



HAL
open science

Creating an avatar to become a “ spect-actor ” of one’s learning of English for specific purposes

Virginie Privas-Bréauté

► **To cite this version:**

Virginie Privas-Bréauté. Creating an avatar to become a “ spect-actor ” of one’s learning of English for specific purposes. *EUROcall Review*, 2016, 24 (1), pp.40-52. 10.4995/eurocall.2016.5695 . halshs-01342496

HAL Id: halshs-01342496

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01342496>

Submitted on 11 Feb 2020

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L’archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d’enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Research paper

Creating an avatar to become a "spect-actor" of one's learning of English for specific purposes

**Virginie Privas-Bréauté
Université Jean Moulin - Lyon 3, France**

virginie.privas@univ-lyon3.fr

Abstract

In this article, we shall examine why the creation of avatars in virtual worlds facilitates the learning of business English. We are committed to determining the factors that enable students in a French business school to consolidate their skills in English (from linguistic, socio-linguistic and pragmatic standpoints) and to develop more general competences (such as self-confidence, the management of space and time, interpersonal relationships) through the creation and use of avatars. Our article aims at showing that these skills are then transferable to real communication situations. Our research comes within the scope of a "communic-actional" approach of English learning. It relies on the notions of "distanciation", "fragmentation" and "spect-actor" of dramaturgs Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal, which give a scientific framework to our research.

Keywords: Cognitive sciences, drama, e-learning, learning English, serious games, virtual worlds.

1. Introduction

The Common European Framework indicates that learners must be the actors of their own learning of languages. They must find learning strategies that enable them to learn autonomously and become aware of their future as "social agents" (CEF, 2001, p. 1). This is what we always have in mind when we teach English to business students. We are committed to inviting them to realize that foreign languages are communication tools which enable them to reach a social and professional autonomy. Following the recommendations of the CEF, we adopt an "action-oriented approach" (CEF, 2001, p. 9) and use all the pedagogical resources at our disposal, including video games in virtual worlds.

We have recently led several experiments with our students in business English. Since they are interested in a variety of themes such as human resources, marketing, management, international trade, we have imagined real business situations in virtual worlds to complete their formation. Through the creation of their own avatars in the online multi-players video game *Second Life*, the students could practice English following the scenarios we had previously invented.

This article aims at highlighting the didactic added value of the creation of avatars in virtual worlds when it comes to learning English for specific purposes. After reminding the readers of our theoretical framework and the context of the experiment, we shall analyse the impact of using virtual worlds and avatars so as to consolidate linguistic,

socio-linguistic and pragmatic competences. The strengths and limits of the device will finally be pointed out.

2. Theoretical Framework

In the 1960s, Bertolt Brecht wrote about the didactic power of drama. For him, theatre practitioners had to bear in mind "its ability to amuse, and [...] its value as education." (Brecht, 1964, p.130). Since then, it has been demonstrated that drama, precisely because of its didactic value, can be well adapted to language learning situations. In *Drama Techniques in language Learning*, Alan Maley and Alan Duff explain:

Language is not purely an intellectual matter. Our minds are attached to our bodies, and our bodies to our minds. The intellect rarely functions without an element of emotion, yet it is so often just this element that is lacking in teaching material. Drama attempts to put back some of this forgotten emotional content into language - and to put the body back too. (Maley & Duff, 1978, p. 7)

We are deeply convinced that learning a language does not only mean taking in (more or less efficiently) a lot of information in a passive way (i.e. remaining seated and listening to the teacher). Moreover, after reading the books of Donald Winnicott (*Playing and the Reality*) and Johann Huizinga (*Ludo ergo Sum*), we have been seduced by the "edutainment" quality of drama and have resorted to dramatic techniques in our business English courses. However, after scientific research on drama and dramatic activities for ESP, we have also realized that this device does not suit every student when it comes to consolidating general and linguistic competences. Indeed, in her article "L'utilisation des stratégies d'apprentissage d'une langue dans un environnement des TICE", Janet Atlan explains that there are generally four types of individual differences in language learning: cognitive, affective, socio-cultural differences and differences in using learning strategies. (Atlan, 2000, p. 111). Depending on the personality of the student, learning must absolutely be differentiated. We have thus decided to turn to new devices and started to use new technologies for information and communication for education such as digital educational platforms or the Internet. Our teaching method has become blended and multimodal.

In *La créativité artistique à l'école: Refonder l'acte d'apprendre*, Joëlle Aden asserts that research in cognitive sciences has demonstrated that learning is non-linear. Learning does not consist of acquiring new information, but rather reorganising what we know and incorporating new elements. (Aden, 2009, p. 175). This reminds us of Brecht's conception of fragmented reality. Brecht would advise to: "take a pair of scissors and cut [reality] into individual pieces which remain fully capable of life." (Brecht, 1964, p. 70). Because e-learning makes it possible to cut reality into pieces through changing our relationship with time and space, and to fragment and segment the development of certain competencies, it can be a useful pedagogical device for language acquisition.

We immediately understood the benefits of all those tools for everyone. More particularly, multimodal NTICE give both the teachers the means to enrich their teaching resources so as to increase the exposure of the student to the language and to differentiate learning strategies. Furthermore, the students can better autonomize their actions and reflexions as Julié and Pierrot explain in their book *Enseigner les langues*. (Julié & Pierrot, 2008, p. 138). In her article "Helping Students become autonomous Learners: Can Technology help?", Rubena St. Louis praises the use of the Internet when it comes to teaching a language because it is a multimodal device. She explains:

The use of different types of activities, with input being received by the learner through a visual, aural or kinesthetic medium, not only caters for individual learning styles, but may also lead to the information being processed on different levels in the learner's

cognitive system and so increase the likelihood that it will be stored in memory. (St Louis, 2006, p. 8).

Encouraging students to use the Internet to consolidate language learning is an excellent idea. Moreover, we are convinced that students learn more efficiently through experience. Multi-player video games on the Internet require the users to see, to talk, to listen and to move. The video game called *Second Life* even offers players the opportunity to express themselves through writing. In his paper entitled "Second Life in Education and Language Learning", Vance Stevens praises the use of this game in particular for qualities that have "been transformative for education". (Stevens, 2006, p. 2). Hence our decision to resort to it. Because it is synchronous, the actor may use diverse modes at the same time to communicate: speak and read, speak and move, show or/and manipulate objects. So, it appeals to all the senses of the learner and, in the context of learning, is an added value.

In "Virtual world teaching, experiential learning, and assessment: An interdisciplinary communication course in *Second Life*", Jarmon et al. write that "project-based instructional activities have been found to provide an effective setting for [...] experiential cycles." (Jarmon, 2009, p.170). They analysed an experiment they conducted with students and their results demonstrated "the effectiveness of the SL environment for a project-based experiential learning approach, particularly as students were able to learn by doing and by applying learned concepts to the real world". (Jarmon, 2009, p. 178) E-learning based on multimodality and projects based on pedagogical scenarios have therefore become one dominating aspect of our fields of interest and a strong device to facilitate English learning. This is how we have progressively come across the use of virtual worlds for pedagogical purposes and started to focus on their didactic value.

We started an experiment in November 2013 with a group of voluntary second year students interested in customer relationship management in international companies. Our objective was to have our undergraduates use English for a professional purpose. It was thus an interdisciplinary project. Jarmion et al. explain that virtual worlds meet this objective and mention: "the potential effectiveness of virtual world environments for learning strategies to communicate effectively across different academic disciplines." (Jarmion, 2009, p. 171). Our students were eager to be given tasks to practice what they had learnt previously. The project was supervised by the English teacher, the marketing teacher, two experts in e-learning through virtual worlds and a technical engineer. A tight agenda was agreed upon, the pedagogical scenarios were validated and after numerous meetings, the experiment started in January 2014.

For the occasion, *Copets*, a company selling toys for pets, was created and its offices were built in *Second Life*. In "Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOs) in the new Media Classroom", Aaron Delwiche writes about a preliminary classroom experience with massively multiplayer environments and reminds his readers of the importance of defining learning objectives if teachers want learning with emerging technologies to be effective:

For an MMO-themed class to be effective, learning objectives should be identified at the outset. Along with the macroscopic theoretical goals, students should be given a series of smaller objectives or "baby steps" that are related to game mechanics. (Delwiche, 2006, p. 168)

So, we imagined scenarios and assigned students to tasks broken down into steps.

The participating students endorsed the roles of members of the CRM team who had to face problems with angry customers (played by the teachers). We were committed to being as close to reality as possible and were careful to propose a truthful social and

professional experience. The teams (teachers and students alike) were all equipped with headphones which facilitated audio exchanges. They each had to create their own avatar.

One week before the first synchronous connection, the students were given the first scenario, the steps they had to follow and the competences that the teachers would observe (see appendix 1). They could meet, figure out and prepare what conversation they could have with the client. After the one hour and a half first simulation, the teams were encouraged to give their opinions on the device, the scenarios and the quality of their language.

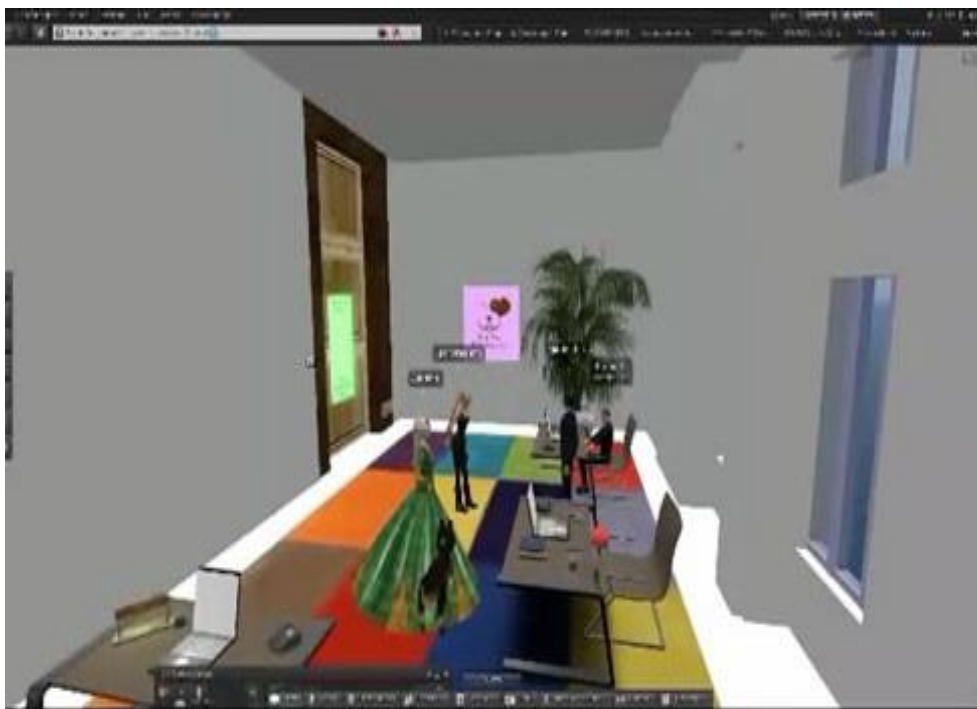


Figure 1. Image of the first simulation.

One month after, they were given the second scenario (see appendix 2). The simulation lasted one hour and a new debriefing followed. All the students were motivated volunteers. These hours were optional and required them some supplementary personal investment. For St Louis, motivation fuels learning. She explains that “when students become more involved in their own learning, taking an active part in making decisions, they might feel a sense of ownership and commitment to the process, and learning might be more meaningful.” (St. Louis, 2006, p. 1). Motivation is thus another strong factor of successful language acquisition. Joëlle Aden adds to this that motivation is what fuels all cognitive investment and is linked to the meaning we give to any social interaction in the context of learning. (Aden, 2004 p. 29). The meaning we give to the activity and the frame we define (for Erving Goffman these two elements are important in learning situations) are essential in the learning context. Therefore, when students get to know the pedagogical scenarios created for them, the roles they must take on and their use of a video game to learn English, they feel motivated and show their interest (a further key-factor to success for St. Louis, 2006, p.7).

These are the reasons why we think that multimodal virtual worlds are efficient devices in language learning. Now we shall study how the creation of an avatar facilitates the acquisition and consolidation of general and linguistic competences from a cognitive standpoint.

3. Results

In his PhD thesis "Le corps dans la langue. Les techniques dramatiques dans l'enseignement/apprentissage des langues étrangères", Alex Cormanski says that paradoxical as it may seem, if the comedian wants to be really involved in the dramatic action, he or she must take some distance from what he or she is playing. This helps him or her be more invested in the role. (Cormanski, 1993, p. 94-95). This aspect of didactic drama, echoing the notion of Brecht's "Verfremdungseffekt" (translated in English by the phrase "distancing effect"), is the guiding principle of our research. We indeed aim at enticing the students to take some distance from their learning and realize what they know and what they still need to learn. Taking some distance helps them to be more involved in the learning process. We therefore devise strategies promoting a meta-cognitive reflection on their own learning (for example, questionnaires).

As said earlier, both the teachers and the students had to create their own avatars for this experiment. In their paper "Constructing my Online Self: Avatars that Increase Self-focused Attention", Asimina Vasalou et al. define avatars as personal, non-anonymous symbolic artefacts that "emit individuating properties back to their owners and outwards to the community". (Vasalou, 2007, p. 445). The choice of an avatar tells a lot about oneself. *Second Life* offers the players the possibility to embody human beings but also animals, objects, fantasy characters. Vincent Berry explains in *L'Expérience virtuelle* that the players who choose avatars who look like real people are people who stay - or show how much they want to stay - close to real life. They live the game like an exploration of their own selves. After some research and interviews on virtual worlds' players, Berry discovered that the homologous relation between the player and his/her avatar was the norm (Berry, 2012, p.174). On the contrary, the players who choose other non-anthropomorphic physical appearances aim at getting further from reality. This is the occasion for them to change aspects and bodies and to live the game like a sheer moment of entertainment. Behind this observation lies the thesis that virtual worlds are spaces where one can learn about another self, a second self. (Berry, 2012, p. 176). The same observation applies for the choice of names. For Berry, if a player chooses to keep his/her real name, it shows he/she is eager to transfer his/her skills. Vasalou et al. write that the use of avatars increases private self-awareness. It is interesting to notice that, during our experiment, the majority of the teachers and students decided to keep their real names and chose avatars close to their real physical appearance. One student, called "Michael" in real life, wanted to be called "Mike" though. This may show that he wanted to transfer his skills but take on a new identity closer to a native English one, therefore creating further distance between himself (reality) and his avatar (fiction), between his learning (reality) and the game (fiction).

Creating an avatar to play in a virtual world enables teachers and students for the first time to become the spectators of their own actions. This makes students become both actors and spectators of their learning, an idea that echoes the concept of "spect-actor" coined by Augusto Boal. Boal was a Brazilian dramaturg inspired by Brechtian drama theories. In his book, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, he explains that a spectator must not be passive. On the contrary, a spectator must actively participate in the performance he/she is watching:

The spectator is less than a man and it is necessary to humanize him, to restore to him his capacity of action in all its fullness. He too must be a subject, an actor on an equal plane with those generally accepted as actors, who must also be spectators. (Boal, 1979, p. 155)

This attitude also applies to learners who should be active at all times. People's theatre, or forum theatre, as he called the theatre he promoted, was experimental and aimed at liberating the spectator. He writes: "all these experiments of people's theater have the same objective - the liberation of the spectator" (Boal, 1979, p.155). Similarly, our pedagogical objective aims at liberating learners when they are in learning situations and to have them express themselves freely through several languages: words or/and the body of their avatars.

One of the reasons why drama does not work with all students in the context of learning a language is precisely the problem of the use of their own body and the expression of their feelings. Some students are indeed too shy to show their emotions and/or use their bodies in front of the class and, thus, remain seated. They have not been trained and encouraged to use them in class. Yet, Joëlle Aden, as well as cognitive sciences researchers such as Francisco Varela and Antonio Damasio, has long demonstrated that learning a language involves everything that makes up a person: body and mind. Garau et al. lamented the "low avatar expressiveness" in "the impact of avatar realism and eye gaze control on perceived quality of communication in a shared immersive virtual environment" (Garau, 2003, p.529), so they tried to find alternatives to compensate it and studied eye gaze animation in particular. They concluded that "inferred eye animations can have a significant positive effect on participants' responses to an immersive interaction". (Garau, 2003, p. 535). However, the aim is not to humanize avatars. It is rather to have students become aware of the role of their body in language acquisition.

In *La réalité virtuelle: Avec ou sans le corps?*, Alain Milon questions the place of the body and warns us to be careful of the mirage of technologies that would exclude the body. Because cyberspace does not abide by the basic rules of physics, it immerses people into a new space and time with a multitude of dimensions. Yet, this has an impact on the body since the question is then to know about one's territory, one's limits and the time-space frame we are used to. After research on the ground, Vincent Berry suggests that all the players of virtual worlds he interviewed realized that they have a new perception of time, space and their body. Their body is completely committed to the game. (Berry, 2012, p. 237). They feel "telepresent", which means that they have a "compelling sense of being in a mediated space and not where their physical body is located". (Nowak and Biocca, 2003, p. 482). Thus, digital technology also places the body at the heart of the learning issue. Avatars and virtual worlds put the body at the centre of discussions since avatars, whom we can view as metaphors of the actors, shed light on the existence of a pedagogical corporeity. The immersion is also corporeal and serious games make us understand the central position of the body when it comes to learning. Ultimately, creating an avatar leads users to become self-aware of the place of the body in language learning and can facilitate linguistic acquisitions.

It goes further than this. In *Alone Together*, Sherry Turkle writes that when we create avatars online, we get the impression that we have built improved versions of ourselves. (Turkle, 2015, p. 244). Turkle carried out some interviews of virtual world players and the general impression that they have is that virtual worlds are essential for their offline life because they help them blossom in their real lives. (Turkle, 2015, p. 333). As a matter of fact, they say that the lives they live in *Second Life* help them to better prepare their real lives. Their avatars permit them to identify what they want and what they are missing. More importantly they allow them to go beyond blockages or complexes. (Turkle, 2015, p. 331). This reinforces the idea that virtual worlds are very serious games. They provide the link between playing and learning as the advertisement for the game reads: "training simulations are incredibly powerful in *Second Life* because they simulate complex processes in the physical world and avatars

can take on different roles to enhance learning". So, not only do learners learn a language but they also develop more general competences like self-confidence.

On the home page of the game one can read that "*Second Life* was designed as a social networking platform - to encourage social interaction. It enables deeply immersive, meaningful, and memorable experiences". Vincent Berry agrees with that in so far as giving a precise role to an avatar and assigning it with precise competences make a certain form of sociability between the members possible: the relationship that each team member has with the others is more determined and meaningful. (Berry, 2012, p.73). Players develop interpersonal skills unconsciously and Sherry Turkle even states that the more we play with an avatar the more we think it is an authentic replica of ourselves. (Turkle, 2015, p.242).

Turkle discovered that even if people create avatars, they sometimes express truths about themselves that may well go beyond words (Turkle 2015, p.357-358). Indeed, reality is always present behind the game. The constraints and rules of the real world are always there (Berry, 2012, p.200). Therefore we shall now study the strengths and weaknesses of this device when it comes to learning English but also the competences that students can transfer.

4. Observations

We were able to make the list of the positive and negative aspects of using avatars and virtual worlds to learn English after we asked the students and the teachers to give their opinions on the device. It was indeed crucial for us to get some feedback from the teams since we wanted to improve our teaching methods. Some of our results are similar to those put into light by H. Sezgi Sarac in his research study "Benefits and challenges of using *Second Life* in English teaching: Experts' opinions". We suggest taking some distance from these observations; therefore, in this part, we would rather offer some guidelines for reflection.

4.1. The strengths of the device

Since the 1990s, a lot of researchers (e.g. Levine and Scollon, 2004) have defined multimodality as a dynamic process of the building of meaning deeply intertwined with the notion of interaction (Betbeder et al, 2008, 2.3). For Claire Tardieu, interaction is crucial in language acquisition. In her book, *La Didactique des langues en 4 mots-clés: Communication, Culture, Méthode et Evaluation*, she reminds us that Vygotsky first shed light on the social dimension of a human being (which Piaget had forgotten before him). For Vygotsky, knowledge is developed through social interaction since the latter can create a socio-cognitive conflictual state. Tardieu thus asserts that working and studying in pairs and teams favors social interaction and consequently cognitive processing. (Tardieu, 2008, p. 155). Drama and virtual worlds both facilitate team work. Students can confront their viewpoints, the strategies they use, share their ideas and make new ideas emerge. Teamwork leads students to question themselves and their learning strategies. Virtual worlds, according to Berry, facilitate participatory appropriation (Berry, 2012, p.241), incorporated knowledge and the notion of synchronous multimodal interaction raises questions about how the actors study and communicate. After studying 3D virtual environments in learning contexts, Andreas Schmeil et al. put to the fore the precious collaborative quality of these new pedagogical tools: "being embodied as avatars in an immersive 3D virtual environment will lead to more effective and sustainable knowledge sharing and to a higher satisfaction, motivation and recall of other team members' backgrounds". (Schmeil, 2009, p. 639). We have come to the same conclusions since our teams unanimously agreed to say that they particularly appreciated the possibility of interaction and close collaboration that our scenarios on *Second Life* offered.

The meaning we give to the scenarios is as important as the kinds of situations we propose to the learners. Joëlle Aden advises teachers to offer learners the possibility to speak and communicate about realistic situations with realistic stakes. (Aden, 2009, p. 174-175). For her, learners must see the link between learning a language and living in the present, the languages they learn must speak about themselves and enable them to speak about themselves and their present environment. That is the reason why, whenever we imagine a scenario for our business students, we carefully study and choose the stakes: they must be realistic and truthful. They must permit our students to project themselves in the situations they will be in when they start working in the real world. When giving an account of their experiment, Jarmon et al. realized that: "the sense of embodiment in SL helped [their students] to make their experiences in the virtual environment real and fostered their sense of concrete experiences. This sense of embodied social presence initiated and enhanced the experiential learning cycle" (Jarmon, 2009, p. 179). That is why we consider virtual worlds and serious games as devices that prepare them for their future social and professional lives.

Furthermore, the notion of transferability of linguistic and general competences is an important aspect of our formation. Berry reminds us that for some observers and researchers like Moisy, Mora or Negroponte, the strategies that players acquire in serious games are know-how and social competences transferable later in real life: helping others, listening to people, knowing how to manage conflicts. (Berry, 2012, p. 151). Yann Bergheaud calls social learning "Eldorado" because it is rich in learning units. He says that when students are made into actors and collaborators, they are better equipped to enter the professional world. (Vaufrey, 2010, p.56). Effectively, not only do they develop linguistic and general competences, but they also benefit from what is called "collateral learning", in this case, using NTICE and the new literacies. (Berry, 2012, p. 111). And for those who are skeptical, Berry suggests the notion of "situated learning" and refers to some researchers like Lave, Rogoff, Brown, Duguid and Greenfield for whom the learner builds up competences when he/she engages himself/herself in social practices.

For other researchers, videogames are like micro-societies, replicas of social worlds which facilitate experience, understanding and learning. (Berry, 2012, p. 151). They enable teachers to devise problem-based tasks and resolutions of issues. In this context, the notions of creativity and freedom are undeniable assets for language learning. Joëlle Aden indicates that creativity and mastering language are tightly linked. Indeed, the more you master a language the better you create, and the more you create the better you speak a language. (Aden, 2009, p. 174-175). Sherry Turkle adds to this that simulations offer the exaltation of creativity without pressure, the excitement of exploration without risk. (Turkle, 2015, p. 347) while Mayrath et al. remind us that "it is this flexible creativity that makes *Second Life* ideal for creating instructional tools, such as games, problem based learning environments, simulation activities, and distance learning settings" (Mayrath et al, 2007, p.2). As a matter of fact, when asked what they liked the most in the device, our students unanimously said they liked it when they had to co-create the scenario. They could invent it together because some tasks allowed them to be creative. This reinforces the idea that learning is smoother when students create, when some freedom is allowed. However, students and teachers realized that the game presented some limits.

4.2. The limits

In his paper, Stevens makes the lists of the positives and negatives of *Second Life* - which he calls "a prototype for some future form of learning" (Stevens, 2006, p.3) - and some drawbacks might indeed hamper learning. Let us first remember that the aim of this activity and the scenarios was to learn linguistic competences and develop general

skills linked to communication in society. In "Intégrer les Tice à une approche cognitive de la grammaire du discours", Muriel Barbazan makes it clear that the use of software and technological devices must be as transparent and ergonomic as possible when the aim of the teacher is to teach a language (Barbazan, 2011, 44) while Mayrath et al. state that "accessibility is making sure that the technology is usable by the students, and extensibility is having the power to create new scenarios and extend the real world into the virtual world". (Mayrath et al., 2007, p.2). Playing a videogame requires the players to master several skills and competences before playing. Yet, not all students have these skills and competences.

Another problem that arose during the experiment was due to the synchronous multimodal possibilities of *Second life*. Creating an avatar goes together with getting to know the codes of the video game and of the avatars. However, the students did not have a lot of time to practice, so it was always difficult for them to know when they could speak or not. Most of the time, either they remained silent or they talked at the same time. So, a multi-player immersive videogame requires some practice before it can be used as a pedagogical tool to its full capacities.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, *Second Life* and the creation of avatars that goes with it is undeniably a device that facilitates the development of linguistic and general competences as the Common European Framework for language learning defines them. Using a video game to learn a language is part and parcel of "informal education", which is characterised by several educational experiences which are lived through throughout our whole lives and which favour the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences thanks to the everyday interaction that the individual has with his/her environment (Berry, 2012, p. 22).

Virtual reality enhances experience and *Second life* facilitates language learning in so far as it gives meaning to practice, it teaches students to stick to a very precise role, interact and give importance to the stake of the game. Betdeder et al. explain that in a learning context, multimodality evolves as communication grows and, consequently, language learning through NTICE is a work in progress (Betbeder et al, 2008, 2.3). This perfectly echoes the idea that autonomy (what teachers aim at for their students) is acquired progressively. Becoming an autonomous foreign language speaker is a process that one builds progressively (Rivens Mompean, 2011, p. 76), so playing serious video games encourages autonomy. However, as Delwiche writes in the conclusion of his paper, players and students alike should not forget that virtual worlds are part and parcel of a series of pedagogical devices meant to enable them to acquire competences autonomously (Delwiche, 2006, p. 169). Students should thus bear in mind that the ultimate aim is to help them practice the language in both personal and professional contexts.

References

- Aden, J. & Lovelace, K. (2004). *3, 2, 1, Action. Le drama pour apprendre l'anglais en cycle 3*. CNDP de l'Académie de Créteil, col. Devenir professeur aujourd'hui.
- Aden, J. (2009). La créativité artistique à l'école: refonder l'acte d'apprendre. Retrieved from <http://gerflint.fr/Base/Europe4/aden.pdf>. Last accessed on 29th March 2015.
- Aden J. & Anderson J. (2005). Le drama pour une approche interculturelle de l'enseignement des langues. Retrieved from http://www.tesol-france.org/uploaded_files/files/coll2005AdenAnderson.pdf. Last accessed on 29th March 2015.

- Alvarez, J. (2007). *Du Jeu vidéo au Serious game. Approches culturelle, pragmatique et formelle*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Toulouse.
- Atlan, J. (2000). L'utilisation des stratégies d'apprentissage d'une langue dans un environnement des TICE, *Alsic*, 3(1). Retrieved from <http://alsic.revues.org/1759>. Last accessed on 15th September 2013. Doi: 10.4000/alsic.1759.
- Barbazan, M. (2011). Intégrer les Tice à une approche cognitive de la grammaire du discours, *Alsic*, 14. Retrieved from <http://alsic.revues.org/2337>. Last accessed on 29th March 2014.
- Berry, V. (2012). *L'Expérience virtuelle. Jouer, vivre, apprendre dans un jeu vidéo*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Betbeder, M.-L., Ciekanski, M., Greffier, F., Reffay, C. & Chanier, T. (2008). Interactions multimodales synchrones issues de formations en ligne: problématiques, méthodologie et analyses. *Revue Sciences et technologies de l'information et de la communication pour l'éducation et la formation*, 15. Retrieved from http://sticef.univ-lemans.fr/num/vol2008/06-betbeder/sticef_2008_betbeder_06.htm. Last accessed on 14th May 2014.
- Brecht, B. (1964). *On Theatre*. Edited and translated by John Willett, London: Methuen Drama.
- Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the Oppressed*. New York: Theatre Communications Group.
- Conseil de l'Europe (2000). *Apprentissage des langues et citoyenneté européenne. Un Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues: apprendre, enseigner, évaluer*. Strasbourg: Division des politiques linguistiques.
- Cormanski, A. (1993). *Le Corps dans la langue. Les Techniques dramatiques dans l'enseignement/apprentissage des langues étrangères*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3.
- Delwiche, A. (2006). Massively multiplayer online games (MMOs) in the new media classroom. *Educational Technology & Society*, 9(3), 160-172.
- Garau, M., Slater, M., Vinayagamoorthy, V., Brogni, A., Steed, A. & Sasse, M.A. (2003). The impact of avatar realism and eye gaze control on perceived quality of communication in a shared immersive virtual environment. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 529-536, ACM.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis. An essay on the organization of experience*. New York: Northeastern University Press.
- Huizinga, J. (1988). *Homo Ludens*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Jarmon, L., Traphagan, T., Mayrath, M. & Trivedi, A. (2009), Virtual world teaching, experiential learning and assessment: An interdisciplinary communication course in Second Life, *Computers & Education* 53, Elsevier, 169-182.
- Julié, K. & Perrot, L. (2008). *Enseigner l'anglais*. Paris: Hachette Education.
- Linden Lab. (2010). Second Life Education: The Virtual Learning Advantage. Retrieved from <http://lecs-static-secondlife-com.s3.amazonaws.com/work/SL-Edu-Brochure-112910.pdf>. Last accessed on 14th May 2014.
- Maley, A. & Duff, A. (1994). *Drama Techniques in Language Learning. A Resource Book of Communication Activities for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mayrath, M., Sanchez, J., Traphagan, T., Heikes, J. & Trivedi, A. (2007). Using Second Life in an English Course: Designing Class Activities to Address Learning Objectives.

Proceedings of World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications, Chesapeake, VA: AACE.

Milon, A. (2005). *La réalité virtuelle: Avec ou sans le corps?* Paris: Editions Autrement.

Nowak, K.L. & Biocca, F. (2003). The effect of the agency and anthropomorphism on users' sense of telepresence, copresence, and social presence in virtual environments. *Presence: Teleoperators & Virtual Environments*, 12(5): 481-494.

Privas Bréauté, V. (2015). Dramatic Activities and ICT in Language Acquisition: Learning a Foreign Language for Professional/Specific Purposes through Role Plays and Online Games. *Journal of Global Research in Education and Social Science*, 3(3): 132-136. Available from <http://www.ikpress.org/issue.php?iid=552&id=46>.

Nissen, E. (2007). Quelles aides les formations hybrides en langues proposent-elles à l'apprenant pour favoriser son autonomie? Apprentissage des langues et systèmes d'information et de communication. *Alsic*, 10 (1): 129-144. Retrieved from: <http://alsic.revues.org/617>. Last accessed on 15th September 2015.

Rivens Mompean, A. (2011), Articuler des dispositifs innovants pour accompagner vers les certifications en langues. *Mélanges CRAPEL*, 32, 66-83. Retrieved from <http://www.atilf.fr/spip.php?article3796>. Last accessed on 29th April 2015.

Sarac, H.S. (2014). Benefits and challenges of using Second Life in English teaching: Experts' opinions. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 158: 326-330. Elsevier.

Schmeil, A., Eppler, M.J. & Gubler, M. (2009). An experimental comparison of 3D virtual environments and text chat as collaboration tools. *Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 7(5), 637-646.

Stevens, V. (2006). Second Life in Education and Language Learning. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 10(3): 1-8.

St. Louis, R. (2006). Helping Students become Autonomous Learners: Can Technology Help? *The Journal of Teaching English through Technology*, 6(3): n.p. Retrieved from <http://tewtjournal.org/issues/past-issue-2006/past-issue-2006-issue-3/>.

Tardieu C. (2008), La Didactique des langues en 4 mots-clés : communication, culture, méthodologie et évaluation, Paris, Ellipses.

Turkle, S. (2015). *Seuls ensemble. De plus en plus de technologies, de moins en moins de relations humaines*. Paris: Editions L'Echappée.

Vasalou, A., Joinson, N. & Pitt, J. (2007). Constructing my online self: avatars that increase self-focused attention. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, pp. 445-448. ACM.

Vaufrey, C. (2010). La composante sociale du e-learning, par la grâce des réseaux, in Lamontagne, D. (Ed.), *La Systématisation des Apprentissages Informels*, Thot Cursus, cursus.edu, 2011. Available from <http://cursus.edu/dossiers-articles/articles/9856/composante-sociale-elearning-par-grace-des/>.

Winnicott, D.W. (1975) [1971]. *Jeu et réalité. L'espace potentiel*. Paris: Gallimard. Trad. de l'anglais par Claude Monod et J.-B. Pontalis.

Appendix 1

Scenario #1: a phone conversation with an angry customer

Copets is a British firm selling toys for pets but it has been losing clients recently. It now needs to win clients back or acquire new ones.

Characters and roles:

1 angry customer (Mrs Privas-Bréauté)

3 members of the CRM of Copets: 1 manager, 1 person in charge of the phone, 1 person in contact with the supply department

Place:

Copets Company

210 Chiswick Road

London W4 1SY

UK

Time: 9 am

Tasks:

1. greetings in front of the building of the université of "les Quais" (meeting point on Second Life)
2. in the office
3. phone conversation between the secretary, the customer, the manager. The last member pretends he is working.
4. the manager tells the story to the others. A meeting is then organized. They go to the meeting room.
5. in the meeting room. It is not the first time it has happened with this toy. They need to find solutions.
6. Go to the computer room to work on the script of the angry customer and find all the complex sentences.

For this situation, you will have to go back to:

courses "on the phone", and customer relationship management (vocabulary)

+ intonation and pronunciation of questions and answers, politeness

+ grammar: simple tenses and modal auxiliaries.

You will be evaluated on:

1. your attitude (professional or relaxed)
2. your linguistic (grammar, vocabulary) and psycho-linguistic competences

Appendix 2

Scenario # 2: carrying out a customer satisfaction survey

Reminder: *Copets* is a British firm selling toys for pets but it has been losing clients recently. It now needs to win clients back or acquire new ones.

Characters and roles:

3 members of Copets: 1 manager, 2 staff members. The three of them work in the CRM department.

Place:

Copets Company
210 Chiswick Road
London W4 1SY
UK

Time: 9 am

Tasks:

1. a new day is starting: greetings.
2. the manager explains that one of the solutions found previously to win customers back or acquire new ones was to write a customer satisfaction survey. So they need to build a team and work on such a document.
3. Brainstorming session in the meeting room.
4. to whom? clients? new clients? old ones? lost ones?
5. what for? to win customers back? acquire new ones? change policies? change strategies?
6. where to take it? in their shops? on streets? which streets? on the internet? on the phone? This will have an impact on its form.
7. once you have answered all the questions above, you may write up the survey.
8. what questions within the survey? how many?
9. end : the manager keeps the questionnaire and transmits it to another team in charge of dealing with it... they all go back to their offices

For this situation, you will have to review:

course on CRM

+ lecture on customer satisfaction

1. intonation and pronunciation
2. grammar

You will be evaluated on:

1. your sociocultural abilities
2. your linguistic and psycholinguistic competences (discussing/ arguing/ comparing and negotiating)
3. methodologic capacities: writing a customer satisfaction form, writing skill