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*Vocabulary treatment in adventure and role-playing games:
a playground for adaptation and adaptivity*

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Abstract

Digital games in which language and story play a crucial role, such as adventure and role-playing games, are considered to offer perspectives for practicing second language (L2) vocabulary in environments which favour contextualized, task-based learning (Purushotma, 2005) and communicative fluency (Baltra, 1990). Although commercial off-the-shelf games are often criticized for containing vocabulary that is too abundant, advanced, and specific – hence, not easily transferable to contexts outside of games (deHaan, 2005) – empirical research suggests that games can create an *involvement load* which reinforces vocabulary retention (Cheung & Harrison, 1992; Miller & Hegelheimer, 2006; Ranalli, 2008). These results tentatively offer opportunities for the design of serious games explicitly tailored to L2 learning and, more specifically, to L2 vocabulary acquisition.

In this presentation, we will briefly review theory and research on vocabulary acquisition in digital games, before proposing a model for vocabulary treatment in adventure and role-playing games. We will make a case for the adaptation of authentic game texts, and for the implementation of adaptivity on the level of word and learner.

References

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