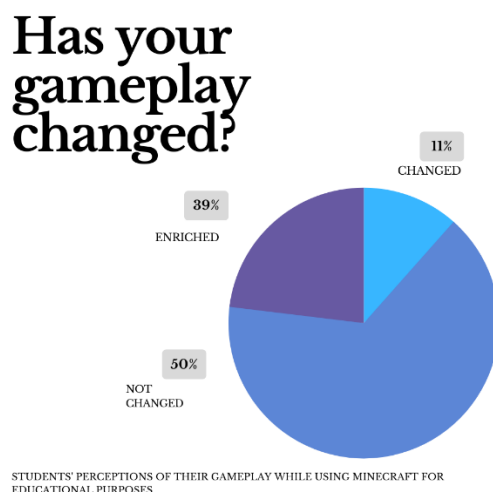
Only 11.5% of the students said their gameplay got worse because the “school halo” influenced the perception of the game: it became only another school assignment for them:

S13: Seeing video games from the point of view of learning, this view made it all look like homework and therefore detracted a bit from what was the pleasure I had in doing things I used to do in my free time. (S13: *Vedere i videogiochi dal punto di vista dell'apprendimento, niente, questa visione rendeva il tutto come i compiti per casa e quindi sminuiva un po' quello che era il piacere che uno aveva nel fare delle cose che di solito uno faceva nel tempo libero.*)

To sum up, Figure 38 shows what students think about their gameplay using *Minecraft* for learning purposes.

Figure 38.

Students' perceptions of their gameplay using Minecraft for educational purposes.



Because the majority of the students related *Gameful English* did not impact their gameplay, they were asked why they thought using commercial video games for educational purposes did not negatively impact their gameplay. There are three main reasons the students pointed out:

6. All the assignments were based on post-gameplay analysis.

The students were free while playing. They could choose how and when to play. All the activities only required playing *Minecraft* in English in multiplayer modality:

S12: In my opinion, writing the acronyms after (having played), for example, was better because you didn't have to think while you were playing anyway. Doing it afterwards helps in this case. (S12: *Secondo me il fatto di scrivere dopo (aver giocato) gli acronimi, ad esempio, era meglio perché comunque non dovevi pensare mentre stavi giocando. Farlo dopo aiuta in questo caso.*)

S9: Imagine you're among friends and you say: 'hey guys, now just a minute, I have to write down acronyms', they think you're dumb. (S9: *Immagina che sei tra amici e dici: "oh raga", ora un attimo, che mi devo segnare gli acronimi", quelli pensano che sei scemo.*)

7. Homework was never presented as an obligation.

The students could choose the modality they preferred to accomplish the tasks:

S12: When my gameplay is free, and then in addition to what I do in the game I have to do an activity related to what I did, I want to choose the modality. If I had been told to record a chat while doing parkour, it would have been different, because I was forced to do an activity imposed by the teacher; and then it was not the pleasure of playing, but it was the obligation to play. *(S12: Nel momento in cui il mio gameplay è libero e poi oltre a quello che faccio nel gioco devo svolgere un'attività legata a quello che ho fatto, devo poter scegliere l'attività da compiere. Se mi fosse stato detto: registra una chat mentre fai un parkour, già era una cosa diversa, perché ero costretto a fare un'attività imposta dall'insegnante; e quindi poi non era il piacere di giocare, ma era l'obbligo di giocare.)*

Students appreciated the fact that I never mentioned the word “homework”. Assignments were “missions” or “goals”: students were not obliged to accomplish them. They did them because they wanted to and because they had fun:

S13: Whenever you assigned a task to be accomplish on the game, you always avoided the word “housework”, the word “school”, because that's the one that then maybe makes your mind realise that I have to do it for a certain reason. *(S13: Ogni volta che assegnava un compito da fare sul gioco, evitava sempre la parola compito, la parola scuola, perché è quella che poi magari fa capire alla tua mente che lo devo fare per una determinata ragione.)*

S21: But just as a mental reflex! That is to say, having heard it so many times in life, as soon as you hear the word ‘homework’, you have the impression of a text to be written, a task to be completed compulsory. Having, instead, the words “goal” and “mission” is more game stuff. It is an interface of the same concept, but to you, it looks like a different thing, practically. *(S21: Ma proprio come riflesso mentale! Cioè, avendolo sentito tante volte nella vita, tu appena senti la parola “compito”, hai l'impressione di un testo da scrivere, un'operazione da completare per forza. Avendo invece semmai “obiettivo” “missione” è una roba più di gioco. È un'interfaccia dello stesso concetto, ma a te pare una cosa totalmente diversa, praticamente.)*

8. The teacher was meant as a coach, not a judge.

The students were rewarded for their progress and received feedback with different solutions and grammar tips if necessary. Students could make meaningful choices; there was no imposition on the right path to follow. The teacher was part of the game community. And they felt it:

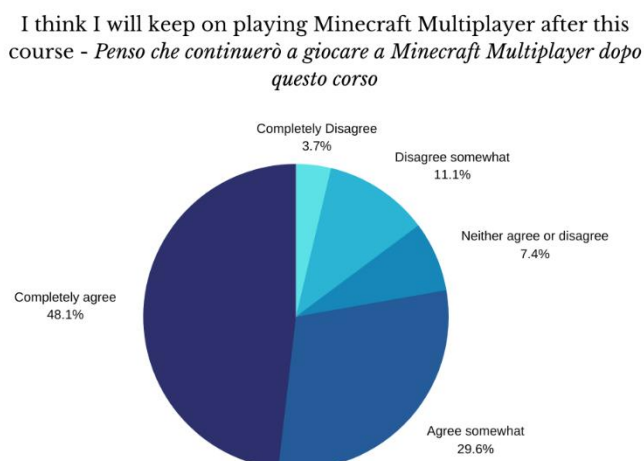
S10: You didn't 'force' us to do anything. Even when you had to correct some grammar mistakes, you understood us. At least that's what I perceived, i.e. I never felt judged. *(S10: Non ci “obbligava” a fare nulla. Anche per esempio quando doveva correggerci qualche errore di grammatica o qualsiasi cosa, ci capiva. Almeno è questo che ho percepito io, cioè non mi sono mai sentita giudicata.)*

S3: You have somewhat inverted the saying: first duty then the pleasure. *(S3: Lei ha un po' invertito il detto: prima il dovere e poi il piacere.)*

S20: This “I'm leaving the job in your hands. You have to make responsible choices” starts a growth path. *(S20: Questa cosa del “Ti lascio in mano il lavoro. Devi fare delle scelte responsabili” avvia un percorso di crescita.)*

S23: I noticed one thing about this whole course methodology: everything was based on creating a community, not pointing a gun at students who make mistakes, but on continuing to improve. *(S23: Io ho notato una cosa di tutta questa metodologia del corso: tutto è stato basato sul creare una community, sul non puntare una pistola sugli studenti che sbagliano, ma sul continuare a migliorarsi.)*

Figure 39.
Students' feelings towards Minecraft Multiplayer.



The majority of the students (77.7%) would continue playing *Minecraft* in the multiplayer modality (Figure 39). Only some students disagreed (14.8%). In the interviews, the students who wouldn't keep on playing *Minecraft* in the multiplayer modality were those who had never liked that video game.

4.1.10 What limits the gameplay

If your gameplay is ruined, the learning experience may suffer and be damaged (Abdul, Jabbar, & Felicia, 2015); for this reason, I wanted to investigate what to avoid when planning activities using video games.

The students were asked about their gameplays and what may jeopardize engagement and fun. Their answers can be grouped into two main areas:

1. External factors:

Among the external factors there are all those elements independent from the game. These obstacles can be caused by technical problems like a bad Internet connection or a broken device:

S7: The connection is the first thing that influences the enjoyment of your gameplay. If you play an offline game, OK, but for an online game, the connection must always be stable, because otherwise you crash, or the gameplay goes in fits and starts. (*S7: Sicuramente la connessione è la prima cosa che influenza la piacevolezza del tuo gameplay. Se giochi ad un gioco offline ok, però per un gioco online la connessione deve essere sempre stabile, perché altrimenti crashi, oppure il gameplay va a tratti.*)

S1: Even having a broken joystick ruins your gameplay! *(S1: Anche avere il joystick rotto ti rovina il gameplay!)*

Meeting toxic players who insult you or damage your progress may have a bad impact too; you could even quit playing because of the extreme pressure:

S10: It also depends on the people who play with you, whether they are your friends or not. I had started playing LOL a while ago, but I left it almost immediately mainly because there were people who insulted me. After all, I didn't know how to play. Emotionally it gets annoying when there are things like that. *(S10: Dipende anche dalle persone che giocano con te, appunto, che siano tuoi amici o meno. Io avevo iniziato a giocare a LOL un po' di tempo fa, ma l'ho lasciato quasi subito principalmente perché c'erano persone che mi insultavano perché non sapevo giocare. Dal punto di vista emotivo diventa scoccante quando ci sono cose del genere.)*

S18: The community also impacts the game; that is, if I see that I am losing and the opponent is making fun of me, I go crazy. *(S18: Anche la community impatta sul gioco; cioè se vedo che io sto perdendo e l'avversario mi prende in giro, io divento pazzo.)*

Moreover, playing too much or without real motivation, keeping on playing when you don't want to anymore, having spoilers on the game, and feeling you are playing not for fun, are the other issues the students complained about:

S3: From my point of view, playing a lot impacts my gameplay. It may make a game boring. *(S3: Dal mio punto di vista impatta il mio gameplay anche il giocarci tanto, troppo spesso. Può far diventare un gioco noioso.)*

S22: In my case, it becomes bad for me to play when I don't feel like playing that game and I keep playing it. At that moment I lose interest. For example, I play for a while, then I get bored. My friends continue to play and I want to leave, but they miss a person to make the whole team. So I keep playing, I get annoyed, I play badly, and I get angry. *(S22: Nel mio caso mi diventa brutto giocare quando magari in quel momento non ho voglia di giocare a quel gioco e ci continuo a giocare. In quel momento perdo totalmente interesse. Per esempi o: faccio qualche partita su un gioco; mi scoccio. I miei amici stanno continuando a giocare ed io vorrei andarmene, ma a loro gli manca magari l'ultima persona per fare tutta la squadra. Allora continuo a giocare, mi scoccio, gioco male, e la mi arrabbio.)*

S6: Personally, if, for example, I have a video game that is a concrete story, knowing how it ends destroys the gameplay for me. Spoilers about the game bother me. *(S6: Personalmente, se per esempio ho un videogioco che è una storia concreta, sapere come finisce mi distrugge il gameplay. A me danno fastidio gli spoiler sul gioco.)*

Trying to find technical solutions while you are playing, in order to accomplish your assignment, could be another negative aspect which may influence the gameplay enjoyment:

S22: Having to find a technical solution is a hassle. When you play and you're already a little demoralised, you lose the desire to play. *(S22: Dover trovare una soluzione tecnica è una scocciatura. Quando poi tu giochi e già sei un pochino demoralizzato, ti passa un po' la voglia di giocare.)*

2. Internal factors:

They relate to the game itself and represent all the limits that may negatively impact the gameplay. The player may even give up playing because of them. Students mentioned: the script of the game, as it doesn't reward your ability and it is a designer's choice to limit your progress, the repetitiveness of the actions and the story (the game may become tedious and slow), and when there are no more challenges to face:

S8: In my opinion, the game should be based only on the player's skills, not on in-game factors, i.e. already programmed. (S8: Secondo me il gioco dovrebbe essere basato solo sulle abilità del giocatore, non su su fattori interni al gioco, cioè già programmati.)

S12: One thing that bores me is when the plot doesn't follow a precise structure, i.e. not growing; so there's no climax where you have a final duel to go to the next level, or you have a prize, or on the contrary, you die and you have to start all over again. When it's all very linear, very basic, i.e. do the usual things and that's it. In general, this lack of a goal, something that you can achieve, is a bit boring. (S12: Una cosa che mi annoia è quando la trama non segue una struttura precisa, cioè non in crescita; quindi non c'è un climax in cui poi si ha un duello finale per passare al livello successivo, oppure hai un premio, o al contrario muori e devi ricominciare tutto da capo. Quando è tutto molto lineare, molto basic, cioè fare le solite cose e finisce lì. In generale questa mancanza di vedere un obiettivo, un qualcosa di massimo che si può raggiungere, un po' annoia.)

S5: I lose the gamefulness when in a story there are no side quests, nothing. You're set up to do that kind of solution. Maybe after a while, you even find it boring, because you don't have to use more inventiveness as there's only one way to get to the end and not several ways. (S5: Io perdo la gamefulness quando in una storia non ci sono missioni secondarie, niente. Sei impostato per fare quel tipo di soluzione. Magari dopo un po' ti risulta anche noioso, perché non devi usare più inventiva, perché c'è soltanto un modo per arrivare fino alla fine e non diverse vie.)

To better understand how video games can be used at school and what are the limitations of their application, students were asked if giving them a certain amount of time and specific directions for playing would have impacted their gameplay. The answer was unanimous, and it was yes.

They say gameplay must be free and at the player's pace. Impositions on how much time and how to play make the game another school assignment. It is no more a game. It becomes another duty. Gamefulness could be compromised:

S25: It wouldn't be a game. We played the game to learn the language at the time we wanted to, we decided the time, we decided the mode, so that wasn't a problem; but if we had to play the video game to learn English, but we had to play in a certain mode, we had to play at a certain time... and then it would be different because it's a kind of obligation, we wouldn't be free. (S25: Non sarebbe stato un gioco. Noi giocavamo al gioco per apprendere la lingua all'orario che volevamo noi, il tempo lo decidevamo noi, le modalità le decidevamo noi, e quindi questo non è stato un problema; però se magari dobbiamo giocare al videogioco per apprendere l'inglese, però dobbiamo giocare per forza in una determinata modalità, per forza ad un determinato orario... e allora qui sarebbe diverso; perché comunque è una specie di obbligo questo, non saremmo più liberi.)

When the discussion moved to the limits the teacher could represent with his/her interventions during the gameplay, students evaluated positively the choice of no intervention because they wanted to be free to experiment and play. Students said interrupting the gameplay to do the assignments would have ruined the pleasure of the game. It was like interrupting watching a film you like because you have to answer some questions:

S26: It would be a bit like interrupting the viewing of a film, just like a school assignment, and then answering the questions. (S26: Sarebbe un po' come interrompere la visione di un film, esattamente come un compito a scuola, per poi rispondere alle domande.)

4.1.11 Use of vernacular video games at school

Although video games are pervasive in teenagers' lives, this was the first time the students could experiment with using video games at school for learning purposes. Even before the implementation, all the students (100%) agreed people could learn English by playing video games because the majority of the games are in English, and you must learn to play if you want to improve your gameplay; they are also an easy and amusing way to practice the language, and they are motivational because of their nature:

S20: That's probably the best way. At school, the teacher teaches you English, but you don't put it into practice, whereas playing with other people, playing with your friends, and speaking English, can definitely be understood as a learning method. (S20: *Questo è forse il modo migliore. A scuola la prof te lo insegna l'inglese, però non lo metti in pratica; mentre giocando con altre persone, giocando con i tuoi amici, e parlando in inglese, questo sicuramente può essere inteso come metodo di apprendimento.*)

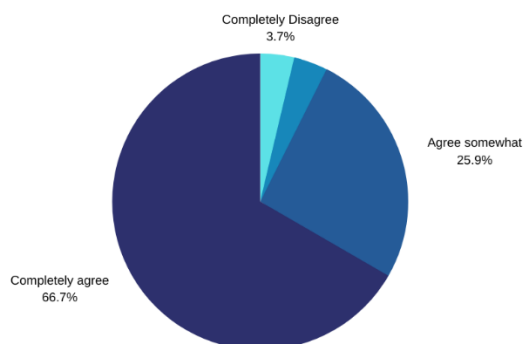
S6: Absolutely, because it's something that stimulates young people. The fact of associating video games with studying is just perfect. (S6: *Assolutamente sì, perché è una cosa che stimola i giovani. Il fatto di associare il videogioco allo studio è proprio perfetto.*)

S2: When YouTube exploded, we realised that you could make money with video games; so why can't you also learn with video games? People always said to me: what are you playing games for? That's what pushed me to do this course, to see if through something I like, I can also learn. Why not? Because if you like something and at the same time you can gain from it, even in the sense of learning, you don't feel the burden, that is, when you like something and at the same time it gives you something in return. This is also a way of learning 'for free' in the sense that you do this course and any person deepens English even more by going on the server and starting to talk to foreign people. (S2: *Quando è esploso Youtube abbiamo capito che con i videogiochi si può guadagnare; allora perché con i videogiochi non si può anche imparare? Mi hanno sempre detto: ma che giochi a fare? Proprio questo mi ha spinto a fare questo corso, capire se attraverso una cosa che mi piace posso anche imparare. Perché no? Perché se una cosa ti piace e allo stesso tempo ci puoi guadagnare, anche nel senso di imparare, tu il peso non lo senti, cioè quando una cosa ti piace e contemporaneamente ti dà qualcosa in cambio. Questo è anche un modo di imparare "gratis" nel senso che fai questo corso e una qualsiasi persona approfondisce ancora di più inglese, andando sul server e iniziando a parlare con persone straniere.*)

After the implementation, the students confirmed and were more aware of their ideas about video games as learning tools, as shown in Figure 40.

Figure 40.
Students' feedback on video games as learning tools.

I am more aware of the possibilities video games may have on learning a second language - *Ora sono più consapevole delle possibilità di imparare una seconda lingua grazie ai videogames*



The students pointed out different and several possibilities they could experience during the implementation that may also enhance language learning and the use of English:

1. Speaking with natives or English language users.

The chance the Multiplayer modality offers is to find English speaking players on the web and to interact with them in English. You are alone “into the wild” and the teacher can’t help providing vocabulary or mediating the comprehension. This is a real challenge, and you are forced to speak and find a solution because you want to win the game and have fun.

S12: Through the contact with other people, outside of Italy, or at least speaking a language other than our own, one must communicate in English. This can also be done by simply putting the game in the original language or in English. (S12: *Grazie al contatto con altre persone, al di fuori dell'Italia, o comunque che parlano una lingua che non sia la nostra, si deve per forza comunicare in inglese. Questo si può fare anche semplicemente mettendo il gioco in lingua originale o in lingua inglese, appunto.*)

S3: Talking to other people in English is different from learning at school, because you're speaking precisely in English to make yourself understood by a lot of people who don't know Italian; the purpose is still to make yourself understood in order to win in the game. In a class you can't speak in English in this way. If maybe you don't know the meaning of a word, you say it in Italian, or anyway you find some other way; speaking in English, to communicate in the game, to get to a concept, to an objective, is different than at school. You don't do that at school. That's why the course is good. (S3: *Parlare con altre persone proprio in inglese è diverso dall'apprendimento scolastico, perché appunto parli proprio in inglese per farti capire da tante persone che non sanno l'italiano; lo scopo è comunque farsi capire per vincere nel gioco. In una classe non si può parlare in inglese in questo modo. se magari non si sa il significato di una parola, o la si dice in italiano, oppure comunque si tro va qualche altro modo; parlare in inglese, per comunicare nel gioco, per arrivare ad un concetto, ad un obiettivo, è diverso rispetto alla scuola. Questo a scuola non si fa. Per questo il corso è buono.*)

2. Real English and use of English.

Many students told they experienced a new way to consider English, that is focusing on communication more than on the accuracy. They said they learned new expressions which were more informal than those they learned at school. They learned idioms and fast sentences which gave them the idea of English as a communicative tool more than that of a language to study:

S10: At school, particularly in the early years, we did grammar, or we always had dialogues between two people we could read from the book, so that we could learn new words. In each chapter there were dialogues with more difficult words that we didn't know; however, we never do dialogues with people who are native speakers. We only do them with the teacher; playing the video games, you have a real dialogue with a person who speaks English every day. *(S10: A scuola, in particolare nei primi anni, si fa grammatica, oppure ci facevamo sempre leggere dei dialoghi fra due persone, inventate dal libro, in modo tale da scoprire nuove parole. In ogni capitolo c'erano dei dialoghi con parole più difficili che noi non conoscevamo; però comunque non facciamo mai dialoghi con persone che sono madrelingua. Li facciamo solamente con la professoressa; giocando ai videogiochi tu comunque fai un dialogo vero, con una persona che parla inglese praticamente tutti i giorni.)*

S9: At school, talking about grammar, you learn it 'precisely', you learn a certain type of grammar; on the other hand, talking to a person, more or less our age, however adolescent, it is a completely different way of relating to language. *(S9: A scuola, parlando di grammatica, la impari "precisa", impari un certo tipo di grammatica; invece parlando con una persona, più o meno della nostra età, comunque adolescente, ha un modo completamente diverso di relazionarsi alla lingua.)*

3. Text chat to improve grammar.

Using a text chat during the gameplay may help to focus on grammar and spelling accuracy too. To give directions or suggestions you must be accurate. A text chat is the equivalent of a vocal chat: you must follow the rules and be clear to express your ideas.

S23: Text chats are useful to become aware of how certain words are written, to be able to formulate a speech which then relates to speaking, because we write in a chat as if we wanted to ask the person directly. It can easily be related to grammar, because you must know how to write a sentence. You still must respect certain rules, to know how to use a verbal tense in the right way; it is as if written chats were a substitute for voice chats. *(S23: La chat scritta serve a prendere coscienza di come determinate parole si scrivono, a poter formulare un discorso che poi si ricollega allo speaking, perché quello che noi scriviamo in una chat è come se volesimo chiederlo direttamente alla persona. Si può ricollegare facilmente alla grammatica, perché la frase la devi saper scrivere. Devi comunque rispettare determinate regole, saper utilizzare un tempo verbale nel modo giusto; è come se la chat scritta fosse sostituito alla chat vocale.)*

4. Vocabulary.

Among the possibilities video games may offer for EFL learning, all the students (100%) agree they have learned a lot of vocabulary playing video games because it was necessary to proceed in their gameplay. Motivation to follow the story in video games with a strong narrative (23.1%), to understand exactly what you needed to pass the level (57.7%), and to plan the right strategy with your team to defeat the enemies (19.2%), push the students

to learn new words essential to their gameplay. You don't learn because you have to, but because you need it to achieve your final goal:

S1: A person, if caught by a video game, is more tempted to learn something, so the desire to understand pushes them a lot to learn a word, to put it in their head, so that, when you find it again, maybe you can better understand what you have to do, or what is happening anyway. The video game that catches on entices the person. [...] You follow the story as you go along and, out of habit, you can learn something even without realising it. Maybe you hear that word again and realise that it is a word you have already heard; it becomes familiar, and you can understand it. (S1: *Una persona, se presa da un videogioco, è più invogliata a imparare qualcosa; quindi, il voler capire la spinge molto a imparare un vocabolo, a metterselo in testa, cosicché, quando ricapita, magari si riesce a capire meglio quello che si deve fare, o comunque quello che sta accadendo. Il videogioco che prende invoglia la persona. [...] Tu segui man mano la storia e, per abitudine, riesci ad apprendere qualcosa anche senza accorgertene. Magari senti di nuovo quella parola e capisci che è una parola che già hai sentito; è familiare e riesci a capirla.*)

Again, you learn because you are interested in the topic not because you must:

S18: Yes, you can learn, because in any case by playing you can learn better, because it is something that interests you; if you have to learn words by heart, but in the end you are not interested, you learn them but the next day you forget them; but this way you continue to use them and so in my opinion you learn them better. (S18: *Eh sì che si può imparare, perché comunque giocando tu riesci ad apprendere meglio, perché è una cosa che ti interessa; se devi imparare delle parole a memoria, ma in fondo a te non interessa, tu le impari ma il giorno dopo te le dimentichi; così invece continui ad utilizzarle e quindi secondo me le apprendi meglio.*)

S26: Some games have specific skills [...]. You get that player with that weapon, with that skill, and then you wonder what certain words mean. Then you have to look them up when there's no Italian language in the game, and I had to understand the various weapons or the story. I couldn't skip it; otherwise, I wouldn't have understood the story or even the mission. (S26: *Per esempio alcuni giochi hanno delle abilità specifiche [...]. Ti capita quel giocatore con quell'arma, con quella abilità, e quindi ti chiedi cosa significhino certe parole. Allora dovevi cercarle quando nel gioco non c'è la lingua italiana, e dovevo capire le varie armi, oppure la storia. Non potevo skippare, perché non avrei capito più la storia e neppure la missione.*)

S20: When you're in a game, in an online game, if it's a team game, for example, you have to cooperate with the other players, so you have to express yourself in English, because the other players don't understand you. So, you, by finding words to express yourself, improve your English and your knowledge of English. (S20: *Quando ti trovi in partita, in una partita online, se è un gioco di squadra, ad esempio, devi collaborare con gli altri giocatori, e quindi devi per forza esprimerti in inglese, perché loro nella tua lingua ovviamente non ti capiscono. quindi tu, cercando le parole per esprimerti, migliori l'inglese e le conoscenze in inglese.*)

Because all of them noticed video games had great potential in vocabulary acquisition, the students were also asked how they could learn new vocabulary and which game features and instruments, according to them, facilitated vocabulary acquisition. They referred to the following issues:

- Repetition (38.5%); repetitive actions make the new terms more familiar. It happens both with the vocal chat (repetition of orders, questions, requests) and the text one (acronyms, idioms):

S17: Many of the words I know in English I learnt from Minecraft, because you repeat the same action many times; for example, if I must try to do a construction, I build many ladders, blocks, and gradually I also learn the names of the objects I use. (S17: *Molte delle parole che so in inglese le ho imparate proprio da Minecraft, perché si ripete molte volte la stessa azione; per esempio, se devo provare a fare una costruzione, costruisco molte scale, blocchi, e a mano a mano imparo anche i nomi degli oggetti che uso.*)

- Association (61.5%); many video games show the item associated to its name on the screen. It makes it easier to remember, because you'll need that object in your gameplay. Some students say they learned a lot switching the language of the game into English:

S8: For example, if there is an object, we can learn the term because we find it written down, it appears to us many times on the screen; therefore, by reading it, even many times, we tend to learn it, also associating it with its image. Perhaps in this way it is easier. *(S8: Ad esempio, se c'è un oggetto, possiamo imparare il termine perchè lo troviamo scritto, ci compare molte volte sullo schermo; quindi leggendolo, anche molte volte, tendiamo ad impararlo, associandolo anche alla sua immagine. Forse in questo senso è più facile.)*

S12: I played the first Minecraft from a mobile phone, in English. So, I initially knew absolutely nothing about what I was getting; then as I gradually read and reread it, and knew in Italian what it was, I learnt that luminite in Minecraft is glowstone; by dint of having to repeat it, but mainly because if I didn't know it objectively I couldn't play. If I couldn't remember the names of the materials, in the end, either to want to know, or to survive and play, I had to learn the names. *(S12: Io ho giocato i primi Minecraft da telefonino, in inglese. Quindi io inizialmente non sapevo assolutamente nulla di quello che mi ritrovavo; poi man mano, leggendolo e rileggendolo, e sapendo in italiano cos'era, ho imparato che la luminite in Minecraft è glowstone; a furia di doverlo ripetere, ma principalmente perché se non lo sapevo oggettivamente non potevo giocare. Se non mi ricordavo i nomi dei materiali, alla fine, o per voler conoscere, o per sopravvivere e per giocare, alla fine i nomi dovevo impararli.)*

According to the students, video games could be integrated in the school curriculum because they can give different strategies for learning. When asked to give some practical examples, they mentioned what they do when they don't know the meaning, or they lack the knowledge of a new term. They mentioned different strategies:

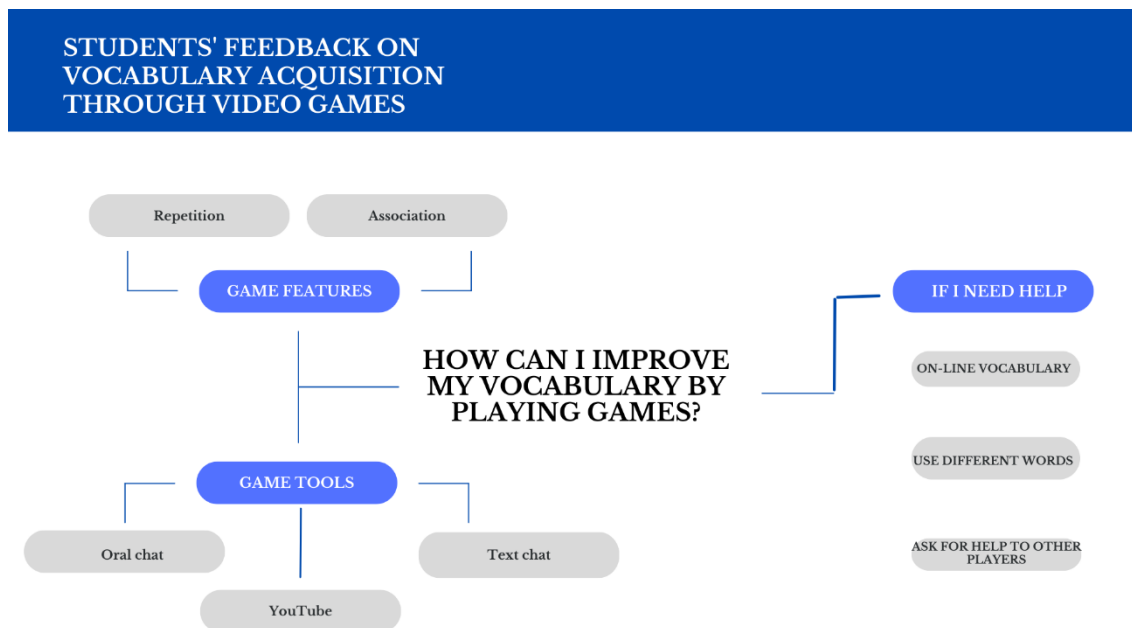
- Search for it on an online vocabulary (53.8%).
- Try to say it with different words (15.4%).
- Ask the other players (using mainly the text chat) (23.1%).

S16: In my opinion, the best way to learn a language, be it English or another, is to speak it with other people who are native speakers, in this case people I find online; when I didn't understand something, I would just literally write "I'm not English. What does that mean?". Many people would also answer me very politely. *(S16: Secondo me il modo migliore per imparare una lingua, che sia l'inglese o un'altra, è parlarlo con altre persone che sono madrelingua, in questo caso persone che trovo online; quando non capivo qualcosa, scrivevo proprio letteralmente "Non sono inglese. Questo cosa cosa vuol dire?". Molte persone mi rispondevano anche in modo molto gentile.)*

The faster you find a solution the better you play. You aren't allowed to stop playing, especially in a Multiplayer modality: you are in a team, and you must keep on playing. That is why many students declared there was not a single solution to find out the meaning of the unknown words. Figure 41 shows how the students think they can learn more vocabulary playing video games and their strategies to solve vocabulary problems during the gameplay.

Figure 41.

Students' strategies and solutions to improve their vocabulary with video games.



If you learn the vocabulary and how to interact with the other players, you may have more fun. It is a strong motivation for the gamers to learn more about the language:

S19: Sometimes, if you don't know English, the game is really much uglier; for example on Rainbow 6, which is a shooter, where you have to play in teams, if you can't communicate with your partner who is not Italian, you may lose... in my opinion, English sometimes makes the game better. (S19: *A volte, se non si sa l'inglese, il gioco è veramente molto più brutto; per esempio su Rainbow 6, che è uno sparattutto, dove devi giocare a squadre, se non riesci a comunicare con il tuo compagno che non è italiano, magari perde.. secondo me l'inglese a volte te lo valorizza il gioco.*)

S13: I play a game called Squad. It's a very realistic game and it's a team game. There are only English people, i.e. German, French, but they all speak English. I don't play it often because I get a bit anxious sometimes when talking. If I were more fluid, I would like to play much more. (S13: *Io ho un gioco che si chiama Squad. E' un gioco molto realistico ed è un gioco di squadra. ci sono solamente inglesi, praticamente, cioè tedeschi, francesi, ma tutti parlano inglese. Io non ci gioco spesso perché appunto mi viene un po' l'ansia certe volte nel parlare. però se si è fluidi, mi verrebbe molto di più la voglia di giocare.*)

Moreover, using video games at school may promote listening skills as well.

Talking to English-speaking players may enhance listening because when you speak with a native, the speaker does not slow down while speaking. Oral interactions are fast and more natural than those built ad hoc in standard courses:

S23: Improving listening, because when you have a dialogue with a person who can speak English well, the person is not just speaking softly to make you understand better what he/she is saying. (S23: *Migliorare il listening, perché alla fine quando tu fai il dialogo con una persona che sa parlare bene inglese, la persona non è che parla piano per farti capire meglio quello che dice.*)

The multiplayer modality enables to join and play with other players from all over the world. In *Minecraft*, you may choose Survival and plan how to kill the Ender Dragon with

your squad, the Creative and build something together; there are also several different mini-games you can play in Multiplayer that need fast and spoken interaction with the other players. Students all agreed on the possibility of improving their fluency if they play Multiplayer as well as using video games to offer a new method focused on communication and topics they like:

S16: I think one thing that has improved is just my fluency in English; I feel a bit more confident when I speak, thanks to video games. And that's something I don't find, for example, in the standard English lesson at school. *(S16: Io penso che una cosa che è migliorata è appunto la mia fluency in inglese; mi sento un po' più sicura quando parlo, grazie ai videogame. Ed è un qualcosa che non trovo, ad esempio, nella classica lezione di inglese a scuola.)*

S24: I think that first of all, a course based on the use of video games is innovative. Since I started, I have increased my confidence in speaking; then being with other people, I could discuss with them while playing some of the variables of the various games, which you cannot usually do through books. *(S24: Io penso che intanto un corso basato sull'uso di videogiochi sia innovativo. io da quando ho iniziato ho aumentato la mia sicurezza nel parlare; poi stando con altre persone, potevo discutere con loro mentre giocavo di alcune variabili dei vari giochi, cosa che solitamente non puoi fare tramite dei libri.)*

S12: Maybe even the content of the lessons is different from what we have in class; for example at school we study passages and then repeat them during the oral tests. Using the video game you can talk about certain missions, about collecting certain items... so using the video game with its narrative to talk in English. *(S12: Magari anche il contenuto delle lezioni è diverso rispetto a quello che abbiamo in classe; per esempio a scuola studiamo brani e poi li ripetiamo durante l'interrogazione. usando il videogioco si può parlare di alcune missioni, del collezionare certi item... quindi utilizzare il videogioco con la sua narrativa per parlare in inglese.)*

To sum up this category, students pointed out positive learning outcomes *Gameful English*, and video games in general, may promote at school:

- an easier language learning because of the video games:

S26: Surely it is a type of learning that is not easier, but that flows more easily to you, because it is connected, connected with play, is more fun and therefore certainly more enjoyable than a mad study with a book. *(S26: Sicuramente è un apprendimento non dico più facile, ma che ti scorre più facilmente addosso, perché collegato, connesso con il gioco, viene più divertente e quindi sicuramente più piacevole di uno studio forsennato su un libro.)*

S7: Games have always been an essential part of learning English, or even other languages, because, actually, when you play online and maybe meet a person from another country, they help you to understand English as well by not putting you under stress. At school you have to do that, because you have to do this homework, you have to study; whereas when you play you have more freedom, and so you have more time to understand, to talk, and maybe even talk about topics that are related to the game that can help you with English anyway. *(S7: I giochi sono sempre stati un tassello fondamentale per imparare l'inglese, o anche altre lingue, perché, in realtà, quando giochi online e magari incontri una persona di un'altra nazione, questa ti aiuta a capire anche l'inglese non mettendoti stress. A scuola devi farlo, perché devi fare questo compito, devi studiare; mentre quando uno gioca è più libero, e quindi si ha più tempo per capire, per parlare, e magari parlare anche di argomenti che sono legati al gioco che comunque ti possono aiutare con l'inglese.)*

S25: Just by playing together with other teenagers, so my peers, I learn vocabulary that we will need and that is targeted for our age, so it is more contextualised. We learn more vocabulary that is within our reach; however, it is this practical aspect of playing that has helped me a lot and I have learnt a lot of vocabulary. In my opinion, the practical approach works. *(S25: Proprio giocando insieme ad altri teenagers, quindi i miei coetanei, imparo vocaboli che ci serviranno e che sono mirati per la nostra età, quindi è più contestualizzato. Impariamo più vocaboli che sono alla nostra portata, però è proprio questo aspetto pratico di giocare che mi ha aiutato tanto e ho imparato molti molti vocaboli. Secondo me l'approccio pratico funziona.)*

- improvements with listening and speaking:

S18: I found improvements both in listening and in dialogues with other people in English, because I was encouraged to understand and think about strategies. *(S18: Io ho trovato dei miglioramenti sia nel listening che nei dialoghi con le altre persone in inglese, perchè ero spronato a capire e a pensare alle strategie.)*

S4: For me, it added the knowledge that I can also not be ashamed of my pronunciation, because there are people worse off and it is much easier to have perhaps a much simpler language than a more elaborate one, because you don't have the time to express yourself well while you are playing. *(S4: A me ha aggiunto la consapevolezza che posso anche non vergognarmi della mia pronuncia, perché ci sono persone messe peggio ed è molto più semplice avere magari un linguaggio molto più semplice che uno più elaborato, perché non hai il tempo di esprimerti benissimo mentre stai giocando.)*

- more confidence in the language performance:

S25: Not having a point of reference can also help you develop competence. You can't think: OK if I can't do it, I have the teacher to help me. You must push yourself to find the answer with alternative methods. *(S25: Anche non avere un punto di riferimento ti può aiutare a sviluppare la competenza. Non hai il pensiero di dire, ok se non ce la faccio ho la professoressa che mi aiuta. Ti sproni a trovare la risposta con più metodi.)*

- new learning challenges:

S23: One thing that impressed me, which I found very challenging, was having to decipher slang, small phrases, which are not usually found in the English books we use at school, during a live game. *(S23: A me una cosa diciamo ha colpito, che ho ritenuto appunto molto challenging, è stato il dover riuscire, durante una partita in live, il dover decifrare degli slang, delle piccole frasi, che non si trovano solitamente sui libri di inglese appunto che usiamo a scuola.)*

S3: When we're at school, we speak in English during class time. But as soon as we leave class, or the time is over, we start speaking in Italian again. There's not really a basic need to use English. When, on the other hand, we want to play with other players, we are obliged to speak, so we are no longer in that comfort zone, where the teacher is there for you. *(S3: Quando siamo a scuola, parliamo in inglese il tempo della lezione, però appena usciamo dalla classe, oppure finisce l'ora, si ricomincia a parlare in italiano. Non c'è proprio un bisogno alla base di dover utilizzare l'inglese. Quando, invece, noi vogliamo giocare con altri giocatori, noi siamo obbligati a parlare, quindi non ci troviamo più in quella comfort zone, in cui diciamo che c'è la professoressa e basta.)*

- making new friends:

S19: Thanks to video games you also tend to make friends, but you have to learn to talk to them, to make yourself understood. This was also important. *(S19: Col videogioco tendi anche a fare amicizia, ma devi imparare a parlarci, a farti capire. anche questo è stato importante.)*

Despite all the students agreed on the positive potential use of video games at school, they also elicited possible limits they may have in their practical application. Different issues were mentioned:

- Difficult internet connection.

As students need Internet to play the game, looking for teammates, and talking to one another, a good Internet connection is necessary to have a good gameplay. You need to speak fluent to accomplish the tasks. If it is not possible, the gameplay may be jeopardized:

S12: The limits, let's say, are only things that concern the video game itself, i.e. in the sense that you are playing online and the connection does not allow you to be able to talk fluently with the person on the other side; only this, because otherwise there are not many limits. (S12: I limiti diciamo sono solamente cose che riguardano il videogioco stesso, cioè nel senso che tu stai giocando online e la connessione non ti permette di riuscire a parlare in modo fluido con la persona che si trova dall'altra parte; solo questo, perché perché per il resto non ci sono molti limiti.)

- Little grammar.

Using video games without a didactical intervention, i.e. introducing grammar references, may represent a limit because students felt something was missing to have a complete English course.

S13: In my opinion, a limitation that this method has might be a lack of grammar; it is not very developed. Mostly you learn listening, how to pronounce words, you learn new vocabulary, but the grammar is a bit lacking, in my opinion. (S13: Secondo me è un limite che ha questo metodo potrebbe essere l'apprendimento della grammatica, cioè che non è molto sviluppata. Più che altro apprendi listening, come pronunciare le parole, apprendi nuovi vocaboli, però la grammatica è un po' carente, secondo me.)

- School/teachers/adults' bias.

Some students (38.5%) reported their teachers may laugh at them if they told they can learn thanks to video games. Teachers are traditional and conservative, according to the students, and they are not ready for such method. They should have a training first but, above all, believe technology and video games can really enhance learning because they are part of the students' lives:

S23: [...] with the teachers I have, you could never do something like that. So you would also have to 'train' the teachers in certain didactics. (S23: [...] con i professori che ho, non si potrebbe mai fare una cosa del genere. Quindi bisognerebbe anche "formare" i professori a una certa didattica.)

S3: If we went to school today and told teachers to learn a language or any subject through a video game, few of them would agree with you. (S3: Se oggi andassimo a scuola a dire ai professori di imparare una lingua o qualsiasi materia tramite un videogioco pochi professori ti darebbero ragione, sono secondo me.)

S7: According to us kids, yes, with video games you can learn; but in my opinion it's something that adults, especially teachers and also parents, still have to think about. If you go to school tomorrow and you tell the teacher that we can learn his or her subject with video games, he/she will surely tell you off; they don't think like you do. (S7: Secondo noi ragazzi sì, con i video giochi si può apprendere; però secondo me è una cosa che gli adulti, soprattutto gli insegnanti e anche i genitori, devono ancora pensare. Se domani si va a scuola e si dice al professore che possiamo imparare la sua materia con i videogiochi, ti manda a quel paese sicuramente, non la pensa come te.)

S10: In the Italian school in general it is difficult for this methodology to be applied, because anyway there are many teachers who are very firm about their ideas. They don't change their minds. (S10: Nella scuola italiana in generale è difficile che entri veramente in utilizzo, perché comunque ci sono molti professori che sono molto ferrati sulle loro idee. Non cambiano idea.)

Adults and families may consider video games a waste of time, too. According to the students, it could be hard to make their parents understand the importance and the possibilities video games may have at school and in their children's lives because they

don't find video games attractive, and people can understand the real nature of video games only when they play them:

S24: One thing that, I think, penalises the use of video games and more technological methods in general, more in Italy than in other countries, is the fact that they are devalued by adults themselves; that is, they say it's useless, it's only a game, what are we supposed to do with it... Instead, they have the potential to teach something! They should try certain video games first [...] Many games are rich in teaching; it's just that if they are devalued, there is no point in even trying them. *(S24: Una cosa che penalizza penso più in Italia che in altri Stati l'utilizzo di videogiochi e metodi più tecnologici in generale, penso sia il fatto che questi vengono svalutati proprio dagli adulti; cioè dicono è inutile, è solo un gioco, che cosa ci dobbiamo fare... Invece hanno il potenziale di insegnare qualcosa! Dovrebbero prima provare certi videogiochi [...] Molti giochi sono ricchi di insegnamenti; solamente che, se vengono svalutati, non ha senso neanche provarci.)*

Students see a deep gap between them and the adult world, and they think it could take a long period to make the “adults” aware of the new chances for learning. Adults only think playing video games is a hard task, and they do not even try.

S2: I see it as a very long process to get older people used to it. A few generations will have to pass. At least one generation will have to pass. *(S2: Io lo vedo molto lungo questo processo di far abituare anche più grandi. Dovranno passare un po' di generazioni. Almeno una generazione dovrà passare.)*

S11: Mah.. I showed cyberpunk to my mother, and she said her head was spinning because she was moving the view. *(S11: Mah.. Io ho fatto vedere cyberpunk a mia madre e ha detto che le girava la testa, perché muoveva la visuale.)*

Students know it requires time and motivation to learn to play, and for sure playing a complex video game from scratch may be frustrating for those who don't even know what a console is:

S26: Some things you have to get used to; that is, if for example a person doesn't like video games in general, and you show a video game of a certain calibre, it might be too much for him/her, there might also be an overload of content.[...] So either it's something you get used to over time, and it takes a lot of time and desire above all, or you can't achieve a perfect result in general. *(S26: Ad alcune cose bisogna essere abituati; cioè se ad esempio ad una persona non piacciono i videogiochi in generale, e tu mostri un videogioco di un certo calibro, per lui potrebbe essere troppo, potrebbe esserci anche un sovraccarico di contenuto.[...] Quindi, o è una cosa che ci si abitua nel tempo, e ci vuole un sacco di tempo e voglia soprattutto, oppure non si può raggiungere un risultato perfetto in generale.)*

S5: Because they may think that we only use video games for fun or to pass the time, when in fact this is not true. *(S5: Perché forse pensano che noi usiamo i videogiochi solo per divertirci o per passare il tempo, quando in realtà non è così.)*

Students also think the bias towards video games may depend on the different approach teenagers and adults have on learning: the former more innovative and technological, the latter more traditional and paper-written based:

S21: Video games have evolved. the meaning has also evolved. Now a video game may not only be an opportunity to have fun, but also to learn; it could be compared to reading a book, where you learn something, where a story is told. Adults are a bit more on the traditional side, on the paper. *(S21: I videogiochi si sono evoluti. si è evoluto anche il significato. Adesso un videogioco può anche non essere solo un'occasione per divertirsi, ma anche per imparare; potrebbe essere paragonato alla lettura di un libro, dove impari qualcosa, dove si racconta una storia. Gli adulti sono un po' più sul tradizionale, sul cartaceo.)*

- Video game selection.

Choosing a vernacular video game for educational purposes is a hard task. Some people may not like video games at all, others may find fun and motivation only in their favourite games/genres:

S6: If you don't like a video game, you play it badly and learn nothing. (*S6: Se un videogioco non ti piace, ci giochi male e non apprendi niente.*)

Other people may like playing in general, despite the game selected:

S23: For me any game has qualities and I try to find those good qualities and have fun. For me any game would have been good, because I would have found good qualities. (*S23: Per me qualsiasi gioco ha delle qualità e cerco di trovare quelle buone qualità e divertirmi. A me qualsiasi gioco sarebbe andato bene, perché avrei trovato delle qualità buone.*)

Some students (19.2%) agree they could have done more if the game selected was their favourite:

S2: I really hate Minecraft as a game! Sometimes when I was in class, I used to get bored because Minecraft sucks and so it was difficult. I don't play it willingly, let alone learn it! Instead, maybe with another game, it would have been even easier for me to learn, because I play it more anyway. (*S2: Io Minecraft lo odio proprio come gioco! A volte capitava che mentre stavo a lezione mi rompevo le scatole, perché minecraft mi fa schifo e quindi era difficile. Già non ci gioco con voglia, figuriamoci per imparare. Invece magari con un altro gioco, mi sarebbe stato anche più facile apprendere, perché ci gioco comunque di più.*)

S4: If you like the game, you don't focus on the fact that you are playing to learn, you focus mainly on playing. (*S4: Se il gioco ti piace, tu non ti concentri sul fatto che stai giocando per apprendere, ma ti concentri principalmente sul gioco.*)

To conclude, students agreed that, considering EFL learning and the gameful aspect, playing Multiplayer is funnier and more challenging than playing single-player. The gameplay itself becomes a better experience if shared with the community and spoken interactions are livelier and more stimulating for the language:

S4: In multiplayer games it is important to have friends. I can't play single player. If you have even one friend, two or three, you have a lot of fun because you experience the victories and the defeats much better. (*S4: Nei giochi multiplayer è importante avere degli amici. Io non riesco a giocare single player. Se hai un anche un amico, due o tre, ti diverti molto perché comunque le vittorie, le sconfitte te le vivi molto meglio.*)

S21: When I can no longer find people to play with, the game becomes boring, because after a while you play alone, I think you lose the taste for it anyway. (*S21: Quando non riesco più a trovare persone con cui giocare, il gioco diventa noioso, perché dopo un po' che giochi da solo, secondo me perdi comunque il gusto di farlo.*)

4.1.12 Development of the project

The findings in this category relate largely to the material from the interviews and field notes, as it addresses the issues of the role of the teacher in relation to the students and

the type of material used, the feedback from the curriculum teachers on their students who participated in the project and the reasons why eight students did not meet the threshold for passing the course.

Another aspect that will be examined is the difficulties encountered by the researcher during the realisation of the fieldwork with the technology used.

The design of *Gameful English* promoted the teacher as a coach for the students, not a judge of their performances, considering the scaffolding method adopted.

The students were asked about their perceptions of the role of the teacher in the *Gameful English* course and what a teacher should avoid in the lectures, so favouring good EFL learning.

All the students (100%) noticed a gradual and guided learning. No assignment was given unless the topic, the vocabulary, and how to solve it were shown during the class:

S19: When there was some homework, I never felt at a loss, or didn't know what to do, because anyway, going from week to week, the homework was linked to the lesson done, so anyway there had been an explanation and we had been guided first, and then we could do it ourselves. (S19: *Quando c'erano quei compiti, non mi sono mai sentito spaesato, oppure non sapevo cosa fare, perché comunque andando avanti di settimana in settimana, i compiti erano collegati alla lezione fatta, quindi comunque c'era stata una spiegazione ed eravamo stati guidati prima e poi ci siamo ritrovati a farli da soli.*)

Considering the students' answers, their perceptions of the role of the teacher in *Gameful English* and in a gameful context can be summed up as follows:

- The teacher as a guide to comfort, encourage, and spur the students.

S10: [...] it must also be said that if there had not been a teacher who kept pushing us, giving us homework each time, the course would have ended immediately; because after playing, after a while, we students tend to let go. A teacher who continued to guide us, giving us homework every week, meant that a little bit of effort was put into acquiring new terms. In my opinion there was this perfect balance between teacher and video game. (S10: *[...] va anche detto che se non ci fosse stata una professoressa che ci spronava, dandoci ogni volta dei compiti, il corso sarebbe finito subito; perché dopo aver giocato, dopo un po', noi studenti tendiamo a lasciare andare. Una professoressa che continua a guidarci, dandoci ogni settimana dei compiti implicava quel piccolo sforzo che man mano a ci ha permesso di acquisire nuovi termini. Secondo me c'è stato questo perfetto connubio tra insegnante e videogame.*)

- The teacher as a point of reference that can help if you need it.

As the teacher was not the leader but someone who promoted independence and self-confidence, the students saw this figure as a reference who could help in case of

problems or clarify linguistic doubts they may have encountered in the interaction with the other players.

S25: Yes, we are the protagonists of the game, but the presence of the teacher, who does not go and intervene directly, helps us, that is, guides us. In my opinion, it is also comforting to know that the teacher is there to help us when we need it. *(S25: Sì, siamo noi i protagonisti del gioco, però la presenza dell'insegnante che non va ad intervenire direttamente, ci aiuta, cioè ci guida. Secondo me è anche confortante sapere che comunque c'è la professoressa pronta ad aiutarci, quando c'è bisogno.)*

The students were also asked what negative aspects of a teacher may jeopardize the success of a gameful course. Their answers can be summed up considering three dimensions:

- Relational: a lack of empathy towards the students makes the use of video games less interesting. All the parts are involved in the gameplay; if one quits, the game is over.

S12: We always discussed the homework done and in general the problems we had. Instead, a teacher who enters the classroom, explains, leaves, who doesn't even talk to the pupils, even when asked, doesn't listen to them, this is detrimental to a course. *(S12: Noi discutevamo sempre dei compiti fatti e in generale delle problematiche avute. Invece un insegnante che entra in classe, spiega se ne va, che non parla neanche con gli alunni, anche a domanda non gli ascolta, questo è deleterio per un corso.)*

- Educational: there should be a balance between homework and playing video games. If you give a lot of homework, playing video games may lose the fun part and become only another school subject, with marks and obligations.

S1: In my opinion, something the teacher should not do is to oppress children by giving them too much homework; the child would no longer find pleasure in playing, therefore in learning, but would only experience it as oppression, i.e. I must do this or else I go wrong, I get bad grades, I get lower marks. You must balance the quality of tasks with the quantity of tasks, so that one finds playing enjoyable. In playing we learn new terms, and at the same time we do our homework. This combination in this course was there, so that as assignment a week was perfect for us because it was neither too onerous for the student, but at the same time it was quite complete, because it always took up all the points we covered during the lesson. *(S1: Secondo me qualcosa che l'insegnante non dovrebbe fare è opprimere ragazzi dando troppi compiti; il ragazzo non troverebbe più piacere nel giocare, quindi di imparare, ma la vivrebbe solo come un'oppressione, cioè devo fare questo altrimenti poi vado male, prendo brutti voti, prendo minor punteggio. Bisogna bilanciare la qualità dei compiti con la quantità di compiti, in modo che uno trova piacevole giocare. Nel giocare impara nuovi termini, e contemporaneamente svolge i propri compiti. Questo connubio in questo corso c'è stato, quindi quel compito alla settimana ci stava perfetto perché non era né troppo gravoso per lo studente, ma al tempo stesso era abbastanza completo, perché prendeva sempre tutti i punti che noi trattavamo durante la lezione.)*

- Psychological: excessive authority does not give the chance to make meaningful choices, which are essential to the gameplay.

S18: In my opinion, the thing that would make students lose some interest is too much authority on the part of the teacher. It is true that we are not on the same level, but we for example talked a lot more with you, we also discussed topics outside the course, compared to the teacher we have at school. *(S18: Secondo me la cosa che farebbe perdere un po' di interesse da parte degli studenti è una eccessiva autorità troppo autorità da parte della professoressa. È vero che non siamo sullo stesso livello, però noi per esempio con lei parliamo molto di più, ci confrontiamo anche su argomenti fuori dal corso, rispetto al professore che abbiamo scuola.)*

Students were also asked how much important the role of the teacher was if they wanted to learn English through video games. Almost all the students (96.1%) said the teacher played a very important role. Only one student said it was not fundamental because he did not need to be spurred:

S4: It depends a bit on the people, because there are some people who maybe have to be a bit pushed. I simply remember what others do and learn that way. (S4: *Dipende un po' dalle persone qua, perché ci stanno delle persone che magari devono essere un po' spinte. Io semplicemente mi ricordo cosa fanno gli altri e imparo così.*)

Although the validity of the role of the teacher was recognized, 15.4% of the students pointed out it was important for the teacher to have the right approach towards video games: being aware of the game and having a good disposition toward using video games as learning tools was the starting point for good teaching. If the teacher is not part of the game, students said it is better to learn alone:

S15: It depends on the teacher, I mean if he/she is good, helps you, follows you, yes, it is good. It's good if he helps you. On the other hand, if the teacher just tells you what to do, that's not good, I mean you can do it by yourself and you can have more fun. But if he/she follows you step by step it is better. (S15: *Dipende dal docente, cioè se è bravo, ti aiuta, ti segue, sì va bene. È un bene se ti aiuta. Invece se il docente ti dice solamente cosa fare, così no, cioè lo puoi fare pure da solo e ti puoi divertire pure di più. Invece se ti segue passo per passo è meglio.*)

S2: [...] You (the researcher) know games, with any teacher who doesn't even know where they come from, it would be different. So, it also depends on the teacher. (S2: *[...] Poi lei capisce di giochi, con una qualsiasi professoressa che non sa neppure dove stanno di casa, sarebbe stato diverso. Quindi dipende anche dall'insegnante.*)

In the focus groups, additional questions were asked because the students were participative and wanted to give their opinions on this issue: “How can the teacher help?”, “What the teacher is necessary to enhance learning through video games?”. Different issues were identified:

- Teacher as a guide (36.6%).

The teacher may help the students to focus their attention on topics useful for learning. His/her presence reminds you why you are also playing. He/she drives your attention towards linguistic aspects:

S11: There still must be a teacher to guide the learning, because if you just learnt by playing then we would be all native speakers of English. A teacher helps to focus the child's attention when he/she plays. The presence of a teacher is like an alarm bell: it reminds you that in addition to what you are doing as a game, you must pay attention to the details concerning the language. In my opinion, the presence of a teacher is essential. (S11: *Dev' esserci comunque un'insegnante che guidi l'apprendimento, perché se si imparasse semplicemente giocando allora eravamo tutti madre lingua inglese. Aiuta a concentrare l'attenzione del ragazzo nel momento in cui va a giocare. La presenza di un'insegnante è come una campanella d'allarme: ti ricorda che oltre a quello che stai facendo come gioco devi dare attenzione a quelli sono i dettagli riguardanti la lingua. Secondo me è fondamentale la presenza di una figura di un insegnante.*)

The teacher controls and drives you to your goal. Without the teacher students would only play the game, avoiding accomplishing the tasks:

S22: For me, the teacher is important. I think if there was no teacher, the kids would just play and not bother to answer the tasks anyway. Instead, having a teacher who still tells you what you should do, in what way, etc. etc., directs you in doing it. (S22: *Per me è importante il docente. Credo che se non ci fosse l'insegnante i ragazzi giocherebbero e basta, senza preoccuparsi comunque di rispondere alle tasks. Invece avere un'insegnante che ti dice comunque quello che dovresti fare, in che modo, eccetera eccetera, ti indirizza nel farlo.*)

The teacher can correct your mistakes and give you immediate feedback. When you interact with another player, he/she won't ever correct your English. The teacher designs the course and makes choices to enhance the students' skills. This can't be left to the students:

S24: The teacher corrects you and this allows you to improve in real time; whereas you just talk to a person, it may be that they don't correct you, not to offend you. I think it is also useful to decide what to do during the meetings. You need a reference figure, because otherwise everyone would propose a different thing and, in the end, nothing would get done. So, yes, I think a teacher in the course is still necessary. (S24: *L'insegnante ti corregge e questo ti permette di migliorare in tempo reale; mentre invece parlando semplicemente con una persona, può essere che non ti corregga per non offenderti. Penso sia anche utile per decidere cosa fare durante gli incontri. È necessaria una figura di riferimento, perché altrimenti ognuno proporrebbe una cosa diversa e alla fine non si farebbe niente, di fatto. Quindi sì, penso che sia comunque necessario il ruolo di un'insegnante all'interno del corso.*)

Although the students recognized they had the main role during the gameplay, the teacher may help them when they needed, even reminding what the goal was:

S25: The teacher per se did not play a central role in the game, because the protagonists were us students, but the role is still important because he or she has to help us when we don't understand something, or when we are in a difficult moment, or we are straying from what is for example the goal of the game, so the objective. There is a certain importance of the teacher, but he or she is not the central figure, the one that completely manages everything, because it is the students who are in charge of the game. (S25: *L'insegnante di per sé non ha avuto un ruolo centrale per quel che riguarda il gioco, perché i protagonisti siamo stati noi studenti, però il ruolo è comunque importante perché ci deve aiutare nel momento in cui non capiamo qualcosa, o quando siamo in un momento di difficoltà, o stiamo sviando da quello che è per esempio il goal del gioco, quindi l'obiettivo. C'è una certa importanza dell'insegnante, però non è appunto la figura centrale, quindi che gestisce completamente tutto, perché sono gli studenti ad avere appunto in mano il gioco.*)

The teacher led the course and kept the students together so that everyone could achieve the set goal, leaving no one behind:

S26: Yes, in my opinion, the teacher, within a course like this, is necessary to guide, to help and to avoid going off the edge. At the end of the course, we have all reached more or less the same level. (S26: *Sì, secondo me dell'insegnante, all'interno di un corso del genere, ce n'è bisogno per forza, per guidare, per aiutare e per evitare di uscire dai margini, per seguire così un corso tutti uniti e uscire alla fine del corso che tutti abbiamo raggiunto più o meno lo stesso livello.*)

- The teacher as language support (26.9%).

Some students recognized the importance to have a teacher to help them with the language. They could have immediate feedback on pronunciation, vocabulary, and use of English:

S6: For example, without you I wouldn't have learnt to pronounce certain words, to know certain ways of saying things, a lot of things that playing online I wouldn't have understood anyway, idioms I wouldn't have known; instead by asking you... (S6: *Per esempio senza di lei non avrei imparato a pronunciare determinate parole a sapere determinati modi di dire, parecchie cose che giocando online comunque non avrei capito, un modo di dire non l'avrei saputo, invece magari chiedendo a lei...*)

S12: [...] if you then make a speech but say all the wrong words, you speak broken English, in the end, if you don't have anyone to correct you and advise you, you will finish that course with broken English. (S12: *[...] se poi fai un discorso ma dici tutte le parole sbagliate, parli un inglese maccheronico, alla fine, se non hai nessuno che ti corregge e ti consiglia, finirai quel corso con inglese maccheronico.*)

- The teacher as a supervisor and controller (30.8%).

Students said the teacher was important to check if everything was fine and they were fair playing. Sometimes kids can be silly, and the teacher may remind them how to behave:

S12: I honestly think it's important in this case, for the simple reason that it's in the physiology of the student to look for loopholes anyway; so, the teacher, when a student gets the idiotic idea of cheating, takes him/her by the collar and puts him/her back in line. (S12: *Penso sinceramente che in questo caso sia importante, per il semplice motivo che comunque è nella fisiologia dello studente cercare scappatoie; quindi, l'insegnante, quando capita che ti viene l'idea idiota di barare, ti riprende per il colletto e ti rimette in riga.*)

S21: Yes, because otherwise there would be no limits, I mean it would all be very playful, there would be no seriousness. (S21: *Sì perché comunque se no non ci sarebbero dei limiti, cioè sarebbe tutto molto giocoso, non ci sarebbe serietà.*)

S23: Well, sure. Otherwise, the group goes off the rails. (S23: *Beh, certo. Altrimenti il gruppo va allo sbaraglio.*)

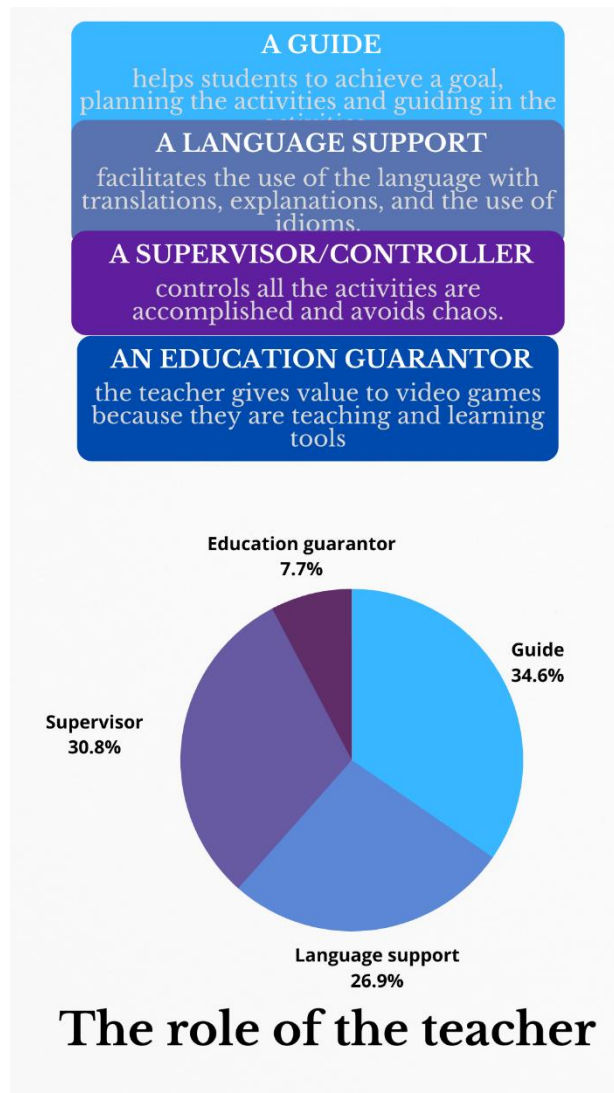
- The teacher as a guarantor of the video games' educational validity (7.7%).

The teacher can promote learning through technology. Students thus feel understood in their world and appreciated. The teacher gives validity to the tool from an educational and didactic point of view:

S14: You can very well learn by yourself, but with the help of a teacher it's better; I felt understood by the teacher concerning video games. Up until now, I've always taught myself how to play in English too, I've never had so much difficulty. But having an adult to support me in this way was very helpful in understanding that they also have an educational value. (S14: *Si può benissimo imparare da autodidatti, ma comunque con l'aiuto di un docente è meglio; io mi sono sentita capita dalla docente rispetto ai videogiochi appunto. Fino a questo momento io ho sempre imparato da autodidatta a giocare anche in inglese, non ho mai avuto tanta difficoltà. Però avendo comunque una persona adulta che mi sostenesse in questo modo è stato molto utile per capire che hanno un valore anche educativo.*)

To sum up, Figure 42 shows the students' opinions on the importance and the role of a teacher in a gameful course.

Figure 42.
Students' opinions on the possible role of the teacher in a gameful context.



To obtain a more complex view of the impact of the implementation on the students, I considered it appropriate to interview the curricular teachers of the students who attended the course. The aim was double: see if *Gameful English* impacted the curricular course and if the students reported to their school teachers the same opinions they related during the interviews.

The teachers received positive feedback from their students in terms of enthusiasm the students showed towards the course. They could identify two main reasons for this disposition:

- Students saw their passion for video games recognized by the school system as something with value, overcoming the bias video games have in our society, as they are usually considered a waste of time and totally useless for intellectual and educational growth:

T1: Beyond everything, there was a lot of enthusiasm for this project. I think this because the consideration of video games is always negative on the part of schools and adults. Because they think it can harm them and give them alienation. Instead, with this course, they have seen the validity of their world recognised. This project has highlighted their usefulness of playing. *(T1: Al di là di tutto, c'è stato grandissimo entusiasmo per questo progetto. Credo perchè la considerazione che si ha sui videogames è sempre negativa da parte della scuola e degli adulti. Perchè si pensa che possa danneggiarli e dare alienazione. Loro, invece, con questo corso hanno visto riconosciuta la validità del loro mondo. Questo progetto ha evidenziato la loro utilità nel giocare.)*

- In this course the students were challenged to try something different and to test themselves. Students love challenges!

Both recognized their students' fluency had improved after the course; they thought it was because the students embarked on speaking tasks in the implementation. They had the chance to prove they could do it, despite their pronunciation and grammar mistakes. The activities proposed gave them more confidence at speaking and expressing their ideas:

T2: They liked it a lot. They really like to challenge themselves and also try different things! They liked not only the way the course was done, but they told me that they found, and I can confirm this as a teacher, that their speaking skills have definitely improved a lot. *(T2: A loro è piaciuto tanto. A loro piace molto mettersi alla prova e tentare anche cose diverse! A loro è piaciuta non solo la modalità con cui è stato fatto il corso, ma mi hanno detto che hanno riscontrato, e io posso confermarlo come insegnante, che le loro speaking skills sono sicuramente migliorate tanto.)*

The teachers could also notice more motivation to speak during their classes, and they admitted the school needs other channels to promote language learning. T2 believes this course could be a good combination with the curricular one because she noticed the students needed to speak more, and they wanted to. After the implementation, she perceived her students as more confident and relaxed at speaking:

T2: Throw yourself! That's right. They started talking more, without giving too much away. *(T2: Lanciarsi! Proprio così. Hanno iniziato a parlare di più, senza dare troppo peso all'errore.)*

In particular, T1 told about three students she could notice some changes after the course:

- Case 1. Because of Covid-19 and the long period of isolation students had to experience, one of her students was afraid to return to school and wanted to remain at home to preserve his grandparents from the epidemic. He was more and more shy and

reluctant. After this course, the teacher could observe a renewed enthusiasm towards English and be with his friends. He enjoyed the course and talked about it with the teacher. He is a gamer, and he spends a lot of time playing video games. This implementation pushed him to share his passion and thoughts with his mates. His English has also improved because he spoke more and seemed more relaxed and calmer.

- Case 2. A student was so enthusiastic about *Gameful English* to ask the teacher for another session because his friends wanted to join too.
- Case 3. A fifth-year student, who had never been so participative and communicative during her classes, changed his attitude and became more open and tried more to speak English, despite his difficulties.

The students' feedback, as reported to their teachers, was totally positive. No bad aspects were related. The main positive aspects the students wanted to share with their teachers were:

- They enjoyed the new method, that is using video games as learning tools to enhance their language acquisition.
- They could enrich their vocabulary.
- They appreciated the punctuality in the correction of errors and mistakes so that they could immediately recognize and correct them.

T2: The feedback was completely positive from all the students; apart from their enthusiasm for the project, for this new way of learning English, they found points that helped them to improve. Above all, they told me about the acquisition of new vocabulary and the punctuality with which they were corrected, which was useful for self-correction. They noted the effectiveness of correcting errors made promptly. It turned out that the prompt correction benefited them in learning and recognising their mistakes. *(T2: Il feedback è stato completamente positivo da tutti i ragazzi; a parte l'entusiasmo per il progetto, per questo nuovo modo di apprendere l'inglese, hanno trovato dei punti che li hanno aiutati a migliorare. Soprattutto mi hanno parlato dell'acquisizione di nuovi vocaboli, e anche sulla puntualità con la quale sono stati corretti, cosa che è stata utile per autocorreggersi. Hanno notato l'efficacia della correzione degli errori fatta in modo tempestivo. È emerso che la correzione immediata li ha avvantaggiati nell'apprendimento e nel riconoscimento dell'errore che avevano fatto.)*

- They noticed an improvement in their fluency.

Gamification as an assessment method received positive feedback too. According to T2, *Gameful English* empowered self-esteem because the students felt comfortable with the new method: they could have the total control on their performances and results.

Rewarding success was certainly more positive than evaluating failure. Moreover, the students found gamification fair and egalitarian:

Another new aspect that they particularly felt was the way of being assessed, because, since assessment affects a student's self-esteem, personality and the way he or she continues in learning, this type of assessment did not disadvantage them; on the contrary, they recognised its effectiveness. Rewarding success was certainly more positive than evaluating failure. (T2: *Un altro aspetto nuovo che loro hanno sentito particolarmente è stato il modo di essere valutati, perchè, visto che la valutazione agisce sull'autostima, sulla personalità dello studente e sul modo di continuare nell'apprendimento, questo tipo di valutazione non li ha svantaggiati, anzi, ne hanno riconosciuto l'efficacia. Premiare il successo è stato di certo più positivo che valutare l'insuccesso.*)

T1: Since language learning is fundamentally psychological, because when you speak in a foreign language various aspects of your personality are involved, and fear of jumping in is among them; it is obvious, this type of assessment gave them the right peace of mind to think less about being able to make mistakes and more about being able to speak. (T1: *Siccome l'apprendimento della lingua è sostanzialmente psicologico, perchè quando si parla in una lingua straniera si coinvolgono vari aspetti della personalità, e la paura di buttarsi è tra questi, ed è evidente, questo tipo di valutazione gli dava la giusta tranquillità di pensare meno di poter sbagliare e più di poter parlare.*)

The teachers enjoyed the method too because, according to them, it gave the right confidence to think less about the mistakes and more about the speaking. They believe this was a great result because their students were more motivated to speak, even during their classes:

T1: I saw a positive return in them. They were happy to participate in the course. And that is the winning key. If a child participates in a course and is happy, the goal has been achieved. They are aware that they have improved their oral production. The pupils' awareness that they have improved is also a goal. (T1: *Ho visto sicuramente in loro un ritorno positivo. A loro ha fatto piacere di partecipare al corso. Ed è questa la chiave vincente. Se un ragazzo partecipa ad un corso ed è contento, l'obiettivo è stato raggiunto. Loro sono consapevoli di aver migliorato la loro produzione orale. La consapevolezza da parte degli alunni, di essere migliorati, è anch'essa un obiettivo.*)

T2: This course has also been an advantage for me as a teacher because to see a kid "trying" is very nice and positive. (T2: *Questo corso è stato un vantaggio anche per me docente, perchè vedere un ragazzo che si "lancia" è sicuramente molto bello e positivo.*)

Despite the positive results obtained in motivation, engagement, and positive learning outcomes, at the end of the implementation, 8/27 students didn't pass the threshold (29.6%). During the interviews, these students were asked about the reasons why, in their opinion, they did not reach the minimum required to pass the course.

Seven students (87.5%) said it was not because of the course. They enjoyed it, the way it was structured, and the general idea of using video games to enhance English language learning. Only one student said he was not so much interested in the course, and he participated just because he thought it was less demanding.

The other reasons for not achieving the target can be summarised as follows:

- School homework (25%). Students were busy with their school homework, and they left to accomplish *Gameful English* tasks behind:

S12: Honestly, because I also had the other subjects, not because I didn't like the homework. So I had to choose what to cut, I had no alternative. If I could have done it, I would have done it. (S12: *Sinceramente, perchè avevo anche le altre materie, non perchè non mi piacquero i compiti. Quindi dovevo svegliare che cosa tagliare, non avevo alternative. Se avessi potuto farlo, lo avrei fatto.*)

- Laziness (25%). Students said they were simply lazy. They postponed doing their homework, and then forgot it:

S13: [...] out of personal listlessness, not because I didn't like the course. If I didn't like the course, I wouldn't have done it at all, right from the start. (S13: *[...] per svogliatezza personale, non perchè non mi piacesse il corso. Se non mi fosse piaciuto il corso, non lo avrei proprio fatto, già dall'inizio.*)

S18: Actually, it's not that I did a lot of homework; also because many times I would say: maybe I'll do it later... and then I wouldn't do it any more, because I would forget. There's no real reason why I didn't do my homework. (S18: *In realtà non è che mi sono impegnato molto; anche perché molte volte dicevo: magari lo faccio dopo.. e poi non lo facevo più, perché mi dimenticavo. Non c'è un vero motivo perché non ho fatti i compiti.*)

- Didn't like *Minecraft* (12.5%). The student did not accomplish the tasks because he didn't like the game, so he was not motivated for accomplishing them:

S20: Because just playing a game that I wasn't crazy about, most of the times it didn't push me to do that particular exercise, that particular task, maybe more because of that. (S20: *Perché proprio il fatto di giocare a un gioco che non mi faceva impazzire, molte volte non mi spingeva a fare quel determinato esercizio, quel determinato compito, forse più per questo.*)

- Didn't care about points (12.5%). The student did not care about points and marks, so he was not interested in the threshold level either:

S12: [...] I don't like scores; I don't really get into them. (S12: *[...] a me i punteggi non piacciono, non ci entro proprio dentro.*)

- Personal reasons (12.5%). The student talked about personal motivations. He was thinking of going to another school. He admitted if this course had been in a different year, he would have done much more:

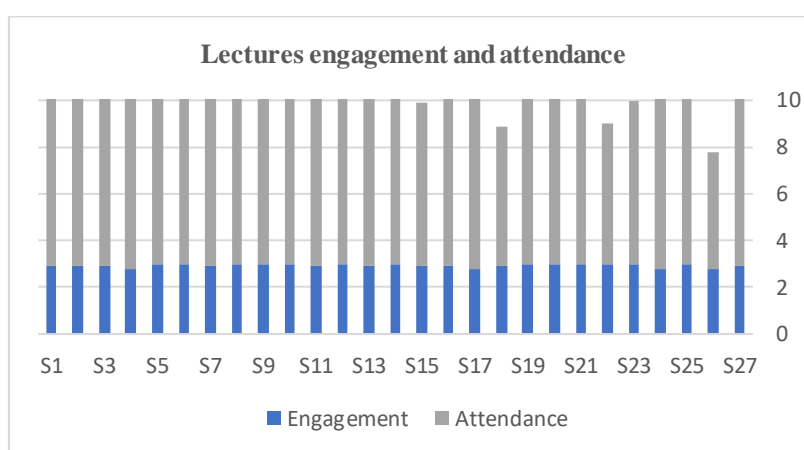
S1: They are not motivations concerning the way the course was run [...]. Let's say it was more personal motivations. This year was a bit more troubled, especially because of the school. In another context, in another year, even last year, I would have done a lot more for sure. (S1: *Non sono motivazioni che riguardano la modalità in cui è stato svolto il corso [...]. Diciamo sono state più motivazioni personali. Quest'anno è stato un po' più travagliato soprattutto per l'aspetto scolastico. In un altro contesto, in un altro anno, anche l'anno scorso, avrei fatto molto di più sicuramente.*)

As far as technical or environmental problems, during the implementation some difficulties were encountered in the online meetings due to problems with the Internet connection. Out of thirty meetings, only one had to be interrupted. In all the others, there were only cases of minimal, easily manageable discomfort (fuzzy images, vocal lag).

The class climate had always been serene, and there had never been cases of lack of participation. Even if minimal, there had always been.

Figure 43 shows the students' attendance, considering a maximum of 10 classes to attend, and the level of engagement during the lectures³⁴. Results show an average of 2.58/3 for engagement during the lectures and an average of 8.85/10 for attendance in the lectures. None of the students joined less than 5 classes.

Figure 43.
Lectures engagement and attendance



All communication was handled via Google Classroom. When students couldn't attend a particular meeting, they could ask to join another group. The request was sporadic and involved only a few students.

As for the methodology adopted, some wraparound materials (videos from Youtube) needed to be managed because after the first meetings I recognized the selected ones were too long to be analysed in a single session. Moreover, in a future implementation, students need to be instructed how to edit a video and use Discord to find English speaking gamers. The next section will give more detailed suggestions for improvements, even considering the students' points of view.

³⁴ The level of engagement was part of the gamified structure and consisted of a maximum of three points for each class attended. The points were so divided: 1 (punctuality) + 1 (presence) + 1 (active participation).

4.1.13 Suggestions for improvements

This category aims to understand if improvements can be made to promote better learning and motivational outcomes in the future iterations.

Some students (38.5%), as well as the two teachers, think it could be useful and valuable to combine *Gameful English* with the curricular course, in order to cover both fluency and accuracy. They recognize the validity of the format and would like to integrate it to what they already do at school:

S22: It should be supplemented with the standard lesson where you do grammar, vocabulary and many other things. Then you have a comprehensive knowledge of the language. *(S22: Va integrato con la classica lezione in cui tu fai grammatica, fai il vocabolario e tante altre cose. In quel caso tu hai una conoscenza proprio completa della lingua.)*

S17: Individually, *Gameful English* can work just as well; however, if we put it next to a school-based course, it would work twice as well and even more. *(S17: Singolarmente Gameful English può funzionare ugualmente; però se lo accostiamo ad un corso fatto a scuola, funzionerebbe il doppio e ancora di più.)*

Most of the students (53.8%) said it would be great, useful, fun, and challenging to play together during the classes:

S24: I would suggest, for example, within the class, to use servers to play all together, even perhaps with other people outside the class, who are native speakers. *(S24: Io suggerirei, ad esempio, all'interno della classe, di utilizzare dei server per giocare tutti quanti insieme, anche magari con altre persone esterne alla classe, che magari sono appunto native speakers.)*

S7: I have to say that it's a very well-organised course, structured well in every aspect. Maybe if there was just that one thing I would add, it would be to involve all the pupils into the game: everybody could play from his/her device, all together, during the meeting. *(S7: Devo dire che è un corso organizzato molto bene, strutturato bene sotto ogni punto di vista. Forse se dovesse esserci proprio quel particolare che aggiungerei, è legare tutti gli alunni nel gioco, nel senso tutti a giocare, ognuno dal proprio dispositivo, tutti insieme durante una lezione.)*

Playing together, for 7.7% of the students, may also give the chance to be less under pressure while speaking English. As you are among other players, the speaking performance during the gameplay would be easier, in the student's mind:

S21: I would include an online world with all the people in the project, maybe even just the group that was created based on the level of English. It would also be an extra stimulus to know that you are not with strangers and so you can feel more comfortable. *(S21: Io inserirei un mondo online con tutte le persone del progetto, magari anche solo del gruppo che si era creato in base al livello di inglese. sarebbe anche uno stimolo in più sapere che non sei con sconosciuti e quindi ti riesci ad aprire meglio.)*

Some students (19.2%) suggested the teacher could take part in the gameplay as a player, interacting like a teacher. This may also give the teacher the chance to be seen in a more friendly way, still preserving the role:

S11: Playing together to try out what we have learnt, perhaps interacting with each other and with the presence of the teacher, who can play along with us. It can also be a way of relating to the teacher differently, in a less authoritarian way, always with respect, but also freer perhaps from the fear of having a teacher in front of us. *(S11: Giocare tutti insieme per provare quell che abbiamo imparato, interagendo magari tra di noi e con la presenza dell'insegnante, che può giocare insieme a noi. Può essere un modo anche per relazionarsi con l' insegnante in modo diverso, in modo meno autoritario, sempre con una base di rispetto, ma anche piu libero magari dalla paura di avere di fronte un insegnante.)*

Others (15.4%) thought better to leave the teacher out of it, acting like a supervisor:

S16: In my opinion, playing altogether in English, supervised by the teacher, of course; it would help a lot. Maybe one day we could have a standard class and another day, one hour a week, we could all play together in English. *(S16: Secondo me sicuramente il giocare in lingua, supervisionati dall'insegnante, certo; però giocare in lingua secondo me aiuterebbe tantissimo, cioè proprio tutti insieme. Magari un giorno si fa una lezione come l'abbiamo fatta sempre e un altro giorno, un'ora a settimana, si gioca tutti insieme in inglese.)*

Other suggestions were not to focus on a specific game (7.7%) but to play different games chosen by the students, dividing them by genre or the gameplay vocabulary.:

S26: For example, at the beginning of the year, you can present a list of games to be chosen with the class. And then you decide on the order of play, maybe even according to the types and mode of play. Maybe similar terms recur in the games chosen and then they will be played in succession... *(S26: Per esempio ad inizio anno si può presentare una lista di giochi da scegliere con la classe. E poi si decide l'ordine di gioco, magari anche a seconda delle tipologie e della modalità di gioco. Magari ricorrono termini simili tra i giochi scelti e allora si giocheranno in successione...)*

Because it was not easy to find native speakers' playmates, 7.7% of the students suggested finding them in advance on Discord:

S4: In my opinion, we should collaborate with a discord server, something where we can find players directly. *(S4: Secondo me si dovrebbe fare una collaborazione con un server Discord, qualcosa per cui poter trovare direttamente i giocatori.)*

The previous suggestions were partially related to the limits already noticed while carrying out the case study. For sure, doing the course in parallel with the curricular one could be a way to improve its benefits as well as experimenting with *Gameful English* at school to limit Internet connection problems and be closer to the student's needs.

Another improvement may regard the possibility to play together during the classes. It would give more engagement and fun. If it is a course based on vernacular video games, playing must be the main part of the process, not only a part of it.

More and detailed issues on the topic will be discussed in the next paragraph and in section 5.3.

4.2 Synthesis and interpretation of the results

The previous paragraphs presented the data from the research instruments using a qualitative approach.

The present section deepens the analysis of the results to give them meaning in relation to this research. Therefore, starting from the general and specific objectives, presented in chapter 3, the data was organised to obtain a clearer and more focused view of the research.

The needs highlighted at the beginning of the research of the desire to provide a useful tool to improve students' language skills by promoting an engaging and relaxed school environment, using commercial video games and gamification, hoped to achieve the following changes in qualitative terms in the students who took part in the treatment:

- Using vernacular video games could lower the affective filter and help students to more and better interact in English.
- Gamification could give a clear and accessible resource to understand assessment measures so to lower the sense of anxiety and frustration, making the learning more engaging.

The general objectives were set precisely with these expectations in mind. Four of them were drawn up based on the independent variable, the making of the *Gameful English* course. The other two remain linked to the practical implementation of the experience.

An analysis, evaluation and synthesis of the data obtained from the fieldwork follow, concerning each of the six general objectives identified at the beginning of the research. Using the same approach, detailed analyses of the specific objectives were then considered. Actually, the data obtained during implementation can provide further information on the topic.

The last section compares the results to the variables to confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses in order to answer the research questions.

A further chapter, intended for conclusions, presents the results compared to the initial hypotheses, the limits of the research, and new possibilities for further studies.

4.2.1 General objective one: Implementation of a gamified and gameful EFL course

The first general objective is “to design and implement a gamified and gameful EFL course using vernacular video games”.

This objective refers to a key stage in the realisation of this case study and the subsequent collection of data. It has been extensively described in the third chapter in terms of both design and methodological choices.

The fact that it was possible to create and implement a series of lessons using video games and gamification is significant in terms of results, as it shows that it can be done.

When reading the results referring to this objective, it is useful to differentiate between the two aspects, the design and the methodological, in order to obtain a broader and more detailed view of the entire process.

Considering the categories used in the data analysis, from a design perspective, the results refer to the following: factors that promote learning; general assessment of the course; gamification: positive aspects; gamification: limits; PBL; suggestions for improvement.

The students always emphasised the importance of technology in their daily lives and were happy to see their passion for gaming recognised from a cultural and educational perspective. Structuring, therefore, a course of study in different levels, with different challenges (tasks) graded according to the accumulated experience of past challenges, was very pleasant, stimulating and interesting to them. Introducing game elements in a non-game context (gamification) made participation more active, not only in terms of scoring but also in terms of greater communicative participation in the classroom. Proposing different topics using different forms (videos from YouTube, in-game images, interactive tests) in the presentation of wraparound materials was considered attractive and motivating because the design wanted to respect the basic mechanics of video games, use novelty and different degrees of difficulty, and encourage communicative exchange between peers in the multiplayer mode, as already confirmed by Thorne (2008).

The enthusiasm shown for the choice of topic and the way the course was structured confirm that the idea of using technology and video games was the right one.

In the students' evaluations, their call for more use of technology in the classroom is evident, as they see traditional methods as too rigid and not close to their everyday life. The score structure was appreciated for the immediate feedback it can give, like when they play at home and can read their level of expertise in the game from the results obtained. Therefore, it is not just enough to use technological systems but to enter the technology and its mechanics. These results confirm what Barajas and Owen (2008) identified as positive outcomes using virtual learning environments: students have the chance to participate in a distributed learning environment which they feel is richer than a traditional one.

From the course evaluations and the suggestions given by the students, they demand an even more all-encompassing use of video games. They propose to include game sessions during school meetings: they want to play together. The teacher could thus directly observe the students' language production and, according to some, take part in the game session to interact more directly with the class. As it was a central point for discussion, further considerations about this topic will be part of a specific section (4.3.4).

Concerning content, *Gameful English* design fully respected the idea of the video game that confronts the player with difficulties to be solved by relying only on oneself and the ability to communicate with the team. The idea of using English to advance a level and win a challenge, or to build just something together, confronted the students with a difficulty to overcome, which was not to learn English but to do well in the game. This apparent lightness in content was intended to help diminish the affective filter, which is evident in a standard language class, as they admit.

During the implementation, while playing from home, the students felt part of a group that fostered sociability rather than restricting it (which is often a bias towards video games). As a matter of fact, they also talked about the course to their curricular teachers, expressing satisfaction, and to fellow students from other classes, confirming Vygotsky's theory of ZPD whereas motivation emerges from meaningful engagement with the material, not the material itself.

Not only video games and gamification influenced the design of *Gameful English*, but also the methodology used during the course. In this synthesis, the following categories were considered: factors that promote learning; tasks assessment; EFL skills assessment;

general assessment of the course: use of the vernacular video games at school; development of the process; suggestions for improvement.

As for the method adopted, the students showed some disappointment with the conduct of the lectures in online mode. Several times they pointed out, even during meetings, that they would have preferred to share the classroom, not the virtual space. Fortunately, there were only few moments of difficulty with the connection, both from the lecturer and the students. This, however, shows the limitation of using technology: interrupting the flow that is established when something enjoyable is happening, may cause frustration on the part of the users.

The task-based method was highly appreciated by the students, who grasped its essence, as many noted that each task assigned was based on what they had already seen and experienced in and with the class, following the idea of scaffolding. They also declared they could learn best and enjoy most when doing cooperative tasks, as Peng et al. (2016) showed in their study. As a result, with a more practical than theoretical method, the teacher's role changed to become a guide and coach who supports students' autonomy by allowing them some control over their learning experiences, as Ryan and Deci (2009) stated. Language was a tool for communication and less for reflection. Consequently, the assessment was less stressful for the students than that of their standard classes. Since each activity corresponded to a well-structured score, clear from the start, the students did not feel exposed to nasty surprises and could build strategies to improve or catch up with their learning.

In terms of content and method, the most promoted activities were those related to communication, i.e. speaking and listening. Several writing activities were also proposed, but they were mostly related to accomplishments and extra activities, therefore, optional. Students expressed satisfaction and recognised a strong teaching and learning value, emphasising the practicality in the use of language that the course aimed to develop.

All the participants in the implementation were casual or pro gamers, though not of *Minecraft*, specifically. Therefore, their passion and knowledge of the gaming world favoured an almost immediate acquisition of the proposed game; the activities were carried out without any real difficulties in terms of practical content. However, some difficulties were encountered in finding fellow players on the Discord server and editing

videos because they lacked technical knowledge. In spite of this, the results obtained show that the students were committed to solving problems by asking for help from more experienced ones (either fellow students or through dedicated tutorials). They accepted the tasks as worthwhile and meaningful, so learning was more effective, as Tekinbas and Zimmerman already noticed in their study (2003).

The idea of letting the students (the actual users) choose the game to play, as well as the modality to be used to accomplish the tasks, was the basis of the methodological content of the course. During the interviews, all the students expressed a strong appreciation for the choices made, emphasising that playing a game because they were obliged to or following rules imposed by a teacher would only turn the video game into another task to be performed, like school tasks. Maintaining a certain level of engagement was the main focus to consider. Prensky (2001) helped a lot in reminding the reasons why people decide to play. Confirming this, students who did not like *Minecraft* scored lower and, in some cases, did not even reach the threshold to pass the course.

Despite the general appreciation of the proposed content, the students detailed possible improvements to the course content. Although a dedicated section (4.3.4) will give further details on the topic, it is worth noticing here that the students think it could be valuable to combine *Gameful English* with the curricular course in order to cover both fluency and accuracy. They recognize the validity of the format and would like to integrate it into what they already do at school. Moreover, some students suggest not playing only a single game but a series of different genres, dividing them according to similarities in the gameplay or in vocabulary.

In the students' evaluations of the proposed content, it seems clear that the choice of the video game to be played and the wraparound materials during class cannot follow a standard to be repeated over time, as also recommended by Reinhardt and Sykes (2014). Video games evolve as well as the interests of the players may change: a game that is appreciated now will turn out to be unplayable six months later because it is outdated. Wraparounds should always be adapted to a specific class, and the teacher should always be up-to-date on the selected game to propose material the players/learners may appreciate.

Considering the results obtained, what students most appreciated was the educational innovation presented. They enjoyed learning outside of school standards with a completely innovative design compared to what they have been familiar with for some time. The idea of experimentation confronted them with the possibility of making mistakes without risking a bad grade or impression. The novelty factor in content, design and the method adopted intrigued the students to try learning differently. Certainly, the results obtained serve as an incentive to pursue research and experimentation in this field.

4.2.2 General objective two: Extra-mural opportunities

The second general objective aims “to provide effective, efficient, and exciting extramural learning opportunities for EFL students bypassing formal EFL instruction”.

This objective is related to the implementation of an English course that can promote greater motivation for students to learn through materials and methods not commonly used in a standard language classroom. Therefore, references to the data collected from the qualitative analysis refer to the following categories: factors that promote learning; general assessment of the course; tasks assessment; gamification: positive aspects; gamification: limits; use of vernacular video games at school; development of the process.

Considering all the data collected, a very high level of satisfaction and motivation toward the *Gameful English* course emerges. The words "challenge," "motivation," "novelty," "fun," and "unconventional" appear with considerable frequency in the results collected through all instruments. Interest in *Gameful English* began even before implementation, during the participant research: many students showed interest only based on the research topic. Class attendance, homework delivery and participation during classes were always very positive, considering that the course did not add any extra marks for school purposes.

Students were motivated by the novelty of the content and the method of assessing and structuring the course. On the one hand, they rediscovered what they love to do during their free time in a school setting; on the other hand, they experienced a different evaluation system that assumed a score to grow and not as the result of a mathematical average. The role of the teacher was a novelty for the students too, as it was more participatory in their world and non-judgmental.

During the classes, students always showed great attention and respect for rules and others. Very often, work was done in groups, helping each other. Despite the leaderboard, which could stimulate excessive competition, there was never any tension or displeasing comments about performance evaluation. The latter aspect was repeatedly reported by students concerning their curricular courses: excessive pressure on grading leads to discussions and tensions among students that damage the classroom environment.

Because of their interest in the topic, the students also felt motivated to speak in English, despite the difficulties for many. They reported feeling "relaxed" and "free" while speaking because it was like talking with friends about things they liked. The discussions were always lively and fun: they often laughed, even at their mistakes, and questions about how they could express their ideas in new forms were frequent. They had the possibility to develop comfort risk-taking and to learn to face potential failure, in accordance with Mawer and Stanley (2011). Moreover, digital technologies allowed a learning environment which was safe and non-judgemental, could connect knowledge to students' lives and interests, and promote knowledge in a wider context, as Barajas et al. (2018) suggested in their creative teaching practices mediated by digital technologies.

Given this data, it can be said that the changes adopted in the design and the method of *Gameful English*, compared to a standard EFL school course, produced a significant degree of motivation that made students interested in learning and ready to throw themselves into speaking without external conditioning. Results confirm Warner and Dupuy (2018): the students (users) become designers of meaning and are no more decoders of language.

Several students also state that they would gladly take a new course in *Gameful English* and that it would be desirable for other disciplines to use the tools they tested in both assessment and course design/content. In this regard, it is crucial to point out that almost all the students admit that such a type of course, applied to other disciplines, although interesting, useful and motivating, might face several obstacles in implementation due to the conservative attitude of many teachers, especially toward the use of technology in the classroom and in evaluating video games as valid tools for learning (see also section 4.2.3).

It is the opinion of the students that the proposed tasks and activities represented a profound change from traditional methods and that these novelties fostered greater involvement during class. From the students' evaluations, the activity that most involved them was the "hardest" one. They were asked to become YouTubers and comment on their gameplay by editing their own video. The task was complex (many did not know how to edit a video), and the students needed a certain degree of English proficiency and extroversion to fully accomplish it. Despite the difficulties, many students did it, and the entire class enjoyed it. For them, it was fun, stimulating, new and very challenging. Being able to engage in tasks that were not only written or oral tests of pages to be studied, as it happens at school, created conditions of challenge toward their own abilities and even their own limits. Many students were "dragged" by the class group to try their hand at tasks they thought were difficult; some wanted to see how much they could achieve; others tested strategies for gaining points.

The involvement, created by the new possibilities experienced for learning a language and being assessed, led the students to recommend the same course to other students or simply people interested in learning English unconventionally. It is particularly interesting that several students mentioned "shy and insecure students" among the possible recipients of the course. It may be assumed that *Gameful English*, in terms of its content, structure and method, makes you feel "relaxed" and gives you the courage to speak in English, even if you are not "good". The proposed activities, after all, were not designed to reward only the good ones but to offer everyone the chance to challenge themselves, according to their abilities, as it happens in a video game.

4.2.3 General objective three: Students' communicative competence in a gameful context

The third general objective wants "to verify students' communicative competence improvements thanks to a gameful context".

This objective is connected to two of the research hypotheses (H1.1 and H1.4). The evaluation of the skills acquired did not involve a pre-test, as the aim of the research was to understand the effectiveness and impact of video games on the students when they use them as educational tools. Therefore, the evaluations that follow are based on the users'

responses, the direct observation of the teacher/researcher during the meetings and when correcting homework, and the feedback from the curricular teachers on the impact the course had on the language performance of the students who took part in the implementation. The categories involved in this synthesis are the following: factors that promote learning; general assessment of the course; EFL skills assessment.

The majority of the students thought they learnt something new in terms of competences in English thanks to *Gameful English*. They declare they have improved both speaking and listening after the course because they felt more confident at speaking (thanks to a calm and friendly atmosphere in the class) and more and more able to comprehend the videos proposed during the activities (thanks to segmentation of their parts to make students more aware of the language).

Writing skills could be exercised only through the assignments (which were not compulsory); despite this fact, the students that regularly sent their work noticed they had improved their writing and grammar skills as well, thanks to the teacher's feedback.

The grammatical aspect, in particular, deserves further consideration. The design of *Gameful English* did not include any section devoted to an in-depth structural study of the language. Therefore, from the researcher's point of view, it was out of the question for the students to recognise an improvement in this language aspect. Considering that the English of video games pays little attention to grammar, it was hardly surprising that the students noticed an improvement in this area. According to them and their teachers, having immediate corrections of their mistakes and brief explanations on how to remedy them helped a lot, and they appreciated it as helpful for learning because the feedback is necessary to assess one's own capacity, as Sykes and Reinhardt (2013) believe. Thanks to comprehensible feedback the students recognized a meaningful relationship between what they do and what they learn, confirming what Tekinbas and Zimmerman (2003) stated.

Probably, what one student declared can clarify the students' general idea of grammar and its use in *Gameful English*: "This course helped me not so much to learn grammar but to use it". Students recognise the importance of accurate speaking and writing in real contexts less than grammar reflections and drill and practice out-of-the-context exercises.

As the course was mainly designed to foster speaking and listening skills, it was expected that the main comments were related to them.

All the students agree that their fluency improved after the implementation, at different levels. They all can see at least a little upgrade. They relate they have the perception it has improved because they feel more easy-going at speaking, and they were not afraid of speaking English in front of the class and the teacher because they had different and several chances to speak, confirming what Gan et al. (2019) said about the correlation between the limited opportunities to speak English in class and the low level in L2 communications.

Students also feel more comfortable with informal English during the gameplay and the oral interactions at school, the same as Thorne et al. (2012) noted; moreover, they can notice some improvements in pronunciation. Three activities were identified as helpful for speaking fluently: You-Tuber assignment, class debates, and describing pictures and *Minecraft* biomes.

Vocabulary, according to the students, seems to help fluency. The more it is rich the more you'll have the chance to communicate your thoughts. Students think *Gameful English* can enhance vocabulary acquisition more than a traditional method because it uses both game features (repetitions and associations) and game tools (voice chat, YouTube, text chat) to facilitate the acquisition of new terms. In addition, the multiplayer mode offers the chance to ask for clarification of word meanings from other players while in the game, should they not know the exact term to express a concept: the multiplayer environment functions as a global arena for intercultural exchange, as Rama et al. (2012) noted in their study and favours vocabulary acquisition, as experimented by Sandra Annette Rogers (2017). The possibility of instant access to an online vocabulary can help speed up the search, as can trying to use other words. Moreover, each game has its own vocabulary, which is essential to advance in level and therefore necessary to learn. In all the aspects mentioned, the students recognised the enormous potential of video games in vocabulary acquisition and the possibilities in the educational field.

The students also noticed improvements in their listening skills as they increased their ability to distinguish varieties of English in the Youtubers' videos better and better and could better understand other English-speaking gamers during the gameplays. These

skills were promoted through activities such as segmenting videos, analysing different accents, and class debates and favoured by the role of the teacher willing to help the student in times of need.

Speaking and listening are intertwined activities, especially in the multiplayer modality. The player needs to understand and respond to the other players' questions; the students note that, even in the classroom and during debates, it is essential to understand well to have a better interaction. Playing allows the students to experience and understand the importance of English as a communicative tool, even before they learn or desire to learn a foreign language.

4.2.4 General objective four: Gamification as an assessment method

The fourth general objective aims “to use gamification to design the course and to assess the students’ progression and achievements”.

This objective is strictly connected to one of the hypotheses of the research (H2.1) as not only were gamification elements used to structure the lectures and the assessment but also intended to change the behaviour of the students lowering stress and anxiety due to a strict educational evaluation system. The categories considered to outline the fourth general objective are the following: general assessment of the course; gamification: positive aspects; gamification: limits; PBL; gamification AND assessment.

With the premise that the students had never experienced any form of gamification during their school career, the novelty was greeted with much curiosity and attention. The students appreciated the structure of the course and were also able to recognise the gamification elements used in the design: the division into levels with progressive difficulty, the repetitiveness of certain structures, the possibility of 'practising' before a challenge (understanding how to do it and then putting it into practice in the task), the points structure, the leaderboard, badges, boss fights (more difficult tasks to accumulate more points to top the leaderboard), and the possibility of making meaningful choices in the personal strategy to pass the course.

Results show that the students find gamification more challenging in terms of learning than traditional methods and so, in their opinion, more stimulating. Moreover, according to students, a gamified course is fairer and more egalitarian than a standard one. The

transparency of the grading of each test, and the fact that everyone starts from the same point, allows aspiring to the maximum because it is a rising score, and each task contributes to the final evaluation; at school, students do just a few tests and are subject to a ruthless mathematical average for their end-of-the-year marks. What they notice, using gamification, is that they can grow from failure because they are given tools and opportunities to recover, confirming Alexander, Cruz and Torrent's (2019) study.

Among the elements that the students highlighted as factors that could increase motivation with gamification, (see 4.2.2), is the novelty factor: experimenting with a new method can bring more enthusiasm towards the proposed activities. Since the feedback on the accomplishment of the tasks is immediate, from a psychological point of view, it can work as a motivating factor: the idea of progress is always clear, as well as that of possible problems; therefore, activating procedures to compensate for any shortcomings is always possible.

Having a benchmark ranking (the leaderboard) can be challenging for many students because it can promote desirable healthy competition among peers and themselves; at the same time, it may also harm the class environment, as it will be discussed later in this section.

Because the rules of the game are presented at the beginning of the course, nasty surprises are effectively eliminated, allowing everyone an equal chance to succeed. The anxiety and stress associated with the written and oral tests, which are decisive for the final grade, as evidenced in the study of D'Agostino et al. (2022), are lowered to the point of disappearing: not the individual test will decide the result, but the whole process, which is well-planned, structured, and continually allows gaining points with extra homework. Gamification promotes a longitudinal learning. Each task or assignments is not determinant for itself but in a more general economy. Students learn little by little while playing and having fun.

During the implementation, students never complained about the scores nor argued with each other about the assessments. They state that they never felt depressed or anxious about doing an assignment as they could make up for it with other work and overtime. In a gamified course, commitment and dedication take on more value than in a standard one because they are visually rewarded (both with badges and in terms of scores); for

example, active participation and good behaviour are rewarded in terms of scoring. Overall, then, students find gamification stimulating and challenging, although it may not work as motivation for learning for all the students who see it positively. For some, it may work to have the challenge to increase their score; for others, there are different sources of motivation to do well, not necessarily related to reaching the top of a leaderboard. For these latter students, the motivation to accomplish a task lay in enjoying it or doing well for themselves, despite the ranking. Therefore, being a gamer does not necessarily determine interest in the score or challenge.

Given the peculiar nature of motivation, gamification may not represent the solution to foster it for all students; for some, the pressure of grades is necessary to keep them from diverting their attention from the result. Moreover, as it is highly schematic, making up for it imposes an effort that may be greater than a single grade taken in school and that, in one fell swoop, may improve the final mark. For other students, being a disruptive educational and school-wide innovation, gamification may not find favour with teachers in its implementation.

As for the elements the students could experience, the leaderboard received some negative comments because it may create excessive and unhealthy competition among them. Moreover, not all students may like to show their results, especially if they are at the bottom of the rankings. Lower positions may not work as incentives to do better. Reaching the threshold level may also condition the player/learner to stop with the course or learning.

Analysing the possible difficulties of applying gamification to an EFL course, it is worth considering the impact of the leaderboard, points and badges on the students who experienced them for the first time in a school context.

The overall impact of the use of PBL in the classroom was positive. Very few students felt under pressure (7.4%), and most appreciated the method and found it motivating for learning. Then, during the interviews, with more focused questions, students also told of their misgivings about the use of gamification in school and the difficulties that, although they did not encounter, might still arise in a school course that adopts this method.

As much as the students did not suffer from the presence of a leaderboard reporting their scores to the whole class, and it was not a cause for anxiety for ranking position, they point out that a leaderboard may harm the student as well as it may cause excessive competition and consequent clashes among those who want to excel, as seen before.

If the leaderboard may generate some perplexity, the same is not for the pointsfication. Almost all the students (92.3%) agree it is an immediate and efficient tool to show progress; moreover, it is less stressful than evaluating with marks as it happens at school because they feel they can improve their scores at any time. An average score instead of an increase makes the students more worried about their results. Thanks to gamification, they can improve little by little in accomplishing tasks.

Badges have also found favourable feedback among students, first of all, because they have no impact on the final grade and only tell a story about achievement and thus are closely related to the psychology of the individual. Students appreciate the novelty and find the badges as possible motivational tools. However, even more than the leaderboard, they notice the subjective value they have as motivational tools. For some, they are powerful motivational rewards, concrete items to prove their abilities, a recognition for their efforts, and a must-have. For others, the presence or absence of badges is irrelevant.

Gamification in the assessment process is considered a valid tool and, therefore, transferable to other courses. Most of the students recognize a positive value in giving them feedback on their tasks because it is explicit, motivational, challenging, and egalitarian. They confirm what Armstrong and Landers (2017) affirm in their study: gamification promotes equality through a narrative that frames the activities constructively with alternative paths. Students appreciate they are constantly building their learning, step by step, little by little. This visible progress, represented on the leaderboard, gives them the feeling to manage and control their results. They can understand if they need to do more to improve their scores or if the planned strategy was right. Many students consider gamification real and tangible feedback on their progress. They recognize the method as efficient and objective to assess their learning outcomes because rules are intelligible from the beginning; students receive continuous feedback on their performances. They can experience their learning: their score is only up to them.

Thanks to the tasks' evaluation grids, presented and discussed at the beginning of the course, the student's view of error also changes. As the students know their possible score and how to get it before accomplishing the task, they can make meaningful and mindful choices which lead to successful learning as Sykes and Reinhardt (2013) show in their study. Mistakes and errors lose their negative aspect because they are considered input and not decisive for the final mark: students have the perception they can always compensate for their score, despite their mistakes.

4.2.5 General objective five: Stress and anxiety within a gameful approach

The fifth general objective, connected to one of the research hypotheses (H2.1), aims "to verify if stress and anxiety during the assessments lowered thanks to a gameful approach".

Given the data on the level of stress and anxiety caused by the school in the current Italian grading system, one of the hypotheses (H2.1) was to consider a gameful learning environment suitable for reducing performance anxiety and stress caused by grades. The categories examined to give an outline of this objective are the following: factors that promote learning; gamification AND assessment; use of vernacular video games at school; development of the process.

One of the premises for building a gameful course is to recreate the same environment in the classroom as in a game session: a relaxing and stimulating environment is necessary to sustain quests and challenges. At the end of the implementation, no student reported feeling under pressure or bored. It is a crucial positive outcome for the course design because it confirms the validity of the upstream choices on the content and structure of *Gameful English*. The goal, however, not only was to create a pleasant classroom environment conducive to learning (as confirmed by the recurrence of the adjectives "relaxed", "calm", "amused, and "intrigued" used by students to describe their mood during the meetings) but also one that continued during the assessment.

The fact that the evaluation obtained during the *Gameful English* course had no impact on the school grade lowered the overall stress level, though it may represent a limit for the research (see 5.2). However, it is worth observing how students received the new assessment tool to try to capture any strengths and weaknesses to seek new solutions to a current situation that, as it stands, does not promote student well-being.

According to the students, the teacher's attitude plays a key role in managing their stress during oral tests (discussions, comments, analysis) and written tests (homework assigned at the end of the meetings and corrected with linguistic feedback). A non-judgmental, supportive, motivating, and caring attitude helps students to see mistakes not as failures but as a starting point to improve. Students recognize the gamified method as an immediate and fair means of tracking their progress, allowing them to have more control over their learning and thus feel more confident and relaxed during assigned tasks. Task tension was minimized because they were in control and knew exactly how to catch up or advance.

Because grades were not from 1 to 10, but with a maximum of 5 per assignment/activity/task, students feel it is easier to make up for failed work. A gameful approach relies on continuous feedback of one's actions, which allows for greater control and awareness of future performance, fostering greater acceptance of a failing grade. An assignment is never loaded with undue weight because there are always elements that can counterbalance a failure of the objective. As in a video game, trying, failing, and starting over are part of the process. The frustration of getting a task wrong becomes the motivation that leads you to tackle the obstacle again to overcome it because you have learned how and what to do. As Barajas et al. (2018) observed, and this research can confirm, game design may help better teacher-student interactions: the learning process has greater value than the outcomes because game design promotes risk-taking and use of failure as a positive learning factor, promoting mutual respect, dialogue, and negotiation.

4.2.6 General objective six: Gameplay and learning

The sixth general objective relates to one of the hypotheses (H3.1) because it aims “to investigate how the gameplay changes using vernacular video games for learning”.

To understand the impact of video games for school purposes on the gameplay, the categories analysed are the following: general assessment of the course; gameplay experience; what limits the gameplay; use of vernacular video games at school; suggestions for improvements.

The use of video games was considered one of the factors that may promote learning. In fact, according to the students, playing video games to perform school assignments engages and entertains them more in the process. Feeling among friends and experiencing the feeling of immersion during gameplay help them to forget that they are doing a school assignment. Game-mediate environments can be designed to promote a playful disposition, confirming the study of Belz (2002).

The students appreciated the initial design choice to have the assigned tasks done only in a post-game phase to limit the impact on the gameplay. Almost all of them did not experience a limitation in the gameplay, even though they knew they were playing for educational purposes.

To understand how much, in fact, the students liked the proposed activities, they were left free to decide whether to do a task. Just as there was no obligation to play (students decided how, when, and in what mode to play, as long as multiplayer was preferred), homework was not mandatory. Left to their own choice, students accomplished numerous tasks. They state they did them because they were fun, innovative, and valuable for learning, confirming the results of Tekinbas and Zimmerman (2003) about learning which is more effective when learners accept that the task they are doing is worthwhile and meaningful.

Gameplay has not changed at all, according to the students; it has even improved for a third of them. In fact, several students realized that playing could improve their gameplay, as it gives added value to the game: you can meet new friends, improve your English skills and vocabulary, and add new challenges (using English to play makes the game more challenging). Only two students (7.7%) state that knowing they were playing "for school" clouded the fun and thus limited the gameplay.

School did not impact the gameplay because all the activities were designed to be done after the gameplay session; moreover, there was no obligation to do the homework, and the teacher was never judgmental toward those who did not accomplish the assignments. Therefore, if students felt no limitations in gameplay, it is interesting to understand what factors might negatively impact it.

Factors that may negatively impact include technical ones, such as a bad Internet connection or a malfunctioning device. However, a specific game may negatively affect the gameplay too. Students tell of toxic gamers, the loss of motivation when playing "by force," and spoilers that destroy the pleasure of surprise. In addition, the flow can also be interrupted when one realizes that the game design limits progress or that actions become too repetitive, so there are no more challenges to face.

Learning how to play better, progressing in the game, and improving the gameplay are fundamental goals for a gamer. Knowing English often becomes essential because many video games are in English and, in multiplayer mode, it is the most used language among players of different nationalities. Students are aware of this. They would advise everyone to use video games to learn English because, in the meantime, there is fun. They highlight how much better learning is through play, not as an imposition: it is more enjoyable and lasting. The willingness to play comes from an internal motivation, which is why the "school" did not impact their gameplay. No one created an extrinsic need.

As evidence that there was no negative impact on gameplay, at the end of the implementation, most students said they would continue to play *Minecraft* multiplayer. Those who would not continue playing never liked *Minecraft* as a game; therefore, their choice did not depend on the course and having played it for school purposes.

4.2.7 Specific objectives

After considering the general objectives, the syntheses and observations on the four specific objectives will follow below.

4.2.7.1 Specific objective one: Motivation within a gameful approach

Specific objective one aims "to verify if the students feel more motivated using a gameful approach than a standard one".

This specific objective investigates whether a gameful course can achieve greater motivation for learning English as a foreign language than a traditional one. The categories of analysis used for this purpose are the following: factors that promote learning; tasks assessment; use of vernacular video games at school; development of the process.

The level of motivation to interact and learn more in a gameful course was assessed based on attendance at meetings, willingness to interact in English during lessons, number of assignments completed and comparison with the traditional method concerning students' feelings of involvement.

The initial motivation for the students to participate in the implementation was the video game topic, which kept their attention throughout the field study. Interacting in English, therefore, was a way to share their passion and discuss issues that were familiar and close to them. The students also felt motivated to interact because they did not risk bad grades that would have compromised their school careers. They state that they felt very relaxed and entertained during the meetings. The serene and playful atmosphere and the feeling of being part of a levelled group that shared the same passions and L2 competences always encouraged the active participation of the group. There were no moments of boredom or tiredness. Discussions were lively and favoured a communicative and untraditional approach, according to the students.

They also mention the role of the teacher in encouraging their participation as a motivator and supporter. The results confirm the importance of creating new educational scenarios through digital technology in which students are protagonists and responsible for their learning, making decisions and constructing their knowledge guided by the teacher (Martínez Pérez, 2016).

Briefly, students speak of an active learning experience in a gameful course, as opposed to a passive one in a traditional method, where they feel like spectators and not participants in the lesson. Beyond motivation regarding video games, many students felt motivated to learn because they were intrigued by the method. Active participation in all phases of the course is evident in the attendance data and the number of tasks completed, which were optional.

Most of the students enjoyed the gameful tasks more than the school homework because they found them fun, challenging and helpful for learning. Since they did not find them difficult but appropriate to their level, doing them was demanding (in terms of time and effort) but enjoyable. The results confirm Sykes and Reinhardt's (2013) study on the importance of being aware of the goal of the activity: it maintains the flow and the learning that comes with it.

Results are definitely positive: they show an average of 2.58/3 for engagement during the lectures and 8.85/10 for attendance. None of the students joined less than 5/10 classes. If students could not participate in the lesson, they asked to be moved to another group not to miss the meeting. It shows the interest in the course unequivocally, as attendance or non-attendance was, again, not influential on the school grade.

As for the tasks accomplished at home, results show the same positive trend: the average was 3.2/5 per student. Homework assignments were seen as something fun to do and not an obligation. They were reasons for discussion in class and among students in solving technical and content problems.

4.2.7.2 Specific objective two: Gamification in other educational contexts

The second specific objective aims “to establish if, according to the students’ perceptions, gamification may be applied to other educational contexts (subjects, programs, terms, etc.)”.

This specific objective investigates whether gamification can be applied to other non-gameful contexts. The previous paragraphs showed that the combination of gamification with a video game-based course produced motivation, involvement and improvement in the student’s language skills. Then, it is also worth investigating whether the students can see a further application of gamification out of video games in other school courses or contexts.

The categories of analysis considered in describing this objective are the following: gamification: positive aspects; gamification: limits; PBL; gamification AND assessment.

The positive feedback from students on the use of gamification applied to a school course shows how important it was for them to see the progress in their learning in real-time and visually. The vast majority recognize a positive value in the feedback on their tasks because it is explicit, motivational, challenging, and egalitarian. Almost all the students who participated in the study believe that gamification could also be applied to other school courses or terms with positive results. Especially in evaluation, the students find more clarity, objectivity and fairness. The feeling of control over their learning path focuses on the importance of meaningful choices over passive learning and decisions.

Results confirm the study of Belz (2002) which considers game-mediated environments as useful to promote a playful disposition.

The limitations highlighted in its use evidence the emotional impact that a leaderboard, in particular, could have on learners and the classroom environment. Moreover, as it is very different from the standard system of assessment and construction of a learning pathway, it could encounter hostility, especially in those teachers more attached to traditional methods. Therefore, students find its application difficult because they see strong resistance to innovation on the part of schools and adults towards technology in general, in favour of methods already tried and tested and in use, despite their lack of effectiveness. According to the students, just mentioning gamification at school would meet with resistance from many because it would immediately be associated with the world of gaming and, therefore, useless, of little value and just a waste of time.

4.2.7.3 Specific objective three: What influences the gameplay

The third specific objective refers to the personal experience of playing video games and specifically aims “to determine which aspects influence the gameplay in an educational context”.

This objective should be considered when designing a gameful course in all its activities and tasks because limitations and obstacles in the gameplay may jeopardize engagement, fun, and so learning. The categories considered in this synthesis are the following: gameplay experience; what limits the gameplay; use of vernacular video games at school.

Assessing the impact of the school on the gaming experience is crucial for making the right choices when planning educational activities. If play is no longer pleasant, one may decide to stop playing, irreparably damaging the educational activities related to it. Maintaining gamefulness could be demanding because learners' play experiences and tastes differ. From the interviews and direct observation, the learners, except very few, did not find any negative influences on their gameplay due to the assignments. On the contrary, for many, the proposed activities added value to their gameplay. Results show that playing a game you don't like limits engagement and participation in the activities; it means accomplishing tasks related to a game you are not in, just because you must do it, may compromise the learning aspect.

This section examines what factors could generally limit gameplay and what decisions are best to avoid in the course design or school activities that could preclude enjoyment of the game, involvement, and thus learning.

In general, among what can limit gameplay, all the students count technical problems of various kinds, from inefficient devices to a bad Internet connection that causes delays or lack of clarity in communicating with other players or a slowdown in the game that can totally jeopardise it. The game environment is another significant factor because encountering toxic players who do not play according to the rules can lead to frustration and then abandon the game. An aggressive, unfair and impartial playing environment leads many students to quit the game as well as they no longer find enjoyment.

In addition to these general aspects, the players' game genre preferences are fundamental to consider. Some students relate they are bored by games that are too repetitive or by the lack of challenges; others perceive frustration because they are 'forced' to play with mates when they would do something else. In short, gaming is subjective, and this factor must be considered when planning activities. As far as possible, therefore, the game to be used should be chosen by those who will play it. Following the orientation of the players is crucial if they have to accomplish tasks outside the gaming experience. Lacasa et al. (2008) suggestion to use wraparounds to compensate for the limitations the game offered seems to be a valid suggestion to encounter the students' preferences.

The students agree that an *a priori* definition of the timing and mode of the game, i.e. the duration of the gameplay and its modalities, can be a limitation for engagement and flow. One of the factors to avoid, therefore, would seem to dictate the rules of playing the game and restrict it to times and modes decided by the teacher. This result confirms what Rogers (2017) and Scholz and Schultze (2017) suggested in the conclusions of their researchers: to obtain more learning from a video game it is advisable to let learners free to decide whether and whenever play it. Furthermore, I could add that any task should not be carried out during the game, as the student would undoubtedly be distracted from the primary objective, which is to play and have fun, in favour of a demand external and unrelated to the game.

The teacher's role, therefore, should be to plan activities, provide background knowledge and give continuous feedback on the tasks performed, as also Foster and Shah (2020)

suggest. The students should be left free to play but prepared to accomplish the tasks. The combination of these two elements could promote enjoyable play and learning. Once again, it is advisable not to compromise the enjoyment of playing to promote good learning.

4.2.7.4 Specific objective four: Possible improvements

The fourth specific objective is mainly based on the responses and the feedback the students gave about *Gameful English* during and after the implementation because it aims “to understand how to improve technical, methodological, and design issues, according to the students’ feedback”.

The categories considered for this synthesis are the following: general assessment of the course; development of the project; suggestions for improvements.

The idea of using vernacular video games as a foundation for better learning was appreciated by all the students who participated in *Gameful English*, as it allowed them to experiment with a method that fostered peer-to-peer communication in English, promoted a less traditional and judgmental teacher figure, and presented a novelty in terms of assessment with the gamification.

Many students thought they acquired new skills in terms of language learning (more vocabulary and improvements in speaking and listening) and a better knowledge about gamification that they think may be transferred to other contexts. They found the classroom environment serene and stimulating, and it was pleasant to speak in English; unlike the curricular school lessons, the students never felt anxious and restricted in their expression.

The teachers of the curricular course themselves confirm the students' positive feedback, as they also recognise a positive return during their lessons from students who had taken part in *Gameful English*. They notice a greater motivation and confidence in speaking and enthusiasm for the novelty that the course promoted.

The interest in the course was also evident in the suggestions to improve it by the students. While reiterating their appreciation for *Gameful English*, they think it should be integrated into the school curriculum and carried out during classes. Combining the two

aspects, the more communicative aspect of *Gameful English* and the more traditional school one (that focuses more on the correctness of the language), students think they may have a complete and well-balanced English course. The curricular teachers fully agree.

Another suggested improvement was moving the online course to a face-to-face modality; according to the students, connection problems would be avoided, and linguistic and social interactions would be better.

To improve the activities and the method, they propose to play together during the lessons, sharing the gameplay to have an even more immersive and realistic experience. Their proposal considers two solutions: the teacher as an observer outside the game who then gives linguistic feedback, or the teacher playing the game challenging students with specific tasks to accomplish. This result needs to be better analysed: on the one hand, previous studies (Rogers, 2017; Scholz & Schulze, 2017) have shown that learners had more engagement and fun if they could play at home at their most favourable time (so confirming the researcher's choice not to play during classes and the students' positive response on the possibility to play at their own pace); on the other hand, results of this study show the desire of the students and the possible good opportunities of playing together during the lectures. Considering the same students expressed good feedback on the freedom to choose the modality of their gameplay and how to accomplish a task without any time restrictions in the gameplay, a possible solution could be to combine some tasks to be accomplished during a class playing session and to maintain the *Gameful English* structure for the rest of the activities. This solution could give a sense of more immersion and community in the game while leaving the single student free to choose how to continue on the personal learning path.

Another practical suggestion the students give is to find English-speaking players in advance on Discord or other platforms because it was demanding before the implementation started and was fundamental to accomplishing the tasks. As a final suggestion, they propose to use various games during the course and not dwell on just one, to meet those players with different tastes. They confirm the need to choose together which game to play to achieve maximum satisfaction in terms of fun and learning.

4.3 Comparison of the variables

After describing the syntheses of the results of the general and specific objectives, this section examines the variables to demonstrate the validity of the research hypotheses. Table 13 shows if the variables have found total, partial or no evidence, according to the results obtained. The last column indicates where the results find evidence in different sections of this study.

Table 13.
Comparison of the variables.

VARIABLES	Confirmed	Partially confirmed	Not confirmed	References
V1.1 Acquisition of new EFL skills		☑		4.1.3; 4.1.4; 4.1.11
V1.1.2 Acquisition of new vocabulary	☑			4.1.3; 4.1.4; 4.1.11
V1.1.3 More engagement in doing homework and during the lessons	☑			4.1.2; 4.1.4; 4.1.7; 4.1.12
V 1.2.1 More speaking interactions	☑			4.1.1; 4.1.4; 4.1.11
V1.3.1 More relaxed and confident speaking	☑			4.1.1; 4.1.3; 4.1.4; 4.1.11; 4.1.12
V1.4.1 Improvements in fluency	☑			4.1.1; 4.1.3; 4.1.4; 4.1.11; 4.1.12
V1.4.2 Improvements in comprehension	☑			4.1.1; 4.1.3; 4.1.4; 4.1.11

V2.1 Gamification reduces pressure during the assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			4.1.1; 4.1.5; 4.1.6; 4.1.8; 4.1.12
V2.2.1 Gamification is more egalitarian than a standard course	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			4.1.4; 4.1.5; 4.1.7; 4.1.8; 4.1.12
V2.2.2 Students talk about their abilities with confidence and consciousness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			4.1.1; 4.1.8; 4.1.11; 4.1.12; 4.1.13
V3.1 Playing Minecraft was always engaging during the implementation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			4.1.9; 4.1.10; 4.1.13
V3.1.2 School did not influence the gameplay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			4.1.9; 4.1.10; 4.1.11; 4.1.13
V3.1.3 Video games are useful tools for EFL acquisition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			4.1.1; 4.1.4; 4.1.11; 4.1.13

As shown by the results in Table 13, all variables have positive outcomes. As partially confirmed, variable 1.1 needs further clarification. During the interviews and survey, the majority of the students (53.8%) reported they learned new skills, and others (46.1%) thought they learned something new. When asked to clarify what new skills they intended, most reported that they have improved their speaking and listening skills and expanded their vocabulary. Few students added new elements. Significantly, however, "new skills" include the possibility to use video games not just for fun, having learned how to make friends with non-Italian players, editing a video, and how to "play" them for learning.

Further details and comments on the hypotheses will be integrant part of the next and conclusive chapter.

5. Conclusions

In the previous chapter, the analysis, evaluation and summary of the results were presented concerning the six general and four specific research objectives. This chapter presents the conclusion of this study, considering the results obtained, the objectives set, and the research hypotheses presented in Chapter 3. The limitations found in the research are also highlighted, and some future possibilities offered by this study are proposed.

5.1 General conclusions

Every innovative form of education finds its legitimacy in experimentation, which is why, when introducing video games in the classroom, it is advisable to monitor the margins of opportunity and criticalities, to verify the levels of competence and knowledge of the class at the beginning of the activity and its conclusion, to analysing the real impact of gameful learning on the results obtained in a specific school reality.

This research began with three questions concerning the possibility of using a vernacular video game that could provide new motivation for the study of English as a foreign language, allowing students to experience assessment with less stress and anxiety, thanks to gamification, without impacting their gameplay. Starting precisely from a vernacular video game, *Minecraft*, which was the foundation of the lessons in terms of both materials and gameplay, I created a 10-lesson online course called *Gameful English*, which the students attended in extracurricular classes, and voluntarily. I adopted gamification in the course design and teaching methodology to foster a gameful environment and try to change the perception of assessment (seen as punitive and demotivating in the Italian school system by students). Since the students could play *Minecraft* without time or mode limits (with the only request to prefer the multiplayer mode), I tried to understand how the school and the assigned tasks could impact the gameplay too.

The novelties presented in this study, as far as I can find evidence of in the literature, are the following:

- It is the first time that, at least in Italy, vernacular video games and gamification are combined in a single study on EFL teaching and learning. Moreover, the

implementation took place in a secondary public school, and most of the studies with games focus on primary or university levels.

- In the studies I considered, when dealing with games, the teacher or the researcher decided *a priori* what game to adopt during the lessons or the implementation. For this research, the students could choose what game to play from a pre-determined list of games that could promote the right affordances for learning.

Moreover, to implement *Gameful English*, no gamification device was required. All the teachers can take advantage of it, even though they think they cannot play video games. The *Gameful English* course clarifies gamification is not using games: it is using what is inside a game because gameful learning is possible only by adopting a gameful mind.

Gameful English was administered to 27 Italian secondary school students, and some hypotheses were made about the results of the proposed educational activities during the planning:

H1.1 Students think they are learning more and better

H1.2 Students are more motivated to speak English during the lectures

H1.3 Students are more confident and relaxed while speaking English

H1.4 Students feel they are improving their fluency and comprehension.

H2.1 Students are less under pressure during the assessments

H2.2 Students are more conscious and confident about their abilities and results

H3.1 Gamefulness does not change because students can always experience the fun

Once the design and implementation of *Gameful English* were over, (Chapter 3), and the results were analysed and discussed in relation to the objectives of the research (Chapter 4), the following conclusions can be presented:

Regarding the students' perceptions of having learned English more and better than in a traditional system (H1.1), the results obtained through the different data collection tools show that the use of vernacular video games had a significant impact on the perception of having improved listening and speaking skills and of having learnt new terms, not only

concerning the game. The students felt that a gameful approach was crucial to learning because an error is assessed in a non-punitive way: this allowed them more exposure to speaking activities, promoting a more relaxed approach to assessment (H2.1). The students emphasise how, by combining this course with the traditional school course, based mainly on grammar accuracy, they would receive a comprehensive preparation and would be better ready to use the language as a means of communication, rather than as a knowledge of linguistic structures. Although they believe people can learn English through a video game, they emphasise that the teacher as a guide, support and motivator is essential if video games are also used at school.

Although students move with familiarity in the environment of video games and technologies in general, they do not always autonomously draw from these experiences learning that can be transferred to other contexts of activity. To gain this passage of awareness and generalisation, they need to be accompanied and stimulated by the competence and observations of teachers who, even if they are less accustomed to video games, provide a guide and input decisive for a critical, expert and reflective approach to content, integrating experiential and face-to-face learning modes. However, students consider it essential that the teacher is at least aware of the gaming world and therefore be part of the context.

Realising gameful learning requires the teacher to be aware of proposing a new learning setting, characterised by *ad hoc* design and assessment, which allows better integration of the video game in teaching activities. Because of the satisfaction and results that this decision will bring, the teachers will have to foresee, especially in their first experiences, an additional workload for the selection of products and the design of training courses and the methods of use of video games and, not least, for the maturation of some direct experience, to acquire familiarity and practice and be able to provide guidance and support safe to students.

Concerning the motivation to speak more in English (H1.2), the students point out that the proposed topic made them comfortable expressing their opinions. The class environment, comparable to a community of gamers, made everyone free to express ideas on their passion. The speaking activities, thus, were not perceived as tasks to be graded but as moments of sharing among friends. Students felt more motivated to speak because

they knew the topic, had a basic vocabulary to support them, and never felt the weight of an evaluation or a judgement. Thanks to a serene classroom environment and the type of activities offered, graded according to the competence and built on a solid foundation, the students did not feel pressure to produce grammatically correct speaking, favouring fluency (H1.3). They believe they improved their understanding of English by analysing videos involving YouTubers commenting on their gameplay (H1.4). The activity was described as challenging because the language used was authentic and not simplified as in listening activities at school. According to them, fragmenting the video into smaller sections and analysing the content together was crucial. The ability to understand the content of the video better and better served as an incentive and reward for their efforts. Thus, the students felt increasingly confident mastering linguistic environments considered hard to understand (H2.2).

The competition element of games is one explanation to clarify what happens in the mind when using games for learning: people are challenged to take further steps in their learning process and receive direct feedback on what they're doing.

As far as the use of gamification (H2.2), the data collection tools demonstrate that it was considered a valid tool for measuring learning and having more control over one's training. Not only do the students point out that a points structure is more transparent, egalitarian and fun, but they have a feeling of continuous growth and greater awareness of what they are doing. The points structure was undoubtedly the element of gamification that most appealed to the students. The badges were received positively, but not enthusiastically. Although the leaderboard was not a cause for anxiety or stress during implementation, some students expressed misgivings precisely because of the character and how failures are accepted by the students in general.

Being able to choose a strategy, even to improve their grade, made the students enthusiastic and curious about this new approach to assessment. Despite this, they emphasise that although they would like to extend gamification to the other courses as well, they express profound misgivings about the feasibility of the proposal, due to a possible bias towards the gaming world.

Regarding the perception of gameplay (H3.1), the school did not impact it significantly. Only two students (among twenty-seven) stated that they were affected by the assigned

tasks in the gameplay phases. All the others did not perceive any difference, and some could enrich their gameplay thanks to the assignments. The elements that contributed to "protect" the gameplay from the school halo can be summarised as follows: the students could choose whenever and how to play, the assignments could be accomplished only after playing (the students had to record part of their gameplay to be later analysed), and the tasks were not mandatory. The students find in other contexts possible negative causes to impact their gameplay: toxic players, feeble Internet connection, malfunctioning devices, and playing as a duty seem to be the actual enemies for engaging and fun gameplay.

As I tried to demonstrate throughout this study, data analysis has provided interesting insights that can guide and help future research on the topic. Apart from the results obtained through the qualitative instruments, I also consider it relevant to outline what can be learnt from this case study.

This research has shown that it is possible to plan and implement an educational intervention using commercial video games and gamification, even if the educator is not an expert in digital games. The course design and its planning were appropriate for the audience in content and form, promoting participation, interest and enjoyment among the students and great satisfaction in the teacher, although I was not what is called a "pro gamer". Curiosity, commitment, and enthusiasm helped to design a gamified course using video games, not my gamer's ability. Of course, it is essential to know and play the video game to propose it as an educational tool, but it is not necessary to be a pro gamer to use it in a school context. What is necessary is, instead, to adopt a gameful approach, and this goes far beyond the video game. These aspects are not to be underestimated, as they can be excellent starting points for future studies (see section 5.3).

This study has delved into the realm of gameful learning and its potential applications beyond the field of video games and EFL learning. While video games were the focus of this study, it is important to recognize that gameful learning principles can also be effectively applied in non-gaming contexts. By adopting a gameful approach, educators can harness the power of motivation, engagement, and active learning to enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

One key implication of this study is the need to reevaluate traditional assessment practices and shift towards a mastery-oriented approach. By emphasizing the development of skills and competencies, rather than a fixed progression through content, learners can experience a sense of autonomy and control over their learning journey. This shift not only reduces stress and anxiety but also promotes a deeper understanding of the subject matter and a more sustainable motivation for learning.

The findings of this research align with the theories proposed by Gee (2008), ecological perspectives, and the concept of affordances as discussed by Nation (2011). These theories emphasize the importance of creating an immersive and interactive learning environment that provides learners with meaningful choices and opportunities for engagement. By leveraging the flow theory, which promotes a state of optimal challenge and engagement, educators can design learning experiences that captivate learners' attention and sustain their intrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, the application of differentiated outcomes based on effort, interest, and achievement, supported by the Dynamic Difficulty Adjustment (DDA) approach, can address the stress and anxiety caused by the current assessment system. Shifting the focus from a linear progression model to a mastery-oriented approach allows learners to engage in personalized learning pathways and pursue their interests and strengths.

By recognizing and celebrating individual achievements, learners can experience a sense of competence and mastery, which in turn promotes a positive learning experience. The central role of motivation in learning cannot be overstated.

Motivation serves as a driving force that fuels learners' engagement and perseverance. The integration of gameful elements, such as meaningful choices, feedback, and clear goals, enhances learners' motivation by creating a sense of purpose and autonomy. Educators can foster a supportive and conducive learning environment by aligning the learning experience with learners' interests and providing timely and constructive feedback.

To conclude, I also find it appropriate to make some general considerations on the use of video games in an educational context after experimenting with them. It is important to fix some basic premises to make gaming activities constructive for learning.

Firstly, teachers must be accompanied in a path of awareness regarding the transformation of their role and the teaching-learning process that follows the introduction of video games in the classroom. They must also be able to acquire knowledge and skills appropriate to didactic design with the video game, to choose the most coherent products for the objectives they intend to achieve, and to grasp the transformation and the centrality of their contribution in the learning process with the video games. Merely applying the label of gameful design, without informed design principles and guidance for implementation to support instructors, would reduce the gameful learning to a superficial fad.

It is also crucial that students are convinced of the effectiveness of video games for learning purposes. This discourse must be addressed in the classroom to avoid misunderstandings and ensure that, while rightly allowing themselves to be involved in the action, students know how to remember the objectives of the task.

A third prerequisite for the success of gameful learning is the construction of an educational alliance with the families. Projects must be contextualised, specifying their objectives, methods and expected effects. It must be clear that one does not play just for 'fun' but to achieve goals with the group. Bringing video games into the classroom represents an opportunity to involve families in the commitment to a responsible approach to the gaming experience.

Finally, from a methodological point of view, the experience with the video games must be punctuated throughout its duration by explicit reflection about the objectives, expectations, processes activated and the evaluation of the learning in terms of outcomes and quality of the experience. The teacher must help elaborate this rich and articulated activity, proposing stimuli that allow the students to acquire adequate awareness of themselves and one's strategies; moreover, the teacher may help to generalise processes activated to apply them outside the specific game context. The use of video games in the classroom must always be subservient to the realisation of a formative intention of the teacher and not to mere attractiveness. In this sense, the use takes place alongside and integration into the teacher's teaching action: video games must be chosen for what they bring to the learning experience, concerning clear and specific aims of instruction and educational purposes.

A further objective in introducing video games in the classroom is the opportunity to initiate paths of self-knowledge and orientation because the analysis of the gaming experience highlights the reaction to the challenge, complexity, emotions, motivational levels, the ability to communicate and collaborate, objectives, the ability to analyse, react, adapt, evaluate feedback, etc.

Despite the incredible opportunities video game may offer for learning, as I tried to outline, in this study there are also some significant limits to consider which can be the starting points for future research.

The next sections will deepen these issues.

5.2 Limits

The main limitation detected in this first phase of the study is certainly in the small number of participants, which is not numerous and representative enough to generalise the results in statistical terms. The choice of participants, as mentioned above, was conditioned by the type of study; consequently, this study represents a limited and specific approximation to the research hypotheses, which at this early stage does not require a statistically representative number of participants.

The second limitation is the duration of the implementation. Indeed, it covered a relatively short period (three months for ten lessons): it would be necessary to observe the trend for at least one semester to obtain a more complete view.

The third limitation is to have implemented the course only in a specific secondary school (Liceo Scientifico). This choice may give a partial vision of the results because this secondary school course is often directed to “good students”. In addition, among the students who participated, there were no students with educational special needs or forms of disability.

Lastly, although external to the research, the health crisis and the pandemic due to SARS-CoV-2 posed limitations, especially in the data collection phase, as the interviews and focus groups, which were planned in person, had to be carried out online using Google Meet.

The limitations found in this first phase of the study will certainly serve as a basis for future research, as described in the following section.

5.3 Further research

This research took inspiration from previous studies on the application of commercial video games for educational purposes and gamification as a tool to increase learning motivation and foster a more relaxed and fun environment that decreases students' anxiety and performance stress. The results obtained, especially those derived from the students' opinions to improve the educational intervention, provided some very interesting insights that would deserve to be further explored in a subsequent study, considering greater representativeness of the sample, more resources, interdisciplinarity, and systematic evaluation.

On the one hand, as seen in the previous section, a subsequent study could consider a larger number of students, thus favouring greater generalisation of the results. It would be interesting to observe what would happen if the students were not all gamers and they belonged to different school contexts (technical and vocational schools).

It might be worth combining the traditional method with the gameful one to study its impact on learning since the students suggested *Gameful English* as part of the regular English course at school.

Moreover, teaching a class while playing the game could allow being more engaged and immersed in the context to observe the student's behaviour and language performance.

The participants in this research joined voluntarily. None of the students had learning disabilities, forms of autism, cognitive disorders or special needs. This field should be considered in future studies as it could be an effective alternative to motivate those students who need diversified and tailor-made attention. Disability at school is a factor that cannot be excluded from a study precisely because it can provide innovative and profound insights for analysis and action.

Another aspect this study offers for deep analysis is to investigate if gamification could obtain the same positive results to lower stress and anxiety being part of the "real" school evaluation system. What if the school results were designed with a points system,

displayed on a leaderboard, and rewarded with badges? Would the results of this study be confirmed?

I also consider the motivational aspect behind the employment of video games, as specified in the theoretical framework, to be salient. However, we need to go beyond the mere recognition of the phenomenon: we need to investigate whether the motivation arising from the use of the resource then had an impact from a learning perspective, as this study attempted to do, such as to stimulate future research. Therefore, there is a need to carry out further studies on the subject.

After this journey, I wish to continue to use video games with my students and to understand their potential and limitations in daily teaching practice. This topic needs to be addressed in schools with a serious and scientific approach, listening to students and other teachers and involving institutions and the family so that technological evolution would not be seen as a potential danger but as a powerful resource.

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Annexes

- Annex 1. *Gameful English* gamified structure.
- Annex 2. *Gameful English* students' scores.
- Annex 3. Badges.
- Annex 4. Leaderboard.
- Annex 5. Lectures plan.
- Annex 6. Game journal.
- Annex 7. Big theme assignments.
- Annex 8. Evaluation grids.
- Annex 9. Parental consent form.
- Annex 10. Teacher consent.
- Annex 11. Survey.
- Annex 12. Interviews and focus groups: questions.
- Annex 13. Interviews: transcriptions.
- Annex 14. Focus groups: transcriptions.
- Annex 15. Field notes observation grid

Annex 1. Gamified structure of *Gameful English*

Assessment gamified structure for *Gameful English*

Assignment type	Points per attempt	# of attempts	Total possible
<i>Assessment English test</i> at the beginning of the course in order to get to know your CEFR level better.	4	1	4
<i>Readings</i> There are readings (or other minimal homework) before some lectures.	1-2	2	4
<i>Survey Lectures</i> Attending and participating in the lectures — where we will be doing a lot of stuff, not just listening passively — is important.	1-3	10	30
<i>Discussions</i> Your discussion sections are where you really learn while interacting with your group.	1-4	5	20
<i>Practice Assignments</i> The practice assignments are the backbone of the course. During weeks 2-10, you may complete five assignments. If you complete five, your lowest below course-average score will be raised to the course average. Note that this is capped at well below the theoretical maximum	1-5	5	25
<i>“Big Theme” Assignment</i> The Big Theme assignment lets you develop a major project around a theme or a question you are interested in. You may do it collaboratively or you may do it on your own. I encourage you to use the practice assignments in your Big Theme Assignment.	1-7	1	7
<i>Peer Review</i> To encourage you to learn from your peers and to get practice in engaging others, you can earn points for peer reviewing one assignment for a fellow student.	1-3	1	3
<i>Game Journal</i> From the first day of this course, till the last, you will be asked to complete a grid to take notes of the time spent and your activities on Minecraft. Playing everyday is not necessary.	1-3	1	3
<i>Final Interview, Survey, and Focus Group</i> You will take part in an interview and a focus group (in Italian) where you will give your personal opinion about the course. A written survey about the course will also complete your interview.	2	2	4

How students' final points in Gameful English are converted to a number grade at the end of the course.

Points	Number grade
95-100	10
90-94	9
80-89	8
70-79	7
60-69	6
50-59	5
40-49	4

Source: Adapted from Ajlen et al. (2020).

Annex 3. Badges



You have reached the threshold (min 60 points). Congrats!



You have done all the assignments (5/5) given during the course. Good job!



The best player/s.



You have done an extra task reviewing one of your mate's works.



Your total score is more than 80 points! Well done!



















































































































You haven't missed any lectures! Excellent participation.



Your commitment is rewarded as a full accomplished extra-curricular activity. Great!

Annex 4. Leaderboard

			PASSED	FULL ATTENDANCE	FULL PCTO	ASSIGNMENTS	PEER REVIEW	PRO-PLAYER	THE WINNER
	S 14	95							
	S 17	94							
	S 24	88							
	S 4	88							
	S 25	88							
	S 8	82							
	S 11	76							
	S 7	72							
	S 16	72							
	S 26	71							
	S 10	69							
	S 9	68							
	S 3	68							
	S 19	63							
	S 23	62							
	S 22	62							
	S 27	61							
	S 15	61							
	S 2	60							
	S 20	54							
	S 12	51							
	S 5	50							
	S 18	46							
	S 1	43							
	S 21	40							
	S 6	36							
	S 13	35							

Annex 5. Lectures plan

LESSON PLANNING

A brief description of the activities and tasks contained in the levels (lectures).

LEVEL 1

1.1 Video games survey: what's your game?

Aim: to talk about the games the learner play.

Tasks questions to let the S talking about their gameplay:

- a. When did you first play a video game?
- b. What was the first game you ever played?
- c. What is you favourite game machine/console?
- d. What was the most difficult game you have ever played?
- e. Why do you like playing videogames?
- f. When and where do you usually play videogames?
- g. How often do you play videogames?
- h. What type of games do you never play?
- i. Who is your favourite video game character?
- j. How often do you buy new videogames?

1.2 Minecraft: what they know. THE GEEK TEST and debate. T writes the link on the Meet chat and S answer individually. T comments their answer showing the diagrams from Google form. S are asked to motivate their answers.

1.3 Digital definitions: virtual vocabulary

Aim: to test S knowledge about gameful vocabulary

the words will appear on the screen and the S will suggest the meaning. They are invited to take notes of the words the don't know.

(NOOB FRAG AVATAR BOSS BOT CLAN FAIL SPAWN GRINDING LAG MOB VOID
LOOT CRAFTING ORES MOBS BREWING ENCHANTING GRIEFING YAWNING)

https://minecraft.fandom.com/wiki/Tutorials/Game_terms

1.4 GCAs: game chat acronyms

what is an acronym? A brief intro to introduce the assignment.

HOMEWORK: Play Minecraft for an hour and take notes of all the acronyms you listen/read.

Try to guess the meaning. Post your answer in the Classroom section.

LEVEL 2

2.1 GCAs assignment discussion. T adds new acronyms

Aim: gameplay vocabulary and language use

AFK away from keyboard

ATM at the moment

BTW by the way

FYI for your information

THX thanks

IMO in my opinion

IRL in real life

CUL see you later

HTH hope this helps
TIA thanks in advance
TTYL talk to you later
OTOH on the other hand
NP no problem
OMG oh my gosh!
IGU I give up

2.2 Worlds apart

Aim: to describe places from Minecraft

T prepares 3 screenshots. Focus on place rather than on characters.

- what kind of place is it? (write adjs next to the image)
- is it a safe or dangerous place? Is it crowded?...

T helps the S with adjs order when necessary

Homework (practice assignment): make a screenshot of the world you have created and write a description of it with 80/100 words, including game vocabulary.

LEVEL 3

3.1 Spot the differences

T shows three different screenshots from Minecraft. S spot the differences between picture A and picture B.

3.2 Before and after

Aim: to guess the changes that have taken place in a game by comparing screenshots

T shows screenshots from Minecraft which show changes and create a slideshow presentation of the images.

S guess the changes (what HAS HAPPENED to cause the change?)

Homework ("reading" assignment): ask S to have a look at Minecraft's walkthrough (web wiki page or others) and be ready to talk about it during the next level.

LEVEL 4

4.1 What is a walkthrough?

S talk about what they have read and seen in the walkthrough they have chosen.

4.2 Mojang walkthrough

Aim: to understand directions, orders, suggestions. Gameplay vocabulary. Focus on the American English accent

T shows the video [Beating Minecraft the Way Mojang Intended It - YouTube](#) which will be paused at specific moments to let the students interact with personal comments about the gameplay. T asks specific questions about what is happening at that moment and explains words S don't know.

LEVEL 5

5.1 Multiplayer: your experience

Aim: to let students talk about how you can make friends, testing the different possibilities the server offers.

T asks several questions to introduce the Multiplayer modality:

What is Minecraft multiplayer?

Do you prefer this modality to the single player? Why? Why not?

Talk about your experience: pros and cons

- How did you keep in touch with the other players?
- What are the server modalities?
- What did you find in the server the first time you logged in?

T shows a video from Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3skTz7H3-qc&t=19> where Multiplayer modality is played. The video will be stopped and commented according to the Ts notes.

Homework (reading assignment): watch the 3 youtube videos suggested by the teacher. You will talk about them during the next level.

LEVEL 6

6.1 Game play

T shows 3 videos (Creative, Survival and Multiplayer modality) and S describe what they see, the objs used and why.

[I Spent 100 Days in Minecraft Creative... here's what happened! - YouTube](#)

[How to Start your New Minecraft Survival World | Tips & Tricks - YouTube](#)

[Once Upon A Tree // Minecraft Survival Multiplayer 1.18 \(Ep. 2\) - YouTube](#)

T stops the videos according to her notes and lets the S comment the actions. Focus on pronunciation.

Aim: vocabulary and tenses revision.

LEVEL 7

7.1 Chat

Aim: how to interact with the community (written chat)

7.2 The narrator: functions. T shows a brief and funny video from Youtube about the narrator.

Comments. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzNz5Vgo1pk>

7.3 T shows a screenshot of a chat and analyse it with the S.

What are they talking about? Focus on accuracy.

Homework (practice assignment) Send a screenshot of part of your game play and write a brief comment, focusing on:

- What did you ask and why?
- Community reaction
- What was the community talking about?
- If you had had more time, how would you have written your message?

LEVEL 8

8.1 Voice chat

Aim: how to talk with the community

T shows a video from Youtube about a Multiplayer game session

[Constructing A Shelter! // Minecraft Survival Multiplayer \(Ep. 2\) - YouTube](#)

Video analysis : what happens? Who is speaking? What are they talking about?

Focus on the slang and the language used.

Homework (practice assignment) Record 15 min of an oral interaction with the community where you are part of the discussion, and take personal notes about your experience. The following questions may help you talking about it during the next level:

- Was it easy to interact?
- What did you want to do?
- Could you understand the other gamers?

LEVEL 9

The Game play: youtubers and twitchers

Aim: To talk about and listen to famous gamers in order to understand how to make your own game live comment.

9.1 S answers to oral assignment of level 8

9.2 T presents a famous you tuber/twitcher (Pew Dee Pie).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGt-BZ-SxGI>

T shows Pew Dee Pie's yawning at Minecraft. Analysis of the live gameplay, focusing on the use of the voice, gameplay vocabulary, and how Youtubers make their videos.

Homework (practice assignment): try to comment your own game. You can choose the game

modality you better like. Record your performance (few minutes will be fine) with your live comment. Send it to the drop box of *Gameful English* on Classroom.

LEVEL 10

Learners as gamers

Aim: To comment your own game with a proper vocabulary and personality like a real Youtuber.

10.1 Videos from the participants. A selection. Comments

10.2 Conclusions

Many activities have been inspired by and adapted from:

Mawer, K., Stanley, G., & Chalmers, J. (2011). *Digital play*. Delta Publishing.

Annex 6. Game journal

Example of a game journal filled in by a student.

DAY	TIME SPENT - 0:0	WHAT I DID	NOTES
27/09/21	30 min	I started building the castle in the vanilla server	I would like to build a 4-storey medieval castle
28/09/21	0		
29/09/21	1 h, 40 min	I went to mine iron because I ran out of resources	I need iron to craft armon and a pickaxe
30/09/21	10 min	I started to smelt the stone in the kilns to be able to make bricks	I need 1280 stone bricks
01/10/21	1 h	I did the homework on acronyms	
02/10/21	0		
03/10/21	0		
04/10/21	3h 20 min	I built the first two floors of the castle and started the third but I finished the stone	i need quartz so i have to "go deeper" in the nether
05/10/21	50 min	I mined more stone and some quartz. I also found 7 diamonds	now i have a diamond axe and a diamond pickaxe
06/10/21	1h 20 min	I have suspended the construction of the castle because I need to build a refuge in the nether	i died 3 times
07/10/21	20 min	I smelted other stone	I need stone, more stone
08/10/21	2h 10 mi	i finished to build the third floor and i started a nether wart cultivation	
09/10/21	2 h	I bult a little pixel art of a baby enderman	
10/10/21	1h 45 min	nether day, i searched the fortress but i didn't find the fortress	i hate ghastr
11/10/21	2h 25 min	ortress found, blaze killed and blaze rods taken	
12/10/21	40 min	officially finished the construction of the castle	

13/10/21	4h	mined 4 stacks of gold. 256 golden ingot	they have to be exchanged for piglins
14/10/21	1h 20min	I have traveled extensively and found the stronghold	now, 3v1 with ben and gab versus the dragon
15/10/21	0		i'm waiting for gab end ben to kill the dragon
16/10/21	0		
17/10/21	2h	we killed the dargo and freed the end. it was satisfactory	finally i can go to the end city
18/10/21	0		
19/10/21	2h 50 min	I went to the end city, killed the shulkers and got the elytra. the game is finally finished	I will miss this vanilla server
20/10/21	5 min	see you soon castle	we deleted the server
21/10/21	0		
22/10/21	0		
23/10/21	45 min	here we go again, new server started	
24/10/21	1h	I made an emergency shelter and some stone tools. I found a wreck full of treasures	dolphins are so cute
25/10/21	2h 20 min	i went in exploration and i found a pillager base	they killed me...
26/10/21	0		
27/10/21	3h 50 min	I found a village, adopted 2 cats and built a creeper farm	i need a bigger house
28/10/21	2h	time to build, I found a village, adopted 2 cats and built a creeper farm	i finished 3 stone axes
29/10/21	0		
30/10/21	0		
31/10/21	25 min	I fixed all the holes made by the creepers	please remove the creepers
01/11/21	2h 40min	new month, new home, i built my home... finally	
02/11/21	0		
03/11/21	0		
04/11/21	0		
05/11/21	0		
06/11/21	0		
07/11/21	0		

08/11/21	0	sorry if i haven't played these days but i have had several family problems	
09/11/21	1h	i mined some iron	
10/11/21	30min	someone stole my iron, i quitted immediately	
11/11/21	2h	i mined some iron, again, and some diamonds	now i have a diamond chestplate
12/11/21	1h 30min	i went to the nether and mined some quartz to make experience	i have 42 exp levels
13/11/21	0		
14/11/21	10 min	chat analysis	
15/11/21	2h 40	i tried to kill endermans to make enderpearl	now i have 18 enderpearl
16/11/21	20 min	i went to the nether and i searched the fortress.	it was close to the portal
17/11/21	2h 10	i killed the blaze for the blaze rods	now, 1v1 with the dragon, again
18/11/21	0		
19/11/21	3h 10min	i went to the end and i killed the dragon	that was easyyyyyyy
20/11/21	5 min	I was bored and deleted the server	
21/11/21	1h	voiche chat with ben and emil	
22/11/21	15 min	i started a new vanilla server with ben and gab	we now are playing in 1.16.5 iceandfire mod
23/11/21	2h	we found a gorgon temple, we killed medusa and we appropriated the temple	that was not easy...
24/11/21	0		
25/11/21	0		
26/11/21	3h 45	we found a dragon nest, we killed the dragon and now i have a dragon egg	his name will be Grindelvald
27/11/21	1h 30	the egg hatched and now I have a baby dragon for me	he is light blu and white
28/11/21	0		
29/11/21	2h	I fed the dragon with special meat, now it is a stage 2 dragon, soon I will be able to ride it	also gab has a dragon.
30/11/21	0		
01/12/21	2 h 45min	YOU tuber, i registered with ben	
02/12/21	0		
03/12/21	1h 20	we built a great pyramid in the desert. grindelvald has become a stage 3 dragon, I can ride him.	ben has a dragon too

04/12/21	0		
05/12/21	2 h 50	now i also have an electric dragon, it is very strong and spits lightning while grindelvald freezes	
06/12/21	0		

Annex 7. Big theme assignments

FINAL PROJECTS (BIG THEME):

1 Gameplay Diary Instructions

Worksheet

- Activity Type: Single-player (requires only yourself)
- Skills Practiced: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing
- Estimated Time Needed to Complete This Activity: 1.5 hour

Directions:

1. Set up the video recorder so that you can record your gameplay.
2. Play the game.
3. At any point, start recording your gameplay and continue recording for at least 15 minutes.
4. When you are ready, stop playing and watch the recording of your gameplay.
5. Using the questions on the next page, get ready to write about the game you played (what you did in the game, and what you learned).

Gameplay Diary Suggested Questions Worksheet

DESCRIBING YOUR GAME

Here are some questions you should definitely try to answer when describing a game to someone who has never played it before.

1. What is the game's title?
2. What is the genre?
3. How many players can play the game?
4. Briefly, what is the main story/who are the main characters (if any)?
5. How do you play the game? In other words, what does the player actually do in the game?
6. What is the goal of the game?
7. How do you lose the game? Can you continue?

Other questions you might want to answer:

1. How many levels are in the game?
2. Which company made this game?
3. When was this game released?
4. What game platforms can you play this game on?
5. Is there downloadable content?
6. Does the game require a subscription?

DESCRIBING WHAT YOU DID IN THE GAME

Here are some questions you should try to answer when describing what you did in the game.

1. How long did you play for the session you are going to write about?
2. What did you do in the game? Describe your actions and what happened.
3. Did you have a goal or something you were trying to achieve while playing? Were you successful in achieving it?

Other questions you might want to answer:

1. Did you have fun? Why or why not?
2. What interesting new words, phrases, grammar (if any) did you notice while playing?
3. If you were going to play this game again, what would you do differently?

2. Vocabulary Journal Instructions Worksheet

- Activity Type: Single Player (requires only you)
- Skills practiced: Vocabulary, Reading, Speaking, Listening, Writing

- Time Needed to Complete This Activity: 30 minutes to 2+ hours (depends on the number of words you choose to study)

Directions:

1. Set up a video recorder so that you can record your gameplay.
2. Play the game.
3. At any point, start recording your gameplay and continue recording for at least 15 minutes.
4. When you are ready, stop playing and watch the recording of your gameplay. In particular look and listen for any new words or phrases.
5. Make a list of the new words or phrases you are interested in learning.
6. Fill in a Vocabulary Journal Worksheet for each new word or phrase you plan to learn. Try to fill in as much information as you can for each section.
7. Record any new vocabulary words or phrases which interest you on the Vocabulary Journal Worksheets. If there aren't any new words or phrases which interest you, try continuing to play for another 15 minutes and start over.

Vocabulary Journal Worksheet

Part 1: About the Word... (Write the word or phrase here)

What is the Italian translation/definition of the word/phrase?

What words or phrases in English do you already know that have a similar meaning?

What is the pronunciation of the word/phrase? Write the phonetic spelling here:

What is the part of speech (circle the answer below) for how this word is used in the game?

Noun

Adjective

Preposition

Conjunction

Verb

Adverb

Phrase

Part 2: About the Context

Write the entire sentence in which the word/phrase appeared:

- Where was this word/phrase used
 - Menu screen
 - In-game instructions
 - Dialogue between characters
 - In-game music
 - Other (describe the situation in which you saw/heard the word/phrase)
- In what kind of sentence was this word/phrase used?
 - Statement
 - Question
 - Command
 - Request
 - Offer
 - Invitation
 - Exclamation
 - Other (write the kind of sentence used here)
- If it is a verb, what tense and aspect was used (circle all that apply)?
 - Tense
 - Aspect
 - Present Simple
 - Past simple
 - Past Perfect
 - Future
 - Future Progressive

- Was this word spoken or written in the game?
Spoken
Written
- Was this word used in a more informal or a more formal setting? Mark the formality on the line below:
|-----|
Very informal (Ex.: Text message to a friend)
Very formal (Ex.: Letter to a teacher)

Part 3: Using the Word...

- Where might you be able to use this word (circle all that apply)?
Lecture/Class
Email
Homework/Essay
Chatting with friends
Talking to a professor
Playing another game
Other (write where you might use the word here):
- Write your own original sentence using this word. Your sentence should use the word correctly and make it clear that you understand the meaning of the word.

Part 4: Collocations...

- What words most frequently appear next to or near this word/ phrase in a sentence?

3. Multiplayer Cooperative Play Instructions Worksheet

- Activity Type: Multiplayer (requires at least 2 people)
- Skills practiced: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening
- Estimated Time Needed to Complete This Activity: 30 minutes to 1.5 hours

Directions:

1. Find a partner on the Multiplayer Session that you will enjoy playing together with.
2. Were you the “player” or the “helper”?
3. What happened?
4. What suggestions did you give/receive?
5. Could you attempt your goal?
6. When you are finished, fill in the Multiplayer – Cooperative Play Reflection and write about it.

Multiplayer Cooperative Play Reflection Worksheet

Your name: Your partner’s name:

Game played:

Web address of FAQ/Walkthrough you used (if any)

In terms of English usage, what did you do well during today’s activity? In terms of English usage, what didn’t go so well during today’s activity? Why?

Was this activity fun? Why or why not? Was this activity useful to your English learning? Why or why not? What advice would you give to other students who want to play Minecraft cooperatively?

4. Video Game Review

Activity type: Single player

Skills practiced: Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing.

- Estimated Time Needed to Complete This Activity: 1 hour + the gameplay
 - Step 1: Choose a game that you would like to write a game review for. You must choose a game for which there are English reviews, although the game itself can be in Italian. It will help if you choose a game that you are already familiar with rather than a new game.
 - Step 2: Play the game until you are familiar with all aspects of the game (you should play for several hours).
- You don't have to get good at the game, but you should play long enough so that you have a good idea of what the game is about.
- Use online FAQs or hint guides to help you if you get stuck; cheat codes might be useful as well
- Make sure you play all the different game modes (singleplayer, multiplayer, etc.);
- Step 3: Using the information you've collected from the previous steps, write a review of the game, comparing the game you have chosen and Minecraft. At a minimum, your review should contain:
 - A rating score: for example, how many stars (out of 5) would you give these games?
 - Information about the games' background (genre, platforms, publisher, etc.)
 - Information about the games' story and characters
 - Information about how to play the games
 - Your opinion of the games' graphics, audio, gameplay, and single and multiplayer features
 - The length of the review should be as long as it takes to provide all of the above information (but don't go beyond three double-spaced pages)

Most of the activities have been taken and re-adapted from Baierschmidt, J.R. (2014).

Annex 8. Evaluation grids

Speaking assessment grid (Discussions section)

Criteria for the assessment scale:

- Grammar and Vocabulary
- Discourse Management
- Pronunciation
- Interactive Communication.

4	Handles communication on familiar topics, despite some hesitation. Organises extended discourse but occasionally produces utterances that lack coherence, and some inaccuracies and inappropriate usage occur.
3	Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 4
2	Handles communication in everyday situations, despite hesitation. Constructs longer utterances but is not able to use complex language except in wellrehearsed utterances
1	Conveys basic meaning in very familiar everyday situations. Produces utterances which tend to be very short – words or phrases – with frequent hesitation and pauses.
0	Performance below Band 1.

Final project (BIG THEME) assessment grid

CONTENT (1-3)	<p>✓ The student answered the task. They have done what they were asked to do.</p> <p>✗ The student did not include everything they were asked to. They have written something irrelevant.</p>	
COMMUNICATIVE ACHIEVEMENT (0-1)	<p>✓ The writing is appropriate for the task. The student used a style which is appropriate for the specific communicative context.</p> <p>✗ They have written in a way that is not suitable – for example, using a very formal style in an email to a friend or ending an article with ‘Love’.</p>	
ORGANIZATION (0-1)	<p>✓ The writing is put together well. It is logical and ordered.</p> <p>✗ It is difficult for the reader to follow. It uses elements of organisation which are not appropriate for the genre, like beginning an email with a title or starting every sentence in an article on a new line instead of using paragraphs.</p>	
LANGUAGE (1-2)	<p>✓ There is a good range of vocabulary and grammar. They are used accurately.</p> <p>✗ There are mistakes that could make the text difficult or confusing for the reader. Some mistakes are unproblematic</p>	

TOT _____

Practice assignment assessment grid

CONTENT (0-1)	<p>✓ The student answered the task. They have done what they were asked to do.</p> <p>✗ The student did not include everything they were asked to. They have written something irrelevant.</p>	
COMMUNICATIVE ACHIEVEMENT (0-1)	<p>✓ The writing is appropriate for the task. The student used a style which is appropriate for the specific communicative context.</p> <p>✗ They have written in a way that is not suitable – for example, using a very formal style in an email to a friend or ending an article with ‘Love’.</p>	
ORGANIZATION (0-1)	<p>✓ The writing is put together well. It is logical and ordered.</p> <p>✗ It is difficult for the reader to follow. It uses elements of organisation which are not appropriate for the genre, like beginning an email with a title or starting every sentence in an article on a new line instead of using paragraphs.</p>	
LANGUAGE (0-1)	<p>✓ There is a good range of vocabulary and grammar. They are used accurately.</p> <p>✗ There are mistakes that could make the text difficult or confusing for the reader. Some mistakes are unproblematic</p>	
Has it been given back on time? (0-1)	<p>✓ Yes</p> <p>✗ No</p>	

Adapted and integrated from <https://cambridge-exams.ch/sites/default/files/b1-preliminary-handbook-2020.pdf>

Annex 9. Parental consent form

Parental consent - Italian Version

DICHIARAZIONE | LIBERATORIA

Consenso/autorizzazione all'uso di foto/video, dati e materiali raccolti durante la partecipazione alla ricerca sul campo dello studio di caso: *Gameful English*

Il/la sottoscritto/a COGNOME _____ NOME _____

nato/a _____ Prov. _____ il _____

indirizzo mail _____ tel/cell _____

Genitore (o chi ne fa le veci) di

DICHIARA

di prestare il consenso/autorizzazione alla raccolta di materiale audio, video e digitale, dove presente, e al trattamento dei dati personali ai sensi del Regolamento generale sulla protezione dei dati (GDPR, Ue 2016/679) raccolti ai fini della partecipazione alla ricerca sul campo dello studio: *Gameful English*. Con la sottoscrizione del presente modulo si attesta la veridicità dei dati indicati. Lo studio si propone di indagare l'impatto dei videogames nell'apprendimento dell'inglese come lingua straniera e il loro possibile utilizzo come attività extra curriculare ed extra scolastica di supporto e/o consolidamento delle attività didattiche in aula. Lo studio prevede un massimo di dieci incontri on line in orario extra scolastico nel corso dell'a.s. 2021/2022. Ogni incontro avrà una durata massima di 60 min e sarà coordinato e gestito dalla responsabile del trattamento. Gli studenti parteciperanno attivamente alle sessioni che si svolgeranno in lingua inglese e saranno coinvolti in attività di produzione e rielaborazione della lingua straniera. Alla fine del corso, agli studenti sarà chiesto di rispondere ad un questionario in forma anonima e di partecipare ad una intervista singola e ad un focus group.

CONCEDE

alla dott.ssa Francesca D'Adamo e/o aventi causa, a titolo gratuito, la liberatoria dei dati e delle immagini di mio/a figlio/a, o dati e immagini da usare in qualunque forma o modo, in Italia e all'estero, anche mediante riduzioni o adattamenti nel pieno rispetto della normativa vigente.

Il trattamento dei dati personali sarà improntato al principio di correttezza, liceità e trasparenza e di tutela della riservatezza e dei diritti degli interessati.

Titolare del trattamento è la dott.ssa Francesca D'Adamo, presso cui possono essere esercitati i diritti di cui all'art.15 e ss. GDPR, in particolare il diritto a recesso, rettifica e cancellazione, utilizzando la seguente casella di posta elettronica: francesca.dadamo@pec.it.

I dati personali degli interessati che possono essere oggetto di trattamento per le finalità sotto specificate ricadono nella categoria di dati comuni, ovvero nello specifico:

- quantitativi: questionari, prove strutturate, registrazioni dello speaking.
- qualitativi: interviste e risposte aperte a questionari.

Non verranno raccolti né trattati dati personali definiti come “dati sensibili” o come “dati giudiziari”.

I dati personali saranno trattati soltanto nella misura in cui siano indispensabili in relazione all’obiettivo dello studio di caso, nel rispetto di quanto previsto nella normativa.

Il conferimento dei dati per le suddette finalità di ricerca è indispensabile per lo svolgimento dello studio. Il mancato conferimento determina l’impossibilità di partecipare ad esso.

In relazione alle finalità sopra indicate, i dati possono essere oggetto di trattamento manuale, con l’utilizzo di supporti informatici, telematici e cartacei.

Le registrazioni delle sessioni di incontro on line e tutti i materiali che verranno raccolti sono esclusivamente finalizzati alla documentazione della attività e ai fini della ricerca.

L’identità dello studente sarà pseudonimizzata.

I dati raccolti saranno registrati, elaborati e conservati fino al raggiungimento dello scopo dello studio.

Non è previsto alcun trasferimento dei dati personali verso paesi terzi o organizzazioni internazionali.

Tutte le operazioni di trattamento dei dati sono attuate in modo da garantire l’integrità, la riservatezza e la disponibilità dei dati personali.

Non sono previsti processi decisionali automatizzati, compresa la profilazione (art.22 GDPR).

La presente liberatoria/autorizzazione può essere revocata in ogni momento rivolgendosi alla dott.ssa Francesca D’Adamo, titolare del trattamento, preferibilmente con comunicazione scritta da inviare a francesca.dadamo@pec.it.

Luogo _____ data _____

Firma _____

Parental consent - English version

DECLARATION | DISCLAIMER

Consent/authorisation for the use of photos/videos, data and materials collected during participation in the case study fieldwork: *Gameful English*.

I, the undersigned SURNAME _____ NAME _____

born _____ Prov. _____ on _____

email address _____ tel/mobile _____

Parent (or legal guardian) of _____

DECLARE

to give consent/authorisation to the collection of audio, video and digital material, where present, and to the processing of personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, EU 2016/679) collected for the purposes of participation in the study fieldwork: *Gameful English*. By signing this form, you attest to the truthfulness of the data provided. The study aims to investigate the impact of video games in the learning of English as a foreign language and their possible use as an extra-curricular and out-of-school activity to support and/or consolidate classroom teaching activities. The study envisages a maximum of ten online meetings in out-of-school hours during the 2021/2022 school year. Each meeting will have a maximum duration of 60 minutes and will be coordinated and managed by the person in charge. The students will take an active part in the sessions, which will be held in English and will be involved in production and revision activities in the foreign language. At the end of the course, students will be asked to answer a questionnaire anonymously and to participate in an individual interview and focus group.

AWARDS

to Mrs Francesca D'Adamo and/or assignees, free of charge, the release of my son/daughter's data and images to be used in any form or manner whatsoever, in Italy and abroad, including through reduction or adaptation in full compliance with current legislation.

The processing of personal data will be based on the principles of correctness, lawfulness and transparency and protection of the confidentiality and rights of the persons concerned.

The data controller is Mrs Francesca D'Adamo, from whom the rights set out in Art. 15 et seq. of the GDPR may be exercised, in particular the right to withdrawal, rectification and cancellation, using the following e-mail address: francesca.dadamo@pec.it.

The personal data of data subjects that may be processed for the purposes specified below fall into the category of common data, namely

- quantitative: questionnaires, structured tests, speaking recordings.
- qualitative: interviews and open-ended responses to questionnaires.

No personal data defined as 'sensitive data' or 'judicial data' will be collected or processed.

Personal data will only be processed to the extent that they are indispensable in relation to the objective of the case study, in compliance with the regulations.

The provision of data for the above-mentioned research purposes is indispensable for the conduct of the study. Failure to provide the data makes it impossible to participate in the study.

In connection with the above-mentioned purposes, the data may be processed manually, using computerised, telematic and paper media.

Recordings of online meeting sessions and all materials that will be collected are exclusively for the documentation of the activity and for research purposes.

The identity of the student will be pseudonymised.

The data collected will be recorded, processed and stored until the purpose of the study is achieved.

No transfer of personal data to third countries or international organisations is envisaged.

All data processing operations are implemented in such a way as to guarantee the integrity, confidentiality and availability of personal data.

There are no automated decision-making processes, including profiling (art.22 GDPR).

This release/authorisation may be revoked at any time by contacting Mrs Francesca D'Adamo, data controller, preferably by written communication to francesca.dadamo@pec.it.

Place _____ date _____

Signature _____

Annex 10. Teacher consent

Teacher's consent – English version only

DECLARATION | DISCLAIMER

Consent/authorisation for the use of photos/videos, data and materials collected during participation in the case study fieldwork: *Gameful English*.

I, the undersigned SURNAME _____ NAME _____
born _____ Prov. _____ on _____
email address _____ tel/mobile _____

DECLARE

to give consent/authorisation to the collection of audio, video and digital material, where present, and to the processing of personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, EU 2016/679) collected for the purposes of participation in the study fieldwork: *Gameful English*. By signing this form, you attest to the truthfulness of the data provided. The study aims to investigate the impact of video games in the learning of English as a foreign language and their possible use as an extra-curricular and out-of-school activity to support and/or consolidate classroom teaching activities. The study envisages a maximum of ten online meetings in out-of-school hours during the 2021/2022 school year. Each meeting will have a maximum duration of 60 minutes and will be coordinated and managed by the person in charge. The students will take an active part in the sessions, which will be held in English and will be involved in production and revision activities in the foreign language.

AWARDS

to Mrs Francesca D'Adamo and/or assignees, free of charge, the release of my data and images to be used in any form or manner whatsoever, in Italy and abroad, including through reduction or adaptation in full compliance with current legislation.

The processing of personal data will be based on the principles of correctness, lawfulness and transparency and protection of the confidentiality and rights of the persons concerned.

The data controller is Mrs Francesca D'Adamo, from whom the rights set out in Art. 15 et seq. of the GDPR may be exercised, in particular the right to withdrawal, rectification and cancellation, using the following e-mail address: francesca.dadamo@pec.it.

The personal data of data subjects that may be processed for the purposes specified below fall into the category of common data, namely

qualitative: interviews.

No personal data defined as 'sensitive data' or 'judicial data' will be collected or processed.

Personal data will only be processed to the extent that they are indispensable in relation to the objective of the case study, in compliance with the regulations.

The provision of data for the above-mentioned research purposes is indispensable for the conduct of the study. Failure to provide the data makes it impossible to participate in the study.

In connection with the above-mentioned purposes, the data may be processed manually, using computerised, telematic and paper media.

Recordings of online meeting sessions and all materials that will be collected are exclusively for the documentation of the activity and for research purposes.

Your identity will be pseudonymised.

The data collected will be recorded, processed and stored until the purpose of the study is achieved.

No transfer of personal data to third countries or international organisations is envisaged.

All data processing operations are implemented in such a way as to guarantee the integrity, confidentiality and availability of personal data.

There are no automated decision-making processes, including profiling (art.22 GDPR).

This release/authorisation may be revoked at any time by contacting Mrs Francesca D'Adamo, data controller, preferably by written communication to francesca.dadamo@pec.it.

Place _____ date _____

Signature _____

Annex 11. Survey

Final survey

This is your end of the course report for Mrs D'Adamo's class. You have been using Minecraft as a learning tool for the last 6 weeks. Please reflect on your learning over this time period and tell me about your experience here.

Questo è il sondaggio di fine corso della prof.ssa D'Adamo. Nel corso delle ultime 6 settimane, hai utilizzato Minecraft come strumento di apprendimento. Ripensa al corso in relazione all'apprendimento e lascia la tua valutazione.

* Indica una domanda obbligatoria

Vernacular videogames impact on learning English - Impatto dei videogiochi commerciali sull'apprendimento dell'inglese *

	Completely disagree Totalmente in disaccordo	Disagree somewhat Parzialmente in disaccordo	Neither agree or disagree - Non riesco ad esprimere una valutazione	Agree somewhat - Parzialmente d'accordo	Completely agree - Totalmente d'accordo
I think this course helped me acquire new English skills - Penso che questo corso mi abbia aiutato ad acquisire nuove competenze in inglese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think I learned more English vocabulary with this method than previous methods - Penso di aver appreso più vocaboli inglesi con questo metodo che con i precedenti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I felt more relaxed and confident speaking English with this method than previous methods - Mi sono sentito/a più rilassato/a e sicuro/a nel parlare in inglese con questo metodo rispetto ai precedenti

I spoke more English in this project than previous methods - Ho parlato di più in inglese con questo metodo rispetto ai precedenti

I think I improved my fluency and comprehension - Penso di aver migliorato sia la comprensione che il parlare fluentemente

I could learn more English grammar with previous methods - Sono riuscito/a ad apprendere più grammatica con i corsi tradizionali rispetto a questo

I enjoyed more doing my homework with this project than previous methods - Ho svolto con più piacere i compiti a casa con questo metodo rispetto ai precedenti

I would recommend this way of learning to other students
Raccomanderei questo tipo di apprendimento anche ad altri studenti

Gamification in educational context - La gamification nel contesto scolastico *

Completely disagree
Totalmente in disaccordo

Disagree somewhat
Parzialmente in disaccordo

Neither agree or disagree - Non riesco ad esprimere una valutazione

Agree somewhat
- Parzialmente d'accordo

Completely agree - Totalmente d'accordo

I found gamification more learning challenging than previous methods
- Ho trovato la gamification più sfidante nell'apprendimento rispetto ai metodi passati

I enjoyed the points, badges, and leaderboard elements
- Ho trovato piacevoli la struttura a punti, i badge e la classifica

I think a gamified course is more fair and egalitarian than a standard course.
- Penso che un corso gamificato sia più equo e chiaro rispetto ai normali corsi scolastici

I felt under pressure looking at the leaderboard and points structure - Mi sono sentito/a sotto pressione in relazione alla classifica a punti

I would recommend this type of structure and assessment to other courses
Raccomanderei questo tipo di valutazione e strutturazione anche ad altri corsi

Gameplay perception - Percezione del gameplay *

Completely disagree
Totalmente in disaccordo

Disagree somewhat
Parzialmente in disaccordo

Neither agree or disagree - Non riesco ad esprimere una valutazione

Agree somewhat
- Parzialmente d'accordo

Completely agree
- Totalmente d'accordo

When I played Minecraft I found it less attractive because it was "for school"
Quando giocavo a Minecraft lo trovavo meno divertente perchè sapevo che era per scuola

It was fun to play the game - é stato divertente giocare

The tasks were too difficult - Le attività erano troppo difficili

I think I will keep on playing Minecraft Multiplayer after this course -
Penso che continuerò a giocare a Minecraft Multiplayer dopo questo corso

I am more aware of the possibilities video games may have on learning a second language - Ora sono più consapevole delle possibilità di imparare una seconda lingua grazie ai videogames

Do you want to add something? Vuoi aggiungere qualcosa?

La tua risposta

Annex 12. Interviews and focus groups: questions

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS – questions

1. *Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più di Gameful English? What did you enjoy the most in Gameful English?*
2. *Cosa hai trovato noioso? What did you find boring?*
3. *Cosa difficile? What difficult?*
4. *Su quali abilità linguistiche ti senti più sicuro dopo il corso? What skill/s (reading, listening, speaking, writing) do you feel more confident with after the implementation?*
5. *Come credi si possa imparare più vocabolario giocando con i video giochi? How do you think you can learn more vocabulary playing video games?*
6. *Pensa alla grammatica. Cosa hai imparato? Let's focus on grammar. What do you think you learned?*
7. *Mi evidenzi le principali differenze tra Gameful English e il tuo corso di inglese a scuola rispetto alla lingua? Could you point out the main differences between Gameful English and the school classes in the approach toward the language?*
8. *Quali compiti a casa ti sono piaciuti di più? Perché? What assignment/s did you enjoy more? Why?*
9. *Qual è stata l'attività che ti è piaciuta di più? What was the activity you like the most?*
10. *Ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare in inglese? Perché/perché no? Did you feel more motivated at speaking English? Why/why not?*
11. *Cosa ti ha aiutato a parlare di più? What helped you to speak more?*
12. *Come ti sentivi durante gli incontri? How did you feel during the meetings?*
13. *Pensi di riuscire a parlare in modo più fluente dopo questo corso? Perché? Do you think your fluency has improved after this course? How?*
14. *Che mi dici del listening? Riesci a capire meglio le persone durante il gameplay quando parlano in inglese? What about listening? Can you understand more clearly people speaking during the gameplay?*
15. *Quale compito/i ti ha aiutato a migliorare le tue abilità? What task/s helped you to improve these skills?*
16. *Come ti sentivi quando controllavi il tuo punteggio sulla leaderboard? How did you feel checking your score on the leaderboard?*
17. *Secondo te i badge sono motivanti? Are badges motivating, in your opinion?*
18. *Può la gamification renderti più sicuro e consapevole dei tuoi risultati? How can gamification make you more confident and conscious about your performance/task?*
19. *Qual è stata la percezione del tuo gameplay mentre giocavi a Minecraft sapendo che era per scuola? What was your perception of the gameplay while using Minecraft for your school assignments?*
20. *Il tuo gameplay è cambiato rispetto al passato? Has your gameplay changed compared to the past?*
21. *Raccomanderesti questo modo di studiare anche ad altri studenti? Perché/perché no? A chi? Would you recommend this way of learning to other students? Why/why not? To whom?*
22. *Come miglioreresti Gameful English? How would you improve Gameful English?*
23. *Vuoi aggiungere altro? Do you want to add something else?*

Extra question for those who did not pass the threshold:

- *Quali sono i motivi che secondo te non ti hanno fatto superare il corso? Why, in your opinion, didn't you pass the threshold?*

FOCUS GROUP – questions

Part 1: Quali sono le possibilità che gli studenti possono avere giocando ad un video gioco commerciale per imparare l'inglese? Cosa suggerireste per incrementare l'uso dei video giochi a scuola per l'apprendimento dell'inglese?

What are the possibilities students may have using vernacular games to learn English? What activities did you find more challenging and valuable? What would you suggest to improve the use of video games to learn English?

Part 2: Che cosa vi è/non vi è piaciuto della gamification? Pensate sia più equa e meno stressante rispetto ad un normale corso scolastico per quanto riguarda la valutazione? Cosa ne pensate della struttura del corso? Quali potrebbero essere i limiti della gamification in un contesto scolastico?

What did/didn't you like about gamification? Why do/don't you think it is more egalitarian and less stressful than a standard school course for the assessment? How can you evaluate the course game rules (the points assessment grid)? What could be possible limitations with a gamified approach in your standard school courses?

Part 3: In che modo la "scuola" ha impattato il vostro gameplay? Cosa può avere un impatto sul gameplay?

How did "school" impact your gameplay? How and what external factors could impact your gameplay?

Annex 13. Interviews: transcriptions

INT 1 (05-01-22; 4 pm)

T: La nostra intervista praticamente riguarda quello che abbiamo fatto nel corso, la tua percezione di quello che è stato il corso e come è stato organizzato. La prima domanda è: che cosa ti è piaciuto di più di questo corso?

S: Una cosa che mi è piaciuta tanto è stato comunque il modo in cui bisognava impegnarsi per cercare di socializzare, quindi cercare modi alternativi per conoscere persone al di fuori, quindi parlare in inglese con qualcuno e iniziare a capire come comunicare con gli altri anche attraverso un videogioco, perché è un qualcosa che magari viene preso, viene visto, come una cosa scontata, come si può fare però effettivamente, soprattutto su molte piatte forme, come Minecraft, dove io trovavo "difficoltà" a cercare persone con cui giocare, poi non l'ho trovato tanto difficile alla fine, cioè nel senso impegnandomi ho trovato qualcosa e comunque ho trovato, imparato, anche nuovi modi di rapportarmi con le persone online, quindi a scrivere, con un dialogo, appunto, intraprendere un dialogo con qualcuno. Quella è stata la parte più interessante che mi ha aiutato tanto anche in quello che magari ho fatto dopo, al di fuori di Minecraft e quindi anche su altri giochi.

T: Quindi sei riuscito a trasferire...

S: A trasferire certe competenze da questo gioco, da questo percorso, anche su altri giochi quindi per esempio a qualsiasi gioco online dove c'è una chat.

T: Sempre in relazione al corso invece quali sono stati gli aspetti le cose che hai trovato noiose, che non ti hanno entusiasmato, che non che non ti sono piaciute?

S: Sinceramente non te lo so dire perché secondo me si riusciva a prendere tutto comunque in maniera molto eh... prendeva molto la cosa e probabilmente non essere stato presente in molte lezioni o comunque molte attività era dato dall'impegno di scuola. Magari anche personalmente quello che ci mette una persona. Però appunto personalmente non ho trovato aspetti noiosi, anzi quando comunque ero a lezione magari non poteva sembrare però ero preso comunque dalla cosa, cercavo.... Io magari interagisco di me no perché magari con le altre persone mi trovo, mi sento, un po' a disagio però sinceramente mi trovavo comunque catturato dalla sfida che c'era. Molte cose riuscivo anche a percepirlle diciamo come una sfida, magari non una sfida tra di noi, ma anche una sfida per me, una sfida per me stesso, quindi per imparare qualcosa, a capire di più. H1.1

T: Ok e tu cosa hai trovato difficile, c'è stato qualche elemento che hai trovato difficile, qualcosa anche sull'organizzazione, su tutto quello che è il corso?

S: L'organizzazione diciamo appunto i tempi e forse quello che dovevo fare perché magari qualcosa, sempre perché comunque appunto, avendo la scuola molte volte magari mi sfuggiva o comunque non riuscivo a incastrarlo bene con gli impegni scolastici, perché anche magari col periodo Covid, molte cose sono barcolanti, diciamo anche a livello di orari e quindi magari trovano professori che mettono un compito di qua l'altro di là, anche nello stesso giorno e quindi in quel caso poi sfuggiva. Però appunto forse l'organizzazione mi ha messo un po' in difficoltà, infatti molte lezioni purtroppo le ho dovute saltare all'inizio, però poi sono riuscito a riprendere. Comunque non mi ritrovavo indietro quando riprendevo la lezione, riuscivo sempre a mettermi in pari.

T: Se tu rifletti sulle quattro abilità: reading listening speaking e writing, alla fine di questo corso, con quale di queste quattro abilità ti senti più sicuro?

S: Allora il writing non tanto, forse quella che metterei per ultima, diciamo non perché non ho imparato nuovi vocaboli. Vocaboli nuovi li ho imparati magari nello scritto nel gameplay si usa di più l'abbreviato, formule comunque brevi o appunto modi di dire che magari non ho scritto e non possono essere utilizzati a livello formale. Nello speaking sì, quando facciamo le descrizioni dei luoghi o comunque una descrizione proprio di un video quindi un commento che si faceva. Quello ha aiutato tanto secondo me perché è una cosa importante da fare, perché aiuta anche semplicemente al ragionamento in inglese, che è una cosa che secondo me è importante, quindi non soltanto saper parlare con una persona ma anche il saper ragionare; inizi anche a pensare in inglese, quindi quello mi ha aiutato molto per il listening e appunto per lo speaking.

T: e secondo te con un videogioco si riesce a imparare più vocabolario?

S: E' semplice comunque poter imparare vocaboli nuovi con un videogioco magari non parlando principalmente di Minecraft ma anche con Minecraft appunto ma comunque in generale molti videogiochi dotati di una di una storia, di dialoghi, pieni di dialoghi, appunto, a me per esempio hanno aiutato molto con l'inglese. Anche Minecraft inizialmente perché quando da più piccolo iniziato con Minecraft molte cose su Minecraft le ho imparate lì, magari anche semplicemente proprio perché si è piccoli: nomi degli animali...

T: Secondo te in che modo uno riesce a memorizzare questo vocabolario, utilizzando i videogiochi? Cosa facilita secondo te l'apprendimento di un vocabolario?

S: Una persona magari se presa da un videogioco è più invogliata a imparare qualcosa, quindi il voler capire lo spinge molto a imparare quel vocabolo, a metterselo in testa, così che quando deve ricapitare magari riesce a capire meglio quello che deve fare o comunque quello che sta accadendo, quindi diciamo che il videogioco che prende invoglia la persona. Anche avanti col tempo è come una sorta di crescita, come quando ti viene insegnato l'italiano: magari proprio per abitudine tu riesci anche a assimilare concetti, quindi per esempio in questo modo parlando di giochi con delle storie tu segui man mano la storia e tu per abitudine, seguendo la storia per tutto

quel tempo magari riesce ad apprendere qualcosa anche senza accorgertene, magari senti di nuovo quella parola che non sai però riesci a capire che è una parola che già hai sentito familiare e riesci a capirla.

T: Qual è stata la tua percezione dal punto di vista grammaticale? se pensi di avere imparato qualcosa... vorrei tu facessi una riflessione sulla grammatica

S: A livello di vocaboli quindi anche alla grammatica dei vocaboli, è stato utile, questo sì. magari allo strutturare delle fasi un po meno rispetto ad una lezione normale di inglese, ma proprio perché appunto nei videogiochi si tende ad abbreviare tutto, si tende quindi a tagliare, a usare i concetti brevi per spiegare un qualcosa di più grande, quindi forse la grammatica va in secondo piano.

T: Vorrei tu facessi un paragone tra questo tipo di corso e il corso che si fa generalmente a scuola per quanto riguarda l'inglese, perché mi interessa proprio l'approccio alla lingua. se tu dovessi paragonare questo corso al nostro curriculum standard di inglese, cosa pensi?

S: Una cosa sicura è che dipende dalla persona. se una persona è appassionata di videogiochi questo sicuramente è un approccio molto più diretto, no, non diretto, diciamo un approccio con cui quella persona si può trovare meglio, più invogliata nell'imparare. per quanto riguarda la grammatica non è allo stesso livello di un approccio scolastico, quindi normale, ma sarebbe magari qualcosa che secondo me si potrebbe introdurre. Forse un aspetto negativo è stato proprio il fatto che fosse extrascolastica. già se comunque la metti insieme alle ore di informatica, per imparare meglio l'inglese e nello stesso tempo anche capacità informatiche sarebbe comunque una cosa che aiuterebbe molto.

T: Tu dici integrare proprio questo tipo di corso però nel curriculum scolastico?

S: l'inglese comunque è una lingua importante, è una lingua che ormai bisogna conoscere per forza, e magari molte persone con una lezione normale non riescono a assimilarlo bene, magari per vari motivi, non lo so, però comunque introdurlo insieme a delle lezioni di informatica che anche a scuola comunque sono scarse con una lezione di questo tipo sarebbe comunque una cosa molto utile a livello di inglese, a livello di istruzione perché appunto ha aiutato il corso. perché non si basa sulla grammatica. la grammatica passa in secondo piano però aiuta molto a livello concettuale, quindi di sviluppo del pensiero. anche se non ha un aspetto formale però devi rapportarti con delle persone, quindi dei ragazzi, quello sì, perché ti aiuta molto nel rapportarti con altri ragazzi. anche non nel videogioco, ma al di fuori del videogioco parlando in inglese

T: tra i compiti assegnati a casa, secondo te qual è stato quello più divertente, quello più piacevole?

S: uno dei primi, quello della casa, quindi del descrivere il paesaggio della casa perché quello comunque a livello di grammatica è stato molto utile perché una descrizione deve essere fatta con rigore, con una certa precisione e quindi quello è stato utile molto anche a livello di grammatica. l'altro sempre piacevole che è utile diciamo per pensare in inglese e nel parlare è stato l'ultimo quindi quello della del far finta di essere uno youtuber.

T: l'attività che abbiamo svolto insieme che ti è piaciuta di più qual è stata?

S: forse quella dei video: commentare dei video di altre persone per quanto magari non potessero essere tutti belli, ma comunque in generale il concetto proprio in sé era interessante e anche utile appunto quindi il poter dare un commento su qualcosa, potersi esprimere liberamente, senza una sorta di vincolo che magari viene imposto in una lezione normale magari nella descrizione di un'opera.

T: Tu in questo corso ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare in inglese? e perché?

S: Mi sono sentito motivato a parlare in inglese o forse anche per la sorta di sfida che si era creata ma anche proprio per l'approccio che c'era con la lezione col tipo di lezione, di studio, che stavo facendo. Parlare in italiano mi sembrava quasi sprecato per una cosa del genere perché era una cosa talmente interessante da spingere una persona almeno a provarci, anche se magari una persona che non ha una pronuncia molto spiccata o comunque una conoscenza dei vocaboli ampia in quel caso comunque veniva secondo me invogliato a provare a parlare in inglese.

T: e quindi che cosa ti ha aiutato a parlare di più?

S: il tema, proprio il videogioco. Questo è stato un percorso a scelta, quindi non siamo stati costretti a fare una cosa del genere. tutte le persone probabilmente che sono entrate in questo corso avevano la passione per il videogioco, quindi un interesse nei confronti del videogioco. quindi secondo me è proprio il sentirsi invogliati da questa cosa che ci ha portati a parlare in inglese, ci ha portato a parlare in inglese molto più piacevolmente, anche appunto togliendo quelle piccole insicurezze che magari ci sono sulla pronuncia o sui vocaboli che si possono conoscere.

T: Quindi secondo te questa cosa ti ha fatto sentire anche più rilassato proprio in generale nel rapporto con la lezione?

S: Sì, più rilassato nel modo di esprimersi. per esempio a scuola c'è un po più di paura quindi sei un po più limitato quando dici qualcosa. avendo paura di sbagliare magari limiti nel parlare o comunque eviti certe parole che pensi di non saper pronunciare bene anche se magari riesci.

T: pensi che la paura a scuola sia data dal giudizio perché poi c'è un voto dietro questa cosa?

S: sì perché appunto perché dietro c'è un giudizio, c'è un voto che magari determina. io con la professoressa che ho non sento questa pressione, OK, però anche io con qualche professoressa sento la pressione perché per quanto magari io posso essere una persona che sinceramente il voto mi interessa ben poco diciamo perché se so di aver fatto bene qualcosa almeno sto bene con me stesso e quello è l'importante, comunque è una sorta di scoccatura se poi ti ritrovi comunque a dover affrontare un debito che magari neanche serve più tanto. O limita la paura di dover poi affrontare un qualcosa di di pesante, una conseguenza.

T: Pensi che il corso ti abbia aiutato nella fluency?

S: Sì, nell'essere sciolto nel parlare, quindi nell'essere più libero e sentirmi più tranquillo. molte persone, ed anche io mi sono trovato più tranquillo, più rilassato nel parlare.

T: E per quanto riguarda il listening invece hai notato un miglioramento nel capire meglio le persone?

S: Io non riuscivo a capire bene diciamo magari la differenza tra una pronuncia britannica e una americana perché comunque sono due pronunce diverse e anche alcuni modi di dire sono diversi e quindi nel listening sicuramente è stata una cosa utile per riuscire a comprendere il concetto.

T: Per quanto riguarda la fluency e che cosa ti ha aiutato a migliorarla, quali task ti hanno aiutato secondo te nella fluency?

S: Per esempio proprio l'ultimo (youtuber) che abbiamo fatto e le discussioni che facevamo in classe hanno aiutato molto nella fluency, nel parlare, comunque nell'avere un dialogo e un pensiero proprio, per pensare e esprimere un'opinione.

T: Ora passiamo invece al concetto di gamification legata ad un corso. qual è stata la sensazione nel vedere i tuoi progressi scolastici su una leaderboard? cioè che cosa pensi di questa cosa, come l'hai sentita, come la hai percepita? ti ha dato fastidio? ti metteva ansia?

S: Il potere rendersi conto comunque di come si sta procedendo nell'andamento scolastico quindi non soltanto scolastico appunto ma parlando proprio in generale nel procedere di una attività è utile, una cosa utile per sapersi anche regolare quindi con quello che si sta facendo, per sapere se si deve comunque cercare di migliorare qualcosa perché appunto la cosa che non viene fatta a scuola, ma anche perché ci sono molte persone. è un, come dire, una trascrizione dei progressi man mano perché magari molte volte viene vista singolarmente ogni interrogazione ogni compito viene visto singolarmente e non come un'insieme, quindi quello che fai dall'inizio alla fine, se stai calando, se stai salendo. Magari prendi un 7, poi un 5 poi un 4 poi un 8, questi vengono visti singolarmente invece che come un'insieme. e quello appunto che invece questa cosa del mettere tutto per iscritto quindi segnalarlo e farlo vedere nel tempo quindi far rendere conto al ragazzo nel tempo come stava procedendo è stata una cosa utile. a me sinceramente non ha messo ansia come cosa.

T: E il fatto magari di avere proprio una classifica quindi di vedere chi sta più in alto di te più in basso?

S: Nel complesso di questo progetto che veniva anche visto come una sfida, come un gioco quindi, non era una fase negativa, perché appunto magari c'era anche l'incentivo a fare meglio se volevi veramente superare qualcuno o essere il primo, quindi forse è proprio anche un incentivo perché non viene visto come un aspetto così pienamente scolastico, ma come una sorta di divertimento, quindi di distacco dalle lezioni classiche; però è anche un modo di apprendere. Nel mettere il divertimento insieme all'apprendimento e la sfida, anche personale, ci si trovava anche più invogliati. quindi questa classifica secondo me non è stata una scelta negativa, anzi ha aiutato anche molto nel complesso.

T: Secondo te potrebbe essere applicabile questo concetto di gamification in una scuola? quali potrebbero essere i limiti?

S: forse molte persone potrebbero sentirsi...magari chi va sotto la classifica... Io sono una persona a cui non gli interessa quello che stanno facendo gli altri, quindi se uno è migliore di me se uno non è peggiore di me. però magari ci sono molte persone che si mettono molto a confronto con gli altri, cosa secondo me diciamo è positiva fino a un certo punto perché molte volte va a discapito dell'altra persona. A scuola diciamo con l'approccio che si ha con molti professori o in generale con l'approccio scolastico, un qualcosa che viene visto come qualcosa proprio di rigoroso e serio, potrebbe creare diciamo dei problemi.

T: Tu pensi che il modo di presentare questo cosa sia stato comunque rigoroso e serio?

S: Questa è una cosa seria, era un progetto serio comunque dove ci si doveva impegnare sicuramente ma era puntato sulla visione del videogioco e questo lo ha reso più piacevole, nel senso sì la serietà però comunque c'era anche l'aspetto gameful.

T: L'ultimo aspetto su cui vorrei una riflessione è proprio sul gameplay. tu sapevi che quando giocavi a minecraft la tua attività di gioco poi sarebbe stata trasportata per fini scolastici. questa tua conoscenza in qualche modo ha limitato il gameplay? Come ha influito sul gameplay?

S: No, diciamo di no, perché l'obiettivo del lavoro era giocare insieme con altre persone. nel momento in cui vai a rapportarti con altre persone, a parlare, è anche un ambiente rilassato, è un ambiente di divertimento. ti vai anche a distrarre con questa cosa: lo sto facendo per scuola, quasi te ne dimentichi che lo stai facendo; distrarsi in senso positivo, quindi: lo faccio ma non mi sento obbligato a farlo perché lo sto facendo con piacere, sto parlando con i miei amici con piacere, sto giocando con loro con piacere. Alla fine era una volta a settimana comunque che l'avremmo dovuto fare, quindi sicuramente poi lo trovi il momento in cui hai voglia di giocare.

T: Il fatto di aver scelto di giocare a minecraft secondo te ti ha cambiato rispetto al passato? cioè tu continuerai a giocare a minecraft oppure questa esperienza finisce qui?

S: Io sinceramente quando ero più piccolo giocavo molto spesso, ma molte volte quando forse avevo 8 anni ci stavo proprio attaccato giorni e giorni, soprattutto magari con la modalità creativa: ti sbizzarrivi a fare di tutto; poi avanti col tempo, per esempio ora ci gioco una volta ogni tanto magari con qualche mio amico che vuole fare qualcosa di diverso magari anche col moddato. da grande si è anche un po' più pratici e appunto anche se non ci gioco sempre, però quelle quelle poche volte che ci gioco comunque ci divertiamo, ci si distrae.

T: Tu lo consiglieresti questo corso ad altri studenti?

S: Sì, perché appunto ti prende. se ti piace il videogioco è una cosa che ti prende, che vivi con serenità diciamo, e perché comunque anche se non svolgevi il compito non c'era la pressione. diciamo che dipendeva tutto da te, quindi è anche una cosa che aiuta nella responsabilizzazione dello studente. appunto aiuta in questo, aiuta ad imparare l'inglese, quindi nello studio della lingua, ma tutto questo viene fatto in una maniera rilassata. Tutto viene catapultato sul gioco e quindi si vede come una sorta di sfida.

T: Tu che sei comunque un gamernella classifica finale non non ti sei posizionato bene, diciamo che non hai raggiunto l'obiettivo del 60 che noi c'eravamo dati nelle regole: si passa il corso se arrivi a 60. quali sono secondo te le motivazioni per cui tu non sei arrivato a 60 se dovessi fare un'autocritica?

S: Non sono motivazioni che riguardano la modalità in cui è stato svolto il corso, quindi l'organizzazione, perché molte persone sono arrivate al punteggio stabilito. diciamo sono state più motivazioni personali. Quest'anno è stato un po' più travagliato soprattutto per l'aspetto scolastico. in un altro contesto in un altro anno, magari anche l'anno scorso, non lo so, avrei fatto molto di più sicuramente. no la cosa appunto importante che non è stato comunque un punteggio dovuto all'organizzazione del corso, ma era stato appunto comunque rispetto a cose personali.

T: Vuoi aggiungere tu qualcosa, un commento, un pensiero?

S: Bene o male sono riuscito a dire tutto rispetto sia al punteggio, perché ho ottenuto un certo punteggio, quindi non è stato per colpa dell'organizzazione del corso, ma proprio per una mia mancanza personale magari. quello che ha aiutato un po' meno, quindi nello scritto nello scritto formale nel parlato formale. forse non ha aiutato tanto quanto magari può avere invece aiutato nel parlato tra adolescenti, tra ragazzi, un linguaggio molto veloce, nulla di complesso. anche per far capire un concetto complesso si usa anche un giro di parole semplici.

T: Secondo te attraverso i videogiochi si può imparare?

S: Si può imparare, sì, assolutamente. è un modo ottimo per staccare la mente diciamo da quello che stai facendo a scuola; distrarsi un attimo, che fa sempre bene no, ma nello stesso tempo rimanere collegati, quindi non staccare troppo il cervello ma rimanere comunque concentrati, sempre farlo lavorare perché poi se non si fa lavorare il cervello anche il corpo non riesce più a far niente.

T: benissimo. Interrompo qui la registrazione.

INT 2 (07-01-22; 3 pm)

T: Come sai l'intervista che facciamo è per valutare un po' quello che è venuto fuori da questo corso, quindi nel modo più sereno e critico possibile chiacchieriamo di quello che è successo. Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più del corso?

S: Partendo proprio dall'idea di base del corso, proprio il principio su cui si svolgeva il corso, quindi attraverso una cosa che piace fare, quindi i giochi. Anche rispondere ai questionari che lei ci aveva dato. Proprio l'impostazione del corso, quindi, come lo ha strutturato: le lezioni, i compiti assegnati pure, anche la tabella (leaderboard) l'ho trovata molto bella, almeno vedevi i risultati, come stavo andando e quindi i punti dati per i compiti. Proprio come è stato impostato, anche il principio, quindi come si è svolto.

T: E invece se dovessi dire qualcosa che hai trovato noioso che non ti è piaciuto? qualcosa che secondo te non c'entrava?

S: Non mi è piaciuto tanto il gioco (Minecraft) ma lo so però che dipende da me, perché è stato dato da una scelta (di gruppo); cioè mi posso lamentare però fino ad un certo punto; secondo me con un videogioco più conosciuto nell'ultimo periodo sarebbe stato più figo forse. Ogni tanto ci stava qualche lezione magari più pesante, per esempio vedere tutti i video e poi si discutevano le giocate; magari solo quello, perché se ci fosse stato un gioco che mi piaceva di più sarebbe stato anche più bello da giocare. però per il resto no, tutto bene.

T: Invece cosa hai trovato difficile?

S: Difficile è relativo nel senso che magari io ho trovato più difficili alcune parole, alcune province, ma una cosa difficile di base No. Il listening poteva essere difficile, ma tanto quello è difficile da tutte le parti. H I I

T: Secondo te, dopo questa esperienza in quale abilità tra listening speaking writing e reading ti senti più a tuo agio e senti migliorato?

S: Speaking e listening. Queste due.

T: Secondo te si può imparare nuovi vocaboli usando dei videogiochi?

S: Sì, non solo i vocaboli, ma proprio la lingua di base, cioè il corso si è basato su un criterio molto importante: si può imparare una lingua attraverso i videogames, sì.

T: Un aspetto vorrei discutere con te: vorrei capire come tu hai percepito la grammatica in questo corso, se pensi che hai imparato qualcosa di grammatica...

S: Più che lo scrivere vero e proprio, ho imparato nuove termini che prima non usavo, nuovi testi che adesso posso usare. Non tanto la struttura ma la contestualizzazione del vocabolario.

T: Hai fatto questa esperienza di questo corso. puoi farmi un paragone tra questo corso e il corso standard di inglese a scuola. vorrei che tu ragionassi sull'approccio verso la lingua di questo corso e del corso che si fa a scuola.

S: Un corso fatto proprio a scuola cioè di quelli che ti danno le certificazioni magari...

T: No, mi riferisco al corso standard.

S: Il corso che abbiamo fatto è molto più interattivo rispetto ad una lezione normale. Non voglio considerare gli argomenti, perchè a scuola fai giustamente le cose scolastiche. qua stiamo facendo qualcosa sulla base di un videogioco. Ma secondo me in questo corso si è più partecipi rispetto ad una lezione in classe. In generale qui si fa molto più listening e speaking.

T: Qual è il compito che ti è stato assegnato che ti è piaciuto di più? Perchè?

S: Quello del video (youtuber) perché è stato figo, creativo. Facevi una cosa che ti piace, giocare, e provavi a fare una cosa che ti piace guardare.

T: Invece l'attività che abbiamo fatto insieme che ti è piaciuta di più durante le lezioni?

S: Eh l'attività che mi è piaciuta molto è stata la prima, quella degli acronimi, perché molte volte non solo quando si gioca si vedevano alcuni acronimi, alcune abbreviazioni, e ti chiedevi che significa? e quindi quello mi è piaciuto un sacco.

T: Ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare in inglese?

S: Eh sì perchè comunque ti dici, quando anche nei videogiochi normali lasciando stare il corso, questi stanno parlando e vorresti comunicare con loro, però ti dici: non so l'inglese! Come posso parlare con loro? Invece in questo corso stavi con persone più o meno del tuo stesso livello, quindi pensi che le persone non sono migliori di me e io non sono migliore di loro, quindi pure se sbaglio non mi importa. quindi ero anche motivato a parlare in inglese.

T: Che cosa ti ha aiutato a parlare di più?

S: Che eravamo dello stesso livello, quindi anche gli altri potevano non capire. C'era reciprocità.

T: Vorrei capire proprio il tuo il tuo sentire, il tuo atteggiamento, come sei stato tu durante il corso, se ti sei sentito rilassato, quali erano le tue sensazioni nel partecipare alle lezioni ?

S: Stavo tranquillissimo cioè tanto perché qualsiasi cosa c'era lei. non c'erano problemi, quindi cioè l'atteggiamento è stato molto tranquillo, ben organizzato. io ho saltato per esempio una lezione e non è stato un problema.

T: Cosa ti ha fatto sentire rilassato?

S: L'organizzazione, tutta l'organizzazione generale che c'era dietro.

T: Se tu pensi alla tua fluency in inglese pensi che anche questa sia migliorata?

S: Più sciolto nel senso che mi vengono meglio le parole non proprio perchè io ho proprio difficoltà, ma più sciolto nel senso di più propenso a parlare in inglese, sì

T: Questo lo puoi dire anche per il listening?

S: Il listening sì. perché comunque sentendo i giocatori che parlano velocemente in Minecraft, riuscivo a capirli meglio.

T: Secondo te quale compito o micro compito ti ha aiutato di più a sviluppare queste abilità, quindi a sviluppare di più il listening e la fluency?

S: Quando commentavamo le cose, i video e le varie attività. Poi il lavoro sullo youtuber perché è stata la massima prova perchè parlavamo, giocavamo e dovevamo anche pensare, quindi fare più cose contemporaneamente, pensando comunque che qualcuno doveva poi guardarci. Credo sia stato questo il compito che abbia mostrato di più le nostre competenze e capacità.

T: secondo te il corso è stato strutturato bene, cioè che praticamente partiva dalla cosa più semplice piano piano ha aggiunto pezzetti mattoncini? Ha funzionato?

S: E' questo che ha funzionato, che ha reso il corso importante: la struttura, perché partendo dall'idea di imparare una lingua con i videogiochi, piano piano ti rendi conto che è possibile, si può fare.

T: Ora invece parliamo un po di gamification. questa leaderboard che io vi presentavo a fine settimana, vorrei capire come l'hai percepita, se ti dava fastidio, se era una cosa che trovavi comunque stimolante? se questa cosa di avere anche dei badge poteva essere stimolante.

S: La leaderboard è soggettiva come cosa, cioè io come in questo corso come nella scuola come in tantissime altre cose non ci do peso più di tanto, cioè non mi serve proprio. se prendo un brutto punteggio non è che mi piango addosso, me ne frego sinceramente. Messa nel senso di andare a vedere i punti totali tuoi, oppure degli altri tuoi amici, degli altri tuoi compagni disse, a me ne non importa nulla, però invece quando hai dei compiti e poi ci sono delle spiegazioni sui punteggi ottenuti, capisci: allora ho fatto 3/5 qua perché? perché magari mi sono sbagliato su questo o quello. allora capisci. se mi danno una valutazione su dei punteggi che capisco, per esempio su 5 ho fatto tre, a me questa modalità piace perchè hai sempre una spiegazione e sai dove migliorarti magari in qualche modo capisci che non dipende dall'insegnante ma solo da te stesso. Se lo fai male e non vai bene è solo per colpa tua. Quindi mi ha fatto piacere avere una leaderboard.

T: I badge sono qualcosa che trovi simpatico, può essere secondo te uno stimolo per fare di più?

S: Il badge diciamo è un dare/avere, ti sprona anche a fare bene.

T: Tu sei arrivato al punteggio minimo, al 60, come mai?

S: Questo è lo stesso discorso che facevo prima, non sono incoerente. Il mio obiettivo era arrivare lì perché tanto, se sono migliorato io me ne accorgo. Magari non ho preso 70 perché ho saltato alcuni compiti, ma sono io stesso a dirmi se sono migliorato oppure; ecco perché io al punteggio non ci faccio tanto caso.

T: Ora parliamo un po' del gameplay. lascia stare che il gioco non è il tuo gioco, va bene, però pensiamo al fatto che tu giochi a minecraft quindi ancor di più sapendo che era legato ad un'attività didattica, perché probabilmente non l'avresti scelto per giocare, però la classe ha scelto di giocare a minecraft quindi tu hai giocato a minecraft. secondo te è cambiato il tuo gameplay, sapendo che stavi giocando per scuola, per fini scolastici?

S: No perché cioè quando giocavo a Minecraft magari stavo con altri amici, quindi non davo peso al corso. La percezione del gameplay il corso me l'ha cambiata in positivo, per esempio quando ci ha dato il primo compito di cercare gli acronimi mi ha fatto aprire gli occhi a 360° sul gioco. Non lo trovavo pesante questo compito.

T: Raccomanderesti questo tipo di corso ad altre persone per imparare?

S: Sì, lo raccomando. È stata veramente veramente una bella idea.

T: Secondo te si potrebbe fare questa cosa a scuola?

S: Sì diciamo in parte, la gamification sì, però i videogiochi non piacciono a tutti; però il modello su come è strutturato il corso sì.

T: Quindi tu ti sei iscritto al corso perché ti piacciono i videogiochi...

S: Non solo. Quando è esploso Youtube abbiamo capito che coi videogiochi si può guadagnare; allora perché con i videogiochi non si può anche imparare? Mi hanno sempre detto: ma che giochi a fare? Proprio questo mi ha spinto a fare questo corso, capire se attraverso una cosa che mi piace posso anche imparare. Perché no? perché se una cosa ti piace e allo stesso tempo ci puoi guadagnare, anche nel senso di imparare, tu il peso non lo senti. cioè quando una cosa ti piace e contemporaneamente ti dà qualcosa in cambio. Questo è anche un modo di imparare "gratis" nel senso che fai questo corso e magari una qualsiasi persona approfondisce ancora di più inglese, andando sul server e iniziando a parlare con persone straniere. basta ormai la playstation.

T: Secondo te è servito l'intervento di un docente in questo caso mio a insegnarti come usare questa funzione chiamiamola così cioè a farti capire come puoi utilizzare il multiplayer piuttosto che un videogioco anche a narrativa diversa per imparare l'inglese?

S: Sì eh, cioè sei comunque un minimo controllato, diciamo seguito, cioè di certo non che è da soli o con altri ragazzi riuscivo a farlo. Magari vedevo gli acronimi, vedevo altre parole e mi dicevo: che significa? e quindi dovrò andarle a cercare e non facevo più niente. Invece seguito, con delle spiegazioni, tutto meglio. Sì, serviva l'insegnante. Poi lei capisce di giochi, magari una qualsiasi professoressa che non sa neppure dove stanno di casa, quindi dipende anche dall'insegnante.

T: Grazie. Vuoi aggiungere qualcosa?

S: No, nulla.

INT 3 (08-01-22; 9.40 am)

T: Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più di questo corso?

S: gli aspetti positivi di questo corso sono di certo intanto il tipo di corso in generale, quindi un corso che aiuta a imparare l'inglese attraverso un metodo alternativo al normale leggere un libro ripetere svolgere gli esercizi. poi secondo me è stato il metodo in generale, quindi la diciamo puntificazione, il fare in modo che diventi un gioco perché ovviamente come sappiamo quando un essere umano in generale una persona è stimolata da qualcosa che gli piace impara meglio, più velocemente e soprattutto con più voglia perché di solito potrebbe essere quella la pecca maggiore che purtroppo manca diciamo nel metodo tradizionale. un'altra cosa che mi è piaciuta molto sono stati vari obiettivi che ci sono stati durante il corso quindi appunto quasi delle tappe ad esempio quando si sta scalando una montagna stabilire appunto delle tappe per raggiungere la vetta, quindi per farci capire molto bene il processo di come si impara è anche un modo per applicarlo perché sinceramente avevo quest'idea in testa che fosse possibile fare imparare una materia attraverso i videogiochi ma tra il dire e il fare ovviamente c'è un lungo cammino. quindi sono molto felice che qualcuno l'abbia fatto

T: Mi puoi dire se secondo te c'è stato qualche aspetto noioso, qualcosa che secondo te non funzionava nell'ingranaggio, qualche parte della lezione che magari tu non trovavi stimolante?

S: Allora in generale diciamo nella lezione nello svolgimento in sé andava tutto bene, perché i compiti erano fatti bene e tutto quanto. l'unica considerazione che c'era e che le lezioni erano in dad ma su quello non si poteva ragionare perché alla fine dovevamo stare in dad per i contagi; ma comunque siamo riusciti a gestire bene perché comunque non è che stessimo tutto il tempo a parlare tutti quanti gli studenti, quindi comunque riusciamo a stare in silenzio. l'unica considerazione negativa in generale sarebbe sul gioco: secondo me invece ad esempio di prendere delle selezioni ad esempio far selezionare da una lista di giochi secondo me un progetto più ambizioso eppure comunque secondo me migliore sotto alcuni aspetti potrebbe essere far scegliere allo studente in generale un gioco di qualsiasi tipo e genere e semmai creare degli obiettivi prestabiliti; ad esempio per un first person shooter un quindi un gioco sparattutto in prima persona come ad esempio Call of Duty un obiettivo potrebbe essere realizzare un numero di uccisioni o semmai giocare un numero di partite; per un gioco di ruolo completare una missione importante e poi descriverla, perché questa descrizione dei videogiocatori secondo me non va sottovalutata perché dovendo calcolare ogni azione per 5/10 min, di solito questo è il tasso di attenzione che si deve avere durante una partita, comunque per tutta la partita sono attenti semmai in un gioco di ruolo ho perso anche io molte volte perché non sono stato tanto alla missione, seguo i punti, però comunque si può descrivere andare di lì sconfiggere quel nemico e cose del genere. secondo me questo metodo è applicabile un po' su tutte quante le tipologie di giochi, anche se comunque minecraft è l'esempio perfetto di questo perché coniuga tutti quanti gli stili

T: C'è stato qualche cosa di difficile nel corso ?proprio nella struttura del corso nella realizzazione del corso o qualcosa che tu hai trovato difficile nel corso?

S: Se per difficile si intende appunto difficile da fare direi di no, perché a parte semmai il video in generale (youtuber) che è una cosa che semmai qualcuno non sa fare, si impara velocemente, cioè uno se vuole imparare lo impara, non è una cosa che diventa impossibile a priori

T: Secondo te alla fine del corso in quale delle abilità reading speaking listening e writing ti sei sentito più capace?

S: Sento più sviluppato lo speaking, anche perché in generale molte volte io conosco i vocaboli so dire significati però semmai è più difficile scriverli perché o lo spelling oppure in generale cercare di spiegare un significato può essere più difficile che scriverlo

T: Quindi secondo te come pensi sia possibile imparare più vocabolario con un videogioco?

S: Allora in realtà è abbastanza difficile perché ovviamente servirebbe semmai un gioco adatto a imparare l'inglese. però ho controllato in giro per vedere se questa cosa era già stata usata in generale e c'era appunto una professoressa, mi sembra americana, che aveva creato questo gioco proprio nel suo corso una cosa simile a questo aveva creato un GDR basato sulla grandissima serie di dungeons and dragons in cui gli studenti per progredire nei livelli, potenziarsi, e così via dovevano rispondere a delle domande oppure appunto trovare delle parole o cose del genere.

T: Credo che lei credo se non non ho letto male anch'io abbia avuto la capacità di modificare il software cioè di modificare il gioco

S: Sì, un software nel quale si potevano muovere così via e tipo sbloccavano i livelli. però in generale è difficile perché comunque dovendo mantenere il concetto di gioco bisogna anche creare uno stimolo ad imparare, quindi è più complicato da dietro le quinte ovviamente.

T: Per quanto riguarda la grammatica, mi racconti un po la tua percezione, come hai percepito questo aspetto durante il corso ?

S: Di certo è stato approfondito bene in generale perché comunque ci è stato spiegato bene ogni vocabolo che non capivamo e quando ci venivano appunto spiegati, ad esempio con dei quiz su cosa significa questo questo abbreviativo, questa abbreviazione? ecc o esempio FRAG che era quello che io usavo senza capire semplicemente poi alla fine lei è l'unica che sia riuscita a spiegarmelo; come anche molti altri vocaboli e altre parole di cui non capivo neanche la funzione

T: Se tu rifletti su questo corso, su questa tipologia di corso e il corso tradizionali che si fa a scuola, riesci a evidenziare le differenze per quanto riguarda l'approccio alla lingua ?

S: Eh allora vediamo.. si potrebbero paragonare i due corsi di certo nella libertà di scelta perché in un corso tradizionale tu hai un programma che devi seguire: ad esempio andiamo a vedere i vocaboli di questo e poi di quest'altro di quest'altro ancora e così via; in un corso di gioco diciamo molto più libero invece si va appunto a vedere il vocabolo di cui c'è bisogno in quell'argomento o vocaboli in generale che vengono approfonditi in altri modi in generale.

T: Quindi credi che sia più mirato l'approccio alla lingua nel corso gameul?

S: Sì, però ovviamente non per forza, perché si possono approfondire dei vocaboli di videogiochi quanto vocaboli su altri ambienti altre sfere di significato, ad esempio con Cooking Mama si possono imparare alcuni vocaboli sulla cucina.

T: Per quanto riguarda gli assignment, quale ti è piaciuto di più, quale ti ha coinvolto di più, che hai fatto anche con più piacere?

S: Allora quello che mi ha preso di sicuro di più era quello nel quale dobbiamo costruire, completare una costruzione, ad esempio avevo fatto un robottino nero e con dei dettagli dorati, e poi descriverlo; poi io mi sono lasciato andare nel descrivere altre cose, però mi è piaciuto un sacco, perché sinceramente su Minecraft quello che mi è sempre piaciuto è stato ovviamente costruire perché è bello esplorare ma poi è bello quando tutti quei materiali nelle casse li usi per creare qualcosa di tuo, quindi farlo in creativa mettersi semmai a parlare con qualche amico mentre si costruisce, mi ha aiutato un po' in generale a capire cosa volessi io da una costruzione

T: Per quanto riguarda le attività svolte durante il corso: qual è l'attività che ti è piaciuta di più durante le varie lezioni?

S: Allora di certo è stata quella di descrivere un ambiente, quando ad esempio ci ha mostrato una penisola che prima era libera con gli alberi poi è stata colonizzata dai giocatori, mi è piaciuto di più perché mi ha fatto capire gli aggettivi che erano necessari in quelle situazioni, che di solito sono anche comuni: ad esempio descrivi questa prateria in inglese o cose così

T: Secondo te ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare in inglese in questo tipo di corso e perché o perché no

S: Allora di certo si mi sono sentito più motivato perché normalmente si usa in scopo utilitario totalmente quindi è utile dire questa parola e non quest'altra, però in un concetto di gioco tu comunque sei più motivato a parte per il concetto di punti ma in generale per esprimere al meglio il concetto che stai spiegando

T: Secondo te che cosa ti ha aiutato a parlare di più, cioè qual è l'elemento che secondo te ha spinto questo uso dell'inglese?

S: In generale è stata l'energia collettiva di tutto quanto il corso; anche se non sono di parte comunque è stata l'energia del gruppo pure che mi ha aiutato a esprimermi meglio e a cercare nuovi argomenti, nuovi vocaboli con cui parlare in generale. Però uno dei punti di forza del corso è stato proprio anche questo: quindi diciamo una facilità maggiore nel volersi esprimere non solo nel doversi esprimere

T: Tu come ti sentivi durante il corso? ti sentivi rilassato, sotto pressione, e secondo te qual è l'elemento che ha scatenato questa sensazione positiva o negativa che sia?

S: Allora all'inizio proprio prima lezione, prime più elezioni, ero molto attento, quindi ero letteralmente mai distratto un secondo, quindi sempre attento, come ad esempio un lavoratore d'ufficio, perché volevo capire di cosa trattava questo corso in generale; poi sono stato sempre attento, però comunque mi sono tranquillizzato un po perché ho capito che comunque si andava bene, piano piano, e si vedevano tutti i concetti necessari in generale. poi mi sono sentito comunque tranquillo e anche stimolato a imparare l'inglese, anche grazie al suo comportamento, perché come ci ha evidenziato lei poi all'ultima lezione cambiare tono, parlare in modo diciamo sempre alternato è sempre meglio che avere lo stesso tono perché altrimenti avendo lo stesso tono una persona non si abitua diciamo ad un cambiamento nella sua voce e capisce che il tono proprio il tono della voce il timbro della voce ecco rimane sempre lo stesso e quindi comunque sta parlando dello stesso argomento. invece nel corso ero sempre stimolato ad ascoltare

T: Pensi tu sia migliorato dal punto di vista della fluency?

S: Sì quello di sicuro forse non su tutti i vocaboli, ad esempio se dovessi descrivere un'industria di certo potrebbe non avermi cambiato, ma di certo mi ha fatto imparare alcune abilità non solo nell'inglese ma anche nella vita normale, proprio come parlare al meglio.

T: Quindi tu ti senti più fluente... in cosa lo hai notato?

S: L'ho notato perché ancora più di prima ho saputo cioè sapevo cosa dire nel caso in cui avessi dovuto parlare in inglese; sapevo cosa dire come dirlo per cercare di coinvolgere diciamo o il pubblico o l'interlocutore.

T: Per quanto riguarda il listening, secondo te anche questo è migliorato? nel corso delle settimane riuscivi a capire più chiaramente i giocatori? riuscivi secondo te c'è stato un miglioramento, un passaggio in avanti?

S: Allora premettendo che il listening è integrato nel mondo videoludico riuscivo sempre a capire qualcosa.. però sì di certo è migliorato, anche perché ci ha fatto apprendere tra i vari vocaboli anche la pronuncia di questi ultimi, quindi varie pronunce; ho imparato anche ad interpretare la pronuncia di un videogiocatore anche perché una pronuncia può anche non essere perfetta

T: Secondo te, per quanto riguarda quindi fluency e speaking quali sono stati i task che secondo te hanno favorito queste due abilità?

S: Di certo quello che l'ha favorita maggiormente è stato quello di fare il video (youtuber) perché nel video una persona, uno studente, doveva parlare in modo fluido per 5 minuti, consecutivi o anche facendo delle pause minime, ma doveva parlare a un pubblico che era ipoteticamente infinito perché stavamo parlando di un canale youtube potevano essere 1.000.000 persone

T: Vorrei che tu riflettessi il proprio sulla gamification. Innanzitutto, qual è la tua sensazione visto che ogni settimana c'era la presentazione di questa leaderboard. mi piacerebbe capire qual è stato il tuo approccio verso la leaderboard, verso questa idea di gamification: e se ti ha creato dei fastidi se ti ha creato delle ansie come ti percepisci come ti percepivi tu all'interno di questa leaderboard del concetto di punti e di badge

S: Allora sulla gamification alla fine erano sempre tranquillo perché non c'è mai stato diciamo quel destino incombente di dover fare qualcosa subito perché alla fine ho fatto quello che volevo fare al meglio e per l'appunto ha portato i suoi risultati. mi sono sentito sempre tranquillo perché anche se sapevo che non stavo facendo il meglio comunque diciamo il non plus ultra dello studente comunque ero felice perché stavo facendo quello che mi piaceva e stavo imparando. al concetto di ansia non ci sono mai arrivato neanche di vera e propria rabbia come penso nessun altro dei partecipanti di questo corso; perché è vero che semmai diciamo schiacciare un risultato negativo addosso a qualcuno con una leaderboard può essere pressante o cose del genere, però, sapendo che è un gioco e sapendo che tanto si può migliorare o recuperare molte persone lo prendono più come uno stimolo ad aumentare i propri conti. poi ci sono anche le persone che potrebbero non importarsene in generale, perché dicono: è solo un punteggio, e io che devo farci...

T: Ora invece vorrei parlare proprio del gameplay. tu sapevi che stavi utilizzando minecraft comunque per uno scopo didattico, per l'apprendimento. questa consapevolezza ha cambiato il tuo gameplay in relazione a Minecraft?

S: Personalmente direi forse, perché in realtà, giocando a minecraft, io giocavo in generale, non la prendevo come una prestazione: l'unica cosa era ricordarsi quello che facevo, ma le persone che mi conoscono sanno che ho memoria di cose di quattro anni fa, quindi per me non è un problema, perché comunque riesco a capire quello che è successo durante la sessione o se mi dimentico di inserirla in un giornale di saperla descrivere riesco a ricordarmela; quindi per me descrivere un ambiente non è un problema. questo mi è stato d'aiuto perché non mi ha portato quella pressione di dover fare certe cose durante il gameplay

T: Beh comunque le attività erano sempre post non erano mai durante il gioco, quindi comunque puoi dire che non la percezione non è cambiata. secondo te in generale adesso che è finito il corso è cambiata l'idea che tu hai rispetto al videogioco, che può diventare quindi uno strumento di apprendimento? ci avevi mai pensato prima, adesso ti è più chiaro, pensi che invece non è possibile?

S: Di certo l'idea che un gioco potesse essere uno strumento di apprendimento l'avevo già prima, perché avevo comunque sentito o di giochi ad esempio che stimolavano certe parti del cervello giochi usati per imparare come abbiamo detto prima da quella quella professoressa, quindi sapevo che l'idea era contestualizzata ed era possibile applicarla in un contesto scolastico. il problema ovviamente è applicarla a creare sempre un gioco specifico e diciamo tutti i passaggi più noiosi e complicati. di certo la mia è cambiata perché adesso è più non sul fatto che sia possibile, ma sul fatto che sia applicata questa idea, perché sapendo che è possibile diciamo è come una tecnologia applicata sulla carta quindi è bellissima e tutto quanto ma è su un foglio non è ancora nella vita reale. vedendo che si sono create varie iniziative nel mondo e anche in Italia appunto i videogiochi sfruttati anche per questo, sono molto contento appunto che questa venga usata in generale.

T: Tu raccomandaresti questo modo di apprendimento anche ad altre persone, cioè tu consiglieresti l'apprendimento tramite un videogioco in particolare modo dell'inglese attraverso un videogioco?

S: Dipende dalla persona, in realtà. Per esempio alcune persone vorrebbero fare questa cosa o per interesse o perché lo vogliono perché appunto un po come i partecipanti a questo corso vogliono giocare e imparare allo stesso tempo. poi potrebbero esserci altre persone che invece possono essere proprio il contrario di un videogioco quindi dicono no io non voglio un videogioco, io voglio giocare per

conto mio, o che siano giocatori ancora più solitari del normale, quindi vogliono giocare da soli non gli interessa di imparare con un gioco

T: L'ultima domanda in realtà è se tu vuoi aggiungere qualcosa se vuoi aggiungere una considerazione tua qualcosa che magari non ti ho chiesto e che vorresti invece evidenziare del corso, anche aspetti da migliorare per esempio

S: Beh in generale è andato tutto bene, nel senso che il corso è andato bene, si è fatto tutto quanto. quindi migliorare, direi nulla. L'unica cosa che avrei da aggiungere è un incoraggiamento (a lei) perché capisco che possa essere estenuante doversi incontrare, dover vedere tutti questi aspetti, che ovviamente dipendono dallo studente, perché alla fine uno studente può anche non fare qualcosa e ci si trova appunto con un compito in meno. poi immagino anche una delusione che ci possa stare sempre quando si assegna un compito e nessuno lo fa o quelle poche persone lo fanno o quando quasi nessuno partecipa a lezione o cose del genere.

T: Secondo te l'idea del concetto di gamification applicata ad un corso scolastico può effettivamente essere realizzata, può portare a qualcosa di positivo?

S: Quello sicuramente perché secondo me si potrebbe integrare uno studente al concetto di scuola. semmai non come diciamo un corso principale, quindi ad esempio invece della matematica abbiamo il gioco della matematica, ma di certo semmai un qualcosa a parte, diciamo una materia scolastica proprio del gioco, dove si fanno delle varie domande in generale proprio; in base si fanno dei punti, con i punti poi si arriva un voto. secondo me questo potrebbe essere un'idealizzazione di una materia basata sul gioco, poi c'è il problema del tempo dei costi e così via che effettivamente è quello che porta alla vera difficoltà di questo esperimento

T: Bene allora io interrompo la registrazione perché la l'intervista è finita.

INT 4 (08-01-22; 12 pm)

T: Questa breve intervista serve un po a riflettere su quello che è stato il corso per cercare di capire aspetti positivi e negativi, cosa si potrebbe migliorare e cosa ha funzionato e cosa non ha funzionato. che cosa ti è piaciuto di questo corso, che cosa ti ha divertito, che cosa ti è piaciuto di più?

S: Ok di questo corso mi è piaciuto soprattutto il fatto che mentre noi parlavamo inglese lei quando noi facciamo un errore lei ci correggeva e quindi potevamo risolvere e ampliare anche il nostro lessico. io per esempio mi ricordo che ho imparato come si dice eccetto, ovvero BUT. poi anche carino il fatto quando ci ha dato il compito di trovare una chat di minecraft. Io mi sono dovuto mettere a cercare una chat che su cui effettivamente potessi trovare qualcosa

T: Quindi qual è la cosa che ti ha divertito di più?

S: Probabilmente la tipologia delle lezioni

T: Sempre in queste lezioni in questi incontri, che cosa hai trovato noioso, cosa non ti è piaciuto?

S: Oddio proprio noioso.... forse magari dopo che rispondevo alla mia domanda stavo un po' a farmi gli affarimici, penso un po come tutti. Però vabbè, è una cosa inevitabile

T: Forse è legata al fatto che fosse online?

S: Anche quello sicuramente

T: Secondo te c'è stato qualcosa di difficile, qualche elemento difficile nel corso, sia strutturalmente che dal punto di vista dei contenuti?

S: No secondo me è difficile no, alla fine era sul nostro livello. Almeno io non ho trovato difficoltà ecco.

T: Se tu rifletti sulle quattro abilità quindi reading listening speaking e writing alla fine del corso secondo te in quale abilità ti senti più confident?

S: Listening, perché abbiamo fatto molta pratica. Io già vedevo qualche video in inglese di mio, ma ho notato che capisco qua si tutto, quindi penso che vada bene così

T: Secondo te come si può imparare il vocabulary con i videogames?

S: Io l'inglese che conosco l'ho imparato giocando a videogiochi negli anni scorsi. si può imparare. la chat testuale è perfetta per imparare secondo me perché la tu non solo ascolti le parole e magari non capisci come sta scritta ma le vedi proprio direttamente

T: adesso invece vorrei che tu facessi una riflessione sulla grammatica. secondo te hai imparato qualcosa anche di grammatica in questo corso?

S: Proprio regole grammatica no. semplicemente la grammatica non è troppo legata allo speaking secondo me. uno può saper parlare ma poi non sapere le regole di grammatica. Noi qualche accenno l'abbiamo fatto però non mi ricordo neanche una regola di grammatica.

T: Ora mi piacerebbe invece che tu pensassi a questo tipo di corso che noi abbiamo fatto e al corso classico che si fa a scuola e mi mettesti in paragone questi due riguardo all'approccio che hanno verso la lingua

S: Ok, ovviamente a scuola abbiamo anche un approccio alla letteratura inglese che secondo me è un po' antiquato come approccio e quindi non ti permette totalmente di ampliare la conoscenza della lingua inglese e soprattutto, essendo le classi abbastanza numerose, è difficile parlare tutti quanti e il prof non sempre riesce a correggere tutti quanti direttamente. Invece in questo corso, essendo il numero più ristretto, è incentrato su parlare e ci sono state molte occasioni per correggere il nostro parlare.

T: Tra i compiti che abbiamo fatto, quale ti è piaciuto di più? e perché?

S: Quello lì probabilmente del video da youtuber, perché alla fine è il sogno un po' di tutti i bambini. Un po' mi è risalito questo sogno infantile. Questo è stato divertente, anche se ho provato a vedere che dice e non lo proverò mai più, perché la ggava tutto quanto.

T: Invece l'attività che ti è piaciuta di più fare, pensando alle lezioni?

S: un attimo... penso... quella lì in cui abbiamo visto i video sul multiplayer, perché alla fine la era pressoché ascolto che era molto facile. Quella in cui lei stoppava il video e poi ci faceva la domanda.

T: Questo corso ti ha motivato di più a parlare in inglese e perché o perché no cioè ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare?

S: Io non mi sono sentito più motivato, però comunque a me parlare l'inglese fa piacere

T: Secondo te che cosa ti ha aiutato a parlare di più, quale elemento ti ha aiutato a parlare di più?

S: Il lessico soprattutto ampliare il lessico. Per esempio non sapevo che porto dicesse HARBOUR, non lo sapevo.

T Quindi parlavi perché volevi conoscere più cose..

S: Sì, il lessico soprattutto

T: Qual è stata la sensazione che tu hai avuto quando partecipavi alle lezioni, come ti sei sentito: rilassato sotto pressione. Mi interessa proprio sapere quali erano i tuoi sentimenti

S: Io mi sentivo abbastanza rilassato, perché tanto anche se non avessi saputo rispondere alla domanda non è che mi cambiava qualcosa.

T: Che cosa ti ha reso più rilassato se dovessi tradurre questo pensiero?

S: Le mie risposte non influivano in alcun modo sulle ore di PCTO e soprattutto sul voto del corso

T: Pensi che dopo questo corso la tua fluency sia migliorata? e in che modo?

S: Sì, penso che un po' sia aumentata perché soprattutto ho parlato molto in inglese

T: Per quanto riguarda il listening invece? riesci a capire più chiaramente adesso le persone mentre giocano? ti ha aiutato anche in questo?

S: Sì anche in questo. Abbiamo sentito anche accenti diversi e sto imparando a riconoscerli.

T: Ritornando sempre alla fluency e allo speaking secondo te quali sono stati i compiti si assegnati ma anche come esercizi in generale che noi facevamo anche nei meeting che ti hanno aiutato di più per favorire queste due questi due aspetti?

S: Quando vedevamo i video, la vedevamo un video di diverse di persone che venivano da diverse nazioni quindi sentiamo diversi accenti e ogni volta magari cambiava il modo in cui parlavano, l'accento, la velocità

T: Vorrei fare un pensiero su quella che è la gamification. Il nostro corso era basato su questo principio. Vorrei sapere quello che pensi tu quale è stato il tuo sentire davanti alla presenza di una leaderboard i punti come hai percepito questa cosa dei punti della leaderboard dei badge. Vorrei sapere qualcosa sul tuo sentire riguardo a questa esperienza

S: Partiamo dal presupposto che io sono la persona meno competitiva del mondo, quindi non era mio interesse scalare le classifiche, anche se mi sono classificato abbastanza alto, semplicemente facendo i compiti; però è simpatica come idea. Non è che stavo tutto il giorno a pensare: ora come faccio? sto indietro! no io mi sono detto: vabbè faccio questi punti poi come va va.

T: L'idea secondo te potrebbe essere applicabile in un contesto scolastico, cioè secondo te usare un principio del genere potrebbe portarvi a vivere anche quella che è la scuola quella che è la valutazione in un modo più rilassato?

S: Qua dipende un po' anche dal tipo di persona. Ci stanno persone a cui potrebbe dare fastidio. Per esempio a me non darebbe problemi ma magari una persona che sta in un punto basso della classifica si sente in soggezione

T: Per quanto riguarda il gameplay...tu quando giocavi a minecraft, cioè no so tu sei un giocatore di minecraft abitudinario o hai iniziato ora..

S: Lo ero ed ora grazie al corso ho ripreso.

T: quindi tu giocavi a minecraft però sapevi che stavi giocando per scuola, cioè che dovevi fare poi delle attività su questo gioco. Secondo te questa cosa ti ha fatto perdere un po' la piacevolezza del gioco?

S: No perché comunque mi divertivo facendo minigame, survival. Mi divertivo lo stesso.

T: Quindi tu hai giocato...

S: Normalmente

T: La tua idea di gioco ora che hai fatto questo corso è cambiata rispetto al passato cioè, hai riflettuto sul fatto che magari attraverso un videogioco uno può anche imparare?

S: Io questo già io questo già lo sapevo, perché io come ho detto prima l'inglese l'ho imparato giocando ai videogiochi. quando ho visto questo corso, ho pensato: vabbè allora non sono soltanto io che vedo la cosa effettivamente vera

T: Ma tu pensi che il fatto che ci sia stato comunque un docente a progettare delle attività e a guidare questo corso, pensi che comunque sia necessario sia importante o uno basta che gioca e impara?

S: Dipende un po dalle persone qua, perché ci stanno delle persone che magari devono essere un po spinte. invece io semplicemente mi ricordo come scrivono gli altri le parole che scrivono e me le imparo così

T: Quindi tu pensi che non sia fondamentale...

S: Nel mio caso non è fondamentale

T: Se pensi proprio a un tipo di struttura di corso così anche a una proposta di apprendimento dell'inglese attraverso i videogiochi: tu consiglieresti anche ad altre persone di fare un corso del genere?

S: Sì sì perché è molto intuitivo e poi pure perché è abbastanza facile imparare così almeno a mio parere

T: Perché usi questa questo aggettivo "facile"?

S: Perché il modo migliore per imparare una lingua è parlarla, semplicemente. Ormai viviamo in un mondo digitale, basta che vai online, puoi scrivere in un'altra lingua senza problemi.

T: Se tu volessi modificare qualcosa per migliorare il corso, cosa faresti?

S: Per migliorarlo secondo me si dovrebbe magari fare una collaborazione con un server discord, qualcosa in cui poter trovare direttamente i giocatori. per esempio nel compito in cui trovare un giocatore con cui giocare ci ho messo veramente tanto a trovarne uno

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualche considerazione tua sul corso qualcosa che vuoi dire, qualcosa anche di negativo o semplicemente aggiungere delle considerazioni tue su quello che hai fatto

S: Penso di aver detto più o meno tutto

T: Ok perfetto l'intervista è finita

INT 5 (09-01-22; 4 pm)

T: Possiamo iniziare la nostra chiacchierata e iniziamo con una domanda molto generica sul corso che abbiamo fatto e cioè che cosa ti è piaciuto di più del corso, quindi note positive

S: Forse il fatto che parlavamo tutti, male o bene, però parlavamo tutti.

T: Che cosa sempre del corso hai trovato noioso, dove non ti sei sentito coinvolto?

S: Eh giocare a minecraft, perché io solitamente vario un po a volte gioco a questo a volte a quello. Giocare a minecraft per qualche ora a settimana, però non facendolo per mia spontanea volontà quello forse era un po brutto.

T: Hai trovato qualcosa di difficile all'interno del corso?

S: Uhm, difficile no

T: Se tu pensi a reading writing speaking e listening: in quale di queste abilità ti sei sentito più sicuro alla fine del corso e perché?

S: Forse ho aopreso di più lo speaking cioè perché di reading non c'era molto.

T: Secondo te si può effettivamente imparare e ad ampliare il vocabolario utilizzando i videogiochi?

S: Ampliare il vocabolario sì, perché lo denoto dall'idea di tutti i giorni. anche con i miei amici utilizziamo anche per scherzare vocaboli per giochi in inglese. quindi sì, però non so se è fattibile insegnare in questo modo

T: Per quanto riguarda invece la percezione che hai della grammatica. pensi che attraverso questo corso tu abbia imparato qualcosa anche di grammatica?

S: Ah beh no, perché stavamo più sullo speaking, abbiamo corretto molto la pronuncia più che la grammatica. certo la grammatica pure ce n'è un po, però cioè molto più pronuncia.

T: Se tu volessi paragonare questo corso ad un corso classico di inglese che si fa a scuola. pensa all'approccio che sia verso la lingua. che puoi dire di questo corso rispetto a quello che si fa a scuola?

S: Eh quello che mi viene in mente che cioè sono diversi, nel senso che con quello che facciamo a scuola impariamo la grammatica: come strutturare le frasi in modo meccanico; qui agevola molto sentire gente che parla inglese, che è un'altra cosa rispetto a scrivere delle frasi

T: Facendo una valutazione sui compiti che io ho assegnato a casa, secondo te quale era il più divertente qual era quello che poteva motivare di più e perché ?

S: Quello che poteva motivare di più forse quello dove facevamo un video, come se fossimo degli youtuber perché è una cosa di versa e in testa c'hai che è già una figata.

T: Se tu ripensi alle attività che noi abbiamo svolto durante il corso, quale è stata l'attività che ti è piaciuta di più che ti ha coinvolto di più che ti ha interessato di più?

S: Non ce n'è stata una in particolare

T: Tu ti sentivi motivato a parlare in inglese?

S: Ma cioè non più del necessario, nel senso cioè, per giocare a un gioco in un server inglese devi comunque voler un attimo parlare inglese per comunicare agli altri

T: Intendo anche proprio nel corso nostro, nei nostri incontri. ti sentivi comunque spronato a parlare in inglese, avevi voglia di comunicare in inglese?

S: Non molto differentemente da una lezione di scuola.

T: Quindi secondo te non c'è stato qualcosa che ti ha invogliato di più a parlare?

S: Cioè forse sulle meccaniche di gioco, queste cose qui, qualcosa che comunque mi interessa

T: Parliamo della sensazione che avevi tu nei meeting. tu come ti sentivi? ti sentivi non so rilassato sotto pressione, scocciato, infastidito... qual era la tua sensazione quando eri nel meeting, a lezione?

S: Ah un po come in una riunione su meet fra amici, però più formale

T: Ok quindi ti sentivi rilassato, o ti sentivi in un certo senso giudicato, sotto pressione. ti sentivi tranquillo?

S: No cioè giudicato, no sotto pressione neanche troppo, perché alla fine non è un voto che mi cambierà la pagella e poi non troppo rilassato, una via di mezzo. che era una via di mezzo.

T: Qual era l'elemento che ti faceva sentire più a tuo agio, comunque ti toglieva quella pressione scolastica, soltanto non a vere il voto?

S: Anche sentir parlare di cose che mi interessano, tipo di videogiochi, anche quello

T: Secondo te dopo questo corso senti che la tua fluency in un certo modo è migliorata?

S: Di poco sì.

T: E in cosa lo vedi?

S: Mi vengono più parole in mente e un po più pronunce corrette

T: Per quanto riguarda il listening, pensi che anche tu sia migliorato, tu riesca a capire meglio adesso, quando gli altri parlano? riesci cioè alla fine rispetto a capire un po' meglio questi gamers?

S: Poco di più.

T: Secondo te ci sono stati degli esercizi che noi abbiamo che ti hanno aiutato a migliorare un pochino sia la fluency che lo speaking?

S: Forse fare il Video (youtuber)

T: Parliamo adesso di gamification. Quando tu controllavi la leaderboard qual era la tua sensazione cioè ti ha messo in difficoltà, è un'idea che comunque ti piace questa qui del punteggio. Dimmi un po che cosa ne pensi di questa di questo modo di valutare e di giudicare con i punti, con la leaderboard e i badge.

S: Non mi fa nè caldo nè freddo

T: Non ti sei sentito più motivato rispetto ad un ad un metodo tradizionale?

S: No

T: E il fatto che tu ricevesti questo punteggio settimanale ti faceva avere la sensazione di essere più consapevole dei tuoi progressi? Cioè, secondo te, il fatto di vedere tutte le settimane questo punteggio crescere o rimanere piuttosto statico, ti dava la sensazione di capire se stavi migliorando o anche imparando?

S: Sì, questo sì

T: Adesso parliamo del gameplay: come ti sei sentito tu a giocare a minecraft sapendo che in realtà stavi giocando perché ti serviva per un compito di scuola? è cambiato secondo te il tuo gameplay? secondo te, ti sei divertito meno, qual è stata la tua relazione rispetto al gioco sapendo che era utilizzato o sarebbe stato utilizzato per fini didattici?

S: Era infinitamente meno divertente, cioè facevo le cose proprio standard che uno fa in un mondo di minecraft, senza quella cosa di "facciamo sta cosa"

T: Perché secondo te ti sei sentito limitato in questa cosa? non vi è mai stato chiesto di limitarvi

S: Ah sì è vero però, non lo so.

T: Cosa era meno divertente secondo te?

S: No non saprei spiegarlo. Mi è sembrata una situazione molto simile a quando ci avevano chiuso per il lockdown e non potevamo più uscire per andare a fare sport e tutti improvvisamente si sono improvvisati corridori.

T: perché hai avuto questa sensazione?

S: Non lo so, forse perché il compito era fai due ore di gioco su minecraft e a me mi veniva voglia di giocare a mortal kombat.

T: Però non c'era un tempo... non era chiesto un tempo, cioè tu potevi giocare quando volevi, non c'era un obbligo di giocare tutti i giorni, e poi c'erano delle attività che tu potevi fare anche su un gioco che avevi fatto 10 giorni prima. Non c'era un'imposizione di orario né di gioco; era lasciato comunque alla tua libertà di giocatore scegliere, quando in che modalità giocare. vi era stato chiesto di cercare di provare la multiplayer per vedere se avevate e difficoltà a capire altri che parlavano in inglese.

S: In un certo senso è come se mi fossi dato io un limite.

T: Mi viene da pensare che è un proprio un rigetto tuo a voler legare un videogioco ad un apprendimento. tu che ne pensi?

S: Ma sì è molto probabile, non lo so, davvero.

T: Ritorniamo alla prima considerazione che tu hai fatto: hai detto sì però non lo so se un corso del genere può essere legato all'apprendimento e all'insegnamento dell'inglese. tu comunque ti sentiresti di raccomandare un corso del genere ad altri studenti come te? cioè tu diresti ad un tuo compagno sì fallo questo corso perché impari, oppure è bello e divertente. Tu lo consiglieresti?

S: Uhm, non lo so, forse no.

T: Perché no? che cosa non ti ha convinto?

S: Non saprei...

S: Magari hai colto dei limiti, delle difficoltà. Oppure puoi dirmi: però se facciamo in quest'altro modo potrebbe invece funzionare...

S: No beh cioè, dipende sempre dalla persona a cui dovrei consigliarlo. cioè per persone che non stanno molto dietro alla scuola ma che giocano potrebbe essere che imparano più cose rispetto all'apprendimento tradizionale.

T: Quindi tu sei una persona che preferisce apprendere in modo più tradizionale?

S: Ah sì più o meno sì.

T: Pensi quindi che questo potrebbe essere un corso mirato a chi ha bisogno probabilmente di più stimoli esterni, quale può essere per esempio il videogioco perché è una cosa che ti piace?

S: Cioè, non più stimoli, ma diversi.

T: Non so se vuoi aggiungere qualcosa tu, un commento tuo personale.. un qualcosa che vorresti aver visto, qualcosa che invece tu ti aspettavi e che non è stata...

S: quando ci hanno comunicato sta cosa del *Gameful English* la professoressa ha detto cose totalmente diverse da quelle che poi effettivamente abbiamo fatto, ma non so se è stata la disorganizzazione della mia scuola o un cambio di programma

T: Io ho fatto anche con voi un incontro online da scuola, in cui vi ho raccontato la cosa. Poi abbiamo fatto un incontro a scuola dove vi ho presentato il progetto e poi abbiamo cominciato quindi non so...

S: Non so....

T: Grazie.

INT 6 (09-01-22; 5 pm)

T: Innanzitutto vorrei chiederti se questo corso ti è piaciuto e in particolar modo che cosa ti è piaciuto di questo corso

S: Innanzitutto vorrei fare una premessa: in questo corso mi sono un po' ritrovato per puro caso perché non pensavo fosse un corso, quindi ho cominciato a seguire le prime lezioni e comunque non mi ha molto impazzire, però penso che comunque alla fine come idea sia buona perché potrebbe attirare l'interesse di molti giovani; infatti i videogiochi adesso sono pane quotidiano e messi insieme allo studio possono veramente stimolare altri ragazzi. non è successo a me, però alla maggior parte dei ragazzi può succedere.

T: Perché a te non è successo?

S: Più che altro non mi ha stimolato tanto, per questo. non so perché, io sono un po' particolare. Come erano gestite le elezioni non mi è dispiaciuto, poi c'era anche lei che è sempre stata sempre disponibile e gentile, quindi proprio al top. però non so bene comunque ogni volta non mi stimolava.

T: Ma forse il tema? forse perché si usava minecraft?

S: No no quello non è assolutamente un problema. in realtà a minecraft ho sempre giocato, però non è che mi ha preso proprio

T: E allora Dimmi un po' l'hai trovato per caso difficile in qualcosa?

S: No difficile no

T: Ok e che cosa allora hai trovato noioso perché forse in quello cioè c'è qualche elemento che non corrispondeva poi al tuo modo di essere, quindi probabilmente c'è qualche elemento che invece ti ha suscitato piuttosto noia o comunque disinteresse. riesci ad identificare questo?

S: Eh diciamo precisamente non lo so che cos'è in realtà, perché comunque alla fine se mi fosse piaciuto l'avrei capito subito, sarei stato preso a pieno, quindi sarei stato molto più coinvolto, invece non ero proprio preso, diciamo. non so bene il motivo. Il fatto che fosse online ha influenzato un po', penso. e quindi in presenza sarebbe stato meglio, però non credo che sia il problema principale. però comunque io le ho detto già come idea del corso ora perché se non ha preso a me però secondo me su 50 ragazzi 45 ne può prendere; comunque associare i videogiochi, che sono ora una cosa che piace ragazzi, all'inglese, che poi era anche diciamo uno studio dell'inglese molto più parlato, quindi quello vero che bisogna sapere, secondo me è un'ottima idea. magari sono stato l'unico caso a cui non è piaciuto il corso.

T: Se tu consideri le quattro reading listening writing e speaking, dopo questo corso ti sei sentito migliorato in qualcuna di queste abilità?

S: Io sono stato assente per 3/4 lezioni, però anche in quelle poche nelle quali sono stato presente mi sento comunque migliorato perché poi cioè diciamo diversamente dalla scuola dove si studia un inglese formale qui lei ci correggeva anche la pronuncia, ci insegnava modi di dire.

T: E quindi quali abilità senti migliorate?

S: Nel listening mi ha aiutato, anche vedendo gli altri ragazzi che facevano gli youtuber mi sono accorto che riuscivo a capire meglio, cioè molto meglio l'inglese. poi il writing non tanto, cioè perché non ho consegnato molti compiti. il reading perché la pronuncia mi ha aiutato un po'. diciamo che sono parecchi dettagli che hanno fatto la differenza

T: Secondo te si può imparare il vocabolario attraverso un videogioco e in che modo?

S: Assolutamente sì, vabbè tralasciando il multiplayer, giocando online con la gente straniera, però ad esempio parecchi giochi che magari non hanno una traduzione in italiano oppure solamente in inglese riescono a farti associare una qualsiasi cosa e riescono a farti capire meglio

T: Se tu pensi per esempio alla grammatica, secondo te questo corso ti ha insegnato anche qualcosa di grammatica?

S: La grammatica come si studia a scuola no, perché cioè come ho detto prima ho imparato molto di più il linguaggio informale che però secondo me si pone quasi allo stesso livello della grammatica, perché comunque alla fine se dovessi andare in Inghilterra sarebbe molto più importante il parlato, a meno che non debba parlare con una persona di alto livello. Mettendolo assieme alla scuola, perché poi io a scuola faccio la grammatica, poi magari nel corso ho fatto il parlato insieme combaciano.

T: Se tu confronti questo corso con l'approccio che si dà alla lingua e i normali corsi che facciamo a scuola e l'approccio che si dà alla lingua, riesci a fare un paragone tra i due?

S: Beh cioè io preferisco come è stato fatto corso (gameful) perché il parlato secondo me serve; diciamo che sono più o meno allo stesso livello, però io soggettivamente preferirei saperlo nel parlato l'inglese, per esempio i modi di dire una cosa senza tradurla letteralmente. L'accostamento alla scuola, costruire due linee parallele che però alla fine insieme mi aiutano: un po' di grammatica e un po' di parlato

T: Qual è stato il compito assegnato più divertente e più piacevole da fare a casa?

S: C'è stato quello là, diciamo che ce ne sono stati parecchi, quello degli acronimi, quello mi è piaciuto. poi ho visto anche quello di youtuber, anche se nel mio caso sarei stato un po' limitato perché a metterci la faccia davanti a una telecamera diciamo sarei stato un po' con imbarazzo. quindi bravi quelli che lo hanno fatto. però comunque come compito in sé era molto bello, molto innovativo, quindi

penso siano questi più di tutti. poi mi sembra ce ne fosse uno dove bisogna va descrive il mondo di Minecraft. I compiti erano parecchio originali; credo sia stata quella la cosa più stimolante.

T: Per quanto riguarda le attività proprio che noi abbiamo fatto durante le lezioni, secondo te quale è stata o quali sono state le attività più stimolanti e più utili dal tuo punto di vista?

S: Allora a me personalmente mi è piaciuto molto nelle ultime lezioni guardando i video di youtube, cioè parlando uno alla volta in inglese descrivendo, riassumendo un po' quello che c'era nel video. e poi come ho detto in 3-4 lezioni non sono stato presente, quindi non so bene cosa cosa è stato fatto in quelle lezioni.

T: Più sei sentito più stimolato a parlare in inglese?

S: A parlare in inglese sì, però comunque diciamo stimolato lo ero già abbastanza perché mi è sempre piaciuto molto. soprattutto ad altri ragazzi questa cosa potrebbe stimolare ancora di più. Sì, i videogiochi comunque come ho già detto goà stimolano in sé, associandoci l'inglese poi, potrebbero essere ancora più stimolanti.

T: Secondo te che cosa ti ha aiutato a parlare di più in inglese, ad intervenire di più?

S: Ad un certo punto vieni talmente influenzato che ti senti quasi come un inglese, però non so bene come spiegarlo. Ad un certo punto, intervenire in inglese, parlare di più, è bello, però non so bene spiegarlo. Come lezione era molto più una chiacchierata che lezione, quindi molto più piacevole infatti mi dispiace che non sono stato preso, perché come idea secondo me era cioè era strutturato anche molto bene.

T: Ti volevo chiedere la tua sensazione in questi incontri. Eri rilassato sotto pressione, scocciato...

S: Ero rilassato sì, come ho detto era prima quasi una chiacchierata. Era sì una lezione però fatta con talmente tanta scioltezza... ma anche anche quando vedevo i miei compagni che scrivono i messaggi sul gruppo, tutti quanti che scherzavano... ti senti comunque a tuo agio.

T: Per quanto riguarda invece la fluency in inglese. pensi che dopo aver sperimentato anche la chiacchierata nel multiplayer er. pensi di essere migliorato da questo punto di vista?

S: Ho imparato singolarmente a pronunciare certe parole. io non ho fatto molti compiti, quindi diciamo non non mi sono allenato.. però già il fatto di sapere pronunciare una parola meglio o riuscire a legare meglio le parole... quindi in un certo senso un poco però sì comunque alla fine mi ha aiutato.

T: Questo puoi dirlo anche per quanto riguarda il listening?

S: Sì sì, perché comunque già il listening, ascoltando della musica in inglese americana, leggendo i testi, già un po' sì, già un po' mi allenavo, però sentendo poi soprattutto gli altri compagni quando c'erano i video oppure sentendo lei a lezione, riuscivo a vedere che capivo sempre quello che dicesse quindi sì, nel listening mi ha aiutato, tanto.

T: Secondo te c'erano proprio dei compiti specifici che erano proprio buoni per favorire queste due skills?

S: Per la fluency sì, assolutamente il lavoro dello youtuber, cioè il fatto di parlare mentre stai giocando, quindi facendo due cose contemporaneamente in inglese, quello sì certo migliora migliora la fluidità. e invece per quanto riguarda il listening lei parlava il 95% lezioni in inglese, quindi se non riuscivi a stare al passo ti perdevi, quindi penso che quello sia diciamo soprattutto la cosa migliore che ha aiutato il listening.

T: Mi interessa parlare della gamification. il corso avevo una leaderboard e ogni compito aveva un punteggio, la partecipazione in classe aveva un punteggio... vorrei capire le tue sensazioni rispetto ad una leaderboard

S: Per me sinceramente nessun problema, anzi magari al contrario poteva essere stimolante. poi dipende da come una persona la prende perché è abbastanza soggettiva, perché magari una persona si vede ultima e si demoralizza; invece un'altra persona al contrario si vede ultima e si dice allora la prossima volta farò meglio

T: E tu come ti percepisci guardando la classifica?

S: Io sono un'ottimista e la prendo con scioltezza, quindi non do troppo peso, ma non è menefreghismo. La prendo con serenità.

T: Il fatto di avere un feedback pensi che sia una cosa positiva a livello proprio di percezione degli apprendimenti?

S: Avere un feedback sì, ti stimola a raggiungere il punteggio

T: L'ultima parte e riguarda la percezione del gameplay. vorrei capire qual è stata la tua percezione del gameplay quindi quando giocavi a minecraft. è cambiato qualcosa, sapendo che tu stavi giocando, però che c'era dietro comunque un fine didattico?

S: Come ho detto prima io l'ho presa con serenità, anche se sapevo che comunque era una cosa di scuola. diciamo me lo sono imposto anche come metodo per farlo meglio, perché lavorando con serenità risultava molto meglio. il fatto di stare giocando, non per me ma per un corso non mi creava nessun problema, anzi cioè diciamo non mi faceva né caldo né freddo.

T: Tu raccomandaresti questo modo di apprendere e di apprendere l'inglese ad altri studenti e perché?

S: Assolutamente sì, perché come ho detto prima è una cosa che stimola i giovani, che nella maggior parte dei casi penso li prenda. il fatto di associare il videogioco allo studio è proprio perfetto. non per generalizzare ma diciamo la maggior parte dei videogiochi la

giocano per lo più i maschi, anche se diciamo su 100 ragazzi di questi 80 sono maschi, quindi potrebbe prendere di più i ragazzi, però secondo me come idea è molto valida.

T: Secondo te diventa importante anche la figura di un docente che ti guida o secondo te l'apprendimento può avvenire anche a prescindere senza un'insegnante dietro?

S: L'apprendimento sì, può avvenire anche senza l'insegnante, però secondo me con l'insegnante è meglio: puoi sempre chiedere un aiuto tipo, in quelli che sono i dettagli e fare comunque tantissime cose; poi logicamente da soli sì si potrebbe imparare, però non come con un docente.

T: In cosa ti aiuta il docente, secondo te in che cosa fa la differenza?

S: Per esempio senza di lei non avrei imparato a pronunciare determinate parole a sapere determinati modi di dire, parecchie cose che giocando online comunque non avrei capito, un modo di dire non l'avrei saputo, invece magari chiedendo a lei...

T: Vuoi aggiungere tu un commento personale, come avresti migliorato il corso?

S: Vabbè secondo me ha penalizzato un po' il fatto di essere online, perché tutti in presenza magari si è più partecipi. però comunque diciamo non vedo tanti difetti in questo corso. secondo me diciamo è parecchio all'avanguardia, perché questo metodo di studio secondo me è ottimo, diciamo invece della classica scuola rigida dove impari le regole, questo secondo me è una cosa molto più stimolante e accattivante.

T: Grazie. Interrompo la registrazione.

INT 7 (09-01-22; 6 pm)

T: Facciamo questa chiacchierata sul corso *Gameful English*, e la prima cosa che mi viene da chiedere è che cosa ti è piaciuto di più del corso?

S: Allora, questo corso devo dire mi è piaciuto davvero tanto in generale, perché unisce secondo me quello che è una cosa più libera più bella, cioè il gioco, con una cosa che comunque serve come appunto l'inglese. infatti in questo corso mi sono sentito molto a mio agio, anche con gli altri miei compagni; non non ci siamo mai sentiti né stressati né costretti a fare qualcosa; ci siamo sentiti liberi, ci siamo divertiti. anche l'idea del gioco è molto bella, soprattutto per noi che ci ritroviamo spesso il pomeriggio a giocare; è bello, ci sentiamo appunto a casa, nel nostro habitat.

T: Hai notato qualche elemento che tu puoi definire noioso o qualcosa di negativo insomma, qualcosa che non ti ha interessato o ti non abbia appassionato?

S: Mah... secondo me, no. anzi, sono sempre stato molto attento, molto appassionato di questo corso, perché mi divertivo anche se dovevo descrivere delle immagini, sempre collegate a minecraft. comunque è una cosa bella, anche se magari è legato a una materia come inglese era sempre non noioso, totalmente il contrario: era molto divertente sempre anche perché si imparavano sempre cose nuove.

T: Hai trovato qualcosa di difficile nel corso, sia dal punto di vista strutturale che come tematiche o qualche argomento che hai trovato difficile?

S: No, cioè nel senso... io in inglese non sono mai stato molto diciamo splendente, non sono mai andato molto bene. però anzi appunto per questo non ho trovato difficoltà quindi è una cosa molto bella: io che magari non so parlare bene l'inglese, non lo capisco bene, comunque non ho trovato difficoltà, quindi significa che sicuramente è strutturato molto bene per tutti, quindi chiunque può partecipare, chiunque può stare senza andare in panico.

T: Che cosa secondo te ti ha avvantaggiato in questa cosa, cioè secondo te che cosa, qual è l'elemento che ha reso anche te che comunque ammetti di avere una qualche difficoltà a sentirti a tuo agio, rispetto per esempio a scuola?

S: Secondo me appunto questo legame che c'è con un mondo più di noi giovani, perché a scuola si trattano tematiche che magari possono essere per noi noiose: la storia, autori, mentre questo ci rende molto partecipi, perché riesce a legare qualcosa che noi facciamo tutti i giorni. io ho sempre giocato a minecraft tutti i pomeriggi, quindi farlo in inglese, anzi, mi dice: wow! imparo e in più gioco, quindi una cosa che lega perfettamente.

T: Tra le quattro abilità di reading speaking writing e listening, alla fine di questo corso, in quale o quali di queste abilità tu ti senti più confidente?

S: Allora forse nel listening, perché ho sempre avuto problemi nell'ascoltare e nel capire. Anzi, in questo corso sono migliorato da questo punto di vista, anche quando vedevo gli altri descrivere un'immagine o comunque anche lei spiegare un qualcosa, io mi sentivo più sicuro, iniziavo a capire, anche perché erano sì termini diciamo più basilici o comunque legati a un gioco, che però comunque riuscivo a capire facilmente, quindi direi che sono migliorato.

T: Si può imparare il vocabolario giocando ai videogiochi e in che modo?

S: Secondo me sì, cioè i giochi sono sempre stati un tassello fondamentale per imparare l'inglese, o anche altre lingue, perché in realtà dei giochi per esempio quando giochi online e magari incontri una persona di un'altra nazione è importante perché questo ti aiuta a capire quella materia non mettendoti stress, come se fosse qualcosa con qualcuno che ti costringe a farlo. a scuola devi farlo, perché

devi fare questo compito, devi studiare; mentre quando uno gioca è più libero, e quindi si ha più tempo per capire, per parlare, e magari parlare anche di argomenti che sono legati al gioco e quindi possono aiutare.

T: Pensi che tu in questo corso abbia imparato qualcosa di grammatica, ti sia servito anche per la grammatica?

S: Ho sicuramente imparato molti più termini, anche quando lei mi correggeva giustamente, quando sbagliavo a fare una frase, le cose che sbagliavo me le segnava e le correggevo. spesso in classe una professoressa non ti corregge, anche perché io non mi espongo in classe, mentre qui ero più libero, quindi andavo a dire una frase, la sbagliavo, anzi, lei mi correggeva, quindi mi segnava le cose ed ho imparato sicuramente più grammatica qui che forse a scuola ecco.

T: Se tu pensi all'attenzione che si dà alla lingua e pensi a questo corso e al corso tradizionale che noi facciamo a scuola, riesci a farmi un paragone?

S: Sì, cioè secondo me sono entrambi utilissimi nel capire una lingua per impararla, però hanno due modi diversi nel farlo: la scuola deve eseguire sempre un percorso standard che è quello prima di fare una grammatica poi gli autori, poi la storia; quindi diciamo è un pacchetto più completo, mentre secondo me quello che invece pecca nella scuola è che, al contrario di *Gameful English*, non non si preoccupa di termini più moderni, di frasi che noi usiamo più spesso. *Gameful English* ci insegna appunto a parlare con i giochi, una cosa che noi facciamo sempre, e quando andiamo online magari andiamo in crisi, non sappiamo neanche come si dice un oggetto che si chiama, mentre qui impariamo molto secondo me, anzi ci aiuta proprio a risolvere questi problemi che noi ragazzi possiamo avere.

T: Se tu ti ricordi i compiti che io ho assegnato, quelli che vengono sotto il nome di assignments, secondo te tra quelli lì qual è stato quello che ti ha divertito di più, quello che ti è piaciuto di più da svolgere, o anche se non l'hai svolto che avresti voluto svolgere e perché?

S: Allora forse uno degli ultimi secondo me è quello dello youtuber, di impersonificarsi in uno youtuber, perché è stato molto divertente, perché effettivamente io mi sono messo lì, ho registrato uno schermo insieme ad un mio amico, ho editato. mi sono divertito molto, mi sono sentito appunto uno youtuber; anzi ero molto appassionato, anche se era un compito da svolgere il pomeriggio non mi pesava per niente, anzi provavo a farlo; è stato bello perché anche se è un inglese che non parlo, lui comunque era legato a un gioco, quindi riuscivo a descrivere bene, riuscivo a mettere le immagini, anche appunto perché abbiamo giocato a minecraft, quindi divertente.

T: Qual è l'attività che ti è piaciuta di più, che ti ha coinvolto maggiormente?

S: Secondo me quella di quando abbiamo descritto delle immagini di minecraft che lei ci presentava, com'è e appunto poteva essere la fattoria, una città, e bisogna descriverla, perché anche se sono cose che sembrano banali, secondo me aiutano molto. io molti di quei termini non li sapevo. adesso li so, quindi mi divertiva molto anche usare la fantasia per descrivere un'immagine con quello che noi sapevamo, anche un'altra cosa rispetto alla scuola normale: lì devi usare dei termini precisi per andare bene. Qui puoi usare la tua fantasia, nel senso quello che sai cerchi di collegarlo; nel caso sbagli, non c'è problema, perché appunto lei ci dava tutte le dritte per non sbagliare.

T: Quindi questo ti ha aiutato anche a parlare di più?

S: Sì sicuramente. Appunto, era molto più divertente e libero parlare in inglese. ho imparato molti termini, quindi mi sento forse anche più sicuro in questa materia in questa lingua quindi mi ha aiutato davvero tanto.

T: Se tu dovessi descrivere il tuo stato d'animo quando partecipavi agli incontri, come ti sentivi?

S: Mi sentivo sicuramente divertito. non mi sono mai sentito né stressato né ansioso, anzi ero sempre divertito e curioso di cosa facevamo quel giorno, anche perché ero insieme a tutti i miei amici; anche chi non conoscevo di altre classi, comunque della mia età quindi riuscivo a divertirmi con loro, a vedere nuove cose, anche perché ogni settimana c'era sempre qualcosa di nuovo, non era mai niente uguale, quindi la curiosità aumentava di settimana in settimana.

T: Pensi che anche la tua fluency sia migliorata dopo questo corso?

S: Sì sicuramente è migliorata; ovviamente ancora non è perfetta, però sicuramente è migliorata molto. ci divertiamo spesso con gli amici, per esempio se giochiamo a minecraft alcune volte ci mettiamo anche a parlare in inglese, e vedo appunto che anche con i giochi e soprattutto su minecraft in questo caso riesco a parlare più fluentemente, senza andare nel pallone spesso, perché ho imparato nuovi termini. quindi sì direi è migliorata.

T: Puoi dire lo stesso anche del listening che riesci a capire di più la gente quando parla?

S: Sì, anche nel listening, soprattutto, perché con lei che parlava sempre in inglese e molto raramente in italiano, che è una cosa che magari può risultare più difficile per noi, però in realtà non era così, perché se qualcuno non capiva, riusciva a spiegarlo. sicuramente quelle cose che non capivo me le spiegava. io mi segnava i termini nuovi. anche nel capire sono sicuramente migliorato.

T: Se vogliamo andare a ricordarci dei tasks quindi dei compiti che ci hanno potuto aiutare di più a migliorare la fluency e il listening quale ti può venire in mente, qualche compito ti ha potuto aiutare in queste due abilità?

S: Sì allora diciamo sicuramente nella fluency, nel parlare più liberamente, quello che ho citato prima, cioè quello dello youtuber, perché appunto eravamo liberi di dire quello che volevamo, quando volevamo, come volevamo. anche senza prepararsi un discorso veniva molto più libero, più fluente. per quanto riguarda il listening per esempio quando ci assegnava dei video da youtube di vedere e magari capire quei video sicuramente aiutava perché anche collegare il mondo di youtube è molto importante perché è un qualcosa che noi giovani almeno io sto quasi sempre su youtube, cioè è il mio mondo; quindi collegarlo a un gioco e perfino all'inglese è una cosa bellissima perché appunto uno può capire, andare a vedere i sottotitoli se non capisce e comunque senza ansia né stress.

T: Parliamo della gamification. Tu sai che questo corso è stato strutturato secondo i principi della gamification; quindi avevi questa leaderboard a ogni fine settimana il punteggio per ogni compito che facevi. Anche la partecipazione aveva un punteggio. Il fatto di vedere la classifica a te ha mai creato qualche difficoltà? Qual è il tuo rapporto rispetto ad una leaderboard, nel vedere il tuo nome in un certo posto della classifica, per esempio?

S: A me non ha mai messo nè stress nè ansia, perché era un metodo bello, nel senso che a me non crea nessun problema vedere il mio nome ultimo. Per me non c'è problema. Sapevo che dovevo migliorare in quel caso; anzi questo schema a punti per me è stato molto interessante, perché sicuramente è un metodo nuovo, a scuola non si usa questo punteggio e che forse è anche meglio rispetto a un voto perché un voto ci segna di più, un punteggio è un qualcosa che tu puoi migliorare con più facilità, soprattutto avendo lezione ogni settimana e sapendo che anche mandando un compito questo punteggio poteva aumentare. Secondo me è stato molto bello questo metodo e non mi ha mai creato problemi.

S: Il fatto di sapere di avere dei badge, pensi che possa essere considerato un feedback positivo?

T: Secondo me è molto interessante, perché infatti è come un traguardo, è come una medaglia che uno prende: quindi facendo questa cosa io ricevo un merito, un premio, che appunto a scuola non avviene, perché se qualcuno si impegna e non rende magari non riesce a prendere questo merito, mentre qui invece c'è, io so di aver fatto bene prendo appunto questo che è il mio merito, questa mia medaglia; secondo me era molto bello e molto interessante.

T: Secondo te una leaderboard, i points, ti danno anche il senso del progresso, del tuo miglioramento?

S: Sì sicuramente. Anche nel corso delle settimane...inizialmente io vedevo 40 punti e mi dicevo no, non è possibile... invece andando avanti vedevo il punteggio che saliva, alcune volte fermo, perché magari non avevo consegnato un compito. Poi risalire di nuovo. Adesso era arrivato appunto a 72; quindi io posso vedere perfettamente un mio percorso di come è andato avanti, è migliorato. Quindi anche questo è bello, nel senso che qualcuno può vedere come ha fatto a migliorare anche nel corso del tempo; quindi nelle settimane precise può vedere cosa ho sbagliato anche attraverso i badge, cose che invece ha fatto bene, in cosa è migliorato rispetto a qualcosa'altro e quindi secondo me tutta la struttura è perfetta.

T: L'ultima parte riguarda quella che è la tua percezione del gameplay: cioè tu sapevi che stavi utilizzando minecraft per scopi didattici. Secondo te è cambiato il tuo gameplay, considerando che tu ci dovevi lavorare per la scuola? Ti sei divertito di meno?

S: Divertire di meno mai. Sicuramente il gameplay quando andavi a giocare online avevi uno scopo più preciso, cioè quello di vedere, di conversare con un'altra persona; però non ha mai tolto secondo me il divertimento. E questa è una cosa che era rischiosa, perché secondo me appunto poteva togliere il divertimento se fosse stato un corso più pesante, come se fosse una scuola; invece era molto leggero, molto bello, quindi il divertimento non l'ha mai tolto. Sicuramente andavi lì con la testa di dover fare un qualcosa ma comunque giocando a minecraft, quindi nel contesto era sempre divertente giocare, senza, appunto, senza stress.

T: Quindi tu raccomanderesti questo metodo di apprendimento anche ad altri studenti e a chi lo raccomanderesti perché lo raccomanderesti?

S: Ah sicuramente lo raccomanderei agli studenti e lo raccomanderei forse a una fascia d'età proprio come la nostra, cioè forse dall'inizio del liceo fino al terzo-quarto. Sono sicuramente gli anni in cui l'inglese aumenta, cioè si ha un apprendimento migliore, anche una fluidità migliore. Anche a livello di sapere come appunto giocare: è proprio la fascia d'età che si diverte con gli amici a giocare alla playstation, di stare legato ai giochi, a youtube, quindi lo consiglieri soprattutto a questa fascia d'età ma soprattutto anche perché è importante per l'inglese, perché qualcuno deve migliorarsi per il futuro. Apprendere adesso è più importante che apprendere da più piccoli perché poi quell'apprendimento lo perdi, mentre adesso è proprio importante l'inglese.

T: Cosa miglioreresti di questo corso?

S: Devo dire su questo corso che inizialmente avevo vari dubbi quest'estate. Poi invece questi dubbi sono stati sfatati. Devo dire che è un corso organizzato molto bene, strutturato bene sotto ogni punto di vista. Forse se dovesse esserci proprio quel particolare che aggiungerei, forse è legare tutti gli alunni nel gioco, nel senso che anche se appunto noi ogni volta seguiamo la lezione, abbiamo dei percorsi da fare, si potrebbe allegare di più il gioco di per sé, nel senso tutti a giocare, ognuno dal suo dispositivo, tutti insieme durante una lezione. Giocare tutti insieme: secondo me questa è forse l'unica cosa che si poteva fare.

T: Interrompo la registrazione, a meno che tu non voglia aggiungere un altro tuo pensiero un'altra riflessione

S: In conclusione, secondo me questo corso è stato molto importante per me e credo anche per gli altri. È stato un corso davvero bello, anche perché quando mi raccontavano della scuola lavoro dicevo: oddio, chissà che pesantezza. Però ho visto questo corso e ho visto la luce in fondo al tunnel: legare minecraft addirittura un gioco con l'inglese è una cosa che a me serviva. Farlo mi è piaciuto molto, mi ha aiutato sicuramente con l'inglese e quindi sì, lo consiglieri davvero a tante, a tutti.

T: Va bene. Interrompo la registrazione.

INT 8 (10-01-22; 5.20 pm)

T: Pensando al corso che abbiamo fatto di *Gameful English*, che cosa ti è piaciuto di più, che cosa ti ha entusiasmato di più, aspetti positivi...

S: Allora soprattutto il fatto di avere un gioco, quindi una cosa che a noi ragazzi fa più piacere, quindi ad esempio anche i compiti sono stati piacevoli e non pesanti, magari proprio quello in cui ci voleva un po' più di tempo era il video, che però comunque a me ha divertito farlo. Principalmente gli aspetti piacevoli sono stati questi. Anche il rapporto con gli altri: cioè confrontarsi, condividere i video.

T: C'è stato qualcosa che hai trovato noioso, oppure qualcosa che non ti è piaciuto?

S: No, sinceramente no. anche le lezioni online sono state fluide; ad esempio ognuno esprimeva la sua opinione, cioè non non mi ha annoiato.

T: C'è stato qualcosa che hai trovato difficile, qualche aspetto del corso che ti è sembrato difficile?

S: No no.

T: Se tu ripensi alle quattro skills: reading writing listening e speaking... alla fine del corso secondo te su quale ti senti più confident?

S: Nel writing sicuro, perché abbiamo anche imparato nuovi termini, acronimi, ma anche proprio termini del gioco, di minecraft. Anche nello speaking perché nella chat orale comunque abbiamo incontrato persone, abbiamo parlato. magari all'inizio era un po' più difficile, perché non sapevi neanche cosa dire, però poi dopo un po' magari conosci anche l'altra persona. io ho incontrato uno svedese e poi piano piano abbiamo parlato un po' di più.

T: Secondo te si può imparare e come si impara il vocabolario grazie ai videogiochi?

S: Allora grazie videogiochi si può imparare, ad esempio se c'è un oggetto, possiamo imparare il termine perché lo troviamo scritto, ci compare molte volte sullo schermo; quindi leggendolo anche molte volte tendiamo ad impararlo, associandolo anche alla sua immagine. forse in questo senso è più facile.

T: Rifletti un attimo sulla grammatica. pensi che in questo corso tu abbia imparato qualcosa, ti sia comunque servito anche dal punto di vista della grammatica?

S: Sì, perché comunque anche quando abbiamo fatto i compiti e lei li ha corretti comunque ho visto che avevo fatto alcuni errori e quindi sì mi è servito anche dal punto di vista grammaticale.

T: Se tu pensi a questo corso e al classico corso che facciamo a scuola, cerca di fare un paragone tra i due corsi per quanto riguarda l'approccio che hanno verso la lingua.

S: Questo corso è molto meglio sotto questo aspetto, proprio perché noi incontriamo altre persone, quindi parliamo proprio con altre persone in inglese e cioè è meglio rispetto ad altri corsi dove invece si studia soltanto attraverso i libri, senza una comunicazione. anche se abbiamo ad esempio degli ascolti, non sono comunque la stessa cosa, anzi cioè è proprio meglio parlare con altre persone, per imparare meglio l'inglese. soprattutto se stiamo parlando di in un gioco, quindi di un argomento che magari piace e quindi abbiamo qualcosa da dire, è meglio.

T: Mi hai già risposto al compito che ti è piaciuto di più è e che è stato quello del video?

S: Sì alla fine sì.

T: Ti sentivi preparato per farlo, quando hai fatto questo compito?

S: Da piccolo mi dicevo voglio fare qualche video anch'io, però alla fine non è che li facevo; però adesso con questa occasione comunque ho provato a fare anch'io video che alla fine non avrai fatto e comunque sì, mi è piaciuto perché è una cosa diversa. Sì, è stato bello.

T: Tu mi hai sempre detto di essere molto timido. avere fatto un video ti espone tantissimo e comunque sei riuscito a farlo. che cosa secondo te ti ha aiutato a superare anche questa difficoltà caratteriale?

S: Non lo so, forse proprio il fatto che fosse un compito. Cioè, avrei avuto anche non parlo, però vedendo anche tutti che si mettevano in gioco poi ho deciso anch'io di farlo. volevo alla fine farlo questo video. Sì, poi è stato divertente. ci ho messo un po' di tempo a causa dell'audio, per modificare ed editare il video però alla fine mi è piaciuto. è stato bello.

T: Se pensi invece alle attività che abbiamo svolto durante gli incontri quale è stata l'attività che ti è piaciuta di più, che ti ha coinvolto di più?

S: E' stato divertente ad esempio quando c'erano molte immagini riprodotte in minecraft e mi ricordo quella del creeper, delle torri gemelle, e poi anche le altre cose. quella è stata comunque una attività bella eh cioè diversa dalle altre.

T: In questo corso ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare in inglese e se sì perché sì o no perché?

S: Sì, sempre per le stesse ragioni, perché ad esempio parlare di minecraft riesce più facile, perché alla fine sappiamo un po' com'è il gioco, quello che si fa, e quindi quando si inizia a conversare comunque ti senti anche sicuro perché quello che dici alla fine è così, perché dopo tante ore di gioco alla fine l'hai imparato come funziona.

T: Come ti sentivi tu a lezione, ti sentivi non so sotto pressione, ti sentivi annoiato...

S: No tranquillo; solo ad esempio quando parlavamo un po' tutti, cercavo un po' di prepararmi quello che dovevo dire, magari in base a quello che dicevano gli altri. quindi comunque alla fine ero attento e non in ansia.

T: Secondo te che cosa promuoveva questa condizione di rilassatezza?

S: Magari anche il fatto che il corso non è una cosa basata su voti, su cose della scuola, quindi magari anche un po' più leggero rispetto ad altri corsi proprio scolastici. anche parlare tra di noi, vedendo che tutti volevano dare la loro opinione o anche proprio lei prof, che comunque cioè non era distante da noi e comunque anche questo ti faceva sentire più tranquillo.

T: Secondo te è migliorata anche la fluency? Come lo percepisci?

S: Sì, sì. all'inizio del corso non è che parlavo inglese in modo fluente, però dopo avanti con le lezioni, con le cose assegnate per casa, quindi parlare anche online, piano piano si è andata meglio, cioè l'ho sentito anche a desso, anche proprio con inglese in classe, con gli interventi che ora faccio.

T: Puoi dire la stessa cosa cioè che c'è stato un miglioramento anche con il listening? cioè riuscivi a capire meglio i giocatori col passare del tempo?

S: Con il listening non lo so, perché ad esempio a qualche persona che trovavi magari il microfono non andava bene, o aveva problemi con il suo inglese... quindi alla fine non riesco bene a capire benissimo, però cioè credo di sì, perché comunque se ho un miglioramento nel writing e anche nello speaking credo anche nel listening.

T: Secondo te quali compiti o anche attività che noi abbiamo svolto hanno favorito maggiormente listening e fluency ?

S: Quello quando dovevamo fare delle partite e trascrivere quello che avevamo fatto, detto.

T: Parliamo adesso di gamification. Come hai percepito la leaderboard? come ti senti tu nel pensarti giudicato e comunque nel eseguire un percorso a punti?

S: A me piace la classifica, ed ho cercato di arrivare più in alto possibile, però tutto è sempre stato in modo leggero, piacevole alla fine.

T: Secondo te questa cosa dei badge può essere effettivamente motivante?

S: Il badge sì, perché magari ti senti soddisfatto anche di aver preso quel badge in più, anche rispetto agli altri. Ogni badge che prendi ti rende soddisfatto verso te stesso.

T: Il fatto di leggere un punteggio ti rende più consapevole della tua performance?

S: Sì, questo sì.

T: Tu vedi una corrispondenza tra un progresso nella leaderboard o nel tuo punteggio e il progresso tuo nell'apprendimento, cioè hai questo impatto visivo?

S: Sì, perché come detto prima anche con i voti in inglese, sono anche migliorato nello speaking, anche l'altra mia prof me lo ha detto.

T: L'ultima parte riguarda il gameplay. tu sapevi di giocare a Minecraft per scopi didattici. questa consapevolezza ha limitato la piacevolezza del gioco? ha cambiato il tuo gameplay?

S: Comunque continuo a giocare, magari non facevo proprio la modalità che avevo voglia di fare, comunque il gioco era lo stesso, quindi è stato comunque piacevole. magari avrei giocato ad altri giochi, ma non perché Minecraft non fosse bello, anzi... per cambiare un po... comunque non mi ha cambiato l'impressione che avevo prima.

T: Tu raccomandaresti questo corso strutturato in questo modo o comunque l'uso dei videogiochi per l'apprendimento ad altri studenti? e a che tipo?

S: Dipende perché ad esempio uno studente che magari ha più lavori più da fare, anche se comunque questo corso non ti impegna va moltissime ore, però magari se si sente perché dire: non posso studiare perché devo fare un corso e giocare per migliorare l'inglese, si rimane un po' perplessi, anche se alla fine lo migliori il tuo inglese.

T: Secondo te questo corso si potrebbe integrare proprio a scuola? cioè non solo come extra curricolare?

S: Secondo me sì, perché no? alla fine magari non tutti saranno d'accordo ma perché, proprio come ho detto prima, vedere un corso in cui si gioca secondo me non sarebbe visto molto bene, però secondo me è molto utile.

T: Perché qualcuno non lo vede vedrebbe bene? e chi non lo vedrebbe bene?

S: I professori, magari, perché pensano che un è un gioco e che si perde tempo. Però alla fine non è così. Perché soprattutto nel parlare di più, perché alla fine a scuola non sia fa.

T: Come miglioreresti questo corso? consigli per migliorare.

S: Magari qualche attività con challenge, sfide.

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualche considerazione?

S: Comunque questo corso è stato bello, piacevole e ha dato anche anche ore di PCTO. È stato utile soprattutto per l'inglese. come ho detto prima, anche nel fare il video è stato anche un momento bello per mettersi in gioco e poi è stato anche piacevole per esempio per lei e per i ragazzi che hanno frequentato il corso.

T: Va bene, grazie

INT 9 (10-01-22; 4 pm)

T: Facciamo un'intervista breve su considerazioni generali di quello che è stato il corso in relazione ovviamente all'apprendimento, all'inglese e alle sensazioni che abbiamo avuto sul corso stesso. Dunque la prima domanda è che cosa ti è piaciuto di più, quindi gli aspetti positivi di questo corso, che cosa possiamo mettere in evidenza.

S: Io penso che comunque un aspetto positivo è stato il fatto che tu riesca ad apprendere l'inglese facendo ciò che ti piace, quindi giocando, e non magari stando sui libri, studiare.. quindi con più tranquillità riesci ad apprendere l'inglese; questo penso sia uno degli aspetti positivi. poi magari l'inglese che si impara non è proprio l'inglese come diciamo noi e che parli più nello specifico; ad esempio nel caso nostro abbiamo imparato più termini guardanti questo gioco, però poi da questo si siamo approcciati a persone, sempre utilizzando una lingua diversa dall'italiano.

T: Che cosa del corso hai trovato noioso, che non ti è piaciuto, che ti stancava o comunque non era nelle tue corde?

S: Noioso che stancava probabilmente niente; se ad una persona piace giocare, allora lo fa con voglia, ci mette anche il proprio impegno. magari si poteva comunque cercare di giocare proprio insieme, più tempo proprio a giocare.

T: Secondo te tra le quattro skills, quindi reading writing speaking e listening, con questo corso e dopo questo corso con quale di queste abilità tu ti senti più confident, quindi sicuro di te?

S: Secondo me principalmente speaking e listening; abbiamo dedicato molte lezioni, attività o ad ascoltare o comunque a parlare in inglese fra di noi.

T: Secondo te si può imparare più vocabolario con un videogioco e in che modo?

S: Secondo me sì è più semplice proprio perché come ho già detto se tu fai qualcosa, ma questo è in generale, se tu fai qualcosa che ti piace, allora verrà tutto più semplice. in questo caso se a te piacciono in generale i videogiochi, allora comunque ci metterai più voglia e sarà anche più facile imparare.

T: Quindi è per una motivazione legata al gioco, quindi ti servono le parole e quindi hai più voglia di saperle?

S: Sì.

T: Pensiamo alla grammatica. secondo te ha imparato qualcosa di grammatica, cioè come hai percepito la grammatica in questo corso?

S: Sì perché anche se si tratta di un gioco comunque noi parliamo inglese e quando facevamo i "compiti", che le inviavamo, erano comunque in inglese e lei ci aiutava con alcune correzioni; quindi la grammatica era sempre voluta.

T: Se tu pensi a questo corso e pensi anche al corso standard di inglese, riesci ad evidenziare le differenze riguardo all'approccio verso la lingua tra questo tipo di corso e il corso standard?

S: Tralasciando il fatto dell'oggetto, quindi che noi trattiamo videogiochi, una cosa che magari può facilitare è che a scuola noi abbiamo un vero e proprio insegnante, quindi magari viene più, un po' è brutto dirlo, però vi è più una gerarchia; invece qui ci riusciamo a relazionare meglio, a essere più tranquilli, più sciolti e a imparare l'inglese più facilmente rispetto a scuola.

T: Tra i compiti che io vi ho assegnato, al di là di quelli che uno ha fatto o non ha fatto, secondo te qual era quello più piacevole da svolgere e perché?

S: Secondo me quello più piacevole e anche penso il più utile era quello dello youtuber, perché tralasciando il fatto che uno si debba impersonificare in uno youtuber, quello proprio ci aiuta ad approcciare con stranieri. il compito era proprio quello di intrattenere i nostri fan, utilizzando l'inglese. quindi era un vero e proprio test di speaking.

T: Se tu pensi alle attività che noi abbiamo svolto durante la lezione, quali sono state le attività che ti sono piaciute di più?

S: Quelle che mi sono piaciute di più sono quelle in cui abbiamo descritto ad esempio un'immagine, o ad esempio vedere le differenze, o anche lo stesso listening guardando i video di youtuber stranieri e che parlavano in inglese.

T: Ok quindi il commento del gameplay degli altri

S: Sì.

T: In questo corso tu ti sei sentito motivato a parlare in inglese e perché? cosa ti faceva sentire motivato?

S: Mi faceva sentire motivato innanzitutto il fatto che non si trattava di ambiente scolastico, quindi ero più tranquillo, più sciolto; e poi sempre il fatto che, pensando a un videogioco, pensavo che magari mi poteva anche essere utile quando avrei giocato io per i fatti miei, e comunque ad imparare sempre meglio la lingua.

T: E che cosa secondo te ti ha aiutato a parlare di più?

S: L'elemento principale più che il gioco è proprio la tranquillità con cui facevo le cose. Nel senso che se non hai quella fretta, quell'ansia di parlare una nuova lingua, cioè di parlare un'altra lingua che non è l'italiano, con il gioco, comunque pensando al gioco, e avendo più tranquillità, uno riesce anche meglio.

T: Secondo te la tua fluency in inglese è migliorata e come lo percepisci se è migliorata?

S: Sì è migliorata. riesco a capirlo non tanto per la pronuncia, cioè quello sì è migliorato, però ovviamente non è che ci siamo messi a fare vere e proprie lezioni, come ad esempio facciamo a scuola, però mi sento proprio più libero, più sciolto quando parlo l'inglese.

T: Per quanto riguarda il listening? anche qui trovi un miglioramento, cioè riesci a capire più chiaramente i giocatori che parlano?

S: Sì sì è stato utile.

T: Secondo te, quali tasks che noi abbiamo fatto o visto ti hanno aiutato in queste due abilità, quindi quella del listening e dello speaking?

S: Allora per lo speaking, come già detto, quella dello youtuber e per il listening penso ovviamente oltre ai video da guardare, secondo ma anche il fatto degli acronyms, perché comunque quelli li vedevi in chat, però li potevi anche sentire, li potevi anche ascoltare, quindi anche quello è stato utile.

T: Parliamo adesso invece della gamification. tu eri inserito in questa leaderboard che vedevi tutte le settimane. avevi un punteggio per ogni cosa che facevi. quali sono state le tue sensazioni nel vedere il tuo nome in una leaderboard?

S: Secondo me non è una cosa negativa, perché comunque personalmente mi suscitava sempre a fare di meglio, cioè nel senso, se io vado a guardare il mio scoring e magari vedo ad esempio un altro mio amico che è sopra di me, allora io dico: no, lo devo superare, e così in maniera molto libera, molto tranquilla, senza impuntarsi sulle cose, però cercando sempre di migliorare.

T: Quindi secondo te è una leaderboard tipo raccontare bene quali sono i tuoi progressi, cioè tu immagina una leaderboard anche a scuola. secondo te potrebbe essere una cosa buona per te. per avere un feedback sul tuo progresso scolastico?

S: Secondo me sì e sarebbe anche buona nel caso contrario, quindi magari se uno perde punti, perché comunque uno riuscirebbe a capire cosa effettivamente ha sbagliato e a migliorare sempre di più.

T: Parliamo adesso del gameplay. tu giocavi a minecraft pur sapendo che stavi giocando per la scuola, per un fine didattico. è cambiato il tuo gameplay? cioè ti cambiava qualcosa giocare sapendo questo?

S: Allora, in una piccola parte sì, però non più di tanto proprio per il fatto che minecraft, il gioco che abbiamo selezionato, lo avevo già giocato precedentemente e quindi non lo facevo con diciamo come una rottura, se si può dire, comunque con molta tranquillità, pur sapendo che magari era per uno scopo didattico; comunque non era un vero e proprio peso.

T: Tu dici io avrei scelto un'altro gioco...

S: Esatto, ma non è stato un peso.

T: Tu raccomanderesti questo modo di apprendimento, di studio dell'inglese anche ad altri studenti? e a chi lo raccomanderesti?

S: Secondo me sì, innanzitutto perché è un'esperienza nuova, quindi comunque fa bene. poi se uno magari ha interessi verso il mondo del gaming secondo me è comunque un buon corso, è corso simpatico, non pesante. con molta tranquillità, con serenità, ti diverti e comunque riesci anche attraverso il gaming, quindi attraverso videogiochi, ad imparare l'inglese. ovviamente non in maniera generale magari un po più specifica, con alcuni termini, però comunque riesci a migliorare l'inglese.

T: Secondo te un corso del genere potrebbe essere inserito all'interno di un curriculum scolastico?

S: Secondo me sì.

T: Quali potrebbero essere i limiti di un corso del genere in un curriculum scolastico?

S: Secondo me come lo abbiamo fatto, come è stato fatto questo corso, andrebbe anche bene, cioè perché comunque non è invasivo, è molto tranquillo.

T: Anche se poi alla fine ci dovesse essere un voto pensi che comunque se si svolgesse così cioè il voto sarebbe vissuto comunque con tranquillità non metterebbe un peso?

S: Penso di no.

T: Come miglioreresti il corso? quali attività inseriresti?

S: Per quanto riguarda qualche miglioramento è giusto il fatto di interagire proprio tra le persone e i gruppi che si sono creati per giocare insieme, proprio anche durante le lezioni; magari fare qualche attività insieme giocando al videogioco selezionato, giusto questo. poi per il resto secondo me va bene.

T: Perfetto interrompo qui la registrazione e grazie

INT 10 (10-01-22; 5pm)

T: Facciamo questa intervista sul nostro corso, *gameful English*. Raccontami quello che ne pensi, cose buone e cose cattive. iniziamo dalle cose buone...

S: A me è piaciuto molto questo corso. sono rimasto molto soddisfatto, perché inizialmente avevo dei dubbi sul fatto di farlo o meno, non per ciò che riguardava il corso ma più che altro per il tempo, visto che comunque ho molti impegni sportivi, compiti per la scuola.

Pensavo che, facendo questo corso, avrei tolto altro tempo ai compiti oppure o allo sport e non mi sarei riuscito ad organizzare bene. Invece, ad essere sincero, si è rivelato tutto il contrario perché nonostante ci siano state 10 lezioni in questo corso, mi sono lo stesso riuscito ad organizzare sia con la scuola, sia le uscite con gli amici, sia lo sport. per quanto riguarda questo aspetto sono rimasto molto soddisfatto. anche per quanto riguarda i compiti per casa di questo corso sono stati tutti compiti semplici, che comunque si facevano nel giro di 15-20. non sono come i compiti della scuola che ci vuole un'ora, un'ora e mezza, due ore. quindi questo secondo me è un altro aspetto positivo e poi questo corso non l'ho visto tanto come un impegno, ma con piacere, perché magari ci sono alcuni corsi che durano anche più di un'ora, un'ora e mezza, e non sei molto felice, non sei molto contento di andarli a fare; invece questo, che non era un corso molto lungo, e comunque riguardava un gioco a cui ho sempre giocato e mi piace giocare, e in inglese poi, che è una delle mie materie preferite, e quindi mi è piaciuto.

T: Che cosa hai trovato noioso, se c'è stato qualcosa che hai trovato noioso, qualche attività che non era nelle tue corde?

S: Non ci ho pensato perché non ho trovato molti aspetti negativi, cioè non mi viene niente in mente. Forse ci sono stati alcuni video che non mi sono piaciuti, perché comunque il corso si è basato anche molto su video di youtuber, streamer. io durante la mia giornata guardo molti video in live su twitch e quindi comunque sono abituato a guardarli, però alcuni erano molto belli molto interessanti, invece diciamo altri un po' più noiosi, però solo questo.

T: Quali video non ti sono piaciuti?

S: Mi piaceva come lo youtuber esponeva le cose a noi spettatori, però magari non mi piaceva il contenuto che portava nel video, questo.

T: Che tipo di contenuti avresti proposto tu?

S: Dei video dove lo youtuber, quindi colui che stava facendo il video, aveva più dialoghi con i propri amici, con le persone con cui stava giocando.

T: Hai trovato qualche elemento difficile nel corso?

S: I video non dico che sono stati difficili, però su tutti quelli che abbiamo visto ce n'è stato qualcuno che faceva parecchia fatica a comprenderlo, a capirlo, non quello che stava facendo, dico proprio a livello di inglese, cioè quello che diceva.

T: Se tu pensi alle quattro abilità di reading listening speaking writing, alla fine di questo corso secondo te in quale ti senti migliorato in inglese?

S: Ah sicuramente listening. Nei corsi di inglese che ho fatto precedentemente a questo, il listening l'ho sempre trovato abbastanza difficile e dove andavo peggio. Nel writing, invece, sono sempre stato abbastanza bravo e secondo me questa cosa si è confermata anche durante questo corso. però listening rispetto a prima molto meglio.

T: Secondo te quindi si può si può ampliare il vocabolario con i videogiochi e in che modo?

S: Secondo me affinché un videogioco riesca ad insegnarti un vocabolario è necessario giocare con persone che sono proprio di un altro paese, di un'altra nazione. per esempio io, durante questo corso, quando volevo scoprire nuovi vocaboli, nuove parole, anche gli acronimi, non giocavo con gli amici di sempre, ma andavo a trovare server stranieri, server inglesi, e alcune volte scrivevo in chat con le persone che si trovano nel mio stesso server; invece altre volte attivavo la chat vocale, oppure nel party della play e parlavamo da lì.

T: Vorrei che tu pensassi all'aspetto grammaticale. in questo corso tu hai avuto la percezione di avere imparato anche qualcosa a livello di grammatica?

S: Sì secondo me sì, perché attraverso i vari compiti per casa, i compiti, magari il compito dove si chiedeva di descrivere il proprio mondo su minecraft, oppure il compito dove dovevamo commentare un video di un qualsiasi youtuber, un qualsiasi streamer, attraverso questi compiti per casa secondo me sì, sono migliorato molto anche per quanto riguarda la parte della grammatica.

T: Perché avevi un feedback dall'insegnante o perché cercavi le regole di grammatica per compilare bene il compito?

S: Diciamo un po' tutti e due; più il feedback dell'insegnante però. poi quando avevo alcuni dubbi su qualcosa lo andavo a cercare.

T: Se pensiamo a questo corso e al corso standard dell'inglese che si fa a scuola, che approccio hanno verso la lingua? quali sono le principali differenze se ci sono differenze?

S: Secondo me il corso della scuola ti insegna maggiormente a parlare in futuro con una persona di nazionalità inglese che parla inglese; invece questo corso magari ti insegna maggiormente a diciamo rapportarsi con le persone in generale, sia quelle che fanno il corso come me, ma anche le persone che non hanno partecipato a questo corso.

T: Potresti dire che il corso di scuola ha un approccio più formale verso l'inglese?

S: Sì, secondo me, sì. Questo corso è meno focalizzato sull'imparare la lingua. la scuola si focalizza di più su tutte le regole grammaticali, invece qua non ci si focalizza magari sulla grammatica ma ci si focalizza di più commentare dei video, sullo scambio di idee riguardo i video che abbiamo visto durante il corso.

T: Se tu pensi ai compiti, al di là di quelli che hai fatto e quelli che non hai fatto, secondo te qual è stato il più divertente da svolgere e perché?

S: Il più divertente secondo me tanto è stato quello dove noi dovevamo commentare in prima persona il nostro più gameplay, come se fossimo uno streamer o uno youtuber, perché ti prende di più come compito. se c'è un compito che ti dice di descrivere il proprio mondo su minecraft, è un compito così, è semplice anche bello da fare, però sicuramente è un po' noioso, invece se ti chiedono di commentare in prima persona un gameplay, comunque parli tu. quindi è come se tu fossi lo streamer, lo youtuber, e quindi ti diverti di più.

T: Se tu invece pensi alle attività che abbiamo svolto, qual è l'attività che ti ha divertito di più che ti ha coinvolto di più?

S: Le attività che mi sono piaciute di più sono quelle ad opzioni multiple dove c'erano le opzioni ABCD, c'era la domanda sopra; per esempio all'inizio abbiamo fatto l'attività, quella che riguardava le caratteristiche generali di minecraft e poi inviare il sondaggio.

T: Ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare in inglese e, se sì, come?

S: Sicuramente sì e per vari motivi: sia perché comunque in un dialogo in una discussione mi piace dire quello che penso io, però più che altro anche per il fatto di migliorare il mio lessico in inglese. è comunque sempre un esercizio, no?

T: Che cosa ti ha aiutato a parlare di più?

S: Sicuramente se stiamo affrontando un argomento che trovo molto interessante, sono più intenzionato a dire la mia sia in inglese che in italiano in generale; se invece l'argomento è un po' più noioso e non mi interessa molto, non tendo ad intervenire. però secondo me anche i video che abbiamo visto dove c'erano gli streamer e gli youtuber che parlavano in inglese mi hanno aiutato molto. in genere gli youtuber inglesi o americani sono molto famosi, perché sono anche quelli più conosciuti per quanto riguarda i giochi perché hanno molte abilità e quindi li vedo pure quando sono a casa, quando non ho niente da fare.

T: Parliamo invece delle tue sensazioni proprio durante gli incontri, durante le lezioni. tu come ti sentivi come stato d'animo?

S: Sicuramente contento, interessato al corso, felice comunque di stare insieme ad altre persona a fare questo corso; perché magari se un corso lo affronti da solo può essere divertente ma nemmeno così tanto, perché magari tu dici la tua e non ci sono altre persone che possono controbattere oppure dire la propria e quindi comunque fare questo corso con altre 8-10 persone mi è piaciuto molto, mi sono divertito. sinceramente se in futuro avrò la possibilità di fare un corso di questo tipo, sicuramente lo farò perché mi è piaciuto. non mi ha tolto nemmeno così tanto tempo, quindi non mi ha creato problemi.

T: Puoi dire che ti sei sentito anche rilassato

S: Sì, rilassato sì. magari se avevo problemi che mi guardavano altro, la scuola, gli amici, lo sport, quell'ora al giorno di lunedì che facevo questo corso non non ci pensavo a questi problemi, pensavo solamente al corso, mi divertivo, mi rilassavo.

T: Secondo te anche la tua fluency è migliorata?

S: Sì, secondo me sì, magari diciamo che io in genere non ho molti problemi a parlare. solamente quando magari sto in ansia oppure un momento di pressione allora sì magari in qualche interrogazione importante è così, però in genere quando sono sciolto, rilassato, riesco a parlare molto facilmente e quindi sicuramente sì, questo corso ha migliorato anche questo aspetto.

T: Puoi dire lo stesso anche sul listening? di essere migliorato, cioè di riuscire a capire maggiormente i gamers?

S: Ovviamente sì, guardando i video del corso, comunque ti abitui anche nel listening. però di sicuro ho migliorato maggiormente la fluency che listening, perché comunque nel listening ho sempre avuto dei problemi, e quindi devo ancora migliorare molto per quanto riguarda questo aspetto.

T: E secondo te quali tasks proprio come compiti specifici hanno aiutato il listening e la fluency?

S: Il listening sicuramente i video degli youtuber e streamer. invece la fluency sì i video ma forse un po' di più gli assegni quelli per casa, dove dovevo scrivere perché ok che se scrivi diciamo non è la stessa cosa di parlare, sicuramente è molto più facile fare un testo scritto che fare un discorso, perché se fai un testo scritto hai il tempo di pensare, puoi correggere se fai degli errori, poi tornare indietro; invece nel parlare non è così.

T: Secondo te c'è stato qualche compito che ti ha proprio agevolato nel parlare, invece?

S: Quando ogni volta che vedevamo un video, diviso in più parti, e lei faceva domande di comprensione su una certa parte. Questo secondo me ha migliorato molto la mia fluency nel parlare.

T: Pensa alla gamification. questo corso non è stato strutturato in modo molto diverso rispetto a quelli standard, perché avevamo una leaderboard a vedevamo i punti i badge. vorrei capire quali quali sono state le tue sensazioni quando vedevi il tuo nome nella leaderboard, che tipo di effetto aveva su di te?

S: A me piace questa idea di fare una classifica, lo sai perché? perché magari se tu fai un corso, lo fai però non sei spronato; in vece se questo corso viene visto anche come una sorta non dico di gara perché sicuramente non è una gara però comunque c'era una classifica c'era un primo arrivato l'ultimo e quindi in qualsiasi situazione non è mai bello arrivare ultimo in classifica, oppure tra gli ultimi, quindi sapendo che c'è una classifica tu sei più spronato a fare bene, a fare tutti gli assegni a farti i compiti ad intervenire durante l'ora del corso. mi è piaciuta molto questa idea di fare una sorta di classifica. io sinceramente sono rimasto anche abbastanza soddisfatto del punteggio che sono riuscito ad ottenere in questo corso.

T: Pensi che potrebbe funzionare una cosa del genere a scuola? cioè se questa struttura venisse trasportata anche proprio come valutazione a scuola?

S: Sì per lo stesso motivo che ho detto in precedenza, perché in questo modo gli alunni sono più intenzionati a studiare sapendo che c'è una classifica, però se una persona ci pensa, magari se tu crei una classifica nel sistema scolastico, comunque la classifica è sempre una sorta di competizione, quindi magari si possono creare tensioni tra gli alunni in classe, litigi, proprio per questo motivo. Magari se una persona vede che un suo amico si trova più in alto nella classifica non vuole più parlarci, essergli amico perché invidia di questa cosa. Quindi da una parte sì perché comunque se tu sai che c'è una classifica tu fai di tutto per cercare di arrivare il più in alto possibile in questa classifica, però secondo me si possono creare sicuramente tensioni, litigi tra gli alunni.

T: Secondo te può essere la classifica o questo sistema a punti anche un buon feedback per capire il progresso che si fa nello studio?

S: No, secondo me no, perché la classifica magari ti dà la tua posizione in base ai voti che prendi, all'impegno, però comunque il progresso in 5 anni scolastici oppure comunque il progresso in generale nella scuola non si basa solamente sulla tua media scolastica sui voti che prendi in una determinata materia. Magari devi vedere anche il progresso nel comportamento, il progresso nelle relazioni con i propri compagni, nel rispettare i professori; quindi magari se è una classifica che oltre alle medie scolastiche riguarda anche queste altre cose, quindi il relazionarsi, il comportarsi bene, allora sì, si può vedere proprio progresso; però se riguarda solamente i voti che prendi nelle materie, la media, allora no. Comunque i professori molto spesso magari hai 5 di media, però in pagella ti mettono sei perché hanno visto che da settembre fino a dicembre ti sei impegnato, hai provato in qualche modo ad arrivare alla sufficienza, quindi comunque ti mettono lo stesso 6 in pagella invece che 5.

T: L'ultima parte riguarda il gameplay. Tu sapevi che giocare a Minecraft aveva uno scopo didattico. Questa cosa ha cambiato il tuo gameplay? Ha cambiato la tua piacevolezza di gioco?

S: No, assolutamente. Perché comunque questo corso riguardava principalmente l'inglese. Però secondo me con questo fatto di collegarlo con il gameplay con Minecraft lo rendeva sicuramente più piacevole. Però per esempio quando io prima giocavo a Minecraft e non facevo questo corso e quindi giocavo solamente con i miei amici, utilizzavamo parole pure del dialetto; anche se non avessi fatto questo corso avrei continuato lo stesso a giocare a Minecraft, però avendo fatto questo corso appunto l'obiettivo era quello di giocare a Minecraft, scoprendo nuove parole in inglese, parlare in inglese con altre persone che giocavano sempre a Minecraft. Sinceramente questa cosa non ha reso il mio gameplay più pesante, anzi mi sono divertito anche di più, perché invece di giocare sempre con le stesse persone, con gli stessi amici con cui ci gioco da anni, sono andato a giocare con persone che non conoscevo, quindi comunque ho fatto anche nuove conoscenze. Ovviamente queste persone non le vedrò mai perché inglesi....

T: Quindi tu raccomanderesti questo tipo di apprendimento anche ad altri ragazzi e a che tipologia di ragazzi lo raccomanderesti?

S: Secondo me se una persona vuole giocare ad un videogioco in questo modo, quindi parlando magari inglese, ma più in generale anche un'altra lingua, deve essere comunque una persona che ha voglia di fare questa cosa, a cui piace lo studio, piace imparare nuove parole sia in inglese che in generale. Però se è una persona a cui non interessa imparare nuove lingue, che è anche un po' svogliata, e che quindi gioca al videogioco solamente per giocarci, per divertirsi, allora non glielo consiglieri, perché magari si rovinerebbe sicuramente il suo gameplay. Se magari una persona gioca ad un gioco e si diverte, ci sono anche le persone che giocano a quel gioco parlando altre lingue perché sono forzati. Se una persona fa il corso e lo deve fare per forza, non si divertirebbe a quel punto.

T: Come miglioreresti questo corso? Cioè che cosa aggiungerei tu?

S: Allora secondo me per migliorare questo corso oltre a vedere i video degli youtubers, degli streamer che sono comunque importanti senza dubbio, più che altro per migliorare l'apprendimento dell'inglese per migliorare la propria influenza nel parlare, magari introdurre nuove attività. Magari su 10 lezioni si potrebbe organizzare una lezione nella quale si gioca tutti insieme a Minecraft obbligatoriamente parlando in inglese.

T: Quindi un multiplayer della classe. L'ultima domanda che si fa nell'intervista è sempre se vuoi aggiungere qualcosa che non hai non è detto che vorresti dire?

S: Vorrei riassumere quello che ho detto all'inizio, che in generale sono rimasto molto contento e soddisfatto di questo corso, avevo dubbi sul fatto di partecipare a questo corso, però alla fine sono rimasto molto soddisfatto perché non ha influenzato il mio rendimento a scuola, perché ho sempre trovato il tempo per fare i compiti, non ho perso un allenamento, e quindi consiglieri questo corso a chiunque.

T: Bene grazie mille.

INT 11 (10-01-22; 5.40 pm)

T: Iniziamo col raccontarci gli aspetti positivi di *Gameful english*, le cose buone. Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più di questo corso?

S: Sicuramente mette il fatto di congiungere quello che può essere uno studio pesante, per esempio la grammatica in inglese con un'attività più leggera, come in questo caso l'attività videoludica di Minecraft. Quindi è più piacevole fare inglese in questo modo e si dà un'utilità in più a Minecraft, perché per quanto può essere divertente, rimane comunque un gioco. Invece così si unisce l'utile al dilettevole.

T: C'è stato qualcosa che hai trovato noioso, qualche elemento che non ti è piaciuto durante le lezioni?

S: Noioso no. L'unica pecca è stato il doverlo fare sempre comunque in dad (da remoto) per via della situazione. Sicuramente in presenza sarebbe stato più piacevole, perché comunque c'era l'elemento connessione, mi devo collegare. Invece stando usando già scuola l'ambiente è diverso e poteva anche scendere meglio. Bisogna comunque metterci impegno, perché andava comunque seguito, si dovevano anche svolgere dei compiti a casa, quindi era un impegno preso e da seguire. Non era noioso, ma impegnativo, ma non tantissimo.

T: Secondo te c'è stato qualcosa, qualche elemento difficile, qualcosa che tu hai percepito come difficile?

S: La cosa un po' più complessa, non difficile, forse era entrare nell'ottica del dover imparare l'inglese tramite un metodo diverso, e quindi non più con la regola di grammatica, ma più da un punto di vista di sapere ascoltare, capire la meccanica dell'inglese, quindi poi riutilizzare anche frasi idiomatiche, che ci sono capitate, e quindi da un punto di vista più parlato che come regola applicata. quindi questa era l'unica difficoltà.

T: Se tu consideri le quattro probabilità di reading, listening, writing e speaking, dopo questo corso in quale di queste skills ti senti più sicuro?

S: Di mio mi sento più a mio agio nel reading e nel writing, però grazie a questo corso è sicuramente migliorato il listening e anche lo speaking, ma meno del listening.

T: Secondo te si può imparare il vocabolario con un videogioco e in che modo?

S: Sicuramente si può imparare il vocabolario, anzi, essendo un videogioco in cui si può interagire con altre persone, quindi parlare una lingua comune che può essere l'inglese, sia in modo formale che informale e schematico, come quando si gioca, sicuramente un vocabolario si migliora, si ingrandisce. si può imparare sicuramente da zero; non penso si possano imparare le regole di grammatica, ma si può imparare sicuramente un vocabolario. la parte che la grammatica scolastica ti non ti insegna, quindi come è meglio esprimersi sotto alcuni punti di vista, un inglese più parlato che schematico, in questo caso. sicuramente un gioco multiplayer aiuta più che un gioco singleplayer, da questo punto di vista, perché se non si limiterebbe alla terminologia legata al gioco un gioco.

T: Pensi di avere di aver imparato qualcosa anche di grammatica?

S: Sicuramente qualcosa a livello di grammatica, qualche meccanismo a livello di grammatica è stato migliorato.

T: Quale cosa ti ha favorito anche la grammatica?

S: Non è un'unica cosa, ma più elementi congiunti. Diciamo che quello che ha contribuito di più sono state le task da fare come compito per casa; quando si tratta per esempio di cercare nella chat gli acronimi e poi trascriverli. Anche il game journal ha aiutato, un piccolo appunto su quello che si era fatto; comunque non si poteva scrivere male, bisognava seguire un minimo di grammatica, quindi un miglioramento, una grande mano è stato anche questo.

T: Tu intendi grammatica a livello di informazioni che tu dove dovevi cercare per poi scrivere correttamente o anche a livello di feedback dell'insegnante che ti rimandava il compito corretto?

S: Anche quello sicuramente perché ogni compito per casa poi aveva il suo commento, la sua correzione, una grande mano per comprendere eventuali errori.

T: Se tu pensi anziché questo concorso e pensi ad un corso tradizionale di inglese che si fa a scuola, qual è l'approccio verso la lingua?

S: Da ragazzo che ha fatto Trinity alle medie, Cambridge alle scuole superiori e adesso questo corso di *Gameful English*, sicuramente sono due approcci diversi che vanno a potenziare due aree diverse, perché magari il Cambridge per quanto possa comprendere una parte di speaking, verte più su reading e writing e sulla regola grammaticale. Invece il gameful è stato più libero più piacevole sicuramente, perché oltre che essere una scelta facoltativa partecipare o no, quindi nel momento in cui accettavi la proposta sapevi cosa andavi incontro, sicuramente è stato più divertente. Ha reso piacevole il dover fare inglese per casa, come compito per casa. l'approccio quindi è diverso, il miglioramento verte su cose diverse.

T: Io però mi riferisco proprio al corso di inglese a scuola...

S: A scuola più che al Cambridge si batte sulla regola grammaticale, perché si parte dal presupposto che la lingua a scuola venga imparata da zero e non viene insegnata come interagire con un'altra persona; viene insegnata di più la grammatica; infatti la materia è grammatica inglese e letteratura inglese. magari la letteratura migliora anche lo speaking e il listening; mentre la grammatica è reading e writing. Ed è più difficile.

T: Pensiamo ai compiti. quale ti ha divertito di più e perché?

S: Sicuramente youtuber, quando dovevamo registrarci 5 minuti fondamentalmente, ma non erano 5 minuti effettivi, perché tra il dover attrezzare a registrare... poi da qui ragazzi sono venuti fuori dei lavori stupendi. Dal mio punto di vista è venuto fuori un lavoro molto lungo, circa mezz'ora e poi non ho potuto caricare perché ho avuto problemi con la registrazione.

T: Perché nonostante questo lo hai trovato il più divertente?

S: Comunque la maggior parte dei compiti per casa del corso, salvo quelli personali, singoli, sono stati fatti in gruppo. Proprio per questo è stato divertente, perché non non si pensava al dover fare il compito, quanto più al "divertiamoci, registriamo quello che stiamo facendo e poi lo carichiamo". Più che un obbligo era un divertimento.

T: Se tu pensi tu pensi alle attività che abbiamo fatto insieme durante gli incontri, quali sono state le attività che ti hanno divertito di più?

S: Sicuramente l'attività che più mi è piaciuta è stato il Bartle test, perché è anche un modo per conoscere, soprattutto sotto il punto di vista del gioco, le persone e la loro personalità. quindi è stato un modo anche per conoscere gli altri partecipanti. Io ho fatto anche amicizia con alcuni di loro, grazie al corso.

T: Ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare in inglese con questo corso e per quale motivo?

S: Sicuramente perché è stato piacevole, è stato divertente. non ho mai pensato devo collegarmi, mi scoccia. se tomassi indietro lo rifarei e anzi, se potessi lo farei anche per altre altre materie. magari non tutte, perché alcune materie che possono essere coniate....almeno credo...

T: Quindi ti ha spinto a parlare inglese proprio Minecraft, il gioco?

S: Sì, perché per determinati tasks, compiti da svolgere, dovendo trovare un server server multiplayer, dovendo registrare una parte di conversazione, si potevano utilizzare server Discord e parlare con persone che non si conoscono. Anche il semplice sentir parlare poteva aiutare, e se si voleva essere parte della conversazione non si poteva fare nella tua propria lingua, ma in inglese. E si ritorna sempre al concetto di inglese come lingua che accomuna anche chi non è madrelingua e si ritrova prova a parlare in inglese perché è un punto comune per tutti.

T: Come ti sentivi durante i meeting?

S: Sempre con molta calma, ma con serietà perché comunque è un lavoro, un impegno e quindi va preso con serietà; però non quella serietà che mette magari pressione, mette ansia. E che devi concludere con un compito di verifica, come a scuola. io non ho mai controllato il punteggio, se non con le ultime due tre lezioni, perché nel momento in cui facevo il corso, non pensavo a raggiungere i 60 punti, quindi qualsiasi punteggio avessi raggiunto alla fine mi sarebbe andato benissimo. sicuramente se non l'avessi passato mi sarebbe rimasto il dispiacere, potevo fare di più, però avendo comunque svolto tutti i compiti a casa volta per volta, non era mia preoccupazione controllare il punteggio, perché sapevo che andava tutto liscio: le lezioni a cui partecipavo sono state tutte e quindi con tranquillità mi sedevo, ascoltavo, quando dovevo interagire, interagivo...

T: Quindi il fatto che ci fosse una classifica che ci fosse una leaderboard...

S: Sicuramente è stato stimolante.

T: Ecco vorrei capire la tua percezione di questo concetto di gamification legata ad un contesto scolastico min

S: Sì sicuramente stimola, perché la competizione nasce già normalmente in classe, quindi una classifica, con un margine di punteggio più ampio, rispetto a 0/10, e prolungata, non ferma alla singola interrogazione, ma durante tutto il percorso, stimola a fare meglio degli altri non una sola volta, ma durante tutto il corso. dal mio punto di vista però non è stata la cosa principale su cui focalizzarmi. Il mio obiettivo non era di arrivare primo al corso ma fare quel corso al meglio delle mie possibilità.

T: Pensi che un badge possa aiutare a stimolare questo raggiungimento di un obiettivo?

S: Sì perché come quando si studia molto e si prende un buon voto, il fatto che l'impegno venga premiato in modo più costante rispetto a quello che è l'ambiente scolastico dove il fine è quello di raggiungere il voto nella verifica, nonostante ci si dica che si studia per noi stessi e non per il voto... alla fine noi studiamo sperando di raggiungere la tanto ambita sufficienza, sicuramente con dei badge, in questo caso, l'impegno che viene premiato è un impegno costante, e non legato ad un singolo compito, e quindi dà maggiori soddisfazioni e più stimoli, perché vuoi tu rimanere costante per ottenere in questo caso dei badge, e si ritorna al discorso della classifica che un impegno costante fa scalare un'eventuale classifica. Da più stimoli ma anche più soddisfazioni.

T: Secondo te ti rende anche più consapevole? Ti fa capire che il tuo apprendimento sta aumentando?

S: Probabilmente sì. non avevo mai riflettuto sotto questo punto di vista, però probabilmente sì perché avere una classifica gradualmente partendo da zero per raggiungere un livello massimo, la presenza di una leaderboard, quindi vedere persone che hanno un punteggio maggiore del tuo, ti fa pensare: magari si sta impegnando più di me; probabilmente ci sono persone portate, persone meno portate, ma con l'impegno si possono raggiungere determinati livelli. quindi se vedi che una persona non è tanto distante dal tuo livello ha più punti di te, dici magari mi devo impegnare di più. può essere uno spunto di riflessione nel poter fare meglio, sicuramente quindi una presa di coscienza maggiore rispetto a quella che può essere un'interrogazione, che è più soggettiva; invece una valutazione costante di ogni singolo elemento può dare una valutazione più oggettiva e che quindi anche una presa di coscienza maggiore.

T: Parliamo adesso invece della percezione del gameplay. è cambiato il gameplay sapendo che giocavi a minecraft per scopi didattici?

S: No perché anche dopo averci giocato per scopi didattici, finita la task, potevo anche continuare a giocare su quel server, come potevo uscire e giocare con altre persone in italiano, oppure sul mondo single player; comunque era un giocare in più per il corso, non essere costretti a giocare per il corso e quindi mi poteva annoiare giocare. non ci sono stati grandi cambiamenti sotto questo punto di vista. sicuramente non è cambiata cambiata la mia percezione del giorno.

T: Tu raccomanderesti questo modo di apprendere anche che ad altri ragazzi e a chi lo raccomanderesti?

S: Lo raccomanderei sicuramente. dal mio punto di vista non come studio assoluto perché deve esserci comunque una parte basata sulla regola, sulla grammatica. Essere accostato ad uno studio più schematico può dare una grande mano dal punto di vista lessicale. Accostato ad una regola può diventare un lavoro più completo. allora lo raccomanderei per chi inizia la lingua da 0, sicuramente perché è un buon modo per imparare a parlare e con il giusto aiuto anche imparare alcune regole grammaticali fondamentali, perché per quanto uno possa sapere la regola grammaticale, nel parlato è tutta una concezione diversa, perché se nel parlato sbaglia un verbo, una regola, non te lo stanno a sottolineare, non è una interrogazione; anche solo per andare in vacanza è un buon modo per imparare la lingua da 0.

T: Secondo te è come comunque importante la presenza di un'insegnante che guidi questo apprendimento?

S: Dev' esserci comunque un'insegnante che guidi l'apprendimento, perché se si imparasse semplicemente giocando allora eravamo tutti grandi di madre lingua inglese.

T: Secondo te in che cosa aiuta la presenza degli insegnanti?

S: Aiuta a concentrare l'attenzione del ragazzo nel momento in cui va a giocare. La presenza di un insegnante come una campanella d'allarme ti ricorda che oltre a quello che stai facendo come gioco devi dare attenzione a quelli sono i dettagli riguardanti la lingua. Secondo me è fondamentale la presenza di una figura di un insegnante.

T: Tu che sei passionato gamer, quali attività inseriresti in questo corso?

S: Allora questa è una domanda complicata. Sicuramente ci sono modi per migliorarlo, anzi probabilmente una cosa che pensavo all'inizio del corso che pensavo sarebbe stata fatta, invece non è stata fatta, però potrebbe essere inserita, ovviamente non è proprio così semplice, ma fattibile...sicuramente pensavo si sarebbe arrivati a un certo punto a giocare tutti insieme per provare quello che avevamo imparato, interagendo magari tra di noi e con la presenza dell'insegnante che poteva giocare insieme a noi. Può essere un modo anche per relazionarsi con l'insegnante in modo diverso, in modo meno autoritario, sempre con una base di rispetto, ma anche più libero magari dalla paura di avere di fronte un insegnante. Proponerei questa attività, ma sicuramente però sono cosciente del fatto che non possa migliorare un listening e speaking, quanto possa migliorarlo giocare in un server con persone madrelingua, perché parliamo tra di noi in inglese ma siamo tutte quanti persone che stanno cercando di imparare l'inglese sicuramente non è la stessa cosa che giocare con madrelingua. Serve per capire anche a che livello sei arrivato, perché se sento parlare un altro ragazzo, e lui utilizza dei termini che io non sapevo si capisce che quel ragazzo è arrivato ad un livello maggiore del mio e per questo posso prendere spunto da persone di livello superiore.

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualcos'altro?

S: No, niente da aggiungere. Il corso mi è piaciuto, è stato anche un modo per divertirsi, giocare, conoscere nuove persone e sicuramente c'è stato un miglioramento per quanto riguarda la lingua quindi, perfetto.

T: Grazie.

INT 12 (10-01-22; 6.15 pm)

T: Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più del corso?

S: Sinceramente del corso mi è piaciuto il fatto che non fosse un corso normale, solito, diciamo, ma era un corso più che altro innovativo che rendeva l'utile dilettevole.

T: E che cosa hai trovato noioso nel corso?

S: Quando ho pensato di iscrivermi a questo corso, pensavo di fare un reame tutti assieme, tutta la gente del corso, tutto quanto in inglese, cioè chattiamo in inglese. Però più che altro è stato un errore di valutazione mio, oddio a me sinceramente se fosse stato così mi sarebbe piaciuto un sacco, però se devo dire proprio qualcosa e andare a cercare il pelo nell'uovo...allora dico questo.

T: Secondo te c'è stato qualcosa di difficile nel corso, qualcosa che tu hai trovato difficile?

S: Difficile? Sinceramente no perché certe parole, alcune, non tutte, ma certe parole già le conoscevo; per cui non è stato molto difficile andarsela a ripescare oppure andarmi a conoscere delle nuove, a livello personale, molte di quelle cose, quando faccio le partite, tipo i nickname, neanche la uso molto, anzi molto probabilmente neanche mi piace troppo usarle, preferisco parlare chiaramente, a cura più diretta dell'acronimo.

T: Se tu pensi alle abilità di listening reading writing e speaking, dopo questo corso secondo te in quale di queste abilità tu ti senti più confident, quindi più sicuro?

S: Con lo speaking perché sinceramente lo speaking tralasciando qualsiasi altro problema che può essere esterno all'inglese diciamo che mi ha aiutato di più ad affinare la tecnica nel parlarlo.

T: Ok secondo te se tu pensi al vocabolario, pensi che giocando si possano imparare nuove parole, si possa ampliare il vocabolario e in che modo?

S: Allora sinceramente Io credo proprio di sì, anche perché per farti un esempio: io ho giocato i primi minecraft da telefonino, perché non ce l'avevo da pc, e ce l'avevo però in inglese. Quindi io inizialmente non sapevo assolutamente nulla di quello che mi ritrovavo; poi man mano, leggendolo e rileggendolo e sapendo in italiano cos'era, ho imparato che la luminite in minecraft glowstone; a furia di doverlo ripetere ma principalmente perché se non lo sapevo oggettivamente non potevo giocare, se non mi ricordavo i nomi dei materiali, alla fine o per voler conoscere o per sopravvivere e per giocare, alla fine i nomi dovevo impararli.

T: Vorrei che tu pensassi alla grammatica. secondo te hai imparato qualcosa di grammatica? ti è stato anche utile dal punto di vista grammaticale questo corso?

S: Sì, nello speaking per fare delle frasi più corrette.

T: Se tu pensi a questo tipo di corso e a un corso standard a scuola di inglese nell'approccio che questi due corsi hanno verso la lingua, quali sono le principali differenze, se ci sono differenze?

S: Quello che è stato fatto qua con *gameful English* e un rapporto con l'inglese non passivo, come può essere a scuola, cioè dove hai il libro e studia studia studia e studia leggi leggi leggi. È stato un metodo che prende, perché ad un certo punto non ti sembra di studiare

inglese, ma semplicemente di giocare; a quel punto tu letteralmente rendi la materia un gioco, un divertimento, allora il peso dello stare là sul suo libro ore ore a leggere scrivere, studiare ,non lo senti più.

T: Se tu pensi ai compiti che io ho assegnato, secondo te quale è stato quello più divertente?

S: Il più interessante tra tutti è quando ci ha chiesto di fare il video di youtube, anche se lei non lo sa in quante lingue l'ho ringraziata per non aver fatto vedere il mio video.

T: Perché ti è piaciuto questo compito?

S: Di carattere io sono una persona che non tende a scrivere, ma a parlare. Io sono una persona che invece di mandarti 20 messaggi per preferisce fare una chiamata. l'idea di dover registrare un video, tralasciando l'imbarazzo però è stata bella come idea .

T: Cioè l'hai sentita come una sfida o come divertimento?

S: Sinceramente un po' tutte e due: divertimento a livello di video, sfida perché dovevo capire come posizionare la telecamera, in modo che inquadrasse me e il pc allo stesso tempo.

T: E invece durante le elezioni, qual è la l'attività che hai trovato più piacevole? quando già fatto vedere a vedere i miei video

S: Quando ci ha fatto vedere i video, il commento al gameplay degli altri.

T: Perché perché secondo te quando te quella quell'attività era più piacevole rispetto alle altre?

S: Il fatto che io vedessi un gameplay era come vedere una guida, non come le immagini che ci ha fatto vedere della megastruttura , e tu non sai come si fa, ed hai pure un po' di invidia. Quantomeno il video ti fa capire che alla fine quello magari ci ha messo anni a costruire quella struttura, a fare tutto quel lavoro: non è un extra terrestre insomma è un idiota come te all'inizio.

T: Ti sei sentito motivato di più a parlare in inglese durante gli incontri?

S: Sì sì diciamo che è stato più facile.

T: Cosa ti ha motivato?

S: Quello che mi motiva di più a parlare inglese è cercare in qualche modo di capirci ,non è molto per passione della lingua, è più che altro perché mi rendo conto che il mondo con cui dovrò confrontarmi è un mondo che non è come quello di cinquant'anni da dei miei genitori, in cui bastava conoscere l'italiano. Io avrò bisogno di conoscere almeno l' inglese, quindi comunque devo farlo per una questione professionale.

T: Le tue sensazioni di quando partecipavi agli incontri: qual era il tuo animo, il tuo spirito?

S: Quando entravo in lezione pensavo sempre: vediamo adesso che cosa succede. ci farà vedere una foto, un video, ci farà fare un test? Ero incuriosito.

T: Ti sentivi rilassato durante le lezioni?

S: Eh dipendeva, dalle elezioni.

T: Quali erano gli elementi elementi che ti rendevano più rilassato o più agitato?

S: Agitarmi proprio nel senso negativo del termine, nessuno. c'era quello che magari mi faceva un po' impallidire per la sua struttura, c'era quello che mi faceva ridere, soprattutto nel veder strillare la gente.. a livello di relax sono state belle le elezioni con i test, in cui dovevi no in cui dovevi vedere la figura, descriverla... quelli sono stati rilassanti; quindi un'emozione negativa non c'è mai stata.

T: Secondo te è migliorata anche la tua fluency? E, se sì, come te ne sei reso conto?

S: Sì. se mi quanto sono migliorato, non lo so ancora, perché devo vedere nel tempo i miglioramenti che ha portato. se mi chiedi invece quanto sarei fluente se dovessi iniziare ora una conversazione informale, ti direi che sono migliorato un po', sì.

T: Pensi che anche nel listening ci sia stato un miglioramento? cioè riesci a capire di più i giocatori?

S: Sì, questo posso assicurarti di sì. sono migliorato molto riguardo a questo. certo ci sono ancora certe parole in inglese che ti sembrano ancora un'altra parola, però con la tecnica si affina tutto, sì.

T: Secondo te ci sono stati dei compiti o delle prove che abbiamo fatto e che ti hanno aiutato a migliorare sia la fluency che il listening?

S: I video, perchè sentivo la gente che parlava e che era molto fluente nel parlare ed hanno un vocabolario estremamente più grande del mio.

T: Secondo te c'è stata qualche attività che ha favorito lo speaking?

S: Ho riscontrato dei miglioramenti e l'attività che mi ha aiutato di più è stata quando dovevamo fare delle descrizioni dei luoghi, perchè bisogna va comunque creare un discorso.

T: Parliamo adesso di gamification. Tu come percepisci il fatto di vederti inserito in una classifica?

S: Per come la vedo io, non è nè più nè meno come i voti normali di scuola. Esiste forse più competizione perchè ci sono i badge; ma io non ne ho mai fatto un dramma. Può succedere che io ce la faccia, come no. io faccio il mio meglio.

T: Secondo te tu per quale motivo non hai raggiunto la soglia minima del 60 per superare il corso?

S: I motivi sono stati: primo, i lavori che dovevo svolgere a casa, seconda cosa perchè a me i punteggi non piacciono, non ci entro proprio dentro.

T: Perchè non hai fatto i compiti a casa?

S: Sinceramente, perchè avevo anche le altre materie, non perchè non mi piacesse i compiti. Quindi dovevo svegliare che cosa tagliare, non avevo alternative. Se avessi potuto farlo, lo avrei fatto.

T: Parliamo del gameplay. Questo corso ha cambiato la tua percezione del gameplay?

S: No. mi sono concentrato sul fare l'esatto opposto, non c'ho pensato. non ho pensato al fatto che stessi facendo una lezione, ho cercato di scordarmelo il più possibile, perchè in questo modo, scordandomi che era una lezione perchè alla fine quella era una lezione, non vedevo la una cosa solita che nasce nello studente, cioè che ti annoia solo il fatto di sapere che è una lezione.

T: E quando giochi per i fatti tuoi? questa cosa ha cambiato il tuo modo di percepire il gioco?

S: Ad essere proprio sinceri, tutto ciò che abbiamo fatto mi ha aiutato a livello linguistico sicuramente; a livello di gioco non molto, anche perchè molti trucchetti già più o meno li conoscevo, tipo la cosa del fare solamente alla piccola non lascia non uccidere animali perchè poi mi sarebbero serviti dopo.

T: Tu raccomandaresti questo tipo di corso ad altri studenti e a chi lo raccomandaresti?

S: Sì lo raccomanderei a tutti quelli che vogliono provare una esperienza diversa da quella normale scolastica.

T: Ti chiedo dei suggerimenti: come miglioreresti il corso?

S: Costruirei un mondo insieme, perchè è un'interfaccia generale con gli studenti. alla fine lo studente non pensa che sia una lezione, che si devo collegare a tot orario. ci si collega, si parla e gioca in inglese, quindi non è una cosa programmata cosa imparare, perchè alla fine magari ti va a creare quella condizione, quella situazione random in cui alla fine comunque andrai a parlare in inglese e a spaziare anche su altre parole.

T: Tu pensi che comunque il ruolo dell'insegnante in questa cosa sia importante o pensi che uno possa imparare con il videogioco?

S: No, penso sinceramente che in questo caso sia importante, per il semplice motivo che comunque è nella fisiologia dello studente cercare scappatoie, quindi l'insegnante, quando capita che ti viene l'idea idiota di barare, ti riprende per il colletto e ti rimette in riga.

T: Pensi che sia importante anche per costruire un apprendimento, che ti possa guidare nell'apprendimento?

S: Sì anche perchè se poi fai un discorso ma dici tutte le parole sbagliate, parli un inglese maccheronico, alla fine, se non hai nessuno che ti corregge e ti consiglia, finirai quel corso con inglese maccheronico.

T: Vuoi aggiungere altro?

S: No

T: Grazie

INT 13 (10-01-22; 7 pm)

T: Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più e hai trovato più divertente in *Gameful English*?

S: Molte delle domande che venivano fatte da lei a noi erano praticamente identiche a quelle che ci faceva la professoressa di inglese durante una lezione, solo che l'argomento di cui si parlava attirava molto di più l'attenzione rispetto ad una lezione normale; le cose che comunque rimanevano erano le stesse. Questo corso era più accattivante.

T: Hai trovato qualche elemento che non ti è piaciuto che hai trovato noioso o comunque poco stimolante?

S: Vedere i videogiochi dal punto di vista dell'apprendimento, niente, questa visione rendeva il tutto come i compiti per casa e quindi sminuiva un po' quello che era il piacere che uno aveva nel fare delle cose che di solito uno faceva nel tempo libero.

T: La parte che hai trovato più antipatica era il fatto di dover svolgere svolgere dei compiti?

S: Sì.

T: E qualcosa che hai trovato difficile?

S: No in realtà niente.

T: Dopo questo corso, se tu rifletti sulle quattro abilità di reading listening writing e speaking in quali di questi abilità tu ti senti più sicuro di te?

S: Speaking, perché io non giocavo online su minecraft in multiplayer con sconosciuti, ma principalmente con altri amici in un mondo privato; invece giocando nel server e parlando con altre persone tu dovevi avere la prontezza nel rispondere, perché altrimenti le persone si chiedevano che fine avevi fatto, oppure iniziano a farti domande e quindi il dover intrattenere una conversazione e poi anche parlare con lei, quindi speaking e listening in modo secondario.

T: Secondo te si può imparare o ampliare il vocabolario giocando? e in che modo?

S: Si può migliorare parlando con altre persone, specialmente con i giovani; dato che i giovani parlano nei videogiochi, nei server quando giocano online, tutti quanti i termini più moderni li usano mentre parlano e quindi ascoltando si può capire questo nuovo modo di parlare, slang, e anche in generale.

T: Se tu pensi alla grammatica. Pensi che questo corso ti abbia aiutato anche in questo ambito? hai imparato qualcosa?

S: In realtà le cose in cui mi ha aiutato di più il corso sono proprio la prontezza nel rispondere e il modo di argomentare; cioè la cosa in realtà di cui mi sono accorto anche a scuola è che dopo questo corso è stata molto migliorata, è proprio la conversazione, perché a scuola si studiano molto i verbi e la grammatica in generale; però poi quando una persona deve andare realmente a parlare a conversare non ha i vocaboli per esprimersi. Questo corso mi è servito non tanto per conoscere la grammatica, più che altro per usarla.

T: Se tu pensi ai compiti che io vi ho dato a casa ora quale poteva essere il più divertente, il più piacevole da svolgere?

S: Io penso il video, sia per il fatto che in realtà era una delle cose un po' più impegnative e bisogna investire molto tempo, però allo stesso tempo era una cosa divertente perché io per esempio l'ho fatta con il mio amico, abbiamo giocato e ci siamo divertiti.

T: Per quanto riguarda invece le attività che noi abbiamo fatto durante i meeting, c'è qualche attività che tu hai trovato più stimolante e che ti è piaciuta?

S: Quella più stimolante era l'attività del dover descrivere delle foto perché stimolava la curiosità.

T: Secondo te c'è stato qualcosa che ti ha motivato di più a parlare in inglese? o se tu ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare in inglese in questo corso rispetto ad un corso standard?

S: Sì quando giocavo online, perché il dover rispondere alle altre persone quando ci parlavo mi voleva far conoscere più termini possibili e sapere conversare nel miglior modo possibile. Era una necessità in quel caso.

T: Ok parliamo adesso degli incontri: vorrei capire quali erano le tue sensazioni quando partecipavi alle lezioni. tu come ti sentivi quando dovevi partecipare a questi meet?

S: Alla fine erano pur sempre delle lezioni, quindi anche se un pochino annoiavano, ma allo stesso tempo erano accattivanti, perché comunque gli argomenti non erano scolastici, invece a scuola sono sempre quelli gli argomenti.

T: Quindi tu dici io trovo noioso il fatto di dovermi collegare per scuola, però poi mi piaceva mi incuriosiva l'argomento?

S: Esattamente.

T: Ti sentivi rilassato quando facevi il corso?

S: Sì certo, l'ambiente era molto tranquillo, ero a mio agio, non avevo ansia o cose varie che di solito si provano a scuola.

T: Secondo te perché l'ambiente era così rilassato? solo perché non c'era il voto?

S: No perché...la valutazione c'era, era complessiva; non c'era la solita ansia di quando si va a scuola, del voto: se tu non prendi quel voto magari poi succede un casino. il fatto di parlare con i miei compagni soprattutto, l'argomento e il modo che ha lei di fare lezione metteva a proprio agio.

T: Secondo te è migliorata anche la tua fluency?

S: Sì sì, parlo più fluentemente; me ne sono accorto anche nello scrivere, in realtà, oppure a rispondere a qualche commento su Instagram in inglese, oppure parlare così per scherzare. mi arrivavano più facilmente i termini sulla punta della lingua.

T: Puoi dire che questo miglioramento c'è stato anche con il listening, cioè riesce adesso a capire più chiaramente certe situazioni mentre giochi?

S: Sì ovviamente ascoltando alcune cose rimangono.

T: Secondo te quali tasks di questo corso ti hanno aiutato di più per sviluppare proprio la fluency e il listening?

S: Il compito in cui dovevamo fare il video (youtuber) perché l'essere concentrato nello svolgere quello che si stava facendo nel video, nel nostro caso il parkour, e comunque dover svolgere quello e nel stesso tempo pensare subito a quello che si doveva dire per commentare quello che si stava facendo, ci si metteva a dura prova. dopo aver finito il video però mi sembrava normale dover parlare mentre facevo qualcosa.

T: Parliamo un po di gamification: il corso come sai era strutturato con il punteggio la leaderboard e i badge. tu come l'hai come l'hai percepita? come ti percepivi all'interno di una leaderboard che magari mirava anche a raccontare un tuo progresso dal punto di vista dell'apprendimento?

S: Questo in realtà sia per questo corso che in generale per la scuola lo vedo sempre allo stesso modo, cioè se io ho fatto un miglioramento, lo vedo più come miglioramento personale. nel caso non dovesse esserci miglioramento alla fine dipende principalmente da me alla fine.

T: Secondo te questo miglioramento può essere rappresentato da questa leaderboard cioè per te questa rappresentazione grafica ti può aiutare ad avere un quadro più chiaro di quello che ti sta succedendo, a livello di progresso?

S: Sì perché un giudizio esterno può essere comunque d'aiuto per chiarirsi le idee su quello che è stato effettivamente il proprio miglioramento.

T: Secondo te i badge essere un incentivo? può influire sulla motivazione?

S: Sì però dipende dalla persona, sono più motivazioni personali. in realtà anche nella scuola come in questo caso c'è chi vuole primeggiare e vuole avere i voti più alti o chi magari si accontenta di quello che ha preso.

T: Parliamo della percezione del gameplay. quindi tu sapevi che giocavi a minecraft e dietro c'era uno scopo didattico. secondo te è cambiato il tuo gameplay?

S: Sapere di dover giocare poteva essere a volte un piacere, perché magari pensavo: adesso devo fare una cosa per il corso, però devo fare uso di minecraft era un piacere, mi dicevo ben venga! ci devo fare un compito e devo farlo giocando a minecraft. Però non sempre si ha il piacere di giocare a minecraft. può essere che magari un giorno uno ha voglia di fare qualcos'altro.

T: Dal punto di vista dell'inglese tu avevi tutte le possibilità per arrivare al confine dei 60 per superare il corso. Riesci a dirmi quale è stato l'impedimento? perché non sei arrivato alla soglia dei 60?

S: Specialmente nell'ultimo periodo sia per la scuola che per altre cose ho messo quel corso in secondo piano, o anche per svogliatezza personale, non perché non mi piacesse il corso, ma perché era una decisione che avevo preso al momento. Se non mi fosse piaciuto il corso, non lo avrei proprio fatto, già dall'inizio.

T: Tu raccomanderesti questo metodo di apprendimento anche ad altri studenti e se sì a quali studenti oppure?

S: Sì perché è accattivante, è una novità e un corso che abbia queste due caratteristiche potrebbe attirare moltissimo gli studenti ma anche persone magari più grandi. i videogiochi non è che piacciono solo ai teenagers, perché esistono da un sacco di tempo e anche persone che hanno 40 anni ci giocano lo stesso.

T: Come miglioreresti questo corso?

S: Fare quello che c'era da fare nel video, durante la lezione. collegarsi tutti quanti su minecraft e poi nel frattempo parlare con la professoressa e fare quella cosa come se fosse un'interrogazione.

T: Vuoi aggiungere altro?

S: No penso di aver detto tutto.

T: Grazie.

INT 14 (13-01-22; 3 pm)

T: Che cosa cosa ti ha divertito di più del del corso?

S: Mi ha divertito un sacco fare i "compitini" che ci assegnava, le cose cose che appunto dovevamo fare per "superare il livello". anche il modo il modo in cui lei lo ha strutturato, mettendo i livelli, livello uno, due. è stato veramente divertente sotto quel punto di vista, ma anche per il semplice fatto che ci siamo visti "tutti gamer" tutte persone accomunate da una stessa passione.

T: E se se dovessi trovare qualcosa di negativo o noioso riguardo alla struttura, qualche compito che magari non ti ha coinvolto particolarmente...

S: L'unica cosa che ho avuto difficoltà a fare è stato trovare qualcuno che parlasse inglese, che fosse disposto "a stare" su discord, dove ci sentivamo per giocare insieme. quella diciamo che poi si può risolvere in abbastanza breve tempo. c'ho messo un po di settimane, anche se avevo passato tutta l'estate, da prima che ci vedevamo, a cercare qualcuno. Ho trovato un tedesco, alla fine.

T: Se tu dove dovessi pensare alle quali quattro abilità, quindi listening, speaking, reading e writing, in quale ti senti più "confident" alla fine di questo corso?

S: Speaking. In inglese sono sempre andata bene, anche perché so che sono una "autodidatta", perché l'ho imparato da sola anche perché molti giochi non erano tradotti in italiano, quindi giocavo in inglese. ma ho sempre avuto vergogna a parlare, sia per la mia pronuncia sia perché temevo di sbagliare le cose. ora invece sono molto più calma rispetto a questo, anche durante l'interrogazione di inglese. infatti le mie professoressa sia delle medie che del liceo mi avevano sempre detto che dovevo essere più sicura di me quando esprimo i concetti in inglese. questa corso mi ha aiutato un sacco, perché ora diciamo, anche se sbaglio, non mi interessa perché può capitare, non sono madrelingua, però mi sento anche molto molto più a mio agio a parlare in inglese.

T: Quindi si puoi imparare il vocabolario con i giochi elettronici? e in che modo?

S: Allora una cosa che mi è rimasta, da quando avevo la Wii, con the Sims3, è il ricordo di upstairs e downstairs proprio perché leggevo lì, e ho capito in base a quel gioco cosa significassero. mentre giochi a The sims, o anche ad RPG normali, capisci almeno le parole “di base”; quindi diciamo che più che meno impari l’inglese giocando.

T: E pensi che l'intervento di un docente abbia potuto fare la differenza, rispetto ad utilizzare solo un videogioco?

S: Sì anche perché molti professori sono ancora molto chiusi di mente e vedono i videogiochi come una perdita di tempo, o come un qualcosa che che i ragazzi usano per non studiare e magari vedono quello che gioca ai videogiochi come quello non ha voglia di fare niente. l'intervento di un docente che capisce questa cosa, cioè che i videogiochi sono sia stimolanti mentalmente, perché rilassano, ma anche per il semplice fatto che comunque dopo aver studiato tutto un pomeriggio, tu ti siedi lì e ti metti a giocare, ti rilassi, fai tutte le cose che vuoi fare tu, sei in un mondo tuo, e questo non vuol dire che ti stai isolando, puoi conoscere benissimo tante altre persone tramite dei giochi. È un mondo che a me piace un sacco, proprio per questo aspetto; quindi i professori dovrebbero iniziare a capire perché i ragazzi si avvicinano così tanto alla tecnologia, in questo caso ai videogiochi.

T: E secondo l'aiuto di docente che media le conoscenze come come abbiamo fatto noi, può fare la differenza o se secondo te si può imparare anche a prescindere da un docente?

S: Sì. allora si può benissimo imparare da autodidatti, ma comunque con l'aiuto di un docente è meglio; cioè io mi sono sentita capita dalla docente rispetto ai videogiochi appunto. fino a questo momento io ho sempre imparato da autodidatta a giocare anche in inglese, non ho mai avuto tanta difficoltà. però avendo comunque una persona adulta che mi sostenessi in questo modo è stato molto utile.

T: Pensiamo alla grammatica. pensi che dopo questo corso tu abbia imparato anche qualcosa di grammatica?

S: Si può dire di sì, come si può dire di no, perché tutte le volte che per esempio ho giocato a minecraft e c'era la chat, in quel momento pensi: perché abbreviano così tanto tutto? quindi ho imparato anche ad usare usare il loro slang; per esempio una cosa che mi viene in mente adesso è YOU ARE, che loro scrivono U R. queste cose sono molto molto utili per farti capire come sono gli adolescenti che parlano la lingua inglese. In questo corso ho imparato queste cose nella task della chat, dove dovevamo descrivere la chat; ma anche quella per descrivere la casa, perché ho ricercato i vocaboli, quindi mi sono più formata su minecraft in inglese, perché io ho sempre giocato in italiano. mettendolo in inglese per questo corso mi sono accorta che è ancora più semplice rispetto all'italiano, soprattutto andando avanti nel corso, con tutti i vocaboli che abbiamo imparato insieme.

T: Se tu pensi all'approccio che noi abbiamo avuto verso la lingua e all'approccio che si ha scuola verso la lingua: qual è il secondo te la differenza, se esiste una differenza?

S: La differenza è che magari a scuola soprattutto per quanto riguarda inglese, noi facciamo il primo e secondo anno grammatica e poi dal terzo fino al quinto letteratura in inglese. la differenza più grande che c'è stata è che in questo corso adesso abbiamo parlato in inglese di cose che ci piacciono, che ci interessano, i videogiochi. A scuola si parla soprattutto di grammatica per fare poi frasi, verifiche eccetera e poi letteratura. Diciamo che c'è questo distacco tra una cosa che può più avvicinare i professori ai ragazzi, come come i videogiochi e qualcosa che si deve fare per perché è scuola e basta. In *gameful english* avevamo un approccio più “amichevole”. come ho detto prima mi sono sentita capita in questo senso, parlando sempre in inglese. parlando inglese a scuola in quel contesto scolastico non ho mai imparato tutti quei vocaboli che potevo imparare con questo questo.

T: Quale compito ti è piaciuto di più e ti ha divertito di più?

S: Sia quando nel corso abbiamo parlato degli streamer, degli youtuber che quando abbiamo fatto il big theme: a me è piaciuto un sacco scrivere dei perché mi sono sentita come una persona che stava dando proprio la sua opinione del gioco.

T: Ti sei sentita più motivata a parlare in inglese?

S: Sì tantissimo, veramente tanto. infatti mi sono accorta che mentre andava avanti il corso, alcune volte pensavo prima in inglese e poi traducevo italiano e sono arrivata anche a leggere vari libri o storie, fan fiction in inglese. all'inizio ero un attimo stranita da questo fatto perché non ci avevo mai provato, anche che comunque me la cavo abbastanza bene, ma in questo momento mi sento molto più sicura magari anche ad esprimermi in inglese anche nella mia vita quotidiana.

T: Che cosa ti ha aiutato a parlare di più?

S: I videogiochi e anche poter parlare con l'amico tedesco. mi sono trovata davvero bene a parlare di videogiochi. Il fatto di dover fare questa cosa mi ha dato una mano, come se fosse stata una spinta in più.

T: Come puoi descrivere le tue stesse sensazioni quando partecipavi ai Meet?

S: Allora ero sempre rilassata, perché sapevo che anche se sbagliavo una parola in inglese o con la grammatica non succedeva nulla, quindi ero veramente rilassata e mi divertiva seguire tutte le lezioni, cioè non ne ho persa una e mi divertivo veramente tanto.

T: Pensi questa pressione a scuola ci può essere solo perché c'è un voto?

S: Sì la maggior parte delle volte sì, anche se i professori dicono sempre che i voti non valgono, alla fine sono sempre quelli che vanno a definirli alla fine dell'anno, se vieni promosso, bocciato, ecc. è comunque la realtà dei fatti fatti, puoi dire che non mi definisce.

T: Pensi che sia migliorata anche la tua fluency?

S: Diciamo ora non mi vergogno. prima avevo veramente molta vergogna, soprattutto della pronuncia, quindi non riuscivo ad esprimermi bene in inglese. infatti agli scritti andavo sempre meglio e all'orale avevo un po più di ansia, perché avevo paura di essere giudicata anche in classe per la pronuncia o semplicemente dalla professoressa.

T: E per quanto riguarda il listening? pensi che anche quello sia migliorato?

S: Diciamo di sì, perché ascoltando anche per esempio i video che ci ha fatto vedere in inglese, mi sono più che altro abituata ai vari accenti, quindi credo sia migliorato anche questo.

T: Secondo te quali attività hanno favorito il listening e lo speaking?

S: Sicuramente per il listening quello dei video che ci ha fatto vedere. mi intrattenevano veramente tanto e comunque riuscivo a capire quello che si diceva e quindi riuscivo a capire anche come si esprimevano queste persone, quello che facevano. Facevo le cose un po' mio e quindi me le sono tenute per me: ho iniziato anch'io a parlare in quel modo. mentre per la fluency sempre questi video, perché appunto sentendo loro parlare e qualche volta anche sbagliare, perché rispetto alla grammatica che si impara in classe normalmente dove è un sacrilegio usare YOU'RE, vederlo solo scritto anche in chat da delle persone all'inizio lo sentivo come, in realtà ho capito che si usano più quelle espressioni che quelle che impariamo a scuola.

T: Parliamo di gamification. Come hai percepito te stessa all'interno di una leaderboard, di questa struttura a punti, se i badge ti hanno motivato..

S: Allora la classifica non mi ha mai messo tanta ansia, anzi ancora meno questo tipo di classifica. non ne comprendo il motivo, ma non mi sentivo giudicata. quando ho visto che ero arrivata quasi a 100, ho pensato di fare un bel big theme, lo scrivo... tanto sto lì... le cose le so fare... quindi mi metto a scrivere. quando poi lei ha scritto sul gruppo she's a mastermind, non potevo crederci! mi sono sentita veramente felice, cioè mi sono sentita gratificata del mio lavoro, perché comunque mi sono impegnata tutte le volte e vedermi prima in classifica per una cosa che mi sono costruita da sola è stato veramente bello e appunto gratificante. i badge mi hanno motivato davvero tanto, perché vedere tutti i badge che ti dicevano: hai fatto bene, brava! o anche quando sbagliavo una cosa, venivo motivata sia da lei che da i compiti in generale. è bello sentirsi motivati anche quando magari si sta sbagliando e ci si accorge di star sbagliando, perché ovviamente è umano sbagliare.

T: Come ti accorgevi di sbagliare, cosa è stato importante per farti capire che stavi sbagliando? da dove prendevi il tuo feedback?

S: diciamo sia da come parlavo in inglese, perché alcune volte sbagliavo, o nel mettere i verbi o anche cose stupide, magari errori di distrazione, perché ero presa dalla foga di rispondere subito e quindi poi ripensando alla lezione mi accorgevo di aver fatto questi sbagli e dicevo: cavolo la prossima volta cerco di non farli. ora sto applicando questo mio pensiero un po a tutte le altre materie.

T: Secondo te è cambiato il tuo gameplay nel momento in cui ha iniziato a giocare sapendo che stavi utilizzando quel gioco per fini didattici?

S: No è sempre rimasto il gameplay, lo devo fare per la scuola? Bene! Meglio! mi piace giocare. se lo faccio per la scuola e posso avere una valutazione positiva su quello che mi piace fare, bene, sono felice di questo.

T: Come miglioreresti questo corso? quali attività inseriresti?

S: Forse la cosa che mi è mancata o che poteva esserci era magari interagire anche con altri compagni del corso che magari non conoscevo.

T: Tu consiglieresti ad altri ragazzi questo metodo di apprendimento e a chi?

S: Assolutamente sì. magari a persone anche come me che comunque non sono abbastanza sicure della loro fluency, ma anche nell'ambito proprio personale. perché mi sono sentita veramente sicura di me stessa quando ho letto che è andato bene il big theme, che erano andati bene tutti gli altri compiti. le persone un po "fragili" perché portano appunto il peso di non essere abbastanza per loro per la loro persona.

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualcos'altro?

S: Mi dispiace che il corso sia finito "subito", perché il tempo per me almeno è passato velocemente, quindi mi dispiace anche perché poi non vederla più ogni lunedì è un po' un colpo al cuore, perché era la mia gioia prima di iniziare a fare i compiti. quindi era rilassante farlo! mi mancherà fare il corso, come credo sia normale. semplicemente sono felice di averlo fatto. cioè non mi sarei mai aspettata questo riscontro e all'inizio avevo deciso di farlo soltanto perché eravamo un gruppetto. È stato molto divertente e quindi mi mancherà anche questo.

T: Grazie.

INT 15 (13-01-22; 4 pm)

T: Cosa ti è piaciuto che cosa ti ha divertito di più del corso?

S: La cosa che mi ha divertito di più è stata imparare giocando. A me l'inglese è una materia che mi piace molto e impararla giocando è più divertente e anche più facile alcune volte. ho imparato anche molte parole nuove, soprattutto non solo inerenti al gioco ma anche parole che prima non sapevo. ho migliorato il mio inglese divertendomi senza pensare come si fa a scuola solamente ai voti; invece qua pensavo solamente al divertimento.

T: Se tu dovessi dire questa cosa però per me è stata noiosa, questa cosa non mi è piaciuta: che cosa, se c'è stata?

S: Forse un po' noioso un po' lunghi diciamo erano i compiti a casa.

T: Tra quei compiti, c'è stato qualcuno che ti è piaciuto di più?

S: Quello dello youtuber. Era la prima volta che mi registravo. Da piccolo avevo sempre sognato di diventare uno youtuber, quindi per me è stato molto bello, mi ha divertito.

T: C'è stato qualcosa che invece hai trovato difficile nel corso?

S: In alcune diciamo lezioni ho trovato difficile tradurre alcune cose, ma questo all'inizio, perché poi le parole si ripetono e quindi poi le impari piano piano e poi diventa sempre più facile.

T: Alla fine di questo corso se tu pensi alle quattro abilità del reading listening writing e speaking in quali abilità puoi dire di essere migliorato?

S: Soprattutto nel listening, perché abbiamo ascoltato dei video di persone che giocavano e quindi era sempre più facile capire cosa dicevano. Era via via più facile capire.

T: Pensi che giocando si possa imparare il vocabolario e in che modo?

S: In quest'ultimo periodo ho conosciuto anche un ragazzo su un altro gioco. Lui è francese. Lui a scuola studia italiano, quindi a volte parliamo italiano, oltre lui mi insegna il francese. Quando non abbiamo i termini non ci capiamo, parliamo in inglese. Sto imparando nuove parole. È molto importante.

T: Se tu pensi alla grammatica, dopo questo corso hai imparato qualcosa anche nell'ambito della grammatica?

S: Qualcosa sì, cioè non tantissimo, perché la grammatica si fa più a scuola e non giocando; cioè giocando si usano solamente alcuni tempi verbali, tipo il presente, alcune volte si può anche usare il passato. Poi gli altri tempi verbali è più difficile usarli.

T: Se pensi a questo corso e al corso normale che si fa a scuola di inglese e pensi all'approccio alla lingua che abbiamo avuto noi e quello che si ha a scuola puoi trovare delle differenze, oppure non ci sono differenze?

S: A scuola diciamo lo fai perché è quasi un obbligo, cioè lo devi fare, anche se è noioso comunque lo devi fare. Qui tu che decidi se vuoi farlo o no e poi soprattutto ti diverti giocando. Nel corso tradizionale ci sono degli schemi da seguire, cioè quindi tu devi imparare solamente quello che c'è nel programma, invece nel gioco ti possono venire diverse parole che si parlano solamente giocando, per esempio diciamo pushare che sarebbe attaccare i nemici. Questo corso è più divertente rispetto a quello tradizionale e anche più facile. È più facile imparare se ti diverti allo stesso tempo.

T: Per quanto riguarda le attività che abbiamo svolto durante le lezioni, qual è l'attività che ti è piaciuta di più ti da svolgere che hai trovato anche più fruttuosa?

S: Quando abbiamo visto i video degli altri ragazzi, cioè è stato bello il commento al video degli altri perché mi hai ricordato noi che lo facevamo.

T: Durante gli incontri ti sentivi più motivato a parlare in inglese?

S: Sì. Anche se all'inizio usavo qualche parola in italiano, però poi col passare del tempo sempre solo inglese mi stavo abituando.

T: Secondo te che cosa ti ha aiutato a parlare di più?

S: La passione per il gioco insieme all'inglese, una lingua nuova.

T: Pensi che sia migliorata anche la tua fluency?

S: Sì, quello sì. Durante le attività parlavo in modo sempre più fluido e non facevo più ehm ehm. A scuola quando facciamo i test ogni tanto mi blocco, invece qui tutto fluido.

T: E anche nel listening pensi di essere migliorato da questo punto di vista?

S: Sì, nel listening sì.

T: Quali sono stati i compiti che noi abbiamo fatto e che a te hanno aiutato a migliorare la fluency e lo speaking?

S: Quando dovevamo descrivere l'immagine mi ha aiutato molto a parlare e a imparare le posizioni (destra sopra sinistra). Grazie a quello ora descrivere un qualcosa è molto più veloce, più facile.

T: Per quanto riguarda il listening, ti ricordi un'attività che secondo te funziona per migliorare il listening?

S: Quando dovevamo descrivere un video di youtube e dovevamo descrivere cosa facevano. Per raccontare quello che stavano facendo, tu devi prima davvero capire cosa dicevano e quindi quello mi ha aiutato molto.

T: Quando partecipavi alle lezioni qual era il tuo stato d'animo?

S: Pensare che fosse un'altra ora di lezione era un po' più noioso, un po' brutto, però poi ho cambiato idea perché ci divertivamo a fare questa attività insieme. Alla fine ho cambiato idea.

T: Puoi dire che ti sentivi rilassato?

S: Sì. Perché si parlava di giochi, dovevamo giocare.

T: Tu pensi soltanto il parlare di giochi possa rilassarti o c'è bisogno anche di qualche altra cosa affinché si possa stare sereni in una lezione?

S: Dipende anche dal tipo di lezione; perché se si parla solamente di giochi dopo un po' diventa noioso, ci devono essere anche delle attività in base a quei giochi e sono belle l'attività è anche più bello imparare cose nuove.

T: Gamification: il corso è stato strutturato con il punteggio. vorrei capire il tuo punto di vista sulla leaderboard, su come ti percepivi tu, se i badge sono stati motivanti. ecco raccontami un po' questa tua esperienza con questa nuova forma di valutazione.

S: In verità io la leaderboard l'ho vista solamente le ultime due volte che volevo vedere se riuscivo a superare il corso o no e quindi mi sono impegnato ancora di più nelle ultime due lezioni. invece in quelle precedenti pensavo solamente a divertirmi. non mi interessava il punteggio, cioè veramente mi interessava divertirmi. Alla fine guardandola mi sono impegnato di più.

T: Non ti faceva sentire magari in una situazione di disagio il fatto di avere persone che stavano in posizione più alta rispetto a te?

S: Se sono in posizione più alta c'è un motivo, cioè o perché sono più bravi in inglese, magari già da prima. invece cioè io piano piano ho migliorato e quindi cioè non sono partito da già da due ma sono partito da zero.

T: Parliamo invece del gameplay: è mai cambiato il tuo gameplay, cioè hai cambiato il modo di percepire il gioco, ti sei divertito di meno sapendo di giocare per fini didattici?

S: No perché alla fine ho fatto sempre le stesse cose: giocavo sempre con i miei amici; al massimo dovevamo cambiare le modalità, però vabbè, cambiare ci divertiva pure di più; ci annoiamo a fare sempre le stesse modalità.

T: Secondo te ti ha lasciato un po' più di consapevolezza questo corso, cioè adesso quando giochi a minecraft presti attenzione a certe cose che prima magari facevi senza rifletterci troppo?

S: Sì sì, col gioco si può imparare, molto pure.

T: Secondo te è importante comunque l'intervento di un docente che ti guida in questo apprendimento o pensi che si possa imparare anche senza l'intervento di un docente?

S: Dipende dal docente, cioè se è bravo, ti aiuta, ti segue sì va bene. È un bene ti aiuta. Invece se il docente ti dice sola mente cosa fare, così no, cioè lo puoi fare pure da solo e ti puoi divertire pure di più. Invece se ti segue passo per passo è meglio.

T: Consigliaresti questo corso ad altre persone e a chi lo consiglieresti?

S: Sì a tutte le persone che non sono molto brave in inglese o di livello mediocre e vogliono imparare cose. e il modo più facile per impararle è proprio questo corso.

T: Come miglioraresti questo corso?

S: In minecraft si potrebbe creare un server privato, in cui anche il docente gioca nello stesso tempo insieme a tutti gli alunni e quindi può interagire direttamente nel gioco. sarebbe una bella idea.

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualcosa?

S: Questo corso alla fine mi è servito tantissimo, non solo per i giochi e per l'inglese; mi sono soprattutto divertito, ho staccato un po' dalle materie "normali" ed ho imparato però divertendomi, senza pensare diciamo ad un voto, ad una pagella, se sbagli hai i debiti eccetera. divertendosi è sempre più facile imparare.

T: Grazie.

INT 16 (13-11-21; 5 pm)

T: Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più? Elementi, aspetti positivi del corso

S: Allora mi è piaciuto molto il tema, qualcosa di molto inclusivo per noi della nostra età, perché tutti giochiamo ai videogiochi e un'altra cosa che proprio mi è piaciuta particolarmente è l'ambiente che si è creato, cioè questa cosa di riunirsi ogni giovedì, nel mio caso. Sono state belle le varie attività, per esempio mi ricordo trova le differenze oppure vedere dei video di altri youtuber, che magari seguiamo anche nel nostro tempo libero; cioè connettere quello a qualcosa di scolastico mi è piaciuto

T: Hai trovato qualcosa di noioso oppure qualche aspetto negativo del corso?

S: In realtà non tanto, perché anche i compiti per casa non erano pesanti

T: Invece qualcosa che hai trovato difficile?

S: No difficile niente.

T: Secondo te dopo questo corso se tu pensi al reading listening speaking e writing quale tra queste skills, in quale di queste skills tu ti senti più sicuro di te dopo questo corso?

S: Secondo me writing. Ho imparato anche parecchie parole che non conoscevo, acronimi che non conoscevo e che adesso uso e capisco

T: Secondo te giocando ai videogiochi si può imparare più vocabolario e in che modo?

S: Allora sì, sicuramente sì, perché secondo me il modo migliore per imparare una lingua, che sia l'inglese o un'altra, è parlarlo con altre persone che sono madrelingua, in questo caso persone che trovo online e così via; magari anche non capendo qualcosa, cioè per esempio io magari non capivo qualche acronimo o qualche parola che si scriveva e che si diceva, però non non chiedevo mai... invece alcune volte ho visto che chiedendo, cioè scrivendo proprio scrivo letteralmente non sono inglese questo cosa cosa vuol dire, molte persone mi rispondevano anche in modo molto gentile molto. se a me chiedessero qualcosa della mia lingua, qualcuno che non la conosce, mi piacerebbe spiegargliela

T: Vorrei che tu prestassi attenzione alla grammatica. secondo te alla fine di questo corso puoi dire di avere imparato anche qualcosa di grammatica?

S: Penso di sì; a parte alcune parole che ho imparato come si scrivono correttamente, poi per la prima volta ho imparato come si scrive WITH nel corso perché prima sbagliavo sempre, mettevo la H prima. mi ricordo che una volta lei mi corresse anche una cosa e spiego anche la regola del present Perfect continuous, quindi sì secondo me sì.

T: Se tu pensi a questo corso e al corso standard di inglese che si fa a scuola qual è secondo te, se c'è differenza. nell'approccio verso la lingua?

S: A scuola c'è approccio prettamente a didattico, proprio nel senso di insegnare la lingua; *gameful English* ha utilizzato un tramite, in questo caso Minecraft, un videogioco, che secondo me è utilissimo perché io durante la lezione non ricordo momenti in cui proprio ho detto "non ce la faccio" cioè "quando finisce", mentre in qualsiasi corso che ho fatto di inglese, anche quando ero piccolo, mi ricordo che controllavo l'orologio, aspettando che finisse perché, certo sono molto utili quei corsi e molto proprio focalizzati sulla sull'insegnamento della lingua, però dopo un po anche la mente proprio non riesce più ad apprendere cose. dopo un'ora e mezza di regole... mentre così secondo me è molto meglio, molto più facile, molto più leggero.

T: Se tu pensi ai compiti, agli assignments, qual è stato secondo te quello più divertente ,quello più piacevole da fare e perchè?

S: Quello di registrare un video come se fossi uno youtuber. ho fatto tipo 5 retake, perché risentendomi, quando parlavo, non mi piaceva; eppure mentre registravo mi sentivo fluido!

T: Quindi e ti ha divertito questa cosa anche se l'hai dovuta rifare più volte?

S: Sì sì.

T: Cosa ti ha divertito proprio tanto?

S: Mi ha divertito il fatto di sentirmi parlare, perché poi quando parlo non mi rendo conto di come sto parlando in inglese. c'era un video in cui per tutto il tempo non mi ricordavo una parola, e quindi ho detto ok ragazzi un attimo solo e nel mentre era tutto registrato sono andato su Google ho fatto Google translate ho cercato la parola l'ho letta, poi sono tornato in video e l'ho detta.

T: Invece l'attività che hai trovato piacevole da svolgere e sai il proprio durante i nostri incontri?

S: Mi era piaciuta la lezione quando abbiamo dovuto trovare le differenze. L'ho trovato divertente come gioco, proprio come era fatto.. era fatto davvero bene; poi anche quello dove abbiamo visto alcuni youtuber e abbiamo commentato. perché mi è piaciuto? perché alcuni li seguivo, quindi vederli qui è stato diverso.

T: Cosa ti ha reso più motivato, cosa ti ha aiutato a parlare di più in inglese?

S: Sicuramente la cosa che mi ha proprio motivato di più nel parlare è stato il fatto che c'erano altre persone che erano sul mio stesso livello, e a cui piaceva lo stesso gioco, ma proprio a livello di inglese eravamo sullo stesso piano.

T: Secondo te quali erano gli elementi che ti facevano sentire tranquillo/relassato durante I meeting?

S: L'ambiente che si era venuto a creare, il gruppo con gli stessi ragazzi, con cui parlavamo. lo stesso tema, ma con diversi argomenti ogni settimana era anche bello. quando due anni fa avevo le lezioni di inglese pomeridiane, dicevo di no.. mentre adesso dicevo: ah tra tra 10 minuti c'è il gameful. buono!

T: E pensi che anche la tua fluency sia migliorata dopo questo corso? ti senti più confident anche nella fluency?

S: Sì sì a parte che ho ampliato il mio vocabolario, poi sicuramente anche nel parlare mi sento un po più sicuro. parlando on line si capisce molto, ma a volte nel gioco capitano persone che parlano tra di loro in una maniera difficile e ti senti un po in soggezione a parlare con loro. In questo mi sono sentito migliorato.

T: Pensi che anche il listening sia migliorato?

S: Sì sì anche lì sicuro. per esempio prima pensavo molto di più, quando sentivo parlare in inglese, ragionavo molto di più su ogni parola. Nel mentre si diceva una frase e io ragionavo su quella frase, nel mentre se ne erano dette altre due. sentendo parlare anche

gli altri miei compagni o anche lei, ho imparato ad ascoltare più il discorso generale cioè se prima non capivo una parola ma magari mi soffermavo e ci pensavo; invece adesso è molto più fluido anche ascolto, cioè il senso lo capisco e anche le frasi.

T: Ci sono stati dei compiti o delle attività che hanno favorito e ti hanno aiutato sia nella fluency che nel listening?

S: Allora nella fluency quello del video, perché riascoltandomi capivo i miei errori, e nel listening quello dove abbiamo dovuto vedere dei video su youtube. Su questi video mi sono soffermato parecchio e rivisti più volte e alla fine quindi ho capito proprio tutto mi sono sentito sicuro di aver capito tutto; quindi secondo me questo è il compito migliore per il listening.

T: Parliamo di gamification: c'erano i punti, c'era una leaderboard, badge quindi anche il sistema di valutazione era diverso rispetto a quello scolastico. come ti sei sentito tu nel guardare il tuo nome nella leaderboard, nel vedere i tuoi progressi raccontati in questo modo, quindi con un punteggio?

S: A me è parecchio piaciuto perché ho sentito proprio il fatto di lavorare per qualcosa, cioè costruire proprio qualcosa. A scuola magari studio qualcosa e poi ho un voto e si ferma lì, o al massimo la cosa che posso cercare di costruire a scuola è una media a fine anno. il fatto proprio di prendere punti e così cercare di scalare era divertente; cioè era bello vedere quello che facevo proprio in punti precisi, quello mi è piaciuto.

T: Ti sei mai sentito in qualche modo in difficoltà nel vederti all'interno di una classifica?

S: No, non mi ha dato fastidio; cioè se c'erano persone sopra di me è perché hanno fatto meglio di me.

T: Una considerazione sul gameplay: il fatto di sapere che tu stavi giocando perché ti serviva per scuola in qualche modo a l'eso, danneggiato, ha modificato il tuo gameplay o anche semplicemente la sensazione di piacevolezza del gioco?

S: No in realtà no. quando da piccolo leggevo tantissimo i libri, poi hanno iniziato a darmeli per le vacanze d'estate, ero arrivato al punto di annoiarmi, perché lo dovevo obbligatoriamente. E invece no, questo in questo corso ho giocato con consapevolezza, perché non mi ha portato l'ansia che mi ha portato la scuola. quindi io giocavo sempre con la spensieratezza di come gioco normalmente.

T: Raccomanderesti ad altri ragazzi questa modalità di apprendimento e in particolare modo a chi e la raccomandaresti?

S: Sì secondo me è la migliore, cioè se proprio potessi decidere una modalità farei sicuramente questo. poi io la raccomanderei a chi magari non è molto sicuro di parlare in inglese o teme il giudizio degli altri su quello che dice, su quello che scrive. venendo qua e trovando persone che sono sulla stessa barca secondo me aiuta parecchio.

T: Da gamer riesci a proporre o suggerire qualche attività che secondo te se venisse inserita in un corso del genere sarebbe piacevole, sarebbe divertente?

S: Secondo me sicuramente il giocare in lingua, anche supervisionato, certo; però giocare in lingua secondo me aiuterebbe tantissimo, cioè proprio tutti insieme. magari un giorno si fa una lezione come l'abbiamo fatta sempre e un altro giorno, un'ora settimana, si gioca tutti insieme in inglese.

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualcosa?

S: No, nulla.

T: Grazie

INT 17 (13-01-22; 5.40 pm)

T: Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più di questo corso?

S: Secondo me il fatto che potessi imparare l'inglese anche soprattutto lo speaking giocando, magari conoscendo anche altre persone; infatti non lo avevo mai fatto, conoscere una persona al di fuori dell'Italia che giocasse a minecraft. L'ho trovato strano, però divertente.

T: C'è stato qualcosa che hai trovato noiosa nel corso o che non ti ha particolarmente convinto?

S: Oddio sinceramente neanche troppo..cioè magari ci sono quelle del vocabulary che comunque sono essenziali; è stato un po' complicato perché in una chat scriviamo di tutto e di più, però è stato comunque divertente anche quello: scoprire un po' come scrivevano le altre persone.

T: C'è stato qualcosa di difficile nel corso secondo te?

S: Ecco forse è proprio il trovare il compagno là fuori, perché infatti c'ho provato su minecraft ma non ha funzionato per circa 4 5 volte; alla fine sono andato su Micol, da tutt'altra parte, e l'ho trovata. Però è stato divertente.

T: Se tu pensi alle abilità di reading writing listening e speaking alla fine di questo corso, in quale ti senti più sicuro?

S: Sicuramente lo speaking. quello mi mancava un po', soprattutto la sicurezza nel parlare.

T: Si può imparare il vocabolario giocando? e in che modo?

S: Allora sinceramente esperienza mia, molte delle parole che so in inglese le ho imparate proprio da minecraft, perché sin da piccolo ci gioco, soprattutto in inglese, quindi sì, comunque si può imparare il vocabolario. poi ci sono tanti altri giochi che comunque ti fanno aumentare il tuo lessico, perché ti danno un'esperienza immersiva o magari si ripete molte volte la stessa azione; per esempio in minecraft se devo provare a fare una costruzione, costruisco molte scale, blocchi, e a mano a mano imparo anche i nomi degli oggetti che uso.

T: Riflettiamo sulla grammatica. pensi di avere imparato anche qualcosa di grammatica in questo corso?

S: Sicuramente sì, un ripasso soprattutto degli argomenti vecchi; alcune cose non non ricordo come si facevano grammaticalmente come una regola, per esempio l'utilizzo dei vari tempi, ecco quello era un po confusionale e sono riuscito a capirlo meglio.

T: Vorrei che tu confrontassi questo tipo di corso che noi abbiamo fatto e il corso tradizionale di inglese a scuola. riesci a confrontarli dal punto di vista dell'approccio che hanno verso la lingua?

S: Secondo me è molto meglio un corso di questo tipo, perché un corso di inglese in classe è un corso di inglese standard, quello scritto sui libri, quello delle regole. invece un corso di questo genere ti insegna a parlare l'inglese; magari se vai all'estero ti serve di più, perché capisci come parlano le persone; in un corso scolastico perché anche i listening sono tutti preparati, parlano ovviamente lentamente, non non come si fanno normalmente. Gameful è stimolante, perché ti fa conoscere un aspetto dell'inglese che effettivamente non ho mai visto, magari solo dalle canzoni, ma neanche troppo.

T: E qual è questo aspetto in particolare che viene fuori?

S: L'effettivo parlato, perché di speaking in classe se si riesce a fare si fa veramente poco. È uno speaking più improntato, per esempio... hai questa frase, tu mi devi tradurre questa frase, oppure uno speaking seguendo sempre le regole del libro.

T: I compiti che vi ho assegnato: dal tuo punto di vista quale stato il più divertente da fare e perché?

S: Sicuramente il video, al 100%. è stato veramente bellissimo. mi è piaciuto il fatto comunque di ritornare su youtube, perché io comunque facevo un po di video, un po di tempo fa. poi mi è piaciuto parlare con delle persone con cui parlo in italiano normalmente, perché sono del nord italia e Sardegna. sentirle parlare in inglese è stato molto divertente, anche perché mi sono potuto confrontare con loro.

T: Per quanto riguarda proprio le attività che abbiamo svolto insieme durante i meeting: quale è stata l'attività che ti è piaciuta di più, che ti ha divertito di più, e che secondo te quindi è stata anche più proficua?

S: Un po' tutte ma se devo dirne proprio una, quella dei video degli youtuber, il commento al gameplay del degli.

T: Ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare in inglese e, se sì, perché?

S: Assolutamente sì. allora mi ha fatto sentire più motivato il fatto che comunque potessi imparare una lingua che conosco già, ma a livello di speaking proprio, potessi migliorare il mio speaking, giocando, facendo una cosa che mi diverte normalmente., anche sentendo altre persone, sia miei coetanei che magari persone da altri paesi parlare inglese. mi ricordo che la persona che ho incontrato forse veniva dall'Irlanda. Mi è piaciuto proprio sentire parlare quest'altra versione in inglese, perché in effetti non mi sono mai confrontato con una persona che parlava inglese come prima lingua. Era una lei, e, quando le ho detto che era una attività per la scuola, le è sembrato strano ma mi ha detto che era divertente. ovviamente non si aspettava una cosa del genere. credo che questa sia stata la prima volta anche per lei.

T: Tutte le volte che partecipavi ai meeting, tu come ti sentivi, cioè quali erano le tue sensazioni nello stare nel gruppo, nel fare gli incontri?

S: Rispetto allo stare in classe mi sentivo molto meglio molto più diciamo integrato nel gruppo e nella lezione. poi è stato anche bello confrontarsi con gli con gli altri che comunque hanno la stessa passione dei videogiochi che ho io, magari un gruppo particolare è più stimolante. Mi sono sentito rilassato.

T: Per quanto riguarda la fluency, che effettivamente è la cosa che tu hai detto di aver migliorato, come ti sei reso conto di essere migliorato o comunque di sentirti più confident?

S: Sicuramente parlando con quella persona dell'altro paese. perché mi sono sentito all'inizio un po bloccato; poi anche durante il video, mentre parlavo, all'inizio è stato un po difficile; infatti ci sta una gran parte del video che ho tagliato in cui non parlavamo quasi per niente; poi abbiamo cominciato a commentare, abbiamo cominciato a parlare di più e mi sono accorto che bastava un po per sbloccarmi. alla fine, anche se magari non azzecavo tutte le parole, comunque era stato divertente farlo.

T: E secondo te è migliorato anche il listening?

S: credo proprio di sì. soprattutto ascoltare magari persone che parlano più velocemente.

T C'è stata secondo te un'attività che noi abbiamo svolto che dal tuo punto di vista ha favorito questa cosa?

S: La stessa di prima: la review dei video di youtube. questa è molto importante anche perché gli youtuber non parlano come parlano i libri di scuola.

T: Parliamo di gamification: per la prima volta tu hai potuto sperimentare il progresso all'interno di un corso diciamo didattico raccontato da una leaderboard, raccontato da una somma di punti, da badge, obiettivi vorrei capire come hai accolto questa cosa, come l'hai percepita, come ti sei percepito tu all'interno di questa leaderboard..

S: A me è piaciuta tanto perché il mio istinto da gamer comunque mi spingeva a prendere il maggior numero di punti possibili; quindi è comunque una cosa buona di mettere sempre voti su voti, perché si può notare un miglioramento più evidente alla fine.

T: Quindi tu pensi che un badge possa effettivamente funzionare come elemento di motivazione all'interno di un sistema scolastico?

S: Secondo me sì, anche perché attualmente non c'è niente. un badge in più sarebbe soltanto uno stimolo in più, quindi molto più importante. adesso c'è il voto... quindi neanche troppo... perché alla fine pensi al voto, alla media; dopo un po' ti scoccia. però magari con un badge, un riconoscimento, anche se piccolo, ti sprona a dare sempre il massimo.

T: Parliamo adesso del gameplay. questo cambiamento diciamo di consapevolezza o di attenzione al gioco ha cambiato il tuo gameplay?

S: Assolutamente no. era una cosa fatta per divertirsi. imparare divertendosi è più utile del "normale" perché, anche se magari all'inizio pensavo che devo fare questo compito, mentre giocavo me lo scordavo, infatti il video è uscito molto lungo, alla fine. non è cambiato il mio modo di giocare.

T: Quindi tu raccomandaresti anche ad altre persone questo modo di imparare e se sì a chi lo raccomandaresti?

S: Sì, lo raccomanderei, soprattutto alle persone che non conoscono i videogiochi, questo perché magari può funzionare anche dall'altro lato: io magari giocando ho appreso l'inglese, magari un'altra persona conoscendo già un po' di inglese, potrebbe imparare a giocare, oppure, quando ha imparato a giocare, potrebbe comunque migliorare il suo inglese. è comunque una win win in tutti e due i sensi. quindi sì, lo consiglieri, molto.

T: Quindi tu non pensi che devi per forza amare i videogiochi per partecipare a questo corso?

S: Assolutamente no, anche perché ovviamente credo sia normale che ogni persona giocando con un videogioco comunque si diverta. Secondo me l'importante è saper imparare divertendosi e non facendolo diventare un peso.

T: Un'altra domanda: tu da gamer, quale attività compito task inseriresti per migliorare questo format?

S: Uno scambio di videogiochi. magari ognuno presenta il suo videogioco preferito. si decide di giocare a quel videogioco per un certo lasso di tempo, e poi ci si confronta su questo videogioco. Potrebbe essere anche un libro o un gioco di società.

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualcos'altro?

S: Se magari questo progetto venisse inserito in altri ambiti, non soltanto l'inglese, anche con altre materie può essere molto utile questo format, anche perché mi ha stimolato proprio, cioè è stato divertente! non è stata una difficoltà, anzi. la domenica sera oppure vari giorni della settimana mentre facevo i compiti di *gameful english* mi ha fatto scaricare tutta la tensione della scuola.

T: Grazie.

INT 18 (13-01-22; 6.20 pm)

T: Secondo te quali sono stati gli aspetti positivi di questo corso? che cosa ti è piaciuto

S: Soprattutto il fatto che lei ha cercato di relazionarsi molto con noi, non ha parlato solo lei, ma comunque ha cercato di far parlare anche noi e ci ha aiutato anche con l'inglese, per chi non lo sapeva bene. in tutto questo aiutati da un aspetto esterno che era minecraft proprio, quindi molte persone riuscivano anche a entrare meglio nel discorso.

T: Secondo te qualcosa che invece ti ha annoiato comunque hai trovato poco interessante poco stimolante c'è stato?

S: Sarebbe stato meglio giocare un po' di più; si poteva fare anche una lobby, si poteva creare un mondo e giocare tutti insieme durante la lezione. però non c'è stata nessuna attività che ho trovato noiosa.

T: Hai mai percepito qualche compito come difficile?

S: No no, era abbastanza facile tutto.

T: Alla fine del corso se tu pensi alle abilità di reading speaking writing e listening, in quale di queste abilità ti senti migliorato?

S: Soprattutto nel parlare ma anche nell'ascoltare, perché più ascolti naturalmente e meglio riesci ad abituarti, sia guardando i video che abbiamo visto durante le lezioni, sia perché lei ha parlato molto in inglese.

T: Pensi che si possa imparare il vocabolario attraverso il gioco e in che modo?

S: Eh sì che si può imparare, perché comunque giocando tu riesci ad apprendere meglio, perché è una cosa che ti interessa; se devi imparare delle parole a memoria, ma in fondo a te non interessa, tu le impari ma il giorno dopo te le dimentichi; così invece continui ad utilizzarle e quindi secondo me le apprendi meglio.

T: Pensiamo invece alla grammatica: puoi dire che attraverso questo corso hai imparato anche qualcosa di grammatica

S: Sì sì diciamo di sì, sempre per il fatto che c'è stata molta interazione nel parlare inglese, quindi stavo attento nel formulare una frase con il verbo giusto.

T: Se tu pensi a questo corso e all'approccio che noi avevamo verso la lingua e poi pensi al corso tradizionale che c'è a scuola, riesci a trovare delle differenze o relazionarli in qualche modo?

S: Ah sì sicuramente ti aiutano entrambi nella lingua inglese quindi sono entrambi molto utili; però utilizzano un metodo di apprendimento completamente diverso, secondo me, perché lei cerca di relazionarsi attraverso il gioco, quindi in questo caso è stato minecraft, ma potrebbero essere anche diversi giochi; invece nel corso che si fa a scuola, l'insegnante è come se fosse un'insegnante normale e cerca di far apprendere gli studenti con il metodo tradizionale. diciamo che *Gameful English* è un metodo un po più moderno, possiamo dire.

T: Tra i compiti che io ho dato, quale secondo te era quello più divertente e motivante e stimolante?

S: Quello del video in cui tu facevi lo youtuber. quello secondo me è stato quello più divertente e interessante. perché potevi anche riascoltarti a vedere come parlavi. dicendo delle cose tu non te ne accorgi se sbagli, però risentendole, magari, ti accorgi pure che hai sbagliato qualcosa; ma poi pure il fatto che ti senti come un vero youtuber e quindi giochi parlando sempre in inglese.

T: Per quanto riguarda gli incontri che noi facevamo, quali attività degli incontri online hai trovato interessanti e divertenti e sempre utili?

S: A me è piaciuta quella di trovare le differenze nelle foto, perché ti aiutava a capire meglio le parole e impararle. con un gioco riesci riesce a impararle meglio.

T: Ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare in inglese?

S: Eh vabbè certo, parlando gli altri e sentendo anche lei parlare in inglese, cerchi anche tu di migliorare e parlare sempre meglio in inglese. anche vedendo i video di persone che parlano inglese, cerchi di capire sempre di più e migliorare.

T: Qual era la tua sensazione durante i meeting?

S: All'inizio forse ero un po scoccia, non è una cosa troppo divertente (fare lezioni), però alla fine seguendo la lezione, pian piano, cercavi di entrare dentro la lezione e continuare a seguire. però poi pensando a quello che dovevo fare realmente non era troppo scoccia.

T: Possiamo dire che ti sentivi rilassato durante i meeting o ti sentivi sotto pressione

S: No, no, ero molto rilassato perché ci lasciava il proprio spazio e quando bisognava parlare, si parlava.

T: Secondo te è migliorata anche la tua fluency?

S: Sì perché più lo parli più naturalmente riesci a farlo sempre meglio. è questo soprattutto che fa la differenza.

T: Anche nel listening?

S: Sì perché comunque abbiamo ascoltato molto un sacco di video di americani e anche lei ci parlava molto in inglese, quindi ci aiutava sempre di più ad ascoltarlo e quindi a capirlo meglio.

T: Se tu dovessi ritrovare un esercizio che abbiamo fatto, che migliora la fluency, quale sarebbe?

S: Nel video youtuber perché tu nel video devi cercare di parlare con una certa fluidità, devi essere sempre molto preparato; se girando il video vedevi che parlavi in maniera non molto fluida, allora potevi anche rifarlo e quindi riuscire a migliorarlo.

T: Parliamo della gamification: come hai percepito questa cosa della leaderboard, del punteggio.. che tipo di sensazioni ti ha dato come la giudichi?

S: Secondo me è stato anche molto giusto, perché per esempio io non ho fatto tutto; però chi si è impegnato di più ha ottenuto un ottimo punteggio e si distingue magari da chi ha fatto meno, e quindi c'è una maggiore gratificazione nei confronti di chi si è impegnato.

T: Per te non è stato motivo di frustrazione il fatto di vederti magari basso nella classifica?

S: No perché so quello che ho fatto e quindi so comunque che non potevo stare sopra. Con la classifica e i badge capisci meglio come sta andando. Secondo me è meglio.

T: Tu avevi tutte le capacità per arrivare al 60 che era la soglia che noi avevamo dato per passare idealmente il corso. perché tu non sei arrivato a 60, che cosa te lo ha impedito?

S: In realtà non è che mi sono impegnato molto; anche perché molte volte dicevo: magari lo faccio dopo.. e poi non lo facevo più, perché mi dimenticavo. non c'è un vero motivo perché non ho fatti i compiti. Altre volte sono stato assente per altri motivi. non mi sono impegnato troppo diciamo.

T: Lo scarso interesse ad arrivare lì a raggiungere questo obiettivo, secondo te da che cosa era dato: se tu dovessi fare un'analisi direi non sono arrivato a soglia perché....

S: ...Non c'è un vero motivo....

T: Secondo te, se ci fosse stata una valutazione che poi avresti trasferito a scuola, poteva essere una motivazione per arrivare al 60?

S: Sì certo. Perché nel corso se tu arrivavi a 60 ottenevi il badge e però finiva lì.

T: Il gameplay. È cambiata la tua percezione del gameplay, sapendo di giocare a minecraft per imparare l'inglese?

S: Sì perché adesso giocando a minecraft non penso solamente a divertirmi, ma anche a relazionarmi con altre persone parlando in inglese. per esempio in una partita online anziché giocare e basta magari parlo anche in inglese, cercando di impegnarmi di più a parlare in inglese.

T: Ma la piacevolezza del gioco è cambiata?

S: Eh si aumenta! pure perché parlando con altre persone diventi sia più bravo sia comunque riesci a goderti meglio il gioco.

T: Consigliaresti questo corso a degli altri studenti e a chi lo consigliaresti ?

S: Certo che lo consiglierei perché comunque ti aiuta sia in inglese sia comunque è una cosa divertente da fare. lo consiglierò soprattutto a chi ha poco da fare nel pomeriggio, che non fa niente, oppure non è molto bravo in inglese. comunque migliora.

T: Indifferentemente se si tratta di un gamer o no?

S: Allora sicuramente ci deve essere un piccolo interesse per i videogiochi, magari in uno specifico videogioco, però almeno un piccolo interesse per i videogiochi; altrimenti si ritorna sempre al fatto che non c'è uno stimolo che ti aiuta imparare e a migliorare.

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualcosa ?

S: No va bene così

T: Grazie

INT 19 (13-01-22; 7 pm)

T: Gli aspetti positivi del corso: che cosa ti sia divertito di più, che cosa ti è piaciuto?

S: Io ero partito dal presupposto di iniziare un corso legato alla scuola, alle materie scolastiche. Invece nel gruppo con lei abbiamo stabilito una bella relazione; forse è stata la prima volta in cui la scuola abbia unito qualche insegnamento a qualcosa che per noi ragazzi è importante, cioè giocare. poi abbiamo imparato anche molte più parole, certi significati che magari solo su Internet possiamo trovare.

T: Qualcosa che non ti è piaciuto del corso?

S: del corso no. più che altro giocare sempre a minecraft dopo un po' scoccia. io non sono un amante di minecraft, dopo un po' mi ha scocciato, però vabbè, si fa lo stesso.

T: Qualcosa cosa che hai trovato difficile?

S: Difficile no, forse impegnativo, perché fare i compiti richiedeva il suo impegno però di difficile no.

T: Se tu che tu pensi ai vari skills speaking, listening e writing, alla fine di questo corso in quale di queste abilità ti senti più confident?

S: Forse a dialogare in inglese con altre persone, perché il lessico lo impari, parlarlo è diverso. parlarlo quelle 2 ore in classe a settimana va bene, ma anche al di fuori è bello.

T: Proprio riguardo al vocabolario secondo te con i videogiochi si può imparare più vocabolario e in che modo?

S: Assolutamente sì. oltre a parole normali della lingua inglese, si possono imparare anche molte più parole, per esempio abbreviazioni come asap e migliorare il linguaggio di base, perché parlando con un'altra persona di sicuro non si avranno le stesse idee, le stesse cose da dire.

T: Se pensi invece alla grammatica, pensi che comunque tu sia uscito ad imparare qualcosa con questo corso?

S: Sicuramente sì, però non è un aspetto momento che su Internet viene curato così tanto. La gente scrive in un modo molto più comodo che corretto. Nel nostro corso ho imparato nuove parole.

T: Se tu pensi a questo corso e al corso di inglese a scuola, riesci a fare un paragone?

S: Sicuramente cinquant'anni fa anni fa sarebbe sempre servito molto di più quello di inglese normale, però adesso che viviamo grazie alla tecnologia, questa secondo me è stato molto più inutile. Nel corso di lingua a scuola si fa molta più attenzione perché ci sono i voti, mentre qui si fa sempre attenzione, ma la cura dura degli studenti è minore, non perché non ci si tiene, ma perché è un mondo che ci appartiene di più, in cui ci sentiamo più sicuri.

T: Quando dici attenzione ti riferisci all'essere grammaticalmente corretti?

S: Sì. Solo a quello, alla grammatica, perché poi a parlare bisogna farlo bene sia a scuola che fuori. **H1.1**

T: Tra i quali compiti che io ho assegnato, qual è il compito che ti ha divertito di più? Che hai svolto con più piacere?

S: Forse se quello degli acrinimi, perché mi ha fatto piacere sia imparare molte cose, cioè modi di dire che solo su Internet ci sono. A me non è piaciuto fare i compiti in cui si doveva giocare a minecraft, perché ero stanco. Invece mi è piaciuto quello della chat, per capire cosa scrivevano gli altri giocatori e che significato avevano.

T: Tu ti eri annoiato a giocare a minecraft perché era diventato un obbligo di studio, perché non è il tuo gioco preferito?

S: No perché semplicemente non è il mio gioco preferito. Giochi così a me non piacciono.

T: Quale attività che abbiamo fatto insieme ti è piaciuta di più?

S: A lezione quando guardavamo i video degli youtuber e dovevamo commentare, perché abbiamo visto vari tipi di accenti e di modi di parlare e si poteva imparare qualcosa. per esempio C'era una volta che abbiamo visto un video di uno youtuber che parlava velocissimo, e noi ci siamo messi piano piano e abbiamo capito quello che diceva. quello mi è piaciuto molto perché ho imparato molte cose.

T: Ti sei sentito motivato a parlare in inglese?

S: Sì, perché avevo più facilità, perché ero proprio spronato a parlarlo; gli altri anni in classe, non esprimevo mai la opinione. con questo corso mi sono sentito più spronato a dire la mia anche su discorsi che vanno oltre la scuola e gli argomenti del corso che abbiamo fatto.

T: Che cosa ti ha aiutato?

S: Il tema, ma soprattutto perché lei durante le lezioni faceva dire qualcosa ad ognuno, non era ad alzata di mano, chiamava lei. e questo, non dico obbligo, ma spronamento a parlare, credo che volontariamente porta qualcuno a parlare. non sono solo sotto richiesta.

T: Come ti senti sentivi durante gli incontri, quando partecipavi alle lezioni?

S: Partecipavo con molto piacere perché è l'argomento che mi piaceva, non tanto minecraft, ma i videogiochi; poi anche perché ho conosciuto molti ragazzi e anche meglio coloro che già conoscevo. e questo è stato bello, perché abbiamo capito che tutti abbiamo la passione in comune; ho visto che ognuno ha fatto il suo video e magari ha reso quel desiderio che aveva da piccolo una cosa vera. Alcuni lo hanno fatto benissimo. È stato bello.

T: Ti sei sentito rilassato durante gli incontri?

S: Sì. Non era una lezione di scuola normale, che crea un po' d'ansia. era proprio una chiacchierata tra amici.

T: Secondo te a scuola che cosa mette ansia?

S: I voti.

T: Anche in questo corso, se tu ci ripensi, c'erano dei punti, una leaderboard...quindi c'era comunque una valutazione. Questa valutazione la trovi meno pressante?

S: Secondo me sì. Poi magari qui non si ha la preoccupazione di essere rimandati o bocciati. quella credo sia la motivazione principale. Qui siamo stati molto più entusiasti di fare le cose perché diciamo eravamo molto più guidati. A volte capita di incontrare docenti a cui non interessa molto insegnare; invece qui ci siamo trovati davanti anche a chi ci guidava e ci entusiasmava. A scuola se magari trovi una docente che non è capace di far passare certe cose, te la devi vedere tu, è tutto a carico tuo.

T: Non sentivi il peso della leaderboard? non ti dava fastidio vedere la tua posizione?

S: Credo di averla vista due volte dall'inizio del corso, non perché non avessi interesse, ma perché anche se non fossi riuscito a passare il corso, anche se poi ho fatto pure un buon punteggio, credo che mi sarebbe interessato, ma solo in parte, perché mi interessava di più imparare delle cose.

T: La gamification può essere motivante per gli studenti?

S: Secondo me sì, perché ogni valutazione in questo caso, aveva anche un peso inferiore rispetto ad un 2 o tre di scuola, perché nella lezione successiva potevi interagire di più e prendere punti, potevi fare un compito a casa prendere altri punti, tranquillamente. invece a scuola ci vuole qualche mese per recuperare una brutta insufficienza. dipende anche dalla personalità, perché se trovi l'alunno che perde subito l'interesse, perde subito il coraggio di recuperare, viene rimandato; invece invece qui no, no perché sei molto più guidato e molto più interessato a fare quello che fai.

T: Ritornando alle attività e ripensando alla fluency e al listening: secondo te sei migliorato in queste due abilità?

S: Secondo me sono migliorato perché parlando di più, sotto allenamento tutti miglioriamo. Siccome in questo periodo ho parlato molto online e con voi in inglese, credo di sì.

T: Quali sono stati i compiti che effettivamente hanno aiutato a fare questo?

S: Nelle ultime lezioni avevamo parlato di qualcosa che mi aveva preso molto, cioè il commento sul gameplay. Sentire gli youtuber, e quindi capire cosa dicevano, e poi esprimere un commento hanno aiutato queste abilità.

T: Tu raccomanderei questo modo di imparare ad altri ragazzi e a chi?

S: Sì. Non solo ai ragazzi che hanno un interesse nei videogiochi, ma interesse a fare le cose. Se chiedi ad un ragazzo di giocare ad un gioco che non gli piace, deve avere interesse a fare le cose, a migliorare l'inglese e ad utilizzare il suo tempo in questo modo.

T: Se uno trova il gioco che al ragazzo piace, pensi che questo corso sarebbe migliore?

S: Sarebbe la svolta! se questo corso fosse stato su Call of Duty non avrei preso 65, ma 120!!

T: Come miglioreresti questo corso?

S: L'unica attività che metterei sarebbe creare un server e giocare con tutti quelli della classe e parlare in inglese. Quello sarebbe bello.

T: Dove sta l'insegnante in questa attività?

S: L'insegnante può giocare con la classe, fare l'osservatore esterno o anche essere assente, così ci si può conoscere meglio ed utilizzare parole che alla prof non piacciono.

T: Ultima domanda: vuoi aggiungere qualcosa?

S: No. va bene così.

T: Grazie

INT 20 (14-01-22; 3.20 pm)

T: Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più, quali sono gli aspetti positivi del corso che riesci ad evidenziare?

S: Sicuramente il fatto di parlare con qualcuno in inglese, perché in classe nostra non lo facciamo spesso. il fatto di parlare in inglese con qualcuno è positivo; anche l'idea di giocare, anche l'argomento era interessante, anche se a me il gioco (minecraft) non faceva impazzire; però comunque l'argomento era interessante.

T: C'è qualche aspetto che hai trovato noioso del del corso, dell'organizzazione... in generale di tutto?

S: Forse l'unico aspetto negativo era un po' il gioco, perché a me non piaceva molto e non mi divertiva molto giocare, forse questo.

T: Secondo te quindi se ci fosse stato un altro gioco la tua partecipazione sarebbe stata anche diversa?

S: Eh sì sicuramente.

T: Perché per esempio io vedo anche dai punti della classifica che tu non hai raggiunto la soglia dei 60. riesci a trovare delle motivazioni, perché sicuramente non sono legate alle tue capacità, perché potevi arrivarci benissimo...

S: Perché proprio il fatto di giocare a un gioco che non mi faceva impazzire, molte volte non mi spingeva magari a fare quel determinato esercizio, quel determinato compito, forse più per questo.

T: Secondo te alla fine di questo corso se tu pensi alle abilità di reading listening speaking e writing, in quale di queste abilità tu ti senti più sicuro di te?

S: Forse speaking, perché era quello dove mi esercitavo un po' di più, quello in cui mi impegnavo un po' di più, e quindi forse è quello dove mi sento migliorato.

T: Secondo te è possibile imparare, ampliare il vocabolario, quindi imparare parole nuove in inglese giocando ad un videogioco?

S: Eh sì, ovviamente sì anche perché giocando con gente inglese che non si conosce quello comunque aiuta molto soprattutto nel parlare nel riuscire ad esprimersi, nel trovare le parole; e quindi secondo me questo è un buon punto di forza. quando ti trovi in partita, in una partita online, se è un gioco di squadra, ad esempio, devi collaborare con gli altri giocatori, e quindi devi per forza esprimerti in inglese, perché loro nella tua lingua ovviamente non ti capiscono. quindi tu, cercando le parole per esprimerti ti aiuta a migliorare l'inglese e le conoscenze in inglese.

T: Quando tu giochi in multiplayer e quindi ti serve una strategia e ti servono le parole, dove le trovi, quando ti servono delle parole in inglese e stai giocando?

S: Beh, o uso il traduttore, quando non riesco proprio ad esprimermi, oppure cerco di girare intorno alla parola, magari ne conosco altre che mi permettono di arrivare allo stesso concetto.

T: E poi i giocatori dall'altra parte ti danno un feedback magari ti danno quella parola, te la forniscono loro?

S: Sì se capisce cosa voglio dire, per esempio mi dice il modo più veloce magari per dire quella cosa al posto di fare un giro di parole inutili.

T: Pensiamo alla grammatica sempre in relazione al corso che abbiamo fatto. secondo te hai imparato qualcosa anche di grammatica grazie a questo corso? che cosa?

S: Sì, ad esempio l'uso dei verbi principalmente e le capacità già acquisite a scuola. il corso comunque sicuramente aiuta a migliorarle.

T: Sempre parlando di scuola. se tu hai presente il corso di inglese che si fa a scuola e quello che abbiamo fatto noi, pensa all'approccio che questi due corsi hanno verso l'inglese: che differenze ci sono, se ci sono differenze, come puoi paragonarli?

S: Questo di *gameful english* secondo me è più specializzato per far migliorare la persona in inglese; l'inglese a scuola è più per farti conoscere le regole, le cose strutturali. qui riesci più a mettere in pratica quello che impari a scuola, cioè con le conversazioni, parlando, cercando di esprimerti.

T: Per quanto riguarda i compiti da fare a casa, secondo te qual è la più divertente il più motivante?

S: Quello degli acronimi mi è piaciuto un po di più, e anche quello di fare il proprio mondo. Anche quello di trovare le differenze.

T: Invece per quanto riguarda le attività che abbiamo fatto durante i nostri incontri: qual è l'attività che secondo te hai trovato interessante, costruttiva, utile e piacevole?

S: Quella più piacevole forse era quella dei video di youtube, quando dovevamo analizzare il video. anch'io vedo dei video stranieri, però non mi metto ad analizzarne per bene il contenuto, non capisco tutte le parti. Il tipo di analisi che abbiamo fatto noi lezione ti rendeva più facile capire il contenuto, riuscivi a cogliere i diversi aspetti che io magari non vedevo quando vedevo il video da solo.

T: Durante il corso tu ti sei sentito motivato a parlare in inglese e che cosa ti ha motivato?

S: Il fatto ad esempio di parlare di un gioco, perché anche se il gioco non mi piaceva, però comunque l'argomento era i video giochi, quindi comunque parlare mi interessava. era un qualcosa di più.

T: Qual era il tuo stato d'animo durante gli incontri settimanali come ti sentivi tu ad entrare nel meet?

S: Era come se dovessi andare comunque a scuola con qualcosa che mi interessava, perché erano i videogiochi. io ero tranquillo perché comunque si trattava un argomento interessante, poi non era noioso, cioè mi divertivo in un certo senso durante le lezioni ok.

T: Secondo te hai migliorato anche la tua fluency?

S: Sì perché comunque parlando in inglese, diventa sempre più automatico riuscire ad esprimersi. quindi secondo me sì.

T: Lo hai notato in qualcosa di particolare cioè questa sensazione l'hai avuta in un momento particolare o in un compito particolare?

S: Nelle prime lezioni ovviamente era più difficile riuscissi ad esprimermi, però poi dopo, con il passare delle lezioni, mi sono accorto anch'io che riuscivo a esprimermi più facilmente, a parlare comunque più fluidamente, perché comunque la lezione, l'argomento, ti stimolava diciamo a farlo.

T: Puoi dire la stessa cosa anche per il listening? cioè puoi dire che è migliorato, che alla fine riuscivi a capire meglio i giocatori e le situazioni?

S: Eh sì, sì soprattutto me ne so accorto quando abbiamo visto il video: riuscivo comunque a capire la maggior parte di quello che veniva detto.

T: Se tu dovessi identificare dei tasks che noi abbiamo fatto durante le attività e che hanno promosso sia la fluency che il listening quali, quali compiti ti hanno effettivamente aiutato?

S: quando vedevamo i video e dovevamo a lezione cosa dicesse; in tutti quei compiti in cui serviva una interazione con altri giocatori; quindi mi portava comunque a migliorare l'inglese.

T: Parliamo invece adesso di gamification che hai visto il corso era strutturato con un punteggio tutte le attività avevano un punteggio poi c'era una leaderboard eccetera. tu come ti sentivi quando vedevi il tuo nome in questa leaderboard, qual era il tuo approccio?

S: La classifica mi è piaciuta. parli di videogiochi, la classifica c'è sempre. Vedere la posizione nella classifica magari ti poteva anche aiutare, io l'ho vista alla fine del corso; però magari vedendola durante il corso mi avrebbe potuto aiutare ad accorgermene e fare qualcosa in più di quello che ho fatto.

T: Può essere quindi uno stimolo? i badge possono essere uno stimolo? vedere questo progresso, questa dashboard, questo progresso sullo schermo, riesce anche a chiarirti meglio un progresso nell'apprendimento?

S: A scuola magari voti possono aiutarti a capire se stai migliorando o no; però durante le lezioni non te ne accorgi come magari te ne puoi accorgere durante le lezioni di questo corso. Qui ti accorgi proprio parlando che stai magari migliorando in quell'ambito, cosa che a scuola magari non succede.

T: Dover giocare ad un gioco che te non hai scelto o non sceglieresti normalmente, ti ha cambiato il gameplay cioè ti ha cambiato la piacevolezza del giocare

S: Ah sì che comunque giocare a un gioco che non ti fa impazzire magari non aiuta; al contrario se magari avessi giocato un altro gioco che mi sarebbe piaciuto di più magari sarei stato più coinvolto. sarei stato più attivo.

T: Secondo te questo ha influito anche sui compiti. è per questo che magari non hai consegnato certi compiti perché comunque prevedevano l'utilizzo di minecraft?

S: Magari non riuscivo proprio a trovare la voglia di giocare in quel modo.

T: Quando tu giocavi a minecraft, le volte che c'hai giocato, quindi sentivi questa imposizione, qual era proprio la tua sensazione del nel giocare sapendo di doverlo fare?

S: Non ero molto felice quando ci giocavo, perché comunque lo dovevo fare. magari mi divertivo di più quando dovevamo fare i compiti con gli altri, con i amici, quindi quello mi spingeva di più a giocare, però nelle attività da solo non avevo moltissima voglia di farlo.

T: Hai vissuto il gioco di minecraft più come un dovere che con un piacere. secondo te in tutte le modalità? creativa survival e multiplayer? o tra queste, proprio dovendo scegliere, ne salvi una?

S: Se proprio devo scegliere sicuramente il multigiocatore; comunque giocavo con i miei amici, poi giocavo con altre persone: c'era la competitività, il dover vincere; quindi quello diciamo mi spronava a giocare. a me di minecraft non piace molto la creativa perché la ritengo abbastanza noiosa, cioè ti deve piacere per giocare in creativa.

T: Se tu volessi darmi un consiglio per migliorare questo format, al di là di minecraft, quale attività inseriresti in un corso sui videogiochi per favorire l'uso della lingua?

S: Far giocare proprio durante la lezione, non solo a casa.

T: Con l'insegnante presente o senza?

S: Con l'insegnante presente e che gioca o anche che guarda.

T: Tu pensi che si possa imparare quindi l'inglese in questo modo, con i videogiochi?

S: Secondo me sì, anche perché è il modo forse migliore. a scuola la prof te lo insegna l'inglese, però non non lo metti in pratica; mentre magari giocando con altre persone, giocando con i tuoi amici, e parlando in inglese, questo sicuramente può essere inteso come metodo di apprendimento.

T: Quanto è importante la presenza di un'insegnante affinché ci sia reale apprendimento?

S: Secondo me tanto, perché comunque se non c'è l'insegnante, gli alunni magari si distraggono, possono succedere cose che portano alla fine a non perseguire l'obiettivo che era stato prefissato.

T: A che tipo di studenti tu consiglieresti un apprendimento dell'inglese fatto in questo modo?

S: Vabbè sicuramente a quelli a cui piacciono i videogiochi, perché comunque quelle sono sicuramente le persone più spronate a giocare, quindi a parlare.

T: Vuoi aggiungere un commento?

S: No.

T: Grazie

INT 21 (14-01-22; 4 pm)

T: Secondo te quali sono stati gli aspetti positivi e divertenti del corso?

S: Secondo me gli aspetti diciamo più positivi erano le lezioni in cui vedevamo i video e poi li commentavamo. tiravano in ballo molte persone, perché vedere un video è spesso interessante, anche se non sai di cosa parla all'inizio; in generale proprio sul corso è stata proprio una bella idea. appena ho sentito che ci si poteva iscrivere, ho subito detto di sì. penso che ci siano molti più aspetti positivi che negativi, perché anche il fatto di dover consegnare dei "compiti", perché alla fine erano degli incarichi sul gioco, teneva comunque l'attenzione sul corso da parte di tutti. poi essendo comunque un gioco a noi ragazzi interessa molto rispetto ad altri corsi.

T: E invece degli aspetti che hai trovato noiosi, poco coinvolgenti, che non ti sono piaciuti?

S: Allora, noiosi... boh sinceramente cioè non ce ne sono molti... è difficile perché mi sono trovato abbastanza bene con questo corso.

T: Qualcosa di difficile che hai trovato?

S: Di difficile no, però relazionarsi tutta un'intera lezione in inglese non è che sia stato difficile, ma impegnativo. È stato bello anche se impegnativo, perché comunque parlare in inglese, che non è nella nostra lingua, non è molto facile.

T: Se tu pensi adesso alle abilità di reading writing speaking listening secondo te alla fine del corso in quale di queste abilità ti senti più sicuro di te?

S: Speaking sicuramente.

T: Secondo te si può ampliare il vocabolario giocando con un videogioco e in che modo?

S: Per prima cosa con i termini specifici propri del gioco. dovendoti poi relazionare con altre persone, se giochi online, la frase non è composta solo da termini specifici del gioco ma anche dal resto. inconsapevolmente anche spesso, impari i termini che non conoscevi.

T: Quando tu non conosci qualche termine, come fai?

S: Lo cercavo con il traduttore e a volte anche durante il giorno, se volevo iniziare a giocare e avevo qualcosa da chiedere sulla chat, prima di iniziare a giocare, se volevo chiedere qualcosa però non sapevo come come farlo, per esempio il giorno prima volevo chiedere qualcosa durante il gioco, ma non volevo fermarlo e quindi ho evitato di chiederlo, il giorno dopo visto ho cercato la parola specifica su un dizionario online.

T: Secondo te con questo corso hai imparato anche qualcosa di grammatica di grammatica?

S: Sì perché anche durante le lezioni lei ci faceva notare gli errori e quindi abbiamo imparato a correggerli automaticamente.

T: Se tu pensi ad un corso normale a scuola di inglese e a questo corso: e riesci a paragonarli per quanto riguarda l'approccio alla lingua?

S: Questo corso secondo me rispetto a quello tradizionale scolastico ci dà una mano più sullo speaking, perché spesso e volentieri in classe si parla in italiano. il writing secondo me è quasi allo stesso livello del tradizionale; il listening è maggiore in questo in questo corso, perché comunque le lezioni a scuola, anche quando la professoressa spiega letteratura a volte per farci capire delle cose ce le spiega in italiano; invece in questo corso le parole non erano complicate, erano facili da comprendere per tutti penso; perché infatti non richiedevamo quasi mai spiegarcele di italiano.

T: Pensi che però questo sia facilitato dal fatto che voi un vocabolario di base già lo avevate?

S: Personalmente io ho imparato molti vocaboli con con questo corso e ho preso anche più sicurezza nel listening, nello speaking infatti nel listening sono migliorato molto.

T: Pensi di essere diventato anche più fluent?

S: Sì, sì.

T: Mi sai dire secondo te quali sono stati i propri compiti, le attività che hanno favorito questi due aspetti quindi la fluency e il listening?

S: Magari non era un compito, ma proprio le lezioni in sé. lo speaking veniva migliorato con le lezioni e il listening anche, perché comunque poi nel gioco a meno che non eri in un sito discord non ascoltavi né parlavi con le persone.

T: Dici durante le lezioni perché io vi incitavo a parlare?

S: Sì, sì.

T: Tu ti sentivi più motivato a interagire a lezione e che cosa ti ha aiutato?

S: Sì. forse perché era proprio parlare di un gioco, cioè essere focalizzati sul gioco.

T: Il fatto che io ti chiedessi di partecipare secondo te ti ha aiutato o ti metteva sotto pressione?

S: Mi metteva sotto pressione ma aiutandomi, perché comunque dovevo comunque migliorare. questo è un altro aspetto positivo appunto di queste lezioni che abbiamo fatto. essere sempre spronati dall'insegnante ad essere partecipi, poi ti fa migliorare, inconsapevolmente spesso. appunto la mia fluency è migliorata molto con questo corso. penso per tutti nel gruppo.

T: Se pensi ai compiti che io ho assegnato, qual era il compito più bello più interessante più accattivante e anche utile da svolgere?

S: Più utile da svolgere e bello secondo me è stato quello dove dovevamo registrare il nostro gameplay, quello dello youtuber.

T: Secondo te che cosa metteva in gioco quell'attività? perché secondo te era divertente era bella?

S: E perché comunque non era ad esempio scrivere dei vocaboli, come avevamo fatto nei primi compiti, ma proprio entrare in gioco noi nel gameplay, mostrando le nostre abilità nel gioco stesso.

T: Invece per quanto riguarda le attività proprio svolte durante il corso, quali pensi che sia stata quella che ti è piaciuta di più quella che ti ha divertito che ti ha coinvolto?

S: Allora quella degli acronimi, in cui dovevamo dire cosa significassero, e quella dei video che dovevamo commentare e fare una review di quello che aveva fatto lo youtuber.

T: Quanto riguarda proprio le tue sensazioni nel partecipare alla lezione, qual era il tuo stato d'animo?

S: Ma ero rilassato quando entravo a lezione perché sapevo che era un gioco, quindi mi sentivo di più a mio agio, senza essere sotto pressione per dei voti che sarebbero arrivati, anche se c'erano dei "voti", ma non non erano così pressanti.

T: Gamification: voi venivate valutati secondo un punteggio che veniva attribuito ad ogni cosa che facevate; poi tutto veniva mostrato nella leaderboard. vorrei capire la tua percezione della leaderboard. è una valida alternativa quella di dimostrare i progressi di uno studente attraverso una leaderboard? e tu come la percepisci?

S: Secondo me c'è un aspetto sia negativo che positivo di questa leaderboard, perché tu vedendo anche i progressi degli altri partecipanti, anche del tuo gruppo, eri spronato, se ad esempio eri un po' indietro col punteggio rispetto ad alcuni; ma a volte ti senti anche un po' a disagio se vedevi che eri molto sotto di punteggio rispetto a qualche persona. è equilibrato. c'è a chi potrebbe dare

fastidio questa cosa di vedere pubblicato il proprio voto rispetto a tutto il gruppo.. però sinceramente a me non non faceva nè caldo nè freddo, era era un buon metodo per la valutazione.

T: Secondo te una valutazione del genere ti riesce a raccontare meglio i progressi in un corso rispetto al metodo tradizionale che abbiamo a scuola, quello dei voti?

S: Sì e secondo me anche molto meglio, perché uno riesce a vedere tutti gli studenti con le loro valutazioni e quindi anche per i ragazzi è soddisfacente vedere che tutti stanno partecipando.

T: Il gameplay .tu giocavi a minecraft. a un certo punto minecraft viene utilizzato a scuola quindi sai che stai giocando a m inecraft per uno scopo didattico. questa cosa ha cambiato la tua percezione del gameplay?

S: No perché comunque era una fonte di divertimento per me, anche se sapevo di essere valutato sul mio gameplay.

T: Ti sei continuato a divertire pur sapendo...

S: Sì, sì.

T: Credi che effettivamente questo possa essere un metodo per imparare una lingua straniera l'inglese

S: Sì, secondo me anche molto efficiente come metodo.

T: A chi lo consiglieresti? a quale tipologia di studenti?

S: A degli studenti non molto focalizzati sui libri. Infatti, della nostra classe, quelli che non hanno partecipato o sono persone che non hanno voglia oppure non gli piacciono i giochi, ma soprattutto quelle più acculturate rispetto al resto della classe. Le persone che noi chiamiamo secchione. spesso queste persone non amano queste attività, proprio perché sono basate sul gaming. Viene sottovalutato.

T: C'è ancora questo stereotipo che chi gioca è un fannullone?

S: Anche i nostri genitori lo vedono come una perdita di tempo; magari spesso lo è, però comunque ci fa divertire.

T: Quale attività introdurresti tu per migliorare il corso?

S: Allora io inserirei un mondo online con tutte le persone del progetto, magari anche solo del gruppo che si era creato in base al livello di inglese. sarebbe anche uno stimolo in più sapere che non sei con sconosciuti e quindi ti riesci ad aprire meglio.

T: Pensi che l'insegnante debba partecipare al gameplay o debba stare dall'altra parte, quindi come il supervisor?

S: Secondo me come supervisor forse è meglio. altrimenti secondo me si perderebbe un po il senso del ruolo tra insegnante e studente.

T: Pensi che comunque sia importante l'intervento di un docente, anche se si tratta di un corso che si fa giocando di base?

S: Sì perché comunque se no non ci sarebbero dei limiti. cioè sarebbe tutto molto giocoso, non ci sarebbe serietà.

T: Quindi è il docente che porta ordine. Per quanto riguarda gli apprendimenti, pensi che ci possano essere a prescindere da un docente?

S: Sì sì, anche con quegli interventi che ci faceva fare spesso durante le lezioni, perché se no penso che quasi nessuno avrebbe partecipato.

T: Un commento finale?

S: Tutto sommato è stato un ottimo corso per imparare l'inglese.

T: Grazie.

INT 22 (12-01-22; 6 pm)

T: Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più del corso; quali sono stati gli aspetti che hai trovato più divertenti più piacevoli più soddisfacenti più belli?

S: Quello che più mi è piaciuto del corso è stato il fatto che è un metodo di apprendimento di una lingua che però non è solito, in quanto è un metodo di apprendimento differente. questo perché noi siamo abituati alla lezione di inglese in cui tutti seduti ai banchi zitti in silenzio, che aspettiamo che la prof ci chiami, oppure non parliamo e aspettiamo che la prof ci dica qualcosa; invece con questo corso è stato molto più interattivo, molto più coinvolgente. poi il fatto di farlo mettendo al centro un argomento molto proprio ai ragazzi di 16 -15 anni, ti coinvolge molto di più, perché parlare magari di minecraft, invece di parlare di London Bridge, London Eye magari ti sprona anche un po di più a partecipare. questa cosa l'ho ritenuta fondamentale.

T: C'è qualche aspetto che trovato più noioso rispetto agli altri?

S: Vediamo....partiamo dal presupposto che ci sono state molte più cose positive rispetto alle cose negative. però se dovessi dire alcuna di negativa, forse il fatto che avrei fatto anche qualche lezione in cui il gioco, proprio durante la lezione, non come compiti per casa, si fa tutti insieme e magari si prova ad applicare tutti insieme qualcosa vista a lezione precedentemente. non solo a livello

didattico, ma proprio per appassionare ancora di più gli studentini nello studio; forse avrebbe aiutato ancora di più. però ciò non toglie che comunque è stato lo stesso molto coinvolgente.

T: Quindi non trovi aspetti noiosi. questo che hai raccontato potrebbe essere come migliorarlo.

S: Noioso no. magari l'unica noia è stata di stare a distanza e saltava la connessione e ti innervosivi. Ma quelli sono problemi tecnici, pratici.

T: Hai trovato qualcosa di difficile nel corso, qualche elemento difficile?

S: Era tutto fattibile, però alcuni assegni, per esempio quando dovevo registrare il video di me stesso mentre giocavo, io non ero abituato né da studente né da gamer, e quindi mi dovevo attrezzare in una maniera un po' diversa che magari mi avrebbe richiesto comunque un'applicazione più, e ci sarei anche riuscito, però forse per me un pochino troppo. infatti non sono riuscito a registrarli alla playstation, perché è difficile tramite lo share play passare da una console a un'email poi da una email a un telefono, era un po' complesso fare il passaggio di dispositivo.

T: Se tu rifletti sulle quattro abilità di reading listening writing e speaking dopo questo corso in quali di queste abilità ti senti più confidente?

S: Assolutamente speaking. Nei miei corsi passati, lo speaking era quello dei quattro in cui andavo meglio; non è che avessi tutta questa esigenza di migliorare lo speaking. però è una di quelle qualità che se tu non alleni spesso piano piano vanno calando. ho ritenuto fondamentale questo corso non tanto per il miglioramento ma più per mantenere l'allenamento a riflettere, a parlare, in una certa maniera. sono certo che magari qualcuno che non è abituato a fare questa tipologia di allenamento. anche perché magari non ha fatto un corso privato, ma semplicemente lezione di inglese a scuola, e in genere la scuola italiana fa pochissimo speaking, ma veramente poco, perché sono tutti abituati a fare le regole grammaticale, il vocabolario, il listening ma mai lo speaking, per quei soggetti lì stato ancora più d'aiuto, secondo me.

T: Secondo te, questo corso ti ha insegnato qualcosa anche di grammatica?

S: Di grammatica non tantissimo, perché magari l'insegnante mi correggeva quando io la applicavo male e mi ha aiutato ad esprimermi meglio a livello grammaticale. però forse del quattro è stata quella meno praticata.

T: Se tu volessi fare un paragone tra questo tipo di corso e la e il corso standard di inglese che si fa a scuola, per quanto riguarda proprio l'approccio alla lingua, come le metti insieme, come le paragoni?

S: Secondo me per come l'ho vista io, la scuola ti insegna l'inglese. Il corso ti insegna a parlare inglese, a farti capire. questo perché a scuola, come ho già detto, ti insegnano la grammatica, ti insegnano il vocabolario, ti insegnano tante piccole cose che servono, sono fondamentali assolutamente, però molto molto spesso poi il ragazzo che nella scuola italiana aveva 10 come voto arriva all'estero e non riesce a spicciare due frasi una dietro l'altra. questo è perché non sono abituati proprio a parlarlo; mentre invece un corso del genere magari ti dà meno preparazione per quanto riguarda la grammatica, sicuramente così, perché a scuola ne faccio veramente tanta, però parlando tanto durante il corso, sicuramente arrivare all'estero e dover parlare quella determinata lingua, riesce e più facile, perché tu sei già stato abituato a parlare in una certa maniera.

T: Se ripensi ai compiti che io vi ho dato, agli assignments, quale ti è piaciuto di più da svolgere e perché?

S: Forse quello che mi è piaciuto di più svolgere è stato giocare online e riportare quello che era stato svolto, com'era stato svolto, eccetera eccetera, perché era il momento in cui, nonostante io dovessi fare un lavoro per casa, comunque avevo libero arbitrio di fare quello che volevo nel gioco. Cioè, io stavo giocando e basta, poi che io dovevo pure scrivere una tabella, per me era un vero e proprio svago. Era come se non fossero compiti per casa.

T: Invece per quanto riguarda le attività che abbiamo fatto insieme. quindi nelle vere e proprie lezioni? quali sono state le attività che secondo te sono state le più divertenti coinvolgenti e quindi utili ovviamente?

S: Delle attività forse le più utili e coinvolgenti non erano tanto l'esercizio stesso, ma prima dell'esercizio, quando con il compagno o con l'insegnante si discuteva come si doveva fare, perché lo si doveva, la modalità eccetera. Poi anche quando abbiamo descritto un'immagine, dovevamo trovare il pezzo mancante. anche quello era divertente, però magari comprendere e parlare sempre in lingua con il compagno era molto "sfizioso", cioè mi è piaciuto anche questo.

T: Questo secondo te ti ha motivato di più a parlare in inglese?

S: Mi ha aiutato a parlare di più forse proprio la voglia di giocare, cioè il fatto che per esempio, anche in game, quando sto a alla console, tu hai proprio la necessità di comunicare, perché sono comunque giochi soprattutto di squadra e quindi hai la necessità di parlare. io in genere parlo italiano perché gioco con i miei amici. in questo ambito facevo la stessa cosa però parlando in inglese. quindi proprio il giocare mi motivava a parlare: più giocavo più dovevo parlare. è direttamente proporzionale: al crescere dell'uno deve crescere anche l'altro.

T: Anche durante gli incontri in classe nelle elezioni, parlare del gioco era quello che ti motivava di più, a parlare in inglese, ad esprimere il tuo punto di vista?

S: Sicuramente sì, magari anche la condivisione di un'idea, se fare una scelta o l'altra è molto più motivazionale rispetto al parlare in classe di un argomento che ti dà l'insegnante, di cui a te magari non interessa minimamente.

T: Secondo te questo corso ha migliorato anche il listening?

S: Sì, assolutamente, perché quando tu stai parlando con un compagno, con un insegnante, non devi soltanto allenarti a farti capire e a rendere quel che dici più comprensibile per il compagno, ma devi anche allenarti a interpretare quel che dice il compagno nella maniera giusta, capire, comprendere e tante altre cose; quindi listening e speaking assolutamente top.

T: Parlando di di fluency e di listening ti ricordi qualche compito che io vi ho dato o qualche attività che abbiamo svolto che secondo te hanno favorito proprio questi queste due tasks?

S: Io ora non ricordo perfettamente tutte le cose fatte, però anche solo il dover giocare in modalità online, aiuta comunque molto per le ragioni che ho già elencato prima: devi giocare online con altri compagni e allenarti sempre quelle due proprietà; poi anche un pochino il writing perché magari ti capita anche di scrivere sulla chat, però quello molto più raramente.

T: Parliamo adesso di gamification. il corso è stato strutturato secondo i principi della gamification per cui punti, leaderboard, badge. vorrei capire quale qual è il tuo rapporto con la classifica e se pensi che questo principio della gamification possa essere un principio valido per farti capire per esempio la tua progressione negli apprendimenti e se se ti può motivare

S: A me l'idea della gamification piace, però va migliorata. questo perché lo dico, perché ad esempio a noi veniva data una tabella in cui uscivano i nomi in ordine alfabetico e tu li andavi a guardare e poi cercavi il tuo e poi basta. se già fosse stata studiata in modo tale da essere messa in ordine dall'alto verso il basso, magari un ragazzo che non aveva fatto tanto e si trovava in uno degli ultimi posti e vedeva magari gli altri amici che stavano più in alto, un pochino anche perché non gli piaceva questa cosa di restare indietro, si sarebbe impegnato di più per scavalcare un pochino la classifica. invece questa cosa con l'ordine alfabetico non c'è. tu cerchi sempre di andare sempre allo stesso passo dei tuoi amici, piano piano uno avrebbe tirato l'altro e magari avrebbe portato più su. invece di arrivare a 62 arrivare a 70. io questo lo dico perché l'unico momento in cui abbiamo trovato questo ordine crescente è stato l'ultima classifica, quella totale, in cui tu potevi solo completare gli ultimi piccoli assegnati. quando io ho visto che non mi trovavo in una buona posizione, ma mi trovavo leggermente più in basso e i miei amici erano poco più avanti, cioè un pochino mi dava fastidio, perché mi ero impegnato come loro. quindi se questa cosa ci fosse stata dall'inizio, forse mi sarei impegnato di più anche da prima. non sarei arrivato all'ultimo giorno a dare tutto quello che mi mancava i giorni precedenti.

T: Secondo te questa cosa di vedere il progresso, quindi al di là della classifica, ma anche il progresso tuo, attraverso il punteggio che cresce, secondo te ti può rendere anche l'idea di un miglioramento nell'apprendimento?

S: Non so. perché quando io vado a scuola e quando io faccio il corso non è che sto apprendendo da una parte di più e da una parte di meno, ma sto proprio apprendendo due cose completamente diverse perché secondo me la miglior modalità di fare questo corso è fare sia l'inglese a scuola, con la grammatica, che *gameful English*, in cui parli, perché secondo me sono complementari.

T: Secondo te si potrebbe applicare lo stesso principio della gamification anche ad un corso più tradizionale?

S: Non sono sicuro, forse sì, però dovremmo essere abituati proprio da piccoli. forse se fossimo abituati poco dall'inizio delle valutazioni sarebbe un ottimo modo di valutare.

T: quale potrebbe essere il problema per esempio nel passare da una cosa all'altra?

S: Se dovessi fare matematica con il metodo di valutazione di *gameful*, non mi troverei. cioè sarei un pochino disorientato dal fatto che non ho la valutazione finale ma ho una valutazione graduale; ma questo è perché sono stato abituato io a ricevere valutazioni in una certa maniera, in un determinato tempo e usando determinate valutazioni. quindi per me passare a una valutazione quasi completamente differente sarebbe un po' uno stravolgere le mie abitudini.

T: Ma non pensi che questo tipo di valutazione sia più chiara rispetto a quella che alla quale tu sei abituato?

S: Questo sì. più chiara sì perché dandoti il voto gradualmente, non finale, tu sai pezzo per pezzo cosa potevi fare meglio, cosa potevi fare peggio, cosa potevi migliorare, a cosa dovevi fare più attenzione. quindi nell'essere più chiaro sì, questo è molto più chiaro.

T: Mi hai detto che comunque tu hai giocato a minecraft e quindi il tuo gameplay non è cambiato, pur sapendo e che stavi giocando per la scuola...non è mai cambiato o c'è stato qualche momento in cui hai sentito che stavi percependo il gioco in un modo diverso, meno piacevole, perché pensavi che poi dovevi fare il compito?

S: Questo una volta sì, però per lo stesso discorso di prima. quando io dovevo fare la registrazione, il compito non mi dava la possibilità di fare quello che volevo, ma mi "obbligava" a trovare il modo di registrare, trovare il modo di immortalare tutto quello che stavo facendo. ho trovato questo mio dover trovare il modo di registrare un pochino noioso, perché io in genere quando gioco non mi registro mai, ma perché nessun gamer lo fa, a meno che non sei uno youtuber o uno che sta su twitch, allora si registra tutto quello che fai e poi lo pubblichi. io l'ho trovato pesante questo.

T: Cioè il limite tecnologico, però, non sul gioco, non sulla giocata o ha influito pure sulla giocata questo dover trovare una soluzione tecnica?

S: Dover trovare una soluzione tecnica è una scocciatura. quindi poi tu giochi e già sei un pochino demoralizzato; ti passa un po' la voglia di giocare. poi lo fai, ti piace, perché alla fine ci giochi anche del tempo libero, però giochi con un pochino meno voglia, dovuto proprio al fatto che hai dovuto trovare sotterfugi e cose del genere.

T: Tu pensi che si possa effettivamente imparare una lingua in questo modo?

S: Anche in questo modo ma non soltanto. non che ci siano più metodi, ma che questo corso si possa fare e che sia importante farlo, però vada integrato con altre lezioni. come ho detto prima, va integrato con la classica lezione in cui tu fai grammatica fai il vocabolario e tante altre cose. in quel caso tu hai credo una cultura proprio completa della lingua. alla lunga potresti ambire ad avere una padronanza non dico da madrelingua, però comunque molto molto ampia. molto più ampia rispetto a quella classica.

T: A che tipo di studente tu consiglieresti questo corso?

S: Lo consiglierei allo studente gamer, che magari a stare sui libri gli pesa molto; però facendo il minimo indispensabile sui libri potrebbe valorizzare quel che fa sui libri utilizzando questo corso online.

T: Secondo te è importante il ruolo del docente in questo corso, o pensi che comunque basti videogiocare e si impara l'inglese? a cosa serve il docente secondo te?

S: Per me è importante il docente, perché molto spesso credo che se non ci fosse l'insegnante i ragazzi passerebbero dal fare questo corso al giocare e basta, cioè giocare senza preoccuparsi comunque di rispondere alle tasks e tant'altro. Invece avere un insegnante che ti dice comunque quello che dovresti fare, in che modo, eccetera eccetera, ti indirizza prima di tutto nel farlo, e poi io ho avuto una insegnante che comunque non era pesante, faceva parte del gruppo, quindi non ti faceva sentire il peso del compito. Tu lo facevi come se fosse una scommessa con un amico quasi, come se fosse proprio un coinvolgimento in più.

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualcosa?

S: Il gioco era anche occasione di parlare del corso con gli amici, fuori dal corso. Anche questo è importante perché a livello sociale ti aiuta a fare la battuta; magari per me che sono estroverso non mi cambia la vita, però per un ragazzo introverso fare una battuta con l'amico magari ti può aiutare nella socialità. Forse se il corso fosse stato più frequente, nel pomeriggio, sarebbe difficile seguirlo. Se dovesse iniziare a essere integrato proprio nella scuola non dovrebbe essere fatto nell'orario extrascolastico, ma dovrebbe essere inserito nel corso della giornata a scuola.

T: Grazie.

INT 23 (12-01-22; 5.40 pm)

T: Parliamo del corso che abbiamo fatto di *gameful English* e iniziamo col raccontare secondo te le cose positive del corso. Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più del corso? Quali sono stati secondo te gli aspetti positivi?

S: Secondo me è una genialata questo corso. Cioè, è veramente una cosa totalmente diversa dal solito e ti coinvolge. Non capisco come certi miei amici non abbiano partecipato, perché non trovo nulla di male in questo corso. Mi è piaciuto perché ci siamo riuniti tutti quanti. Noi che condividiamo la passione del gaming. A tutti quanti piace Minecraft che è un bel gioco; è adatto a questo tipo di corso perché si può discutere molto; è un gioco vasto.

T: C'è stato qualcosa che tu hai trovato noioso o comunque che non ti è piaciuto molto nel corso?

S: No effettivamente no.

T: E qualche elemento che secondo te è stato difficile?

S: Io compiti per casa non li ho fatti per la maggior parte. Qualche compito era abbastanza impegnativo, perché magari bisogna aver parlato, trovare una certa situazione... era un po' difficile perché trovare dei giusti giocatori, la mappa, la lobby....

T: A te ha limitato questo nel fare quei compiti? cioè che secondo te era complicato trovare certe situazioni?

S: Sì perché io non gioco molto Minecraft multiplayer, quindi non sono molto esperto. Non sapevo dove andare per cercare queste lobby di stranieri.

T: Se tu pensi alle abilità di reading speaking writing e listening, dopo questo corso in quale di queste abilità ti senti più sicuro?

S: Nel writing non tanto. Di più secondo me nel listening, perché abbiamo ascoltato molti gameplay e ascoltare il gameplay non è una cosa banale, perché molto spesso gli youtuber parlano velocemente, magari usano anche il dialetto, qualche parola un po' più particolare per quella situazione, per intrattenere il pubblico.

T: Secondo te, al di là di Minecraft proprio nel mondo dei videogames, si può imparare il vocabolario? Si possono imparare parole nuove in inglese? e come?

S: Allora io imparo tantissime parole grazie per esempio a GTA, Battlefield. Si può imparare benissimo anche guardando i video, perché gli youtuber spesso spiegano anche cosa vogliono dire e dicono parole sempre nuove. Per esempio dicono parole in inglese ma italianizzate, che però alla fine quel significato italiano comunque si collega con la parola inglese. Per esempio negli sparatutto dicono spesso HITTATO, che si collega a HIT, colpo, colpire.

T: Se pensiamo adesso alla grammatica: tu pensi che con questo corso tu abbia imparato anche qualcosa di grammatica?

S: Quando abbiamo fatto qualche errore lei ci ha corretto e quindi penso di sì. Anche io ho fatto quell'errore nell'ultimo compito, e ora lo so. Però più nel parlato sicuramente ho imparato.

T: Se tu dovessi fare un paragone tra questo corso che noi abbiamo fatto e un corso tradizionale a scuola. Pensa all'approccio che questi due corsi hanno verso la lingua, come vedono la lingua, cosa mi puoi dire al riguardo?

S: Questo corso secondo me è più intelligente, perché impari la lingua però facendo qualcosa che è più interessante per noi. Io ad esempio ho fatto un corso con MLA e parlavo con una professoressa madrelingua di quello che ho fatto in passato nella mia vita; però non c'è nulla di interessante alla fine, non c'è nulla che ti attira. È utile anche quello però questo è più divertente; impari e ti diverti. E quindi probabilmente questo qua è stato il corso più interessante, sicuramente.

T: Tra i compiti che io ho dato da fare a casa, negli assignments, qual era il più interessante da fare e perché?

S: Parlare con gli stranieri a me piace molto; infatti ho giocato altri giochi dove parlavo con stranieri. mi sarebbe piaciuto farlo, soprattutto se me ne fossi ricordato!

T: Noi sapevamo che questo era un corso extracurricolare, non c'era voto. pensi che se ci fosse stato il voto te lo saresti ricordato di fare il compito?

S: Purtroppo devo dire sì.

T: Per quanto riguarda le attività che facevamo durante i meeting, quali erano secondo te le attività che ti sono piaciute di più, che ti che ti hanno coinvolto di più?

S: Sicuramente quella del video che abbiamo fatto noi e poi il commento al gameplay dei compagni.

T: E secondo te quello perché era divertente? e perché era coinvolgente?

S: Fare un video e poi farlo vedere ai nostri coetanei non è di tutti i giorni; quindi può risultare un po imbarazzante, ma non è imbarazzante. però è una cosa nuova e comunque abbiamo discusso anche ridendo, e quindi è perfetto perchè abbiamo imparato l'inglese ci siamo divertiti.

T: Cosa ti ha motivato a parlare in inglese? cosa ti ha aiutato anche a parlare in inglese?

S: Nella lezione il fatto che ero coinvolto ed ero nel giusto mood e mi trovavo a mio agio.

T: Cosa ti ha reso tranquillo rispetto ad una lezione tradizionale?

S: Il fatto di parlare di un videogioco e con il quale io ci gioco da anni. è stato il mio primo videogioco forse.

T: Pensi che anche a scuola ti saresti sentito così tranquillo pur parlando di videogiochi?

S: Non solo per l'argomento, anche l'ambiente. lei che è molto brava a coinvolgerci, comunque. Anche a scuola magari c'è un argomento interessante di storia ma a volte i professori non lo sanno sfruttare per farci interessare.

T: Pensi che con questo corso anche la tua fluency sia migliorata?

S: Sicuramente sì.

T: E anche il listening?

S: Sì. Listening di più.

T: Ti puoi ricordare dei compiti specifici che ti hanno aiutato tanto nel listening e anche nella fluency?

S: L' esercizio di descrivere l'immagine, il before and after. quello è stato utile perché spesso quando si descrive un'immagine si ripetono sempre le stesse parole, invece abbiamo imparato altre parole, altri modi di dire.

T: Parliamo di gamification. qual'è stata la tua percezione nel vederti in una leaderboard che racconta un apprendimento? come ti sei sentito tu? secondo te questo modo può funzionare anche nella valutazione?

S: Non è un modo opprimente, come i voti a scuola. è leggero. c'è un punteggio però non ti senti che devi prendere il punteggio maggiore per forza.

T: Ti avrebbe motivato di più se poi ci fosse stata una corrispondenza tra corso e voto in inglese?

S: Vabbè forse sì, però finché non si va nell'insufficienza... è tutto bello. l'importante è che imparo io. Mi sarebbe interessato, ma non mi sarei accanito sul voto.

T: Secondo te un badge può incentivare la motivazione?

S: Sì perché comunque un po di competizione ci vuole sempre. la competizione ti spingere a migliorare. quindi sì, potrebbe servire.

T: A te servirebbe? tu che tipo sei?

S: Ad esempio se ci sono anche i miei amici, la soddisfazione, lo sfizio di superarli, magari mi incentiverebbe a fare di meglio.

T: Parliamo invece adesso di percezione del gameplay. tu giocavi a minecraft e a un certo punto ti viene detto che c'è anche uno scopo didattico dietro questa cosa. questa nuova consapevolezza ha cambiato il tuo gameplay

S: No per me è ancora più interessante, perché hai uno scopo, quindi devi raggiungerlo ed è sempre più competitivo, no competitivo, perché non è che sei contro le altre persone; però hai un obiettivo quindi è bello concluderlo. È più soddisfacente se poi lo concludi.

T: Non è diminuita la gamefulness...

S: No, perchè minecraft essendo un open World, spesso non sai cosa fare e quindi ogni tanto una sfida ci vuole, un obiettivo.

T: Tu che attività metteresti dentro questo *gameful English* per renderlo ancora più interessante?

S: Eh vabbè la cosa migliore in assoluto che si potrebbe fare è un creare un server per giocare tutti insieme, nello stesso mondo, creare la casa insieme però è una cosa abbastanza complessa da fare.

T: L'insegnante dovrebbe partecipare nel gioco o stare fuori dal gioco?

S: Un'opzione potrebbe essere fare uno streaming al professore e così il professore vede cosa sta succedendo. quella persona deve essere fidata; oppure il professore entra e però magari si mette in modalità creativa e osserva tutti gli altri, muovendosi, volando, e li controlla.

T: Nell'usare un videogame per imparare, secondo te è importante che ci sia un docente dietro che guidi?

S: Beh, certo. altrimenti il gruppo va allo sbaraglio. ad esempio il professore, volando, ci dice in inglese cosa creare: una casa, con un pavimento di un certo materiale...così dando delle direzioni.

T: Tu quindi pensi che comunque questo può essere un metodo efficace per imparare l'inglese?

S: Sì io ho sempre detto che i videogiochi sono importantissimi per imparare, in generale, però l'inglese soprattutto perchè i videogiochi sono in inglese.

T: A chi lo consiglieresti questo corso? cioè secondo te qual è lo studente perfetto per fare questo corso, che possa apprendere il più possibile?

S: Sicuramente a chi gioca ai videogiochi, ma anche a qualcuno che è abbastanza chiuso di mente, parlando di videogiochi, e quindi magari gioca in single player, senza mai parlare, senza mai cercare l'interazione con gli altri videogiocatori. A questi farebbe bene.

T: Se a te non fosse piaciuto minecraft, secondo te ti saresti appassionato allo stesso modo? cioè è importante che un corso del genere si faccia su un gioco che piace?

S: Per come sono io, mi sarei adattato, perché per me qualsiasi videogioco è bellissimo e a me interessa comunque scoprire nuovi videogiochi. molte persone so che non lo avrebbero fatto, perché sono appunto chiuse di mente. per me sarebbe stato uguale qualsiasi videogioco; però appunto con minecraft si può imparare meglio l'inglese.

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualcosa?

S: Penso di aver detto tutto.

T: Grazie.

INT 24 (12-01-22; 3.30 pm)

T: Quali sono stati gli aspetti positivi del corso? che cosa ti è piaciuto? cosa ti ha divertito? cosa hai valutato in maniera positiva?

S: Mi è piaciuta molto l'idea di base del corso. ovvero quella di poter imparare una nuova lingua attraverso semplicemente giocare a un videogioco. ci sono state molte cose che mi hanno fatto divertire all'interno di questo corso, come ad esempio la possibilità di avere come compito quello di giocare e di tenere relazioni sociali con altri giocatori, sia che conosca di persona che conosciuti Online. magari anche di altri continenti proprio.

T: C'è qualche elemento che hai trovato noioso, poco stimolante nel corso?

S: No, in realtà niente.

T: E c'è qualcosa che hai trovato difficile?

S: No, per me no, tutto quanto era fattibile.

T: Se pensi alle quattro abilità di listening, speaking, reading e writing, alla fine del corso in quale ti senti più sicuro di te?

S: Nello speaking e nel writing.

T: E come la percepisci questa sicurezza? perché riesci a dirmi speaking e writing?

S: Nello speaking mi sento più confidente a parlare, perché sento di aver comunque acquisito nuove competenze per parlare con più tranquillità, perché mi riesce meglio, ecco, rispetto a prima di fare il corso e nel writing più o meno la stessa cosa: riesco più a stare a mio agio e quindi a mettere meglio per iscritto quello che penso veramente.

T: E' il fatto di sentirti più tranquillo che ti ha dato di più la possibilità di migliorare queste abilità?

S: Mi sono esercitato nell'ambito di un gioco che mi piace e questo mi ha reso più confidente.

T: Secondo te si può ampliare il vocabolario con un gioco elettronico? e come avviene questa cosa?

S: Allora, ovviamente sì, si può ampliare il proprio vocabolario, perché comunque all'interno dei videogiochi secondo me nel parlare con giocatori che vengono da altri continenti, quelli che parlano normalmente in inglese, si può imparare oltre allo stesso inglese che

ti insegnano a scuola, anche alcune forme abbreviate che vengono utilizzate nel parlare quotidiano di queste persone. questo ti permette di ampliare il tuo vocabolario e ti permette di riuscire a costruire meglio quello che tu devi dire nell'altra lingua.

T: Pensiamo adesso alla grammatica, all'aspetto grammaticale. secondo te dopo questo corso puoi dire di avere imparato qualcosa in più anche di grammatica? e che cosa?

S: Sì qualcosa sì indubbiamente ho imparato, perché tra i vari compiti che ho che ho svolto e le varie correzioni che mi sono arrivate da quei compiti, ho messo a punto alcune cose che magari prima erano leggermente confuse, per esempio l'uso degli articoli.

T: Ripensando a questo corso e paragonandolo a quello che si fa normalmente a scuola, pensa all'approccio verso la lingua che questi due corsi hanno, riesci fare un paragone tra i due corsi?

S: L'approccio "tradizionale", quello che viene fatto a scuola, dell'inglese, è più "formale", perché la si punta solamente secondo me ad una cosa, ovvero imparare al meglio la lingua; invece nel gamified english, secondo me, oltre a questo scopo qui che resta comunque di base e quello principale, ci sta comunque il permettergli di relazionarti comunque con altre persone e quindi anche poter conoscere meglio la lingua, perché di fatto parlare con persone madrelingua comunque è il miglior modo per imparare una lingua.

T: Pensa ai compiti che hai svolto, quale ti ha divertito di più e perché?

S: Anche se mi è dispiaciuto un po' non essere riuscito a farlo al meglio, mi è piaciuto molto fare quello dello youtuber.

T: Cosa ti ha divertito in quel compito e secondo te perché è stato utile?

S: Mi ha divertito perché comunque il fatto di mettermi quasi al pari degli youtuber, che seguo quasi tutti i giorni, è stato comunque emozionante e divertente. e poi penso che mi abbia aiutato molto ad esempio nello speaking, perché comunque il fatto di dover parlare a un "pubblico", ci permette anche in un certo senso di vedere quali sono le tue competenze e anche di migliorarle, ovviamente.

T: Pensa alle attività che abbiamo svolto in classe, quale ti è piaciuta di più? quale attività hai trovato più piacevole e anche forse più utile?

S: Più piacevole è stata quella di trovare le differenze nelle varie immagini, e più utile comunque quelle ad esempio in cui cedevamo dei video in inglese e poi dovevamo comprendere quello che veniva detto all'interno del video.

T: Quando partecipavi a lezione ti sentivi più motivato a parlare in inglese?

S: Penso di sì, perché comunque ero immerso nell'ambito dei video; guardavo persone che parlavano in inglese, quindi mi veniva quasi "naturale" fare come se gli stessi rispondendo.

T: E che cosa secondo te ti ha portato a voler interagire di più?

S: Penso comunque il fatto che tutto si sia svolto nell'ambito di questo gioco che mi piace e che quindi mi ha permesso di più di sentirmi a mio agio, e di conseguenza di riuscire a parlare sia in modo più fluido che più rilassato, più aperto.

T: Che cosa ti rendeva rilassato?

S: Il gioco, l'atmosfera che si creava, perché bene o male stavamo tutti quanti concentrati sulla stessa cosa.

T: Secondo te è migliorata la tua fluency

S: Eh sì decisamente sì.

T: Perché riesci a dire questa cosa... cosa senti dentro di te, cosa è cambiato...

S: Perché ad esempio quando mi capitava di dover parlare inglese nella classe a scuola ero un po' più nervoso era proprio sull'attenti ecco...quindi mi fermavo più tempo a pensare, ai termini da utilizzare, quindi tutto il discorso rallentava. invece trovandomi così a mio agio mi viene tutto quanto più semplice, il termine vi viene automatico invece che dover stare parecchio tempo a pensarlo; questo comunque rende tutto quanto più fluent.

T: Pensi che anche il listening sia migliorato?

S: Ah sì sì sì. Quando vedevamo i video e poi dovevamo riassumerli...sì è migliorato.

T: Se tu dovessi identificare due compiti che ti hanno aiutato a migliorare la fluency e il listening, due o più compiti, attività, quali menzioneresti?

S: Sicuramente quello dello youtuber per lo speaking; invece per il listening quello di dover vedere i video per comprendere il gameplay.

T: Parliamo invece adesso di gamification, questo sistema nuovo anche di valutare, perché tu vedevi il tuo punteggio che era poi di fatto la tua valutazione. come hai percepito questo sistema di valutazione e come ti sei sentito all'interno di una classifica?

S: Come strumento l'ho trovato molto innovativo, perché mi è piaciuto il fatto di poter vedere in tempo reale come stavo procedendo all'interno del corso e in cosa magari non ero andato benissimo e invece in cosa ero andato meglio; così potevo anche capire più o meno anche il mio livello comunque di inglese.

T: Come ti sei percepito tu nella classifica se ti ha creato uno stato di disturbo, di fastidio, se ti è piaciuto, se l'hai trovato più stimolante...

S: L'ho trovato stimolante, perché comunque mi ha permesso di mettermi in gioco con altre persone che come me erano concentrate sia nello scalare questo all'interno della classifica sia comunque sul gioco.

T: Tu pensi che i badge possano essere utili ad incentivare la motivazione?

S: Sì, penso di sì.

T: Possono essere considerati un feedback? possono essere considerati un modo per avere un feedback su un percorso di apprendimento?

S: Sì, già il fatto di vederlo ti stimola comunque perché ti dici: wow! mi piacciono questi badge accanto al mio nome! ne voglio altri! e quindi ti sprona a metterti in gioco, ecco.

T: Parliamo del gameplay. Tu giocavi prima a Minecraft. secondo te il tuo gameplay è cambiato ora che lo utilizziamo a scuola come strumento didattico?

S: Ah no sinceramente no, perché comunque il fatto di dover interagire con la community del gioco era una cosa che facevo anche prima di questo corso.

T: Non è che ti sei sentito meno motivato o che hai perso la gamefulness?

S: No no no, questo no.

T: Pensi che quindi attraverso il videogioco si possa imparare l'inglese? Tu lo hai sperimentato. dopo questo corso puoi confermarlo?

S: Sì, assolutamente sì.

T: E a chi lo consiglieresti, che tipologia potrebbe sfruttare al meglio questo corso e veramente potrebbe imparare l'inglese grazie a questo corso?

S: Secondo me non c'è proprio un tipo di ragazzo in particolare; secondo me questo è un corso che ti lascia comunque la possibilità di sbizzarrirti, perché comunque tutti ragazzi della nostra età passano una buona parte del loro tempo giocando ai videogiochi. il fatto di poter abbinare questa attività allo studio di un'altra lingua è una cosa positiva, perché comunque ti permette contemporaneamente di divertirti, sfogarti e allo stesso tempo comunque imparare o migliorare una cosa nuova.

T: Non pensi che se tu non sei un gamer comunque questo corso non possa piacerti allo stesso modo? cioè secondo te se io davanti ho un ragazzo che non gioca può sfruttare questo corso allo stesso modo?

S: Forse potrà avere qualche difficoltà in più, magari per interfacciarsi per la prima volta con il gioco, però comunque penso che bene o male possa essere d'aiuto anche a questo ragazzo non gamer.

T: Consigli per migliorare questo corso.

S: Ok allora io suggerirei ad esempio, all'interno della classe, di utilizzare dei server per giocare tutti quanti insieme, anche magari con altre persone esterne alla classe, che magari sono appunto native speakers; così c'è la possibilità sia di socializzare con i propri compagni di classe, sia di poter giocare e interfacciarsi in tempo reale anche con persone madrelingua.

T: L'insegnante dove dovrebbe stare in questo contesto?

S: Dipende soprattutto dall'insegnante, perché se l'insegnante ha piacere di interfacciarsi con il gioco può giocare appunto con gli studenti; se il gioco magari non le piace, può comunque supervisionare ad esempio la chat, o dare dei compiti dall'esterno.

T: Pensi che il ruolo dell'insegnante in un corso organizzato in questo modo, che comunque vede i videogiochi come protagonisti, sia importante e quanto è importante?

S: L'insegnante ti corregge comunque di fatto e questo ti permette di migliorare in tempo reale, mentre invece parlando semplicemente con una persona, può essere che non ti corregga per non offenderti. Penso sia anche utile per decidere cosa fare durante gli incontri. è necessaria una figura di riferimento, perché altrimenti ognuno proporrebbe una cosa diversa e alla fine non si farebbe niente di fatto. quindi sì, penso che sia comunque necessario il ruolo di un'insegnante all'interno del corso.

T: Hai qualcosa da aggiungere?

S: Penso di aver detto tutto.

T: Grazie.

INT 25 (12-01-22; 2.40 pm)

T: Che cosa ti è piaciuto di più? e che cosa ti ha divertito di più del corso?

S: In generale mi è piaciuto l'approccio di questo corso, perché è un approccio diverso da quei metodi di insegnamento tipici della scuola italiana. e quindi non solo ho potuto approfondire la lingua inglese ma proprio sperimentare tecniche diverse che secondo me funzioneranno anche per un futuro in Italia, ed è proprio quello di cui abbiamo bisogno, secondo me, soprattutto fra i giovani che hanno difficoltà a imparare l'inglese. quindi per me è stato proprio qualcosa di nuovo e molto interessante.

T: Quando mi dici tecniche nuove ti riferisci a qualcosa in particolare?

S: L'approccio pratico, perché appunto nel videogame non abbiamo bisogno di spiegazioni di nozioni, ma dobbiamo proprio entrare nel gioco e quindi mi è piaciuto questo aspetto di, appunto, concentrarsi sulla praticità del corso in generale.

T: C'è qualche elemento sia strutturale che dal punto di vista del contenuto che hai trovato noioso o comunque pesante, poco interessante?

S: No, noioso assolutamente no. forse all'inizio ho avuto un po' di difficoltà ad ambientarmi, diciamo, ad adeguarmi a quelli che erano videogame, cose che non avevo mai fatto; però di noioso non c'è stato nulla. semplicemente ho dovuto abituarli a dei giochi a cui non avevo mai giocato. però noioso assolutamente no.

T: Perché tu non conoscevi minecraft? non eri una giocatrice di minecraft?

S: Sì conoscevo minecraft, ma non avevo mai fatto delle sessioni di gioco così lunghe, in cui mi dovevo concentrare per tanto tempo ed impegnarmi seriamente; quindi è stato diciamo uno sforzo quello che ho dovuto fare.

T: Qualcosa che hai trovato difficile? qualche elemento che hai trovato difficile?

S: Allora appunto a parte il gioco in generale perché non sono esperta, di difficile no, niente di particolare. forse magari nella parte in cui dovevamo chattare e giocare contemporaneamente ho avuto un paio di difficoltà, ma per il resto è stato tutto molto facile e adatto anche ad un livello di non esperienza in quanto gamer, come me ad esempio.

T: Se pensi alle quattro abilità di reading listening writing e speaking, alla fine del corso, dovendo valutarle in relazione a te, in quale ti senti più sicura, in quale ti ha aiutato di più?

S: Use of english sicuramente, perché parlando ho scoperto nuovi vocaboli e lo speaking, perché abituandomi a parlare di più, anche con persone che non conoscevo, ho avuto l'opportunità di migliorare anche su questo aspetto.

T: Pensi che effettivamente che si possano imparare nuove parole giocando? e in che modo?

S: Per imparare parole nuove certamente giocare non porta allo stesso risultato di leggere o guardare film in inglese, però devo dire che proprio giocando insieme ad altri teenagers, quindi i miei coetanei, imparo vocaboli che ci serviranno e che sono mirati per la nostra età, quindi è più contestualizzato. impariamo più vocaboli che sono alla nostra portata; però è proprio questo aspetto pratico di giocare che mi ha aiutato tanto e ho imparato molti molti vocaboli. secondo me funziona, appunto l'approccio pratico funziona.

T: Le parole si imparano dalle chat scritte, dall'interazione orale, dalle scritte che tu trovi sul monitor? dove si imparano più parole?

S: Secondo me quando le parole sono scritte sono più facili da assimilare, perché magari un orecchio non abituato all'inglese potrebbe avere difficoltà all'inizio, quindi magari le parole scritte possono essere più comprensibili e memorizzate più velocemente.

T: Pensiamo anche alla grammatica. pensi che, sempre alla fine del corso, tu abbia imparato qualcosa anche in questo ambito?

S: Allora nella grammatica sì, soprattutto nel momento in cui dovevamo parlare fra di noi, quindi creare sul momento un discorso e appunto avere attenzione per l'aspetto grammaticale. questo impegno anche nel parlare davanti a tante persone ci ha fatto focalizzare anche sulla grammatica.

T: Tu pensi che questo sia avvenuto in qualche compito in particolare o anche semplicemente nell'interazione con me nella classe virtuale?

S: La consapevolezza di avere un "pubblico", anche se online, è molto importante, ci sprona a voler fare un discorso fatto in maniera corretta; quindi secondo me questa attenzione nei confronti della grammatica aumenta.

T: Adesso tieni in considerazione l'approccio all'inglese che ha avuto questo corso e l'approccio all'inglese che si ha in un corso tradizionale. quali pensi che siano proprio gli approcci e l'atteggiamento verso la lingua?

S: Allora di questo corso appunto che si focalizza su praticità, e quindi un qualcosa che useremo inevitabilmente nella vita di tutti i giorni, soprattutto chi vorrà studiare in inglese; mentre invece in un corso tradizionale c'è una conoscenza più a 360° di tanti argomenti che non saranno tutti approfonditi in un futuro; quindi diciamo una conoscenza in generale, un po' nozionistica su tutto.

T: Se tu pensi ai compiti che hai svolto, tu li hai fatti tutti, quale ti ha divertito di più e perché?

S: Mi ha divertito di più il gameplay (youtuber), quello in cui io dovevo giocare e parlare. mi ha divertito perché per la prima volta mi sono sentita una specie di youtuber, quindi è stato molto divertente creare, editare il video e cogliere i momenti più divertenti del mio video. pensandoci potrebbe essere anche un'attività da riprendere in futuro, dato che appunto ho conosciuto questa questo nuovo hobby, questa passione. quindi è stato molto divertente.

T: Invece per quanto riguarda proprio le attività che abbiamo fatto durante il corso, qual è stata l'attività che ti è piaciuta di più e secondo te ha avuto in realtà valore anche dal punto di vista degli apprendimenti?

S: Mi è piaciuto molto analizzare gli spezzoni dei video e capire cosa stava succedendo, perché non solo è un metodo per apprendere, quindi è una nuova tecnica per conoscere appunto l'inglese, ma perché è stato proprio un gioco, cioè quindi un divertimento puro, confrontandomi anche con i miei amici. ci siamo divertiti, abbiamo creato sfide fra di noi, a chi indovinava più cose; quindi è stato molto stimolante.

T: Ti sei sentita più motivata a parlare in inglese? e perché?

S: Per tanti motivi. un po' per l'approccio in generale del corso, poi perché non vi erano conseguenze, tipo brutti voti, quindi delle penalità, ma anche perché stando appunto in un team, quindi in gruppo, di compagni è stato molto divertente, mi sentivo sempre più motivata e appunto a migliorare collettivamente, quindi non solo singolarmente.

T: La cosa che ti ha aiutato a parlare di più è stata quella di condividere questa esperienza con un gruppo, sentirsi parte di un gruppo?

S: Sì anche quello, ma soprattutto perché non vi era una valutazione di tipo numerico, che andasse a pesare in qualche modo su successi scolastici, come una pagella a scuola. quindi diciamo che è stato più rilassante, non mi sono sentita sotto pressione.

T: Pensi che la tua fluency sia migliorata dopo questo corso?

S: Sinceramente non mi sono resa conto di quanto poco sforzo facessi nello speaking, nel senso che in passato non ho fatto abbastanza conversazioni, ma con questo corso ho potuto esercitarmi e colmare delle lacune che avevo.

T: E puoi dire la stessa cosa per quanto riguarda il listening?

S: Sì, anche, perché praticamente i video si sono rivelati essere un tantino più difficile di quel che pensavo, ma non troppo, per il semplice fatto che nel gaming il linguaggio è molto molto veloce, quindi bisogna prestare attenzione, è molto challenging; mi sono dovuta impegnare e quindi sono un po' più sicura anche sul listening, che è il mio punto debole.

T: Sapresti identificare dei compiti particolari che noi abbiamo fatto, delle attività particolari, che noi abbiamo fatto che secondo te sono state molto utili sia alla fluency che al listening?

S: L'analisi dei video e la vocal chat, se non mi sbaglio, che appunto mirava a farci prestare più attenzione e quindi a cogliere i dettagli più importanti e appunto farci migliorare sia nello speaking che nel listening.

T: Parliamo adesso di gamification, che c'entra un po con il discorso della valutazione. il corso era strutturato con punti quindi non pesavano dal punto di vista didattico, però comunque c'era una valutazione sia dei compiti che delle performance. come ti sei sentita in relazione ad una classifica, al fatto di vedere aumentare il tuo punteggio, rimanere più indietro?

S: Mi è piaciuto tantissimo questo metodo, perché appunto è diverso da quello italiano, che tende a punire gli studenti che non raggiungono un certo livello, perché è stato molto stimolante. questa tipologia di assegnazione dei punteggi ha attirato in me e la parte più competitiva, però in senso positivo: miravo più che altro a dare il meglio di me, e quindi arrivare il più vicino possibile al primo posto in classifica. mi sforzavo per raggiungere questo punteggio; ed è stato appunto stimolante anche questo.

T: Pensi che comunque ricevere un badge possa essere un agente motivante? possa agire sulla motivazione di uno studente?

S: Secondo me sì, per me ha funzionato, perché alcune volte noi studenti ci facciamo troppi problemi su una valutazione anche negativa; mentre invece con questo metodo, quindi ricevere una specie di premio, ci sentiamo più stimolati e quindi anche meno sotto pressione e quindi diamo il meglio di noi.

T: Percezione del gameplay. quanto e se è cambiata la tua percezione di gioco, del divertimento del gioco, sapendo di utilizzare un videogioco per l'apprendimento, per scuola?

S: Dopo questo corso la mia percezione è cambiata, perché prima giocavo ai videogame per noia o semplicemente per provare, mentre adesso, mentre gioco, mi concentro anche su altri aspetti, come imparare cose nuove e approfittare di un certo videogame per imparare appunto tecniche come l'ascolto, oppure lo speaking; e quindi cerco di istruirmi anche attraverso il gameplay.

T: Ma secondo te questo fa diminuire la gamefulness? ti diverti di meno, secondo te, sapendo di investire energie in quest'altro ambito?

S: Secondo me no. no perché si possono fare entrambi in una stessa sezione di gioco tranquillamente e secondo me si può appunto unire divertimento e apprendimento nello stesso momento durante un semplice videogame e conoscere anche persone nuove online. Perché no? Non mi sono dovuta forzare per imparare. È stato tutto molto naturale.

T: Pensi che effettivamente si possa imparare utilizzando un videogioco? e a chi consiglieresti questo metodo di apprendimento?

S: In generale, sicuramente alle persone che sono appassionate di elettronica, informatica anche videogame, ma anche a quelle persone che magari vogliono un metodo efficace ma veloce per imparare l'inglese; quindi fare due cose in uno, quindi divertirsi ma imparare allo stesso tempo, per chi magari non ha tempo per fare un corso di inglese completo, per diversi motivi. io consiglieri questo corso proprio perché è molto veloce ma divertente, quindi il tempo letteralmente vola.

T: Secondo te il fatto di essere un gamer è un prerequisito necessario per fare il corso?

S: Non per forza. io ad esempio non sono super esperta di videogiochi, però tranquillamente sono riuscita a svolgere tutti i compiti, a giocare, imparare nuove tecniche. quindi è solo questione di tempo e pazienza; ci vuole solo un po di impegno all'inizio, ma è molto facile anche per chi non è abituato a giocare ai videogame.

T: Tu, da giocatrice, quale attività inseriresti in un corso del genere perché è divertente e perché secondo te può effettivamente dare quel valore aggiunto anche nell'apprendimento?

S: Allora a parte quello dello youtuber, l'ultimo che abbiamo fatto, penso anche a quello degli acronimi, perché è molto importante e ci aiuta a fissare meglio quelli che sono i nuovi termini che impariamo; secondo me un compito del genere sarebbe.

T: E un compito che proporresti tu?

S: Magari farei fare una partita fra più squadre, e magari costruire un testo argomentativo su questo duello. anche un semplice video in live, in cui si scontrano queste due squadre che possono essere classi diverse.

T: Quale dovrebbe essere il ruolo dell'insegnante?

S: Dovrebbe guidare in generale gli studenti su quelli che sono gli obiettivi e magari controllare che questi studenti utilizzino tutti gli strumenti che hanno a loro disposizione, quindi speaking listening, quindi non restare in disparte ma cercare di entrare veramente nel gioco e mettersi in gioco. secondo me l'insegnante dovrebbe fare questo.

T: Quanto è importante la presenza di un docente, anche in un corso del genere, che alla fine è un corso sui videogiochi? il docente fa la differenza in un corso del genere e in che cosa?

S: Allora diciamo che l'insegnante di per sé non ha avuto un ruolo centrale per quel che riguarda il gioco, perché i protagonisti siamo stati noi studenti, però il ruolo è comunque importante perché ci deve aiutare nel momento in cui non capiamo qualcosa, o quando siamo in un momento di difficoltà, o stiamo sviando da quello che è per esempio il goal del gioco, quindi l'obiettivo. c'è una certa importanza dell'insegnante, però non è appunto la figura centrale, quindi che gestisce completamente tutto, perché sono gli studenti ad avere appunto in mano il gioco.

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualcosa tu? un commento tuo personale?

S: Volevo ringraziarla per tutto il lavoro che appunto ci ha messo per questo progetto. è stato divertentissimo, bellissimo e soprattutto ben strutturato, cioè una cosa proprio che magari mi aspetterei in una scuola americana, non qui in Italia. e se questo progetto funziona io spero che in un futuro si insegnino così l'inglese, perché è veramente bellissimo, anche per chi non è magari appunto interessato o appassionato di videogame, però è un'occasione veramente speciale per imparare l'inglese in maniera efficace, secondo me.

T: Grazie.

INT 26 (12-01-22; 4.30 pm)

T: Qual è la cosa che secondo te ha funzionato di più, ti è piaciuta di più di questo corso e hai trovato valida?

S: Intanto il fatto di avere un colloquio tra più persone, anche differenti di età, permette di imparare nuovi termini; parlare con altre persone in inglese mi ha permesso di abituarci; poi pure fatto che tramite i videogiochi è un modo per stare collegati con gli altri amici; alcuni lavori li ho fatti in multiplayer con altre persone.

T: C'è stato qualche elemento, qualcosa, che hai trovato noioso nel corso?

S: Noioso no; a me non piace tanto scrivere soprattutto in inglese, perché è ancora più difficile; solamente questo. forse il fatto che bisognasse scaricare minecraft, perché c'era un problema che non ci riuscivo sul pc. non so capire il perché, ma ho dovuto utilizzare il telefono; per il resto molto bello il corso.

T: Qualcosa che hai trovato difficile?

S: No, le modalità sono state molto semplici, anche perché sono semplici ed immediate da capire: nelle lezioni sugli acronimi, di cui già ne sapevo qualcuno, ne ho imparati altri. Solo la parte sulla scrittura, ma per una cosa mia, perché la trovo molto più difficile; io non ho mai scritto né al computer né a mano in inglese.

T: Se tu pensi alle quattro abilità di listening speaking listening writing reading, alla fine di questo corso, in quale di queste abilità tu ti senti migliorato?

S: Allora il listening perché già prima ero a un livello base. ora riesco a capire molto meglio le persone che parlano inglese. Poiché mi sono esercitato anche a scrivere, direi anche un po' il writing. io le parole le so, le so pronunciare, però poi quando le devo scrivere, mi si cancella tutto dalla mente, come se avessi una penna luminosa che cancella la memoria.

T: Si può ampliare il lessico, si può ampliare il vocabolario videogiocando in inglese? e in che modo?

S: Sì, videogiocando sì, perché per esempio alcuni giochi hanno delle abilità specifiche se si mette in lingua originale inglese. dopo tu ti trovi quella terza, quarta volta, che ti capita quel giocatore con quell'arma, con quella abilità e quindi ti chiedi cosa significhino certe parole. Allora dovevi cercarle. Quando nel gioco non c'è la lingua italiana, e io dovevi capire le varie armi, oppure la storia. poi non potevo skippare, perché non avrei capito più la storia e neppure la missione.

T: Pensi di avere imparato delle cose di grammatica alla fine di questo corso? mi riesci anche a dire cosa ti ricordi, quali aspetti grammaticali?

S: Sicuramente sì. io prima trascrivevo un suono, che diventava una parola ma che non aveva un significato. i primi anni di scuola è andata così. con questo corso, sia perché dovevo scrivere, perché dovevo parlare e capire, a furia di scrivere, le parole riesci a fissarle meglio. Ho ampliato molto il lessico, per esempio quando bisognava descrivere le immagini di alcuni sfondi di alcuni strutture su minecraft, oppure di alcune ambientazioni; la ho capito, ascoltando anche gli altri, come si poteva fare e ho aggiustato anche i miei difetti di pronuncia e anche proprio di scrittura.

T: Pensa a questo corso e all'approccio che ha avuto alla lingua e pensa al corso tradizionale scolastico e all'approccio che ha che ha quel corso alla lingua. riesci a farmi una considerazione tra i due?

S: L'inglese a scuola è molto sistematico, quindi non c'è proprio un approccio diretto; cioè una cosa la impari e poi la ripeti però, però fino a un certo punto lo comprendi, perché varie cose non le utilizzerai; non è un discorso tra amici. Invece, tramite un videogioco, ti incontri con gli amici e si crea una lobby, cioè una bella bella partita in multiplayer, oppure una story mode. quando siamo in giro è molto più facile usare i termini di gioco rispetto a quelli di letteratura. Un libro fino ad un certo punto ti aiuta. Sono parole scritte in bianco e nero, statiche, mentre in un videogioco ci sono quei discorsi, uniti ad animazioni, che capisci già grazie all'animazione, e quindi riesci a capire in generale la frase.

T: Tra tutti i compiti che io assegnato, quale ti è piaciuto di più da svolgere e perché?

S: Il big theme su un videogioco; infatti io ho descritto tutte le modalità di gioco, dalla prima all'ultima. Call of duty avrà fatto il decimo compleanno sul mio telefono. Mentre in minecraft si fanno quasi sempre le stesse cose, costruire andare a caccia, andare alla ricerca di minerali specifici; mentre in call of duty ci sono 20 modalità diverse e ogni giorno posso usare una modalità.

T: E invece per quanto riguarda le attività che abbiamo svolto durante il corso, quali attività ti sono piaciute di più, ti hanno divertito, hai trovato comunque utili?

S: Divertito per esempio nel registrare il video, quello dello youtuber. mi sono divertito anche se ho capito, dopo quel video, che devo comprare un nuovo pc! Per fare quel video ci avrò messo 5 ore!!

T: E' interessante che tu non abbia mollato l'attività che ti interessava!!

S: Sì anche perché qualche anno fa registrai un video con un mio amico per youtube, ma i caricato, e passai buone tre ore a montarlo.

T: Invece proprio nelle attività che noi abbiamo svolto insieme durante gli incontri, che cosa ti è piaciuto?

S: Quello che mi è rimasto ancora impresso era trova le differenze tra due immagini. Minecraft ha molte texture simili tra loro, quindi è facile trovarle. Quando non le trovi, ti appassioni. poi ha pure fatto di doverle dire in inglese è stato proprio un motivo in più per impegnarmi.

T: Ti sei sentito più motivato a parlare in inglese?

S: Sì, anche; perché già solitamente quando sto in classe e quando devo parlare con la professoressa in classe tendiamo di base ad usare l'italiano. Poi in classe non mi piace...perché siamo un gruppetto sul mediocre/sufficiente e gli altri a livello C2. Ed io non voglio essere interrogato con quelli bravi. qua io mi sono sentito molto più a mio agio; qui c'erano altre persone, tipo me, che avevano più o meno il mio livello, e quindi mi sentivo a mio agio a parlare con loro.

T: Quindi anche questo ti ha aiutato ovviamente a parlare di più. e come ti sentivi proprio a livello emotivo durante i meeting, qual era il tuo stato d'animo?

S: Le prime volte ero un pochino... non dubbioso... però volevo capire come funzionasse. la prima lezione ero molto su: ok analizziamo tutto, come come funziona, così capisco. ma già dalla seconda lezione in poi mi sono cominciato a divertire, perché c'erano altri ragazzi, parliamo un po' tra di noi, vediamo le immagini, vediamo cose... e quindi è stato molto divertente. non c'era un momento in cui mi sono sentito un po' giù di tono, cioè mi ha dato sempre qualcosa di nuovo e mi stavo divertendo.

T: Pensi che anche la tua fluency sia migliorata?

S: Sì, perché rispetto all'anno scorso, in cui usciva una parola ogni tanto, quindi parlavo piano, lentamente, ora sono molto più fluent, cioè parlo molto meglio in inglese, anche grazie all'ascolto degli altri.

T: E la stessa cosa puoi dirla su listening?

S: Sì. Perché stare insieme ad altre persone che parlano in inglese, mi ha aiutato a capire anche dei discorsi.

T: Se tu volessi identificare proprio dei compiti, delle attività, che noi abbiamo fatto che secondo te hanno migliorato la fluency e il listening, secondo te quali sono queste attività?

S: Per il listening per esempio quando dovevamo vedere dei video da analizzare, perché lo dovrei ascoltare, capire per poi creare un discorso tutto mio per raccontarlo alla classe. Per questo è migliorata anche la fluency. Sentendo gli altri parlare in inglese, ho preso un pochino più coraggio e ho iniziato a parlare anche io.

T: Penso adesso alla gamification, quindi il nostro corso è stato strutturato con i punti, i badge la leaderboard. quanto queste cose hanno influito su di te, cioè come hai percepito anche la tua posizione nella classifica, che impatto ha avuto l'utilizzo di un sistema del genere di valutazione?

S: Intanto il fatto che non fosse un voto unico, che veniva messo per ogni esercizio per casa e poi ne veniva fatta una media, ma era una somma di punti che si sommavano piano piano, fino alla fine del corso, ha aiutato. Non ti demoralizzi, perché sai già che è un processo che accumula punti un po' per volta. A scuola se prendi un 5 già ti demoralizzi, perché sai che devi prendere un voto alto per avere 6, invece qui pensi che puoi sempre migliorare e aumentare il punteggio, andando avanti. Anche a scuola io non faccio molta attenzione al voto, se prendo un bel voto sono felice se no, sono un po' triste, però poi penso a come recuperare.

T: Pensi che un badge, che è un riconoscimento, alla fine sia un feedback utile anche ai fini dell'apprendimento?

S: Eh sì, perché vedi tutti i tuoi impegni rappresentati da un badge: è qualcosa che certifica che io mi sono impegnato fino ad ora.

T: Pensiamo adesso al gameplay. hai iniziato a giocare a minecraft e tu sapevi che stavi giocando a minecraft per uno scopo didattico. questa conoscenza, questa consapevolezza, in un certo senso hanno cambiato il tuo gameplay?

S: Di minecraft non è che ne vado pazzo, però ci giocavo fino a qualche anno fa; quindi, già il fatto che dovevo rientrarci per un compito, almeno le prime volte era un dover fare. Poi, verso la fine, avendo visto che c'erano stati molti aggiornamenti nelle texture, mi sbrighavo a fare gli esercizi, per scoprire le nuove modalità di gioco.

T: Quando tu dici lo devo fare, quindi ci entro. ma una volta che tu ci entravi, questo “durante il gioco” lo sentivi con minore divertimento?

S: Le prime volte sì, perché non è che mi piaccia molto minecraft, quindi entravo, giocavo, sapevo che dovevo raggiungere un tot minimo di tempo per poter scrivere qualcosa, per segnare sul diario, e poi alla fine uscivo appena finiva il tempo. le prime volte era proprio così. poi verso la fine era, ok ho finito di fare questo lavoro, finiamo di fare questa sfida; quindi mi sono divertito, però è sempre stato graduale, rispetto all'inizio che non avevo proprio voglia di giocare. alla fine invece sono riuscito ad unire il divertimento agli esercizi.

T: Secondo te quindi si può apprendere attraverso un videogioco?

S: Sì, si può apprendere attraverso i videogiochi. per esempio, oltre a minecraft, che non aggiunge tanti termini nuovi all'anno, quindi già dopo sei mesi impari tutti i termini di gioco, quindi bisognerebbe aggiungere altri giochi al progetto, così da ampliare ancor più il vocabolario.

T: A che tipo di persona tu consiglieresti questo metodo di apprendimento? a che tipo di ragazzi?

S: Sicuramente a quelli un po' timidi, perché, giocando, ti sciogli nel parlare con gli altri e ti senti parte di un gruppo. e poi anche agli amanti dei videogiochi che posso unire ai videogiochi l'apprendimento di nuovi termini. quindi sia agli otaku che ai timidi.

T: Essere un amante dei videogiochi diventa una condizione necessaria per partecipare a questo corso?

S: No, non per forza. perché se tu sei già sei amante dei videogiochi li apprezzi e poi inizi a fare amicizia con gli altri; in vece se sei timido bisogna trovare qualcun altro con cui giocare. dopo un po', pure se si è restii a creare legami con gli altri, pure se non hai mai giocato a nessun videogioco, si impara. ci sono giochi che all'inizio hanno un tutorial, poi ci si mette d'accordo con un'altra persona che deve fare qualcosa con me e si crea un legame con questa persona; poi con un'altra attività ci si unisce al gruppo, e così via.

T: Tu già mi hai detto no è che lo miglioreresti per esempio inserendo vari giochi nel format

S: Per esempio ad inizio anno si può lista di giochi da scegliere con la classe. E poi si decide l'ordine di gioco, magari anche a seconda delle tipologie e della modalità di gioco. Magari ricorrono termini simili tra i giochi scelti e allora si giocheranno in successione...

T: E all'interno di questo corso, o comunque di un corso strutturato così, pensi che l'insegnante sia importante?

S: Sicuramente l'insegnante ha importanza vitale all'inizio del corso, in modo da indirizzarti. poi piano piano ti appassioni al gioco e inizi un pochino ad apprezzarlo. poi c'è qualcuno che resterà un pochino indietro perché non siamo tutti uguali, e quell'insegnante aiuta questa persona anche a parlare con gli altri in un modo più fluido. quindi sì, secondo me dell'insegnante, all'interno di un corso del genere, ce n'è bisogno per forza, per guidare, per aiutare e per evitare di uscire dai margini, per seguire così un corso tutti uniti e uscire alla fine del corso che tutti abbiamo raggiunto più o meno lo stesso livello.

T: Vuoi aggiungere qualcos'altro?

S: Sì forse una cosa che vorrei aggiungere è il fatto che il suddividere in livelli di inglese può essere utile, ma se un ragazzo volesse sperimentare un livello superiore dovrebbe poterne avere la possibilità, creando un anello di congiunzione tra tutti e tre, in modo da conoscere anche altre espressioni e sentire altre espressioni. Io non manterrei un gruppo chiuso, proprio per motivare chi ha voglia a confrontarsi con qualcosa di diverso, e forse più difficile.

T: Grazie.

Intervista prof.ssa I. D. I. (11-08-22; 5.30 pm)

Me: Un paio di domande sul corso *Gameful English*, a cui alcuni tuoi studenti hanno preso parte. Innanzitutto se loro ti hanno dato un feedback e poi se tu personalmente hai potuto notare qualcosa, dal punto di vista didattico e di approccio verso l'inglese.

I: I ragazzi, come hai avuto modo di vedere, sono persone che quando prendono un impegno lo portano a termine con passione. Coloro che hanno partecipato sono rimasti entusiasti. A me hanno detto che è stato bello. È stata una bella esperienza e a loro è piaciuta, al di là dei videogiochi, che sappiamo essere la loro passione. A loro è piaciuto tanto. A loro piace molto mettersi alla prova e tentare anche cose diverse. A loro è piaciuta non solo la modalità con cui è stato fatto il corso, ma mi hanno detto che hanno riscontrato, e io posso confermarlo come insegnante, che le loro speaking skills sono sicuramente migliorate tanto. È vero anche che gran parte dei ragazzi che hanno fatto il corso sono molto spigliati, come avrai avuto modo di vedere, interagiscono, vogliono sempre la parola, sono loro i protagonisti. Quello che loro mi hanno detto è proprio significativo: “vorremmo una scuola che fosse metà come questo corso che abbiamo fatto, e metà come è ora, incentrata soprattutto nei primi anni sulle regole grammaticali”. Noi facciamo tanta grammatica, viene dato poco spazio allo speaking, perché noi insegnanti siamo in ansia di finire il programma, che loro acquisiscano tutte le regole...invece poi, alla fine, i ragazzi ti sottolineano l'importanza, cosa che è vera, soprattutto per la lingua straniera, di parlare. Di lanciarsi anche.

Me: Hai potuto notare che si sono staccati dalla paura di sbagliare? Senti che si sono lanciati di più a parlare in inglese?

I: Sì, sì. Lanciarsi! Proprio così. Hanno iniziato a parlare di più, senza dare troppo peso all'errore. Anche io ribadisco questo concetto e loro, secondo me, hanno colto in pieno quello che era lo spirito del corso.

Me: Il focus del corso era appunto speaking e listening, farli parlare, spingerli a raccontare. Cosa ti hanno detto della gamification?

I: Anche se si sono trovati di fronte ad un tipo di valutazione diversa, i ragazzi sono stati pronti ad accettare il cambiamento.

Me: Il feedback è stato positivo?

I: Ad essere sincera, non sono scesa in dettaglio. Mi hanno solo detto che venivano valutati in modo diverso. Non si sono dilungati. Ho visto sicuramente in loro un ritorno positivo. A loro ha fatto piacere di partecipare al corso. Ed è questa la chiave vincente. Se un ragazzo partecipa ad un corso ed è contento, l'obiettivo è stato raggiunto. Loro sono consapevoli di aver migliorato la loro produzione orale. La consapevolezza da parte degli alunni, di essere migliorati, è anch'essa un obiettivo.

Me: Riesci a farmi degli esempi specifici di ricaduta didattica su singoli alunni?

I: Non penso di riuscire a dare un esempio pratico. L'impressione è assolutamente positiva. L'entusiasmo e la voglia di raccontami la loro esperienza sono state notevoli. Mi hanno sottolineato come tutti abbiano parlato, senza nessun timore. Forse in ambito scolastico si sentono più frenati, sicuramente dalla valutazione. Io cerco sempre di ribadire che la valutazione è complessiva.

Me: Me lo hanno detto i tuoi studenti. Questo progetto di ricerca si basa sul principio che nella valutazione non è un togliere, ma un mettere.

I: Brava, brava. Quello che mi piace che hai detto è il concetto di aggiungere.

Me: Bene. Quindi il valore positivo che hai riscontrato è che loro adesso si lanciano di più.

I: Questo corso è stato un vantaggio anche per me docente, perché vedere un ragazzo che si "lancia" è sicuramente molto bello e positivo.

Me: Grazie.

Intervista prof.ssa M. N. (09-08-22; 3 pm)

I: Vorrei da te un feedback sul corso *Gameful English*, a cui molti tuoi studenti hanno partecipato: come hanno visto il corso? Come hanno percepito la gamification? E, altra domanda, tu hai potuto notare qualche cambiamento in alcuni di loro? Andiamo per gradi. Cosa ti hanno detto i ragazzi del corso?

M: Il feedback è stato completamente positivo da tutti i ragazzi; a parte l'entusiasmo per il progetto, per questo nuovo modo di apprendere l'inglese, hanno trovato dei punti che li hanno aiutati a migliorare. Soprattutto mi hanno parlato dell'acquisizione di nuovi vocaboli, e anche sulla puntualità con la quale sono stati corretti, cosa che è stata utile per autocorreggersi. Hanno notato l'efficacia della correzione degli errori fatta in modo tempestivo. È emerso che la correzione immediata li ha avvantaggiati nell'apprendimento e nel riconoscimento dell'errore che avevano fatto. Un altro aspetto nuovo che loro hanno sentito particolarmente è stato il modo di essere valutati, perché, visto che la valutazione agisce sull'autostima, sulla personalità dello studente e sul modo di continuare nell'apprendimento, questo tipo di valutazione non li ha svantaggiati, anzi, ne hanno riconosciuto l'efficacia. Premiare il successo è stato di certo più positivo che valutare l'insuccesso.

Al di là di tutto, c'è stato grandissimo entusiasmo per questo progetto. Credo perché la considerazione che si ha sui videogames è sempre negativa da parte della scuola e degli adulti. Perché si pensa che possa danneggiarli e dare alienazione. Loro, invece, con questo corso hanno visto riconosciuta la validità del loro mondo. Questo progetto ha evidenziato la loro utilità nel giocare.

I: Come insegnante, in qualcuno hai visto qualche cambiamento positivo, anche solo nell'atteggiamento verso l'inglese?

M: Sì. Sicuramente un ragazzo che era particolarmente chiuso con l'inglese, dopo questo corso è cambiato molto. Il ragazzo aveva subito anche un shock a causa del Covid, rimanendo a lungo isolato a casa, vista la presenza dei nonni. Non voleva neppure tornare a scuola. Aveva trovato la sua dimensione nella didattica a distanza. Dopo questo corso, tornato a scuola, con l'inglese l'ho visto più sciolto, meno timoroso. Prima non interveniva mai, perché aveva paura di sbagliare.

I: Con me era molto partecipativo, alla fine, perché lui è un vero gamer. Lui adora i videogames. All'inizio anche con me molto timido e riservato e timoroso. Poi si è sciolto moltissimo.

M: Un altro ragazzo mi ha chiesto addirittura quando si sarebbe fatto un secondo corso, tanto è rimasto entusiasta. Poiché è di un'altra classe, anche i suoi compagni volevano partecipare.

I: Tutti i ragazzi sono stati molto partecipativi e bravi. Molto seri. Qualche altro elemento da segnalare?

M: Anche un altro ragazzo di quinta, che non ha mai brillato con l'inglese, adesso si lancia molto di più a parlare in inglese. Il progetto lo ha aiutato. Il minimo comune denominatore è stato una maggiore motivazione all'inglese; e questo, secondo me, è indicativo del fatto che l'apprendimento della lingua deve essere fatto attraverso altri canali, non solo quello che si fa a scuola.

I: I ragazzi hanno evidenziato un'attenzione troppo marcata sulla grammatica e poi sulla letteratura.

M: Io infatti dedico un'ora a settimana allo use of English.

I: Puoi dire che da parte di alcuni c'è stato un miglioramento nella fluency, nell'esposizione?

M: Sì, c'è stato sicuramente.

I: Ritorniamo alla gamification...mi dicevi che a loro è piaciuta come dimensione e lo hanno percepito come strumento utile nella valutazione. Lo hanno percepito anche come strumento egualitario?

M: Sì, sì. Al 100% e questo gli ha dato un approccio diverso allo studio della lingua. Io ho visto uno stretto legame tra apprendimento e questo tipo di valutazione. Siccome l'apprendimento della lingua è sostanzialmente psicologico, perché quando si parla in una lingua straniera si coinvolgono vari aspetti della personalità, e la paura di buttarsi è tra questi, ed è evidente, questo tipo di valutazione gli dava la giusta tranquillità di pensare meno di poter sbagliare e più di poter parlare.

I: Loro non si sentivano penalizzati nell'errore, infatti. Perché potevano fare altre attività per migliorare.

Me: Grazie mille.

Annex 14. Focus groups: transcriptions

FOCUS 1 (17-01-22; 3-4 pm)

T: Iniziamo con il primo focus Group e ci raccontiamo un po' quello che abbiamo fatto, impressioni e suggerimenti sempre sul nostro corso. Vorrei capire da voi quali sono le possibilità che avete potuto notare e ovviamente cosa suggerireste voi per favorire l'uso dei videogiochi per imparare l'inglese.

S10: Sicuramente è un apprendimento non dico più facile, ma che ti scorre più facilmente addosso, perché collegato, connesso con il gioco, viene più divertente e quindi sicuramente più piacevole di uno studio forsennato su un libro

S9: Sono d'accordo con lui, perché nel momento in cui stai apprendendo l'inglese giocando a un videogioco apprendi l'inglese facendo qualcosa che ti piace. però apprendere l'inglese giocando per esempio a videogiochi come minecraft, come nel nostro corso, non può mai essere allo stesso livello dei corsi privati, oppure delle lezioni a scuola. però lo trovo lo stesso molto utile.

T: Quali sono i limiti che avete trovato? E poi anche le possibilità che ci vengono offerte.

S15: I limiti diciamo sono solamente cose che riguardano il videogioco stesso, cioè nel senso che tu stai giocando online e la connessione non ti permette di riuscire a parlare in modo fluido con la persona che si trova dall'altra parte; solo questo, perché perché per il resto non ci sono molti limiti.

S20: Secondo me è un limite che ha questo metodo potrebbe essere l'apprendimento della grammatica, cioè che non è molto sviluppato. più che altro apprendi listening, come pronunciare le parole, apprendi nuovi vocaboli, però la grammatica è un po' carente, secondo me.

T: dalle interviste è venuto fuori che questo corso potrebbe funzionare in parallelo ad un corso ufficiale. Cioè affiancare il corso tradizionale a scuola con questo corso, che potenzia di più listening e speaking. Voi siete tutti d'accordo? Cioè che la grande potenzialità è nell'insieme, nell'interazione tra i due metodi?

S21: Sì perché sicuramente singolarmente *gameful english* potrebbe anche essere sottovalutato, preso sottogamba, e non non viene data la giusta attenzione, focalizzandosi più su l'apprendimento dell'inglese che sul gioco; invece accostandolo quindi in parallelo con un corso ufficiale può dare sicuramente una grande mano.

S5: Pure secondo me, cioè singolarmente può funzionare sicuramente ugualmente; però se lo accostiamo ad un corso fatto a scuola, funzionerebbe il doppio e ancora di più.

T: Utilizzando i videogiochi in generale, al di là di Minecraft, da un punto di vista linguistico, secondo voi quali sono le possibilità offerte per l'apprendimento di una lingua?

S20: Il dialogo con persone che parlano quotidianamente inglese, con delle persone madrelingua, penso sia uno strumento che si può sfruttare di questo corso. nel nostro caso di minecraft magari entrando in chat di discord vocale, nella vocale di determinati server, magari americani o inglesi; però per esempio anche con giochi come Genshin o giochi multiplayer dove vi è una interazione tra diversi giocatori, proprio voluta dal gioco. fondamentalmente in minecraft, anche multiplayer, uno può fare le cose sue singolarmente e non interagire con altri giocatori. invece in giochi dove il contatto è necessario, sicuramente è un valore aggiunto.

S19: Anche perché comunque a scuola, in particolare nei primi anni, si fa grammatica oppure ci facevamo sempre leggere dei dialoghi fra due persone, inventate dal libro, in modo tale da scoprire nuove parole. ad ogni capitolo c'erano dei dialoghi con parole più difficili che noi non conoscevamo; però comunque non facciamo mai dialoghi con persone che sono madrelingua. Li facciamo solamente con la professoressa; giocando ai videogiochi tu comunque fai un dialogo vero, con una persona che parla inglese praticamente tutti i giorni. quindi questa è una possibilità.

T: Rispetto ai vostri convincimenti prima di fare questo corso...questo corso che cosa vi ha dimostrato? avete scoperto delle nuove possibilità alle quali prima non pensavate?

S22: Io ero già a conoscenza dal fatto che anche attraverso i videogiochi si poteva apprendere una lingua, giocando con persone che parlano quella lingua. perché alla fine è un po' come la musica: molte persone hanno imparato l'inglese traducendo i testi delle canzoni; però diciamo fino all'inizio del corso non avevo mai giocato ai videogiochi con lo scopo di apprendere una lingua, ma ci avevo sempre giocato con gli amici con cui esco, puramente per divertimento.

T: Alla fine di questo corso c'è questa consapevolezza che effettivamente si può utilizzare il videogioco come strumento di apprendimento? O avete delle perplessità al riguardo?

S13: Secondo noi ragazzi sì, però secondo me è una cosa che gli adulti, soprattutto insegnanti e anche i genitori devono ancora pensare. se domani si va a scuola e si dice al professore che possiamo imparare la sua materia con i videogiochi, ti manda a quel paese sicuramente, non la pensa come te.

S20: Io ho trovato dei miglioramenti sia nel listening che nei dialoghi con le altre persone in inglese, quindi secondo me è una cosa possibile.

S9: Se oggi andassimo a scuola a dire ai professori di imparare una lingua o qualsiasi materia tramite un videogioco pochi professori ti darebbero ragione, sono secondo me.

T: Qual è il limite che gli adulti colgono nel videogioco?

S22: Perché forse pensavano che noi usiamo i videogiochi solo per divertirci o per passare il tempo, quando in realtà non è così.

S10: I nostri genitori sono cresciuti anche con dei videogiochi che rispetto ai nostri sono molto indietro e non hanno molte cose che abbiamo noi. I videogiochi si sono evoluti. Si è evoluto anche il significato. Adesso un videogioco può anche non essere solo un'occasione per divertirsi, ma anche per imparare; potrebbe essere paragonato alla lettura di un libro, dove impari qualcosa, dove si racconta una storia. Gli adulti sono un po' più sul tradizionale, sul cartaceo.

T: Quindi pensate che magari dietro c'è un po' lo stereotipo del videogioco come inutile e perditempo, insomma. E sul video gioco come gioco violento? E' vera questa cosa?

S5: Dipende da persona a persona; pure io ho giocato a videogiochi violenti, di guerra, però non è che sono diventato violento. Non è vera questa cosa.

T: Noi abbiamo giocato con un videogioco commerciale. Voi sapete che per l'apprendimento delle lingue ci sono anche dei videogiochi studiati proprio per l'apprendimento delle lingue.

S15: Io ho usato Duolingo, che è focalizzato sull'imparare la lingua e anche se propone attività, anche sotto alcuni punti di vista piacevoli, divertenti, comunque l'attenzione è sempre al 100% sull'apprendimento. Mentre il videogioco commerciale non è creato per quello scopo, però può essere usato anche per cogliere queste occasioni, ma fondamentalmente l'obiettivo del videogioco commerciale, in questo caso Minecraft, non era far imparare l'inglese. Siamo noi che sfruttiamo le potenzialità di questo gioco in un ambiente educativo, in ambiente scolastico.

T: Se volessimo enumerare le possibilità che abbiamo utilizzando un videogioco per apprendere l'inglese. Quali sono le possibilità che abbiamo... già detto il fatto di poter parlare con persone straniere..

S21: Sfruttando una terminologia sicuramente tipica di quell'ambito.. si possono scoprire parole che magari nella grammatica non sarebbero mai state utilizzate, anche negli esempi, invece vengono utilizzate nel vocabolario specifico del gioco, che però non si limita solo al gaming, perché poi il vocabolario specifico di quel gioco dipende dal gioco, dall'ambiente del gioco.

S13: Migliorare il listening, perché alla fine quando tu fai il dialogo con una persona che sa parlare bene inglese, la persona non è che parla piano per farti capire meglio quello che dice. Parla come se stesse parlando con un'altra persona inglese che capisce bene la lingua. È la stessa cosa quando noi per esempio a scuola andiamo a fare gli esercizi di listening, molto spesso troviamo difficoltà perché le persone parlano velocemente.

T: Abbiamo già visto tre opportunità, listening, speaking, vocabulary

S22: La chat scritta serve a prendere coscienza di come determinate parole si scrivono, a poter formulare un discorso che poi si ricollega allo speaking, perché quello che noi scriviamo in una chat è come se volessimo chiederlo direttamente alla persona. Si può ricollegare facilmente alla grammatica, perché la frase la devi saper scrivere. Devi comunque rispettare determinate regole, saper utilizzare un tempo verbale nel modo giusto. Però si ricollega sempre più allo speaking, perché è come se la chat scritta fosse sostituito alla chat vocale.

T: Passiamo all'altro tema, per quanto riguarda invece la gamification. Vorrei capire secondo voi quali sono i limiti dell'applicazione a scuola della gamification e se questa cosa può funzionare anche con le altre discipline.

S9: Potrebbe risultare più stimolante, potrebbe incuriosire sicuramente, e quindi ricevere maggiore attenzione, al contrario di sistemi vecchio stampo a cui uno nemmeno dà più di tanto attenzione, perché ormai è così, si fa così, da parte nostra, di noi studenti, non c'è nemmeno così tanta attenzione a come la professoressa insegna, perché fondamentalmente utilizzano tutti quanti lo stesso metodo che lo stesso da cinquant'anni. Invece se viene proposto un metodo diverso, sicuramente ha un'attenzione maggiore rispetto alle proposte di insegnamento attuali. Ci sono sempre diverbi sulla valutazione, sulla poca chiarezza dei voti, che magari non vengono nemmeno detti subito, ma si devono vedere poi su un registro. Invece con una classifica, in un ambiente ristretto come una classe, che viene aggiornata giorno per giorno, c'è una maggiore chiarezza sul voto che poi sarà quello finale o comunque sull'andamento che si sta avendo.

S10: Forse però questo sistema "crescente" non ti non ti fa rendere bene conto quando stai andando male, però non tocchi con mano il fatto che hai preso un voto basso, e quindi potresti impegnarti di meno, forse questo. Se io prendo 5 e insufficiente e dico, cavolo mi devo sbrigare! se io prendo 1 invece penso solo di aver preso poco.

S19: E' un argomento fresco, perché non tutti sono pronti ad accettare il cambiamento, semplicemente questo. Non tutti sono indirizzati ad andare verso la tecnologia, o comunque ad assecondare i più giovani, soprattutto qui in Italia. Per me è meglio mettere tanti voti piccoli e fare una somma di tutti i voti che si hanno, piuttosto che mettere dei voti grandi che poi si vanno a dividere e a decimare a causa di un 2 o di un 3.

T: Secondo voi questo sistema a punte più egualitario rispetto ad un sistema scolastico tradizionale - è più chiaro, più trasparente, più egualitario?

S22: Dal punto di vista della valutazione si, perché prima di tutto la progressione si vede volta per volta. E un aggiornamento continuo, non è una verifica di fine mese o di fine quadrimestre, che quindi magari uno può pensare di avere delle conoscenze, di aver sviluppato delle conoscenze tramite uno studio, e magari nella verifica finale, che può essere una verifica, oppure possono essere 2, 3 verifiche, comunque una verifica di fine quadrimestre, si accorge solo in quel momento di non aver appreso come avrebbe dovuto. Invece con una valutazione continua, giornaliera, se vi è qualche lacuna, viene subito fuori. Per rispondere a quello che diceva il compagno prima, che non essendoci una valutazione da 0 a 10, come nelle normali verifiche, interrogazioni, non vi è magari la consapevolezza del brutto voto preso, vi sono sempre dei punti di riferimento nella classe, di quello che prende il voto più alto e quello che prende il voto più basso. Quindi nel momento in cui comparando il proprio punteggio con quelli nella classifica più in alto, si può capire che si deve aumentare l'impegno e lo studio per scalare la classifica, perché non si sta facendo bene. Come magari si può capire che si sta studiando

quanto si studiava prima, perché magari se prima si prendeva un 6 un 7 o un 8 e adesso sei a metà classifica o poco più di metà classifica, si capisce che quindi la valutazione più o meno coincide. c'è sempre un modo per capire, fare il paragone, come se fosse un passaggio euro/ lira il passaggio è però più ancora più semplice.

S15: Anche io sono d'accordo perché, con questo metodo della classifica, tu puoi vedere praticamente il tuo progresso giorno dopo giorno, e se ti accorgi che magari stai andando male, perché sei in una bassa posizione della classifica, sei più stimolato a fare meglio per scalare posti. invece se i professori spiegano, spiegano per due settimane e mezzo, poi la terza settimana fanno un'interrogazione oppure il compito, tu in quelle due settimane, due settimane e mezzo, pensi che hai capito tutto bene, che sei pronto per il compito, e poi prendi un brutto voto. a quel punto puoi recuperare solo all'interrogazione dopo, o al prossimo compito.

S20: Anche secondo me la gamification può essere valida.

T: Quanto è importante chiarire prima le regole del gioco?

S22: E' molto importante perché in base alle regole del gioco tu sai come agire, come ti devi organizzare il lavoro. invece se non sai prima le regole del gioco, c'è una sorpresa, tu ti organizzi in un modo e poi arriva la sorpresa che scombuscola tutto quello che ti eri organizzato prima

T: Ultima parte di questa chiacchierata è sul gameplay. Tutti mi avete detto mi avete risposto che comunque sapere che stava utilizzando un videogioco per fini didattici non ha modificato il gameplay, se non in alcuni casi verso una maggiore consapevolezza dell'uso del videogioco. Ora vi voglio fare un'altra domanda, che è diversa, sul gameplay. Quali fattori esterni possono modificare, possono impattare il gameplay?

S9: Soprattutto quando mi arrabbio, quando succede un qualcosa che non mi aspettavo, per esempio qualche bug, oppure che ne so, la connessione che lagga, se ci sono dei tossici contro. quelli ti fanno perdere la pazienza.

S10: Secondo me principalmente tre cose> allora la prima cosa è abbastanza banale, però sicuramente la connessione e la prima cosa che influenza la piacevolezza del tuo gameplay. se giochi ad un gioco offline ok, però per un gioco online la connessione deve essere sempre stabile, perché altrimenti crashi, oppure il gameplay va a tratti. poi la seconda cosa, secondo me, è il rapporto che hai con le persone con cui stai giocando, perché se siete tutti in sintonia ci si diverte molto di più, invece se ci sono dei litigi all'interno del gruppo che sta giocando, un po' rovina il piacere di giocare in quel momento. e poi secondo me quello che si chiama script del gioco, perché molto spesso se Vinci tante partite di fila il gioco poi arriva ad un punto, ad un momento, che ti fa perdere apposta le partite, oppure ti fa incontrare delle squadre avversarie molto più forti della tua per farti perdere perdere. secondo me la vittoria deve essere basata solamente sull'abilità del player non sul bug del gioco, oppure diciamo gli "handicap" del gioco. se non ci fossero appunto questi bug questo script e vero pure che molte persone smetterebbero di giocare al gioco, perché magari essendo troppo più scarsi perderebbero tutte le partite. invece il gioco con questo script fa in modo che anche quelli più scarsi riescano in qualche modo a competere.

S19: E' un modo che utilizza l'app per bilanciare il gioco, per bilanciare quella che è la classifica se parliamo di fifa, oppure anche di altri giochi. lo script è necessario, altrimenti giocherebbero al gioco non per piacere ma solamente coloro che ne hanno un minimo di abilità e di capacità. se un principiante inizia a giocare, mettiamo a fifa, e incontra tutti quelli che ci passano tutta la giornata, ci sanno giocare, non potrà mai avere un'occasione di sfruttare il gameplay al massimo e di potersi divertire; quindi lo script è necessario per dare l'occasione a tutti quanti di vincere bene o male e bilanciare la classifica

S21: Dal mio punto di vista impatta il mio gameplay anche il giocare tanto, troppo spesso, può far diventare un gioco noioso. fondamentalmente le meccaniche di gioco, di tutti i videogiochi, sono le stesse che si ripetono in forme diverse. nel passarci troppo tempo uno inizia a notare non solo le qualità ma soprattutto i difetti che può avere quel gioco. se passa mezza giornata su fifa, lo script e di cui si parlava è esageratamente alto; se ci giochi un'ora e mezza, lo gli script lo vedi pochissimo. il giocare troppo ti può far incontrare player tossici o può diventare anche più noioso, perché si iniziano a notare tutti i difetti che magari non si vedevano a primo impatto

S13: Per me a volte i giochi e il loro script. se tu giochi del tempo e quindi impari a giocare, e sai giocare, puoi trovare qualcuno che non sa giocare e che vince senza meritarselo, per colpa dello script. Secondo me è fatto appositamente per farti arrabbiare, così hai ancora più voglia di giocare per vincere. Anche i giocatori tossici sono un problema, perché ti fanno arrabbiare.

S10: Secondo me il gioco dovrebbe essere basato solo sulle abilità del giocatore, non su su fattori interni al gioco, cioè già programmati.

S5: Anche avere il joystick rotto ti rovina il gameplay!

S19: Anche la community impatta sul gioco; cioè se vedo che se io sto perdendo e l'avversario mi prende in giro, io divento pazzo.

T: Se io vi avessi "obbligato" a giocare un'ora a minecraft, quindi guidando il tempo e le attività da svolgere, per ogni giorno, questo avrebbe impattato?

S22: Sì. Non sarebbe stato un gioco. noi giochiamo al gioco per apprendere la lingua all'orario che volevamo noi, il tempo che ci decidevamo noi, le modalità le decidevamo noi, e quindi questo non è stato un problema; però se magari dobbiamo giocare al videogioco per apprendere l'inglese, però dovevamo giocare per forza in una determinata modalità, per forza ad un determinato orario... e allora qui era diverso; perché comunque era una specie di obbligo questo, non eravamo più liberi.

S15: Concordo perché diventa noioso nel momento in cui influisce sul gameplay e il compito va a influire sull'attività che devo svolgere nel gioco; perché nel momento in cui il mio gameplay è libero e poi oltre quello che faccio nel gioco devo svolgere un'attività legata a quello che ho fatto, ma è una mia libera scelta l'attività da compiere, cioè nel momento in cui nel nostro caso si trattava di analizzare la chat io potevo fare una bedwars una Lucky block, perché siamo in ambito di minecraft, un parkour quello che volevo fare facevo nel mondo se mi fosse stato detto registra una chat mentre fai un parkour...quello che volevo fare facevo. Se mi fosse stato

detto: registra una chat mentre fai un parkour, già era una cosa diversa, perché ero costretto a fare un'attività imposta dall'insegnante; e quindi poi non era il piacere di giocare, ma era l'obbligo di giocare.

T: Un'altra scelta che io ho fatto è stata quella di non farvi intervenire mai durante il gameplay, che significa che io non vi ho mai detto mentre giocate dovete scrivere gli acronimi, o mentre giocate dovete fare un'altra attività. Se io vi avessi chiesto di fare un'attività "interrompendo" il gioco, questo poteva avere un impatto forte sul gameplay, tanto da decidere di non giocarci?

S22: Secondo me il fatto di scrivere dopo gli acronimi, ad esempio, era meglio perché comunque non dovevi pensare mentre stavi giocando. farlo dopo aiuta in questo caso.

S10: Secondo me fare delle attività durante il gameplay avrebbe in qualche modo influenzato in modo negativo la piacevolezza del gameplay, però secondo me avrebbe facilitato sia il compito stesso, ma anche l'apprendimento in generale dell'inglese durante il videogioco. Se noi dobbiamo scrivere per esempio gli acronimi dopo, comunque se noi giochiamo un'ora non possiamo ricordarci tutti gli acronimi che abbiamo sentito durante il gameplay.

T: Aspetta... il compito era specifico però. Certo così detto non te lo ricorderai mai... cioè i compiti erano molto dettagliati: vi si chiedeva registrate 15 minuti di quello del gioco e scrivete gli acronimi solo di quei 15 minuti. ma questo si fa dopo, però, cioè tu giochi un'ora due ore ,quello che vuoi...e di queste due ore registravi solo 15 minuti e poi, per fare il compito, andavi a riguardare solo quei 15 minuti e scrivevi tutti gli acronimi.

S19: Così era giusto. Avevo capito male io.

S5: Io prof sono d'accordo con lei. Sarebbe un po' come interrompere la visione di un film, esattamente come un compito a scuola, per poi rispondere alle domande.

T: Se non ci sono altri commenti, chiudiamo qui il focus. Grazie

FOCUS 2 (18-01-22; 3-4 pm)

T: Affrontiamo il tema dei videogiochi più in generale rispetto all'intervista singola, per cui io vi propongo degli spunti di discussione e voi mi raccontate quello che ne pensate al riguardo. abbiamo utilizzato un videogioco per l'apprendimento dell'inglese. Da quello che voi avete potuto osservare, da questa vostra esperienza, quali sono le possibilità che offre un videogioco per imparare l'inglese?

S2: Io credo grazie al contatto con altre persone, al di fuori dell'Italia, o comunque che parlano una lingua che non sia la nostra, si deve per forza comunicare in inglese. Questo si può fare anche semplicemente mettendo il gioco in lingua originale o in lingua inglese, appunto.

S15: Puoi imparare più vocaboli, vedere se qualcuno è più preparato di te, che parla meglio, magari con un accento migliore.

S3: Si potrebbe pure imparare lo slang, imparare qualche parola che non esiste però viene usata.

S4: Durante il gioco impari un inglese un po' più veloce, un po' più accorciato, più più slang. se stai parlando normalmente, mentre non stai giocando, l'inglese è diverso.

S23: Col gioco si apprende un inglese con le relative abbreviazioni. l'esempio più facile per capire è l'uso di U al posto di YOU.

S18: Forse anche il modo in cui si parla, semplicemente per il fatto che magari a scuola. parlando di grammatica, la impari "precisa", impari un certo tipo di grammatica; invece parlando con una persona, più o meno della nostra età, comunque adolescente, ha un modo completamente diverso di relazionarsi alla lingua

S12: L'unico obiettivo è di farti capire e basta. comunicare e basta.

S11: In certi giochi, in certi casi, si può imparare anche il linguaggio specifico.

T: Quindi un linguaggio di settore e specifico al gioco, in inglese, meno formale, più colloquiale. La prima possibilità è quindi quella di confrontarci con persone che parlano in inglese. Quali altre possibilità abbiamo notato nell'utilizzo del gioco per imparare l'inglese? Come? quali sono queste possibilità offerte?

S23: Come ho detto anche prima il fatto di poter cambiare la lingua e metterla semplicemente in inglese. o magari quando un gioco non è stato nemmeno tradotto in italiano utilizzi l'inglese. dopo un po' lo inizi anche a capire, cioè lo intuisce anche semplicemente dal gioco cosa devi fare, cosa non devi fare.

S2: Dipende anche dai giochi: ci sono giochi in cui magari devi soltanto giocare, in altri devi comprendere la storia dark souls, per esempio, viene valorizzato molto dalla storia, che però devi leggere attraverso gli oggetti del gioco.

S11: Un'altra cosa potrebbe essere... nel caso in cui non capisci bene l'inglese, puoi usare i sottotitoli. molti giochi hanno dei sottotitoli o dei dialoghi che semmai tu senti in lingua inglese, perché non sono stati doppiati, ma appunto hai la scritta, quindi più o meno riesci a intuire quello che sta dicendo.

S14: a volte, se non si sa l'inglese, il gioco te lo rende veramente molto più brutto, cioè per esempio su Rainbow6, che è un gioco sparattutto dove devi giocare a squadre, se non riesce a comunicare con il tuo compagno che non è italiano, magari si perde.. cioè secondo me l'inglese a volte te lo valorizza il gioco.

S12: Io ho un gioco che si chiama Squad, è un gioco molto realistico ed è un gioco di squadra. ci sono solamente inglesi, praticamente, cioè tedeschi francesi, ma tutti parlano inglese. c'è la chat 3D, quindi imparare l'inglese anche solo per quello sarebbe interessante. io non ci gioco spesso perché appunto mi viene un po' l'ansia certe volte nel parlare. però se si è fluidi, mi verrebbe molto di più la voglia di giocare.

T: In relazione al corso che noi abbiamo fatto, c'è una nuova consapevolezza sull'uso dei videogiochi in relazione alla lingua inglese?

S3: nel mio caso, non credo. la mia concezione alla fine è rimasta la stessa; perché per esempio io gioco molto a League of Legends, in cui lascia la chat è utile per due motivi: o per capire cosa fanno gli alleati che non sanno giocare, oppure insultarli. Alla fine, leggendo e scrivendo, impari quei modi di dire in inglese.

S18: A me aggiunto soltanto la consapevolezza che posso anche non vergognarmi della mia pronuncia, perché ci sono persone me sse peggio ed è molto più semplice avere magari un linguaggio molto più semplice che uno più elaborato, perché non hai il tempo di esprimerti benissimo mentre stai giocando.

T: Avete la sensazione che attraverso un videogioco potete anche imparare o già sentivate questa cosa?

S14: Io ne ho avuto la prova. almeno dal mio punto di vista. io sono stato seguito da da lei prof, quindi ne ho avuto la prova concreta dell'applicabilità.

S12: Io avevo pensato di un videogioco a scuola quando ero alle medie ed hanno rilasciato Minecraft educational. avevo visto qualche video degli americani, però avevo qualche dubbio. Oggi penso che sia utilizzabile, però dipende sempre dal come.

S3: Dipende dal come lo gestiscono anche i professori, perché per esempio, almeno nella mia classe con i professori che ho, non si potrebbe mai fare una cosa del genere. quindi bisognerebbe anche "formare" i professori a una certa didattica.

S18: Anche secondo me, una cosa che penalizza penso più in Italia e in altri Stati l'utilizzo di videogiochi e metodi più tecnologici in generale, penso sia il fatto che questi vengono svalutati proprio dagli adulti; cioè dicono è inutile è solo un gioco, che cosa ci dobbiamo fare... quando invece hanno comunque il potenziale di insegnare qualcosa. Dovrebbero prima provare certi videogiochi, perché, finché provi certi videogiochi semmai più competitivi, come ad esempio Rainbow six perché si vuole rilassare e giocare e stare con gli

amici... ma se giochi ad un gioco più profondo, proprio di storia in generale, come dark souls o molti altri, secondo me può dare appunto altri insegnamenti. Il Papa ha giocato ad Undertale e l'ha anche apprezzato. molti giochi sono ricchi di insegnamenti; solamente che se vengono svalutati, non ha senso neanche provarci.

S4: A livello di possibilità sì, cioè comunque ti aiuta a migliorare. però nella scuola italiana in generale è difficile che entri veramente in utilizzo, perché comunque ci sono molti professori che, come hanno già detto, sono molto ferrati sulle loro idee. non cambiano idea.

S12: Io penso prof, che soprattutto da parte dei docenti, soprattutto quelli più anziani ma anche da parte di alcuni ragazzi a cui il videogioco può non piacere, viene visto anche in maniera più contorta, se non lo si capisce.

T: Potrebbe piacere comunque a tutti un approccio del genere, o soltanto a chi gioca?

S2: Se magari è approfondito e curato bene, anche a tutti, anche a chi non ama per niente giocare sì, perché magari può essere visto come un mezzo multimediale che ti aiuta a capire..

S14: Secondo me dire proprio tutti è esagerato, perché di sicuro ci sarà quella persona a cui magari non piacerà come approccio; però in generale penso possa piacere.

S3: Io lo vedo molto lungo questo processo di far abituare anche più grandi. dovranno passare un po di generazioni. almeno una generazione dovrà passare.

S18: Però già noi abbiamo questo pensiero, e lo comunichiamo ai genitori e ai nonni

S11: Mah.. io ho fatto vedere cyberpunk a mia madre e ha detto che girava la testa, perché muoveva la visuale.

S4: Anche perché ad alcune cose bisogna essere abituati; cioè se ad esempio ad una persona appunto come dicevamo prima non piacciono i videogiochi in generale, e tu mostri un videogioco di un certo calibro, per lui potrebbe essere troppo, potrebbe esserci anche un sovraccarico dal contenuto. Pensa che sia troppo e non riesce a capire nulla. A me capitava da piccolo, ad esempio con League of Legends proprio. ero sovraccaricato, perché tu impari le prime cose, sì, ma non riesci a imparare ogni cosa. Quindi, appunto, o è una cosa che ci si abitua nel tempo, e ci vuole un sacco di tempo e voglia soprattutto, oppure non si può raggiungere un risultato perfetto in generale.

S11: Questa cosa potrebbe anche essere "aggirata" cambiando semplicemente il gioco, anche perché ce ne stanno un sacco che possono rispettare le tue abilità. puoi trovare benissimo quello che può piacerti.

T: Questa cosa della condivisione del gioco, che deve piacere. secondo voi quanto influisce poi sulla riuscita del corso? Noi abbiamo utilizzato minecraft perché tutti eravate d'accordo nel giocare e da un sondaggio è venuto fuori che la maggior parte voleva giocare a minecraft. Quindi il gruppo si è adeguato a giocare a minecraft. secondo voi, se tutti avessero scelto veramente il gioco che riteneva in quel momento piacevole e divertente, l'apprendimento sarebbe stato addirittura maggiore? (tutti)

S3: Sì

S12: Sì

S11: Nella mia situazione sì sarebbe stato meglio; alla fine comunque Minecraft era quello un po' più neutrale; bene o male tutti lo capiscono.

S18: Se un videogioco non ti piace, ci giochi male e non apprendi niente, se ci giochi male, senza voglia.

S2: In generale secondo me Minecraft è stata una scelta sbagliata, perché minecraft non è un gioco alla fine. Sì, ci puoi giocare con gli amici ma non è un gioco che chissà quanto ti faccia divertire; cioè è molto limitato. è un gioco famosissimo, però secondo me è stato il gioco abbastanza sbagliato, rispetto agli altri che c'erano, perché non è tanto interattivo a parer mio.

S12: Se il gioco ti piace, tu non ti concentri sul fatto che stai giocando per apprendere, ma ti concentri principalmente sul gioco.

S14: Ed è questo l'importante! Io Minecraft lo odio proprio come gioco! a volte capitava che mentre stavo a lezione mi rompevo le scatole, perché minecraft mi fa schifo e quindi era difficile. già non ci gioco con voglia, figuriamoci per imparare. invece magari con un altro gioco, mi sarebbe stato anche più facile apprendere, perché ci gioco comunque di più.

T: Pensate che la conoscenza o meno delle meccaniche di gioco possa essere un impedimento all'apprendimento?

S18: A me piacciono tutti i giochi. Per me non ci sono giochi che mi fanno schifo o altro. cioè per me qualsiasi gioco ha delle qualità e cerco di trovare quelle buone qualità e divertirmi. A me qualsiasi gioco mi sarebbe andato bene, perché avrei trovato delle qualità buone.

T: passiamo adesso ad un altro punto che è quello della gamification. vorrei capire che cosa vi ha particolarmente incuriosito di questa pratica che noi abbiamo legato alla valutazione e se secondo voi potrebbe essere efficace in un normale corso a scuola. cosa potrebbe dare in più o in meno rispetto alla valutazione in generale? non parlo soltanto di inglese.

S11: Io penso che sono soltanto dei sistemi diversi, perché alla fine questo sistema a punteggi si basa su un percorso e non sul risultato singolo. penso che dipende da come viene applicato. se tu ti perdi un pezzo del percorso, prendi un voto basso; invece seguendo la media matematica, un buon risultato può ribaltare tutto quanto ma come anche un pessimo risultato può ribaltare in negativo. quindi ognuno dei due ha i suoi pro e i suoi contro.

S3: il percorso magari ci può essere anche nel contesto scolastico, perché comunque tu prima di fare per esempio una verifica o un'interrogazione fai comunque un "percorso" di studio, cioè ti fai 2- 3 argomenti e ti fai l'interrogazione o il compito. qui è stato diverso perché non c'era quell'ansia di dover fare un'interrogazione, un compito. tu facevi queste cose che magari ti andavano o anche a piacere. per esempio fare i vari "compiti" per casa. era anche piacevole farli perché non erano cose che ti pesavano, come magari può pesare fare un problema di fisica o un tema di italiano.

S14: Secondo me è un altro punto a favore della gamification è che molte volte, quando uno si prepara per un'interrogazione, si ricorda gli argomenti per l'interrogazione e già una settimana dopo quasi non se li ricorda più, perché quello si è preparato per avere il voto in quel momento. Invece con i punti, tu piano piano apprendi il sistema di gioco e apprendi in generale, mentre stai giocando; perché semmai ricordandoti del gioco, di un momento piacevole, ti ricordi meglio quello che hai imparato. Invece se io mi dovessi ricordare la storia di un avvenimento, che era legata solamente a quell'interrogazione in cui dovevo prendere un voto alto, altrimenti andava male, non mi ricordo quasi nulla.

T: E dal punto di vista dell'equità, ragazzi? Nei sistemi di gamification tutte le regole vengono chiarite all'inizio...

S12: A me non è cambiato molto, perché io a scuola ho docenti che fanno le interrogazioni nella stessa maniera, con un chiarimento del punteggio. Ho anche lì dei paletti ben precisi. E capisco da dove è nato il voto.

S4: Secondo me tutto è un po' più competitivo. l'unico lato negativo a cui può portare veramente è l'eccessiva competizione che può nascere da una classifica. poi dipende dal ragazzo.

S23: Prof, per me il sistema col punteggio ha un vantaggio, ovvero che se tu devi raggiungere un minimo di punteggio per essere promosso e passare, appena lo raggiungi puoi anche non fare niente; però questo qui da vedere se è un pregio oppure un difetto. è un pregio di sicuro per chi non ha voglia di fare niente, però ti porterebbe anche a non fare niente dopo.

S14: O magari se c'è qualcuno in bilico, se si impegna facendo l'ultimo compito e sale di quei tuoi punti, come magari un voto non può, sei salvo. la gamification con i punti, anche messi da zero a 100, è molto utile anche per la precisione che ti dà, cioè quei prendere 55 perché ti meriti 55, se prendi 87 è 87.

S: Poi, ovvio, questo era un corso... quindi facevi 60 o 90 o 100 non cambiava niente. ovviamente a scuola è diverso. però cioè in realtà non cambia niente secondo me, manco scuola, però comunque è considerato diverso.

S12: La competitività per me è un pregio: ti sfida a fare sempre meglio ti incita a fare meglio; però il difetto è che poi diventa tutto un po' più schematico, forse. però comunque la vedo una soluzione migliore rispetto alla media matematica, dei voti dallo 0 al 10.

S11: Cioè diventa sfidante tra 60 e 80 c'è differenza. allora tu punti a prendere 80. perché se tra 60 e 80 non c'è differenza, io, per come sono fatto, arrivo al 60 e fine.

S14: Dipende dalle persone.

T: Questa idea della classifica all'interno di una classe, a cosa porterebbe?

S2: Secondo me è meglio, perché molte volte magari tu prendi un voto ma non capisci davvero da cosa deriva quel voto; invece vedendo magari punti per punti cosa prendi, secondo me è meglio. Chi si impegna di più avrà un punteggio maggiore; uno che vuole arrivare solo alla sufficienza, prenderà un punteggio minore.

S23: La classifica in realtà tra alunni già esiste, perché in una materia si fa alla fine in una classe, dove c'è quello bravaissimo e chi magari fa più fatica; alla fine tra ragazzi si sa. però magari messo proprio nero su bianco... dipende: tra amici alla fine è una sana competizione, però magari per alcuni che fanno della scuola per esempio una ragione di vita, non lo so, potrebbe essere anche pesante se magari non arrivano primi. o alcuni potrebbero prendere in giro chi sta messo peggio. quindi dipende dalle persone.

S14: Anche in classe mia ci sono persone che riescono anche a litigare semplicemente per uno 0.25 in più. ci sono persone che non studiano nemmeno per loro stesse, come dovrebbe essere, ma studiano soltanto per far felici i genitori, perché devono farlo, perché lo vedono come un obbligo. quindi magari questa classifica a punti, fatta in questo modo, risulterebbe anche più "veritiera", perché se ti piace una cosa la fai. anche se poi non ti piace tu cerchi di farla comunque, però magari non ottieni lo stesso risultato di qualcuno che ci si impegna veramente. Dipende sempre dalle persone.

S12: Secondo me c'è un panorama più grande di giudizio, quindi veramente è più dettagliato nel giudicare una persona.

S11: Secondo me anche, vedendo un po' le opinioni di tutti quanti, quello che è una classifica alla fine sbatte nero su bianco la verità in faccia a chiunque, ovvero: tu hai fatto questo e quest'altro ha fatto quest'altro. è la pura oggettività. ovviamente diventa un problema, come abbiamo detto, in base alla persona. il concetto principale, sbattere la verità in faccia a una persona, è una cosa molto difficile, perché una verità, giustamente, può fare anche molto male.

S3: Soprattutto quando una persona è molto autoconvinta, quindi quando lei prof diceva che questo potrebbe porre fine alle diatribe, dipende. se una persona è molto autoconvinta, e arriva seconda, pure se capisce perché è arrivato secondo perché ha fatto meno punti di un altro in una determinata prova, non finiranno mai, perché quando uno si autoconvince di una cosa, quello è.

S12: Ma anche semplicemente per il fatto che per durante una interrogazione, alla fine ti fanno quelle 4 -5 domande, che sono magari gli argomenti che proprio ti stanno antipatici e non non li hai studiati. E vai male. mentre magari con una valutazione compito per compito, in un lasso di tempo più ampio, una persona può essere valutata in modo più globale e non solo per una singola prova, anche di fortuna.

T: Passerei all'ultimo punto della discussione. Tutti nelle interviste avete detto che comunque il fatto di giocare a minecraft, pur sapendo che dietro c'era un obiettivo didattico, non vi ha cambiato la piacevolezza del gameplay, perché comunque vi divertivate e anzi, forse, in alcuni ha sviluppato altre consapevolezze. E allora, che cosa disturba veramente la piacevolezza del gioco?

S18: La piacevolezza di un gioco la si distrugge quando giochi con gli amici e sembra che ti stai giocando veramente le chiavi di casa, cioè quando veramente devi vincere perché, che ne so, se non vinci, muori. quello distrugge la piacevolezza di un gioco. Quando hai un compagno in multiplayer che ti mette questa ansia addosso.

S4: nel mio caso mi diventa brutto il giocare quando magari in quel momento non ho voglia di giocare a quel gioco e ci continuo a giocare. in quel momento perdo totalmente interesse. Per esempio: faccio qualche partita su un gioco; mi scoccio. i miei amici stanno continuando a giocare ed io vorrei andarmene, ma a loro gli manca magari l'ultima persona per fare tutta la squadra. allora continuo a giocare, mi scoccio, gioco male, e la mi arrabbio. la piacevolezza di gioco finisce quando perdi la voglia di giocare in quel momento.

S23: Quando non è più un divertirsi ma diventa un qualcosa di più serio poi, che può essere un impegno, una scommessa... qualsiasi cosa.

S14: Per me ci sono due cose fondamentali: la prima è intanto la presenza di altre persone, perché nei giochi multiplayer è importante avere degli amici, io non riesco a giocare single player. se hai un anche un amico, 2 o 3, ti diverti molto perché comunque le vittorie, le sconfitte te le vivi molto meglio. questo per un gioco multiplayer. per un gioco single player, invece, per me esiste anche il concetto di che gioco sia e come venga giocato, perché se una cosa diventa seria, poi diventa solo una scocciatura. se ti diverti è diverso. anche se sei obbligato a giocare... ad esempio molte volte mi trovo ad aprire la playstation o il computer e non so a cosa giocare. se io non ho voglia, spengo subito. o altre volte quando il gioco diventa ripetitivo, quindi o ci hai giocato tantissimo, o così poco ma ti diventa ripetitivo, e quindi non hai voglia di nuovo di giocare.

S12: Diciamo che dipende anche dalle persone che giocano con te, appunto, che siano tuoi amici o meno. almeno dal mio punto di vista io avevo iniziato a giocare a lol un po di tempo fa, ma l'ho lasciato quasi subito principalmente perché c'erano persone e che mi insultavano perché non sapevo giocare. dal punto di vista emotivo diventa scoccante quando ci sono cose del genere.

S3: Soprattutto quando inizio a perdere; in alcuni giochi, come fifa, perdi perché il gioco decide di farti perdere.

S2: Pure quello veramente! quando il gioco ti si mette contro!!

S12: Anche la botta di lag nel momento più importante della partita non se la scorda nessuno eh!

S23: Quando tante persone smettono di giocare ad un gioco è perché gli sviluppatori fanno aggiornamenti sbagliati, cosa chiarissima. è successo con fortnite. è da un po di season che aggiungono solamente cose stupide; rovinano solamente il gameplay, fanno pubblicità di una collaborazione...

S11: Quando veramente il gioco crea tanti problemi con gli script ti passavo proprio la voglia.

T: Secondo voi qual è stata la strategia vincente che io inconsapevolmente ho adottato, in modo da non fare impattare la scuola sul gameplay?

S14: non nominarla mai, cioè ogni volta che assegnava un compito da fare sul gioco, evitava sempre la parola compito, la parola scuola, perché è quella che poi magari fa capire alla tua mente che lo devo fare per una determinata ragione.

S4: Ma proprio come riflesso mentale; cioè, avendolo sentito tante volte nella vita, tu appena senti la parola "compito", tu hai l'impressione di un testo da scrivere, un'operazione da completare per forza. perché c'è quella cosa da fare, perché giustamente nella vita hai avuto quello. avendo invece semmai "obiettivo" "missione" è una roba più di gioco. è un'interfaccia dello stesso concetto, ma a te pare una cosa totalmente estranea, praticamente.

S11: E' quello che alla fine fanno tutti i più grandi nel mondo del business, cioè non usano le parole dirette ma usano altre cose.

S18: Anche per il modo in cui lei si è posta con noi. Non ci "obbligava" a fare nulla. anche per esempio quando doveva correggerci qualche parte di grammatica o qualsiasi cosa, ci capiva. almeno è questo che ho percepito io. cioè non mi sono mai sentita giudicata.

T: Se io vi avessi chiesto di fare qualcosa durante il gameplay, cioè mentre giocate dovete fare questo compito...

S14: Ci saremmo distratti..

S2: Magari sì. Immagina che sei tra amici e dici: "oh raga", ora un attimo, che mi devo segnare gli acronimi", quelli pensano che sei scemo.

S12: Io penso decisamente di sì. ha un po' invertito il detto: prima il dovere e poi il piacere.

T: Sentite che in qualche momento ho rovinato il gioco?

S11: No prof.

T: Tutti d'accordo su questa cosa?

(tutti d'accordo).

Grazie a tutti.

FOCUS 3 (20-01-22; 3-4 pm)

T: Quali sono le possibilità che avete riscontrato utilizzando appunto i videogiochi per l'apprendimento dell'inglese?

S16: Io penso che una cosa che è migliorata è appunto la mia fluency in inglese; quindi mi sento un po' più sicura quando parlo, grazie ai videogame. È stato un qualcosa che ho raggiunto appunto grazie ai videogame ed è un qualcosa che non trovo, ad esempio, nella classica lezione di inglese a scuola.

S7: Io penso che intanto un corso basato sull'uso di videogiochi sia innovativo. all'inizio può essere un po' complicato ingranare, ma poi utilizzare questo corso, che usa un videogioco, è molto più facile integrarsi, rispetto a prendere un libro nuovo. io da quando ho iniziato ho aumentato la mia sicurezza nel parlare; poi stando con altre persone, potevo discutere con loro mentre giocavo di alcune variabili dei vari giochi, cosa che solitamente non puoi fare tramite dei libri.

S8: Magari anche il contenuto delle lezioni è diverso rispetto a quello che abbiamo in classe; per esempio a scuola studiamo brani e poi li ripetiamo durante l'interrogazione. usando il videogioco si può parlare di alcune missioni, del collezionare certi item... quindi utilizzare il videogioco con la sua narrativa per parlare in inglese.

S25: Anche forse nel parlare con altre persone proprio in inglese è diverso dall'apprendimento scolastico, perché appunto parli proprio in inglese per farti capire da tante persone che non sanno l'italiano, quindi lo scopo è comunque farsi capire per vincere nel gioco. in una classe non si può parlare in inglese in questo modo. se magari non si sa il significato di una parola, o la si dice in italiano, oppure comunque si trova qualche altro modo; mentre in realtà parlando in inglese, proprio per comunicare nel gioco, per arrivare ad un concetto, ad un obiettivo è diverso proprio rispetto alla scuola. Questo a scuola non si fa. per questo il corso è buono.

T: Ci sono delle attività, e degli aspetti, che voi avete trovati sfidanti in questo corso e che invece in un corso normale voi non trovate?

S26: La cosa che a me ha pesato è stato parlare in inglese ed essere costretto a pensare inglese per parlare con gli altri; oppure anche il fatto di dover, in alcuni esercizi, descrivere abitazioni di gioco rispetto alle solite immagini che vengono mostrate in classe, che sono diventate così comuni che può essere che durante il proprio di studi si becca la stessa immagine più volte. Anche capire la classifica può essere sfidante. a livello di difficoltà, non le ho trovate

S17: A me una cosa diciamo ha colpito, che ho ritenuto appunto molto challenging, è stato il dover riuscire, durante una partita in live, il dover decifrare degli slang, delle piccole frasi, che non si trovano solitamente sui libri di inglese appunto che usiamo a scuola. sul momento, non avendo il tempo per andare sul dizionario sul vocabolario su Google traduttore, cercare di arrivare a quel significato tramite appunto l'intuito o riguardando appunto un qualcosa che magari ho sentito in giro.

T: Possiamo dire che l'ambiente di gioco, rispetto alla scuola, è meno protetto dal punto di vista dell'apprendimento? Nel senso che a scuola puoi chiedere l'aiuto all'insegnante continuamente, puoi parlare in italiano per farti capire. un ambiente di gioco invece ti piazza proprio davanti alla difficoltà?

S6: Esatto. Siamo noi che ne dobbiamo uscire.

S24: Sinceramente arrivati ad un certo livello di studio, è una cosa positiva, anche perché vai proprio di fronte alla persona a che parla in inglese. magari anche non avere un punto di riferimento ti può aiutare a sviluppare la competenza. Non hai il pensiero di dire, ok se non ce la faccio ho la professoressa che mi aiuta. Ti sproni a trovare la risposta più con più metodi.

S1: Questo metodo con i videogiochi è utile se tu hai già delle nozioni, perché poi ti ritrovi all'interno del gioco e potresti sentirti già scoraggiato. Devi conoscere quei termini base per riuscire a giocare e che poi vengono integrate con nuove parole che vengono acquisiti tramite video gioco. quindi diventa positivo avendo una base, sempre con l'aiuto di un insegnante che ti indirizzi, ti guidi, finché non diventi autonomo.

S25: Come hanno detto anche loro, è molto utile e importante. A scuola se sei costretto a rispondere e non sai qualcosa, ti arrendi, tanto il professore non ti dirà nulla, quindi ti aiuta. mentre in un campo come il gioco devi cavartela da solo, non puoi chiedere aiuto, senza cercare su Internet, appunto per spronarsi, almeno per riuscire ad arrivare all'obiettivo di parlare, di dire qualcosa.

S24: Quando siamo a scuola, parliamo in inglese il tempo della lezione. però appena usciamo dalla classe, oppure finisce l'ora, si ricomincia a parlare in italiano. quindi non c'è proprio un bisogno alla base di dover utilizzare l'inglese. quando noi vogliamo giocare con altri giocatori, noi siamo obbligati a parlare, quindi non ci troviamo più in quella comfort zone, in cui diciamo che c'è la professoressa e basta.

S16: Col videogioco tendi anche a fare amicizia, ma devi imparare a parlarci, a farti capire. anche questo è stato importante.

T: Mi avete detto due cose che forse se uno le guarda da fuori potrebbero essere viste una la contraddizione dell'altra, cioè è il fatto che si impara molto quando resti da solo perché te la devi cavare, però effettivamente la mediazione dell'insegnante ha il suo valore. Pensate che in questo corso la mediazione dell'insegnante e il gioco si siano bene incastrati o uno ha prevalso sull'altro?

S8: Secondo me la mediazione era piuttosto equilibrata, perché giustamente all'inizio abbiamo prima studiato gli acronimi che ci hanno permesso poi di poter capire di più i discorsi e le chat durante il gameplay. quindi sì c'è stato un perfetto bilanciamento. poi va anche detto che se non ci fosse stata una professoressa che ci spronava, dandoci ogni volta dei compiti, il corso sarebbe finito subito; perché dopo aver giocato, dopo un po' noi studenti tendiamo a lasciare andare. una professoressa che continua a guidarci, dandoci ogni settimana dei compiti implica un quel piccolo sforzo che mano a mano a ci ha permesso di acquisire nuovi termini. quindi secondo me c'è stato questo perfetto connubio tra insegnante e videogame.

S7: Anche secondo me è molto equilibrato, perché si siamo noi protagonisti del gioco, però diciamo la presenza dell'insegnante che non va ad intervenire direttamente però ci aiuta, cioè ci guida, secondo me è anche confortante, nel senso sapere che comunque c'è appunto la professoressa pronta ad aiutarci, quando c'è bisogno. secondo me perfettamente bilanciati.

T: Voi avete percepito una costruzione da parte dell'insegnante di un percorso?

S26: Secondo me sì, l'organizzazione è stata molto bella, perché quando c'erano quei compiti, comunque non non mi sono mai sentito spaesato, oppure non sapevo cosa fare, perché comunque andando avanti di settimana in settimana, i compiti erano collegati alla lezione fatta, quindi comunque c'era stata una spiegazione ed eravamo stati guidati prima e poi ci siamo ritrovati a farli da soli. però comunque secondo me l'organizzazione è stata molto bella, da questo punto di vista.

S17: Durante il corso ci sono state diverse possibilità interessanti, perché comunque il fatto di poter parlare con persone madrelingua, dal Canada o comunque dagli Stati Uniti e quindi che parlano inglese quotidianamente, puoi imparare da loro molte cose nuove, sia in termini di vocabolario che in termini di speaking e comunque di fluency. L'insegnante resta comunque una figura di riferimento, ti può aiutare all'interno del corso.

T: Cosa non dovrebbe mai fare secondo voi un'insegnante per rendere questo corso inutile? Qual è un atteggiamento, qualcosa, un compito, che l'insegnante potrebbe fare o dare, tale da rovinare tutto?

S1: Noi discutevamo sempre dei compiti fatti in generale delle problematiche avute. Invece un insegnante entra in classe, spiega se ne va; che non parla neanche con gli alunni, anche se le fanno domande non gli ascolta, questo è deleterio per il corso

S6: Secondo me qualcosa che l'insegnante non dovrebbe fare è soprattutto opprimere ragazzi, perché poi dando troppi compiti, il ragazzo non troverebbe più piacere nel giocare, quindi di imparare, ma la vivrebbe solo come un'oppressione, cioè devo fare questo perché se no poi vado male, prendo brutti voti, prendo minor punteggio. bisogna bilanciare la qualità dei compiti con la quantità di compiti, in modo che uno trova piacevole giocare, nel giocare impara nuovi termini, e contemporaneamente svolge i propri compiti. questo connubio in questo corso c'è stato, quindi quel compito alla settimana ci stava perfetto perché non era né troppo gravoso per lo studente, ma al tempo stesso era abbastanza completo, perché prendeva sempre tutti i punti che noi trattavamo durante la lezione.

S7: Secondo me la cosa che farebbe perdere anche un po' di interesse da parte degli studenti e la acquisizione di troppa autorità da parte della professoressa. È vero che non siamo sullo stesso livello, però noi per esempio con lei parliamo molto di più, ci confrontiamo anche su argomenti fuori dal corso, rispetto al professore che abbiamo scuola.

T: La seconda area di interesse è quella della gamification. Voi avete sperimentato questo concetto e lo avete trovato applicato alla valutazione. secondo voi questo metodo di punti, badge e leaderboard può effettivamente risultare efficace anche all'interno di un sistema scolastico?

S26: Francamente credo che i voti con numero che abbiamo ora funzionino a livello pratico, ma a livello psicologico sugli alunni siano un po' deleteri. trovarsi davanti un 6, che è una sufficienza, non è comunque abbastanza. Invece con dei punti che vanno da 0 fino al 100, magari con dei compiti in più che si possono fare per aumentare il punteggio, uno si troverebbe più a suo agio. fare piuttosto un percorso invece di una media di voti. Sarebbe anche più utile, perché magari io a inizio anno vado male nella materia o ho la sufficienza proprio al limite, però verso fine anno miglioro e diciamo riesco a prendere anche un 8 alla verifica; alla fine il voto finale non sarà 8, ma la media tra tutti i brutti che ho preso inizio anno, più quell'8 finale. è deprimente.

S7: I voti decimali che vengono messi a scuola, e con una media a fine anno, possono portare a creare nello studente false speranze perché ti aspetti un voto alto alla fine, perché lo hai raggiunto, e invece ti ritrovi una media con i voti mediocri presi in precedenza; mentre con un sistema a punteggio, poiché il punteggio si somma di volta in volta, c'è sempre margine di miglioramento. io ve devo il punteggio e mi dicevo: ok, ho preso questo punteggio, posso migliorare. non c'era una media che prevedeva una somma e un dividere. un punteggio è a crescere. ogni volta ogni volta che facevo qualcosa, ci guadagnavo ed ero sempre più vicino alla mia meta; il fatto che il punteggio sia dato per ogni esercizio, non da 1 a 10, permette di non dividere così tanto la soglia da uno studente all'altro.

S24: Il discorso dei badge secondo me è giusto, perché comunque una volta che li hai raggiunti, ti senti soddisfatto per averli raggiunti. la classifica è giusta perché, se sei tra i primi, cerchi di fare il possibile per arrivare più in alto possibile; allo stesso tempo se sei tra gli ultimi, magari tendi anche a non darci nemmeno più conto e quindi a fare forse anche meno cose... però non lo so.

T: Tu dici chi si trova in alto ha una motivazione in più, non so se la stessa motivazione può essere applicata ai ragazzi che sono nella fascia bassa della classifica, giusto?

S24: Sì.

S24: Una cosa che volevo aggiungere: è anche vero che con la classifica abbiamo avuto tutti le stesse opportunità, nel senso che, se quella classifica è stata creata e perché possiamo tutti raggiungere il primo posto. quindi diciamo che anche finire all'ultimo posto nella classifica, non vuol dire che si è fatto un lavoro sbagliato, o non si vale nulla o cose del genere, ma che magari si deve adottare un metodo diverso per la prossima volta. quindi diciamo che la classifica implica un percorso in crescita, anche dall'ultimo posto.

S8: Secondo me la classifica è soggettiva. una persona che si trova ultima durante il corso, potrebbe sia demoralizzarsi che sentirsi stimolata; è sicuramente una cosa abbastanza soggettiva. poi è anche vero che partiamo tutti quanti sullo stesso livello. però una volta arrivati a questo punto secondo me c'entra il fatto di come viene preso dagli alunni.

S17: E' vero che è sempre soggettivo come si reagisce al fatto di essere primi e ultimi, ma una classifica tramite punteggio che si somma è sempre meno incisiva rispetto a dei brutti voti che prendi a scuola, perché se prendi un brutto voto, sai già che la tua media è rovinata. ci sono persone che vedendo la media bassa si danno da fare ed altri che si demoralizzano, nonostante gli sforzi, che non vengono ricambiati con il voto. tramite una classifica, invece, nonostante il voto possa essere basso, la differenza tra un salto e l'altro è molto lieve e ti permette di fare molti più cambiamenti nel tuo metodo di studio. quindi non è che ti demoralizza tanto

T: Possiamo dire che un corso con la gamification ti dà più feedback?

S1: Sì perché essendo un punteggio che va da 0 a 100, diviso in vari esercizi che hanno un punteggio compreso tra 1 e 5, ci sono molti più esercizi e quindi dà molte più opzioni per poter creare un proprio metodo di studio, a differenza di un voto scolastico, che tu non

sai quanti voti dovrai avere per raggiungere il tuo obiettivo. per riprendere il discorso dei badge, invece, per chi è già al massimo del punteggio, avere un riconoscimento da parte dell'insegnante, può generare soddisfazione, perché so che ho dato il massimo e sono stato riconosciuto dall'insegnante per aver dato il massimo. I badge però non dovrebbero avere peso sul voto, perché chi non riesce a prendere questi badge può sentirsi demoralizzato.

S26: Secondo me questo metodo col punteggio racconta un percorso molto più lineare rispetto a quello della scuola, perché in ogni caso c'è comunque uno sviluppo dell'alunno che, partendo da zero punti, riesce ad arrivare ad una certa meta; mentre a scuola, per quanto ti impegni, a causa dei voti passati, basta magari un 5 a distruggerti, anche al livello di autostima. questo punteggio è giusto perché non c'è mai stato un momento in cui io e credo anche gli altri siamo stati rammaricati per qualcosa, oppure abbattuti per essere andati giù con il voto. c'è sempre stato lo sviluppo. anche per quanto riguarda il badge è molto bello, perché se qualcuno si impegna riesce a prendere un badge come se fosse una medaglia, quindi come se si arrivasse a un certo punto e finalmente si prende un premio. anche se io arrivo settimo e vedo chi è arrivato primo non si sente neanche questa rivalità.

S17: il fatto che i punti, i punteggi, comunque siano assegnati non in una scala da 1 a 10, renda comunque anche più semplice il recupero di un esercizio che non è andato tanto bene, perché una cosa magari e su 10 punti prendeme due, quindi sostanzialmente è un punteggio molto basso, e rende comunque più difficile il recupero con gli esercizi successivi; mentre invece ad esempio prendere 2/5 non non è comunque un bel voto, per carità, però è comunque più facilmente recuperabile.

S6: Anche le griglie di valutazione che lei ci aveva fornito all'inizio, mi sembravano più che giuste; a scuola però i professori di solito ci danno la griglia durante le verifiche. Ma nessuno la guarda, perché abbiamo poco tempo durante il compito. in effetti è migliore farla vedere all'inizio, specificare le varie cose. anche per le interrogazioni sarebbe utile, per capire come organizzarti.

S25: Diciamo che questo metodo va a minare quello che è l'aspetto psicologico degli studenti, però in maniera strategica, nel senso che con i voti diciamo che noi abbiamo una spada puntata sulla testa, della serie se fai questa cosa sbagliata è 5; invece con un punteggio come reward, praticamente abbiamo intanto una motivazione per far qualcosa, anche se magari ci spaventa; quindi anziché procrastinare o arrendersi in partenza, ci mettiamo in gioco; ma poi perché anche attraverso il nostro errore, comunque riceviamo l'impegno per lo sforzo, e poi impariamo dal nostro stesso errore. e ci diciamo: ah! quindi se riesco a far bene questa cosa che ho sbagliato, la prossima volta posso avere anche più punteggio; quindi secondo me è molto intelligente come com e strategia.

S7: Dare la griglia, a scuola, dopo un compito o dopo l'interrogazione, preclude allo studente di capire a quali punti lui può arrivare. Se una persona leggesse prima la griglia, capirebbe subito cosa eliminare dal suo discorso, dove migliorare.

T: Prima avete fatto una considerazione sull'errore, cioè in questo modo anche l'errore lo posso vedere positivamente, e non come una pietra lanciata contro, perché l'errore mi serve ad aggiustare il tiro per la prossima volta e fare meglio; invece l'errore a scuola ti segna. perché poi è quel voto e finisce lì. Voi avete avuto la sensazione che con questo metodo dei punti anche un errore, quindi, non essere andati bene una volta, può essere usato la seconda volta per migliorarvi?

S16: In questo corso c'è sempre stato il fatto che comunque mi sarei potuto migliorare e aumentare il voto. L'errore lo vedevo come uno stimolo diciamo. a scuola è diverso perché comunque la valutazione è diversa.

S24: Mentre a scuola per noi l'errore è molto più gravoso, perché lo sentiamo, ci segna ed è un peso da trascinare durante l'arco dell'anno, l'errore, in un sistema punteggio, in cui differenza tra un punteggio e l'altro è minima, il nostro errore è meno sentito, e quindi sappiamo già che potremmo recuperarlo nella lezione successiva.

S8: Secondo me anche un altro punto a favore di questo sistema, sempre nell'ambito dell'errore, è il fatto che in questo corso l'errore può essere riutilizzato proprio durante il corso; a scuola, invece, se faccio un errore in una determinata verifica o interrogazione sapere di aver sbagliato qualcosa non mi sarà utile la prossima volta. qui c'è un percorso, mentre a scuola invece gli argomenti cambiano, quindi cambia anche il tipo di errore.

T: Parliamo del gameplay. Durante le interviste mi avete detto che il gameplay non si è modificato, sapendo che dovevate utilizzare questo gioco per l'apprendimento; magari si è modificato in positivo, però non avete trovato spiacevole giocare. Allora la domanda è al contrario: che cosa invece inficia il gameplay?

S17: Io non trovo più divertente un gioco o quando l'ho finito, o se non ha più sfide che io reputo interessanti, magari per il miglioramento del personaggio. Oltre a ciò, quando magari non riesco più a trovare persone con cui giocare al gioco, e quindi diventa noioso, perché dopo un po' che giochi da solo, secondo me perdi comunque il gusto di farlo.

S24: Innanzitutto vorrei dire che certi compiti che lei ha dato, secondo me erano molto alterativi e in positivo potevano anche migliorare il gameplay. Personalmente, se per esempio ho un videogioco che è una storia concreta, sapere come finisce mi distrugge il gameplay. Minecraft, al contrario, sì, ha una storia, ma è un gioco open world. A me danno fastidio gli spoiler sul gioco.

S16: Secondo me forse fare la stessa modalità, perché può risultare ripetitivo e magari non può piacere; infatti per esempio io ho fatto molto i mini giochi su minecraft. tendevo sempre a cambiare o Big fight o magari Speed run o anche altre modalità; non sempre la stessa modalità.

S7: Ti passa la voglia di giocare quando sai che si sta creando una community diversa in quel tipo di gioco. un tempo giocare a Call of Duty era rilassante ed era per divertirti. adesso se sei scarso, e diciamo che lo sono, non si può giocare perché dopo un secondo ti uccidono. tutta la gente gioca per vincere; si è perso quel giocare per divertirsi. poi un'altra cosa è che se non trovi nessuno con cui giocare, continuare a giocare da solo è abbastanza noioso; perché può essere rilassante fino a un certo punto.

S1: Mi rovina il gameplay quando un gioco è molto lento oppure ha una storia molto lenta. invece un gioco come minecraft, come me può essere fortnite e così via, dove ogni partita è completamente diversa dall'altra cioè non c'è mai una cosa uguale... è quel quel tipo di giochi che mi intriga di più; perché ogni volta faccio qualcosa di diverso. Minecraft ha infinite combinazioni di mondi, di cose.

S8: Quello che a me solitamente influisce sul gameplay è finire proprio la storyline. una volta che è finita, la maggior parte dell'hype che hai avuto tante il videogioco lo perdi, perché ormai è finita la storia. Rimane solamente il gioco libero, e dopo un po' finisce la. invece giochi come Minecraft, Call of duty, multigiocatore o Battle Royale, puoi continuare nell'open World. Però anche con questi giochi, se li giochi da solo, possono portarti giovamento nei primi mesi, ma poi hai bisogno di condividere con qualcuno il tuo gameplay. Nei giochi multiplayer, il gameplay può essere disturbato dalla community. Quando in un gioco hai solo pro-player, non trovi più il gusto del gioco. Quindi, riassumendo, ci sono tre punti: la community nei giochi multigiocatore, poi la solitudine del single player, e la mancanza da parte della casa che ha sviluppato questo gioco di aggiornamenti per rendere il gioco divertente anche una volta completata la storyline.

S6: Una cosa che mi annoia è quando la trama non segue una struttura precisa, cioè non in crescita; quindi non c'è un climax in cui poi ha un duello finale, poi passi al livello successivo, hai un premio, oppure al contrario muori e devi ricominciare tutto da capo. Quando è tutto molto lineare, molto quasi basic, cioè fare le solite cose e finisce lì. Il secondo me non è più un videogioco, ma una valvola di sfogo che tu fai quando ti annoi. questo mi dà un po fastidio. è vero che è un dato più soggettivo, però in genera le questa mancanza di vedere un obiettivo, un qualcosa di massimo che si può raggiungere, un po' annoia

S24: Io perdo la gamefulness quando in una storia non ci sono missioni secondarie, niente. sei impostato per fare quel tipo di soluzione. magari dopo un po ti risulta anche noioso, perché non devi usare più inventiva perché c'è soltanto un modo per arrivare fino alla fine e non diverse vie.

S17: sentendo tutti i discorsi, è evidente un carattere soggettivo del videogioco: ci sono persone a cui piacciono le storie, persona a cui piacciono le storie secondarie, a chi piace i giochi arcade, che continuano all'infinito; quindi secondo me qualsiasi gioco è destinato, dopo un certo periodo, a decadere. Per esempio, prendiamo il boom che avuto Among us. poi è crollato vertiginosamente, perché è rimasto sempre lo stesso. secondo me non esiste un gioco completo. un gioco dovrebbe avere vari miglioramenti ogni volta.

T: Volete aggiungere altro?

S8: Io ho notato una cosa di tutta questa metodologia del corso. io praticamente informandomi un po su Internet un po sui media, ho visto che questo corso segue un po' i principi della scuola in Finlandia, che sono basati proprio su questa cosa del creare la community, del non puntare una pistola sugli studenti che sbagliano, ma sul continuare a migliorarsi.

S24: Secondo me a dei ragazzini un po più piccoli, tipo di primo liceo, questa cosa del "ti lascio in mano il lavoro. devi fare delle scelte responsabili" avvia ad un percorso di crescita. Non devo arrivare in quinto, che dico: alla maturità devo essere responsabile.

T: Grazie a tutti.

Annex 15. Field notes observation grid

DAY	TIME	LESSON	GROUP
Development of the activity (teacher's feedback – use of technology – extras)			
Contents (Useful? Fun? Affordable?)			
Interest and motivation (Do the students ask questions? What about? Level of participation in the activities).			
Class climate (teacher/student relation – student/student relation – respect of the laws – gender knowledge)			