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

Shafi S. Alqahtani

Department of English Language & Translation
College of Languages & Translation
King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

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

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

Cite as: Alqahtani, S.S. (2016). Saudi EFL Students' Attitudes towards Communicating in English while Immersed in Virtual Platforms. *Arab World English Journal*, 7 (4).

DOI: dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol7no4.22