Incorporating Cultural Factors in Understanding Challenges Facing Composition Pedagogy for Cross-Cultural Students using Online Videogame Technologies

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In the past 30 years, computer and videogames have become a popular recreational pastime. Rapid development in videogame applications to teaching composition has attracted scholars' attention to this important research area in composition pedagogy. One of the most promising developments in videogame application is MMORPGs that enable videogame players around the world to interact with each other in a common gaming platform. The study aims to explore how cultural factors influence teaching and learning of composition using the English language among cross-cultural videogame players. The study proposes a theoretical framework that integrates cultural factors into the study of composition pedagogy to demonstrate how the proposed theory helps scholars to better examine cultural effects in teaching composition among cross-cultural students.

In the past 30 years, computer and videogames have become a popular recreational pastime. Rapid advances in networking technologies have further transformed the traditional single machine, stand-alone videogame into a colossal cyberspace playground that enables players from different cultural backgrounds to take part in the interactive and synchronous gaming experience (Guins, 2004). While the technologist's perspective adopted in this paper is often challenged by those of social pragmatists (who claimed teaching practices will dictate technology use) and critical analysts (who argued that teachers should be aware of culturally-bound technology) (Chapelle, 2003), this study aims to explore whether and how the application of online digital game technologies, specifically Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games, is beneficial to teaching composition to students with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Rationale and Background

Rapid developments in computer and network technologies in the twentieth century have led to the integration of these technologies into language teaching and learning (Levy & Stockwell, 2006). Kern (2006) advanced this argument by stating that the applications of new technology will enable "new forms of discourse, new forms of authorship, and new ways to create and participate in communication" in a language classroom (p. 183). Among many technologies, one of the most promising online digital game applications is called Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) that refer to "any computer network-mediated games in which at least one thousand players are role-playing simultaneously in a graphical environment" (Filiciak, 2003, p. 87). Popular MMORPGs include games such as *Everquest*, *Halo 2*, and *Diablo* (Reynolds, 2006). It is estimated that about 100 million people play MMORPGs worldwide, which generates about $5 billion per

year in subscription fees (Reynolds, 2006).

Unlike traditional videogames, MMORPGs allow users to take part in the playing by creating their own characters, or *avatars* (Filiciak, 2003). In language learning literature, role-playing in a drama setting has been found to enhance students' learning (Byram & Felming, 1998a; Jensen & Hermer, 1998; Schewe, 1998; Schmidt, 1998). Similar to a theater in a face-to-face language classroom, we argue that MMORPGs have created an online space that can be conceptualized by Selfe and Selfe's (1994) term, the "electronic contact zone" and is capable of enabling videogame users to "play an active role in modulating the transmissions that reach him, and has control over them" (Filiciak, 2003, p. 91).

The application of videogames to facilitate students' learning of writing has been widely researched in game study literature (Beavis, 2002; Gee, 2004a, 2004b; Prensky, 2005). The application of MMORPGs in teaching composition has yet to begin attracting scholars' attention. Some scholars have begun to explore the influence of unique technical characteristics of MMORPGs on teaching writing (Moberly, 2008), such as the study of videogame design in facilitating learning in various contexts (Holland, Jenkins, & Squire, 2003).

The application of videogame technologies such as MMORPGs to teaching composition to cross-cultural students often relies on the parasocial characteristics of a "digital contact zone" (Pratt, 2001; Selfe & Selfe, 1994) made possible by many emerging videogame technologies. The parasocial nature of videogames bears much resemblance to human interactions, but lacks the face-to-face component because players congregate from various time and geographical zones. This emerging virtual space has been given various nomenclatures that aim to address different dimensions of the zone. Pratt (2001) and Selfe and Selfe (1994) conceptualized the technology as a (digital) contact zone "to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (Pratt, 2001, p. 5). Gee (2004a), on the other hand, referred to this unique type of space as "an affinity space" (p. 83), often broadly conceptualized as:

> Common endeavor, not race, class, gender, or disability is primary; newbies and masters and everyone else share common space; both intensive and extensive knowledge are encouraged; both individual and distorted knowledge are encouraged; dispersed knowledge is encouraged; there are many different forms and routes to participation; there are lots of different routes to status. (pp. 85-87)

The global convergence of video-gaming spaces allows videogame players (students) with various cultural backgrounds to interact with each other and the instructor in a single platform. Furthermore, online videogames also allow these videogame players to take part in synchronous communication during each game-playing session. Because composition teachers and scholars have increasingly noted this potential use of videogame technologies in pedagogy, the paper also examined applications of videogame technologies as a digital contact zone to enable composition instructors to negotiate their pedagogy with students' cultural backgrounds in a mediated educational context.

The application of videogame technologies to language teaching is often categorized

under computer-assisted language learning (CALL) field (Egbert & Petrie, 2005). While the integration of videogame technologies into CALL classrooms has gradually caught up, the diffusion of CALL is expected because of the popularity of distance learning curricula around the world. Given the potential application of videogame technologies in teaching cross-cultural students, our study intends to propose a comprehensive theory that integrates cultural factors into a theory of composition pedagogy using MMORPG technologies.

Literature Review

Online Digital Games and Computer-Assisted Learning (CALL)

During the last thirty years, computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has developed and evolved at a fascinating speed (Levy & Stockwell, 2006). Egbert and Petrie (2005) also defined CALL as "learners learning language in any context with, through, and around computer technologies" (p. 4). CALL systems always include a multimedia component (such as cassette recorder, film projector, or web-based systems) or some computer hardware and software application in producing digitized sound and video for teaching materials (Dodigovic, 2005). Emerging new technologies have also added to a list of technologies suitable for CALL applications. These include personal digital assistants (PDAs), mobile phones with text messaging and Web searching capabilities, laptop computer and peripherals (e.g., digital cameras, scanners, printers, and keyboards), and software from basic word processors to multimedia movie making (Egbert & Petrie, 2005). CALL systems usually mean that language learners learn "language in any context with, through, and around computer technologies" (Egbert & Petrie, 2005, p. 4). Furthermore, unlike the traditional classroom, composition learning and teaching through CALL can take place in a variety of places such as learners' homes, libraries, computer, Internet cafés, and so on (Egbert & Petrie, 2005).

The development of CALL is associated with the development of computer technologies (Dodigovic, 2005). Therefore, the advance of online videogames will definitely contribute to the application of CALL to composition teaching and learning. For example, developing from the interactive communication mode that CALL systems are characteristic of, Long (1996) emphasized the role of face-to-face interaction in language teaching and learning, in which meaning can be negotiated. Pica (1991) also argued that the negotiation of meaning between language learners and interlocutor(s) can be facilitated by the interactivity of CALL systems in making interactional adjustments continuously.

Empirical studies have partially confirmed the above descriptive and speculative discussions about the effects of videogames on human behavior. For example, some exploratory studies on online videogames have demonstrated the importance of social interaction during students' learning processes (Ho, 2005). Peña and Hancock (2006) studied the messages players exchanged while playing online videogames and found that the majority of messages were socio-emotional and had positive valence. The application of online videogames in teaching composition to students with diverse cultural backgrounds will be affected by the parasocial characteristics of online language classroom made possible by the technology.

Unlike other asynchronous computer-mediated communication tools previously used in

CALL (Levy & Stockwell, 2006), online videogames allow composition students to take part in synchronous communication during game-playing sessions. During their interactions, they not only exchange their linguistic and writing skills, but they acquire skills to interact online with other game-players. As to interactions with game-players with diverse cultural backgrounds, students' participation can also lead to culture awareness of the target language (Byram & Fleming, 1998b; Hsu, 2006).

The digression from conventional classroom and pedagogy is likely to lead to needs for new teaching philosophy and materials for composition instructors. For example, Levy and Stockwell (2006) argued that the selection of media is likely to influence the teaching materials in terms of the amount of time required for message reception and delivery, the relationships between the participants in the learning process, the types of language employed in the teaching materials, and the equipment needed to conduct CALL.

The emergence of computer-assisted learning technologies has also responded to recent developments in language teaching methods. Wong (2005) argued that teacher-centered transmission model is gradually being replaced by interactive and communicative model to account for students' needs on language learning. A CALL system using online videogames allows a student-centered instructional approach. As Dodigovic (2005) pointed out, in a traditional face-to-face language classroom, a language teacher usually serves the role of providing language learners with detailed instructions about language learning.

Culture and Composition Pedagogy in a Multicultural World

Language is closely related to culture (Sercu et al., 2005; Valdes, 2006). Sapir's approach to language postulates that "language can be seen as a way to describe and represent human experience and understanding of the world" (Sapir, as cited in Hinkel, 1999, p. 3). Some scholars even claim "language *is* culture" (Sercu et al., 2005, p. vii). Culture is found to relate to language use such as nonverbal communication and politeness norms (Sercu et al., 2005). Although definitions of culture may vary across disciplines, in language learning and teaching, culture has been usually defined as "a /the culture associated with a language being learnt" (Byram & Grundy, 2003, p. 1). Jin and Cortazzi (1998) defined culture as "socially transmitted patterns of behaviour and interaction" (p. 98). Heathcote and Bolston (1998) further defined culture as composing two categories of values: personal and cultural values. Personal values refer to values guiding individual behavior, while cultural values refer to a system of value hierarchy followed by all members in society (Heathcote & Bolston, 1998).

Multiculturalism in the U.S. language classrooms is often criticized as problematic. Lu (1994) pointed out "how to conceive and practice teaching methods which invite a multicultural approach to style, particularly those styles of student writing which appear to be ridden with 'errors'" (p. 442). Valdés (2006) further elaborated that teaching minority students requires "a deep understanding of the nature of societal bilingualism and on the examination of existing views about writing and the development for bilingual individuals" (pp. 31-32). The same argument can be made for teaching composition students with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Teaching composition to students with diverse cultural backgrounds requires that instructors be fully aware of various cultural norms and learning styles among students. Furthermore, for students in the same classroom, similar cultural awareness and

understanding are also needed to create a synergetic learning environment, an idea that bears much resemblance to "contact zone" (Pratt, 2001) or "affinity space" (Gee, 2004a, b). Jin and Cortazzi (1998) argued that the process of increasing cultural awareness implies that students in a classroom are willing to "challenge their own assumptions" (p. 99). While the importance of culture in language curriculum has been well-documented (Byram & Fleming, 1998b), research about the influence of new technologies on integrating culture into language curriculum is still nascent (Hsu, 2006). Hsu's (2006) dissertation discussed the role the Internet can play in language curriculum as well as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Problems and challenges posed by new technologies in teaching EFL were examined.

Although the constraints posed by conventional educational approaches are commonly held as status quo and unchallenged in the language classrooms (Lu, 1994), the emerging videogame learning environment introduces a drastically different space (either named as "contact zone" or "affinity space") that enables both students and teachers to negotiate their learning and teaching styles. Furthermore, this new educational environment is equipped with various technical, as well as social cultural characteristics, which can significantly influence composition pedagogy (Pennington, 2006).

Pennington's (2006) article delineated various issues that alert instructors about teaching composition using new and emerging writing media. For example, her discussions include students' positive attitudes toward computer and network technologies, unique textual properties in a computer-mediated environment, and the integration of alternative discourses into the writing process (such as hypertext, hypermedia, Web pages, or websites). While Pennington's essay is comprehensive, she has yet to examine the emerging MMORPG technologies in congregating students with diverse cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, how will instructors strategize their pedagogy by taking into consideration cultural backgrounds of these students?

Negotiation of meaning between a teacher and students is common among face-to-face or mediated CALL classrooms (Chapelle, 2003). In some cases, students interacting online are found not only to negotiate meaning, but to use the language during the interactions (Chapelle, 2003). Co-construction of meaning is also found among learners that work together in both face-to-face and virtual collaborative classrooms (Chapelle, 2003). Furthermore, the negotiation process can be extended from the linguistic arena to social-cultural development between instructor-students, students-students, and students-technology. The multiple dimensions of negotiation are likely to be influenced by participants in the process. Participants with diverse cultural backgrounds are bound to influence the effectiveness of new technologies in composition pedagogy.

Jin and Cortazzi's (1998) framework detailed the influence of culture of language learning and culture of learning in a language classroom. By comparing and contrasting learning philosophy and language learning style between Western and Oriental cultures, Jin and Cortazzi (1998) argued that, in the Chinese transmission model of language learning, the role of a teacher is to teach textbook contents to ensure that students will master the knowledge through memorization of vocabulary and grammatical rules. On the other hand, the Western acquisition model of language learning emphasizes task-oriented problem solving skills to ensure that students will develop skills to solve future problems. The focus of

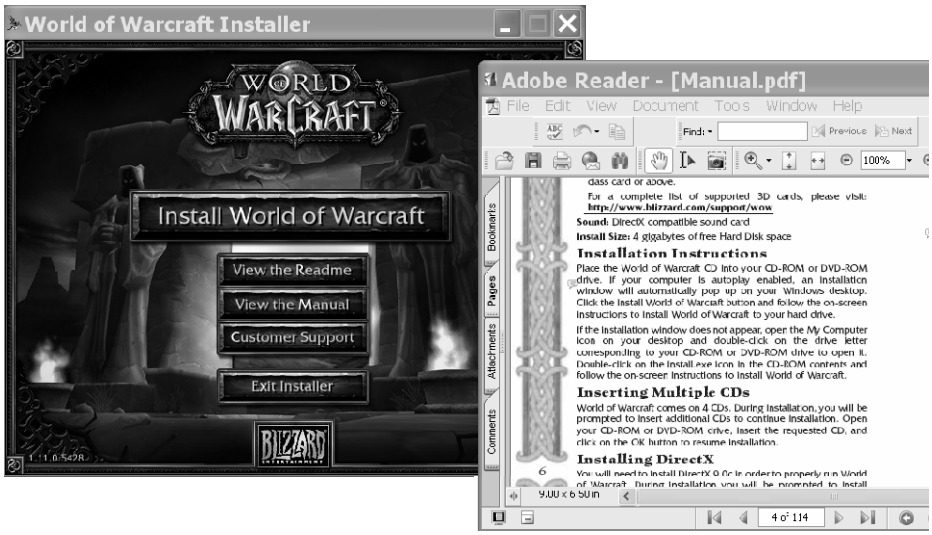

Figure 1. Game installation screen for *World of Warcraft*.

language learning is on interaction and function/use (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998). Although Jin and Cortazzi's (1998) model addressed all language learning processes, teaching and learning composition constitutes an important part in the process. Furthermore, although Jin and Cortazzi (1998) compared and contrasted cultures that greatly differ with one another, the influence of culture on language learning process and outcome has been supported. This study thus argued that to understand learning and teaching composition through MMORPGs, it is important to examine the role of cultural factors.

Theoretical Framework

Gee's (2004a) book brought up the needs to examine learning through the use of videogames in the following: "because video games…are simulations of experience and new worlds, and thus not unlike a favored form of human thinking, and because their makers would go broke if no one could learn to play them, they constitute an area where we have lots to learn about learning" (p. 4). Videogame playing constitutes learning to read instructions about installing the videogame, *World of Warcraft* (see Figure 1), setting up a personalized account (see Figure 2), comprehending online prompts during playing (see Figure 3), interacting with other players who send text messages during playing (see Figure 4), and so on. The above alternative discourses help explain better how videogame technologies can have effects on composition pedagogy. While some critics argue that many young kids do not read the text-rich manual before playing the videogame, reading and writing are composed of the majority part of game-playing experience. Although culture seems to be often ignored by game researchers, Gee (2004b) briefly discussed the process of decoding in a videogame situation that is related to meaning negotiation (Chapelle, 2003) as discussed above.

Figure 2. Personalized account setup screen for *World of Warcraft*.

Figure 3. An example of an online prompt during *World of Warcraft* game play.

Figure 4. Text-based online interactions with other players during *World of Warcraft*.

Gee (2004b) explained that "learning to decode was not 'decontextualized.' It was not, in fact, separated from meaningful and value-laden action, interaction, and dialogue" (p.48). Furthermore, Gee (2004b) also emphasized the role of language in enabling gamers to sharing perspectives.

To accurately model human actions in a videogaming context (in particular, MMORPGs), it is necessary to take culture into consideration. As discussed by Jin and Cortazzi (1998), culture will influence the learning and teaching of how to write by students with diverse cultural backgrounds. Vygotsky's (1962, 1971) social cultural theory provides a useful foundation to develop a culture-centered theory to study the application of online digital game technologies in composition pedagogy research. Waschauer (2005) further pointed out three main aspects of Vygotsky's theory: mediation, social learning, and genetic analysis. According to Vygotsky, *mediation* is the center of the social cultural theory, in which he argued that all human activity is mediated by tools or signs used in the process (Vygotsky, 1962, 1971; Warschauer, 2005). The importance of these new technologies to teaching and learning composition is that they fundamentally transform human action to allow asynchronous communications that disregard existent social relations and ignore temporal and geographical constraints. Warschauer (2005) extended from Vygotsky's thoughts and argued that the inclusion of tools in human activities does not simply facilitate human actions, but rather become part of the actions, flows, and structure of mental functions. To borrow from Vygotsky's theory in the context of teaching and learning composition through mediated videogame technologies, it can be argued that the effectiveness of composition pedagogy

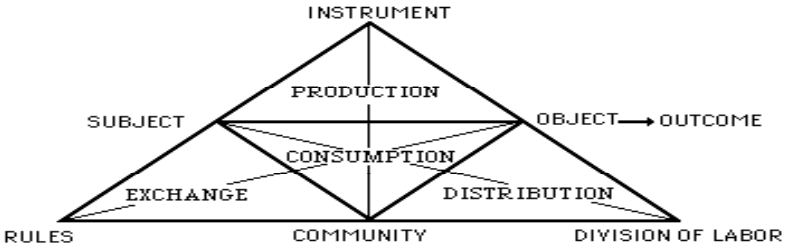

Figure 5. The structure map of human activity (Engestrom, 1987, p. 62).

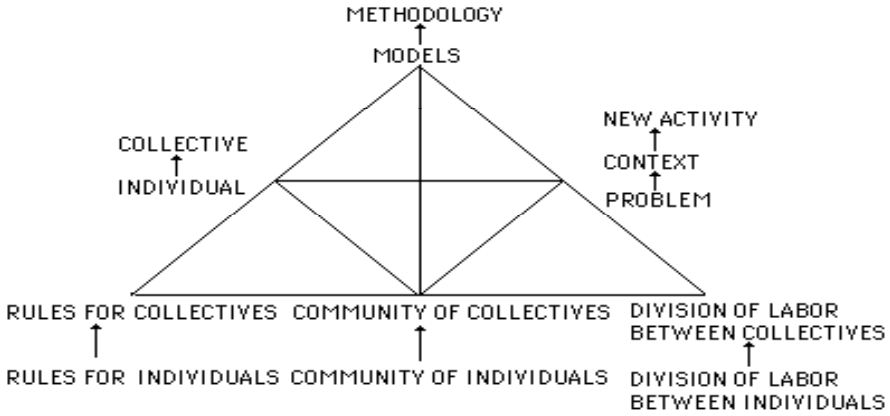

Figure 6. The structure map of learning activity (Engestrom, 1987, p. 102).

relies on dynamic interactions among students, social-cultural environments, and teaching situations (Canagarajah, 2002). Regardless of types of technologies used in teaching, composition classrooms are social (Canagarajah, 2002) and full of cultural norms that determine interactions among participants.

Researchers that emphasized the role of cultural factors in human activities in general, and composition pedagogy in particular, have helped us to examine whether and how culture can play a role in using MMORPGs to teach composition among cross-cultural students. To guide our study, we proposed the model that integrates the mediating role of videogame technologies into a composition classroom setting. Engeström (1987, 1997) models in human activities and learning help us to propose a hierarchical model that delineates the relationships among different components (see Figure 5 and Figure 6). The proposed theoretical framework was arranged as a hierarchical model. The top layer includes “MMORPGs” as the tool (media, or means) (Figure 7). The second layer in the framework includes two essential entities in the composition pedagogy, “Teacher” and “Students.” At the third layer in the framework, three culture-related components are proposed to cover “Cultural Norms,” “Videogame Community,” and “Culture of Language Learning.” All three blocks at this layer are related to cultural factors deemed important to teaching and learning composition in a MMORPG

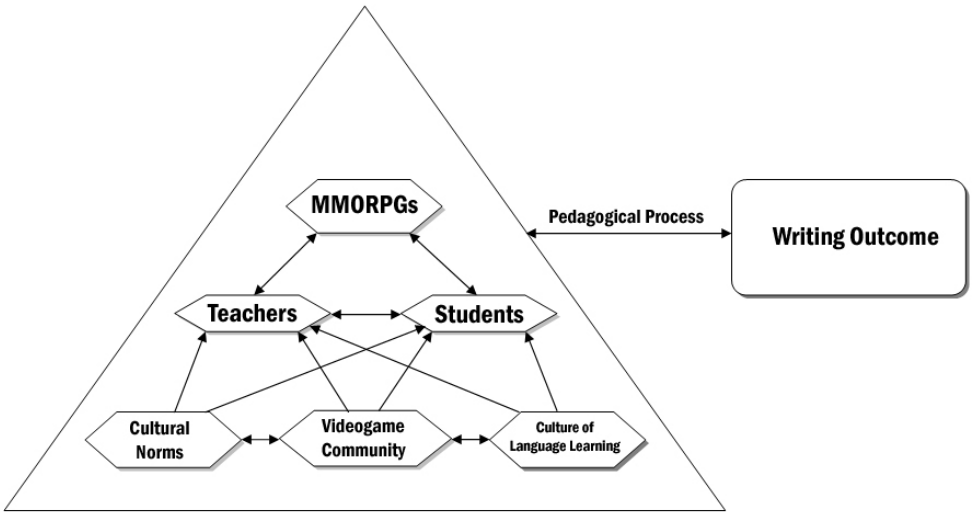

Figure 7. A culture-centered MMORPG theory of composition pedagogy.

environment. External to the pyramid is the component labeled as "Writing Outcome" to address the result of composition pedagogy. Many of the lines linking the entities are bi-directional, which demonstrates the highly interactive, dynamic, and discursive nature of teaching and learning composition in a MMORPG context.

A Case Study of *World of Warcraft*

World of Warcraft is said to be one of the most popular MMORPGs in the world (Reynolds, 2006). Gee (2004a) described playing *World of Warcraft II* as a "horizontal learning experience" in which players do not "make a lot of progress up the ladder of skills, but stays on the initial rungs a while, exploring them and getting to know what some of the rungs are and what the ladders look like" (p. 60). Playing *World of Warcraft* requires that players dedicate a lot of time to gaining skills in order to be promoted to another rank after each gaming session (Reynolds, 2006). Unlike learning in a face-to-face composition classroom setting, videogame and computer have the advantage "in the creation of motivation for an extended engagement" (Gee, 2004b, p. 60). Furthermore, "an affinity space" (Gee, 2004a, p. 73) is created when videogame players log in to play to share same interests, activities, and goals, regardless of their differences in race, class, ethnicity, culture, and gender background (Gee, 2004b).

World of Warcraft is a commercial, graphically rich and advanced game that simulates a three-dimensional virtual world where gamers can create avatars like a humanoid body to interact with other gamers (Mortesen, 2002). It is one of the most popular and successful MMORPGs, with more than 6 million subscribers in the world (Ducheneaut, Yee, Nickell, & Moore, 2006). According to a Blizzard Entertainment press release on July 24, 2007, over 9

million subscribers were playing *World of Warcraft*. This shows a dramatic increase of 3 million subscribers within three years. Despite its monthly subscription fee, *World of Warcraft* remains a widely popular MMORPG that attracts videogame players from around the world.

In the following, we applied the theoretical framework in Figure 7 to discuss some examples about how cultural factors influence the teaching and learning of composition using the English language. A more realistic portrayal of these examples would be to set up an ad-hoc virtual composition classroom for students with diverse cultural backgrounds, so they can take part in writing tasks assigned by the instructor. Nevertheless, given the exploratory nature of this paper, the examples were used to demonstrate the importance of culture in studying the use of MMORPGs in composition pedagogy.

The task asks an English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) student from Taiwan to play *World of Warcraft* with a predominantly White team. As a result of great cultural differences between the EFL student and the rest of native speakers of English teammates, it is expected that culture will play a role in generating writing opportunity and difficulty in maintaining team synergy in a videogame community. The EFL student is asked to bring up questions about American culture during the gaming session. Also, the EFL student is asked to ask questions about how to play *World of Warcraft* as a novice player through writing questions and reading teammates' responses.

The EFL student logged in by the name of "Ethos" to interact with players of the *World of Warcraft.* The following discourses demonstrate the role of culture in the gaming session and how various cultural backgrounds of players lead to writing opportunities and sharing of cultural awareness among MMORPG videogame community members.

The first discourse demonstrated that, in a culturally diverse MMORPG classroom, students have become culturally aware of food culture of another country (see Textual Discourse 1). Such types of cultural awareness can often lead to more lively discussions and lead to more writing opportunities for participating students. MMORPGs allow players to interact with each other during the gaming session and at the same time, sending out (writing or typing) textual messages. As such, the online classroom provides a good opportunity for cross-cultural students to learn to read and to write. While a gaming situation like the one presented in Textual Discourse 1 does not allow players to respond specifically to the questions raised, it helps students to learn how to write. For example, WH-questions are extensively used by the Taiwanese EFL student in this case. The practice of using WH-questions helps Taiwanese students to become familiar with this sentence structure. For example, Ethos, who is the EFL student from Taiwan, asks a lot of questions such as, "What are you eating?" and, "Why tacos?"

Learning how to write in a MMORPG composition classroom also can rely on culture-specific vocabulary to motivate students to take an active role. Like Textual Discourse 1, Taiwanese food culture is introduced to attract more interactions, thus more writing opportunities, among students. "Taco" (a Mexican food) and "Smelly Bean Curd" (a Taiwanese food) are brought up during the textual exchanges. As a result, students learn about other food cultures, which lead to more writing opportunities and exchanges among participating students.

Textual Discourse 1
Talking About Food

Ethos: dude?
Doobage: sorry about that, I was eating
Ethos: what are you eating?
Ethos: your dinner?
Doobage: tacos
Ethos: why tacos?
Ethos: I had smelly bean curd
Doobage: ok. meet me in Kharanos.
Ethos: bean curd
Ethos: here?
Doobage: bean curd?
Ethos: smelly Taiwanese food
Doobage: ok. yeah, just wait here. I'll meet you here in like 10 minutes, ok?
Ethos: what is taco?
Doobage: how old are you?
Ethos: It smells like dead body but it tastes good
Ethos: 23
Doobage: you're hilarious!
Ethos: what is hilarious?
Doobage: you're funny. So you going to wait here for me?
Ethos: is hilarious the same as funny?
Doobage: yes
Ethos: okay I will wait for you right here?
Ethos: right?
Doobage: yes. I'll be here in a few minutes
Ethos: I'll check my watch

Similarly, as shown in Textual Discourse 2, an English vocabulary word, *hommie*, is introduced during the gaming session. The EFL student, Ethos, is not familiar with this English slang and is motivated to learn about its meaning. To do so in a text-only MMORPG learning environment, Ethos asks the meaning of *hommie* by writing, "Could you please tell me what that is?" This motivated action is a result of cultural interaction, but the opportunity helps him to learn how to write a question sentence by moving *could* to the beginning of a sentence. The linguistic structure of auxiliary inversion is not used in Mandarin Chinese, but Ethos learns to use it as the writing opportunity emerges. Furthermore, Ethos also learns the correct word order for a noun clause following the verb, *tell*. The noun-clause structure is also unique to the English language and many Taiwanese EFL students often make the mistake by inverting the verb *to be*; for example, "What that is?" instead of, "What is that?" In addition to using culture to motivate writing students in a cultural contact zone, through interacting with the other videogame player, the EFL student, Ethos, has learned the meaning of *hommie* as well as unique English linguistic structures.

Textual Discourse 2
Talking About English Slang

Ethos: is my English weird?
Jondalar: no, sounds great. that's why I thought you were messing with me at first
Ethos: really?
Ethos: good to know that. ha
Ehos: okay you are on my list now
Jondalar: I'll talk to you later, hommie
Ethos: hommie??
Jondalar: dog
Ethos: Could you please tell me what that is?
Jondalar: bro
Ethos: hommie?
Jondalar: man, dude, whatever
Ethos: waht is that?
Ethos: okay is that English?
Jondalar: d means like buddy, friend
Ethos: okay I got it
Ethos: are you going to sleep?
Jondalar: I'll talk to you later, hommie.

Conclusion

Relationships between technology and language learning have been a frequent line of inquiry by language teachers (Chapelle, 2003). The ability of emerging MMORPGs to introduce culture into dynamics of teaching and learning composition lead to new research questions that deserve to be examined carefully. The study began with a review of past literature that dealt with the above-mentioned issues to better situate the research topic. On the basis of the literature review, this paper attempted to answer the influence of videogame CALL learning environment on design and implementation of composition pedagogy. Furthermore, the study examined theoretical implications by exploring the role of videogame technologies in teaching composition in a videogame learning environment to students with diverse cultural backgrounds; examples demonstrating the applications of MMORPGs concluded this paper.

The potential of MMORPGs is not completely demonstrated in this study because the situations where data were collected are limited to certain participants with specific tasks to be completed. However, according to a university introductory English class required for all students, all students need to write expressive essays, explanation essays, analysis of argumentative essays, and argumentative essays. Although the data reported in this study only showed some parts of expressive and explanatory writings enabled in a MMORPG environment, argumentative and analytical writing can be integrated into future research to see how these two types of writing can also be taught and in what ways online. Also, instructors can design a videogame classroom to assemble a group of students to interact with each other to complete a task of writing an expressive, explanatory, argumentative, or analytical essay. This should lead to higher and goal-oriented learning outcome, as intended

for teachers who want to integrate videogame into their composition curriculum.

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