

Genshin Impact as a Language Learning Tool for ESL Learners' Vocabulary Acquisition and Communication Skills in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of a popular open-world action role-playing game, Genshin Impact, as a learning tool for enhancing English language proficiency among Malaysian tertiary students. The study employed a quantitative methodology where data were collected from 100 respondents from various Malaysian tertiary institutions. The research focused on evaluating the impact of Genshin Impact on two key aspects of language learning; vocabulary acquisition and communication skills. From the findings, it was found that there is a statistically significant improvement in English vocabulary related to the game among participating students. This suggests that the immersive and engaging nature of Genshin Impact, with its various quests, diverse characters, and in-game dialogues, can effectively introduce and reinforce new vocabulary in a contextually relevant and motivating manner. Furthermore, a majority of participants strongly agreed that Genshin Impact's in-game chat feature has significantly increased their motivation for English language learning and improved their English communication skills. It is believed when utilized appropriately and effectively for collaborative gameplay and communication, Genshin Impact holds a great potential in improving students' English language proficiency.

Keywords— Game-based learning, English language proficiency, Vocabulary acquisition, Communication Skills, Tertiary Education

INTRODUCTION

Genshin Impact is an action role-playing game (RPG) developed by MiHoYo that was released in September 2020. The game has since garnered international acclaim for its captivating gameplay, expansive open world, and stunning visuals. Its cross-platform availability and free-to-play model contributed to its rapid rise in popularity. The game's narrative-driven approach, featuring diverse characters and a captivating magical world, has captivated players of all ages (MiHoYo, 2020). In the era of the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR), education witnessed a paradigm shift towards integrating games and digital tools into traditional learning environments. Research has consistently demonstrated that technology can significantly enhance learning outcomes by increasing engagement, interactivity, and overall learning effectiveness (Ding, Er& Orey, 2018).

This study investigates the potential of Genshin Impact as a learning tool for enhancing vocabulary acquisition and communication skills among Malaysian tertiary students. In today's dynamic educational landscape, incorporating digital games aligns with the evolving preferences of modern learners, prompting a reevaluation of traditional teaching methods (Becker, 2017). In tertiary education, the integration of digital games as learning tools has become an emerging area of interest, with a notable rise in the popularity of Genshin Impact. This action RPG created by MiHoYo (2020) features a bright and engaging virtual environment that has captured many students. However, the extent to which Genshin Impact can effectively serve as a learning tool to enhance language proficiency in tertiary settings remains underexplored. The problem lies in the lack of comprehensive understanding specifically regarding its impact on students' vocabulary acquisition and their communication skills which potentially can impact their language proficiency.

The study's findings can help educators gain a deeper understanding of how university students perceive and approach Genshin Impact as a learning tool. This awareness can enable educators to adapt their teaching methodologies and instructional strategies to incorporate game-based learning effectively into the curriculum. By aligning with students' perceptions and attitudes, educators can create more engaging and interactive learning experiences that enhance student motivation, participation, and knowledge retention. Other than that, understanding how Genshin Impact can promote vocabulary acquisition and communication skills as a learning tool for students can empower educators to design learning experiences that resonate with students. By incorporating games, educators can create immersive and interactive environments that cater to different learning styles, enhance student engagement, and promote deeper understanding and application of knowledge. This can lead to improved learning outcomes, critical thinking skills, and a more positive overall educational experience for students.

Lastly, game-based learning is becoming increasingly prevalent in various fields, and exposure to it in tertiary education can help bridge the digital skills gap. By exploring students' perceptions and attitudes towards Genshin Impact as learning tools, educators can identify areas where students may require additional support or training. This knowledge can inform the development of targeted interventions and resources to enhance students' technological proficiency and adaptability, equipping them with valuable digital skills that are relevant in the modern workforce.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The integration of technology into education has moved towards a new era of pedagogical possibilities, with game-based learning emerging as a promising approach to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. While numerous studies have explored the effectiveness of digital games in various educational contexts, including language learning (Reinders, 2016), research specifically examining the potential an open-world action role-playing Game (RPG), such as Genshin Impact, as a pedagogical tool for language acquisition have yet to be explored.

Existing literature on game-based language learning primarily focuses on general principles of game design and their application to language learning (Pitarch, 2018). Previous research often provides general frameworks for designing and implementing game-based language learning activities but may not specifically address the unique features and characteristics of games like Genshin Impact. Other than that, previous research has yet to venture on the use of specific game genres or platforms such as Genshin Impact. Studies may have investigated the use of educational games, casual games, or language learning platforms (Wiggins, 2016) but may not have delved into the specific case of immersive, open-world games like Genshin Impact.

This lack of specific research on Genshin Impact within the context of tertiary English education creates a significant knowledge gap. A more in-depth understanding of how Genshin Impact can be effectively integrated in English language learning is crucial for several reasons. First and foremost, educators and curriculum developers need evidence-based insights to effectively integrate Genshin Impact into their language teaching methodologies (Hayak & Ungar, 2020). This includes understanding the specific features of the game that can be leveraged for language learning, as well as identifying potential challenges and limitations (Zhang, 2023). Policymakers and educational institutions also need to make informed decisions regarding the allocation of resources and the development of relevant policies related to the use of digital games in education. Hence, this research on the effectiveness of Genshin Impact can provide valuable data to support and become the guideline for policy decisions. Also, by investigating Genshin Impact specifically, this study can contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which games can facilitate language acquisition, potentially informing the design and development of future game-based learning experiences.

Furthermore, focusing on vocabulary acquisition and communication skills within the context of Genshin Impact is crucial. These skills are fundamental to effective language use and are closely intertwined with successful communication in real-world contexts (Sumaiya et. Al, 2022). By investigating the impact of Genshin Impact on these specific skills, this study aims to provide valuable insights into how immersive and engaging game environments can contribute to the development of essential language competencies.

Bridging this research gap is critical for informing educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers about the potential advantages and limitations of implementing Genshin Impact in tertiary language instruction. It will help to acquire a more nuanced understanding of the role of digital games in language learning and provide valuable guidance for developing effective language learning practices in postsecondary settings.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

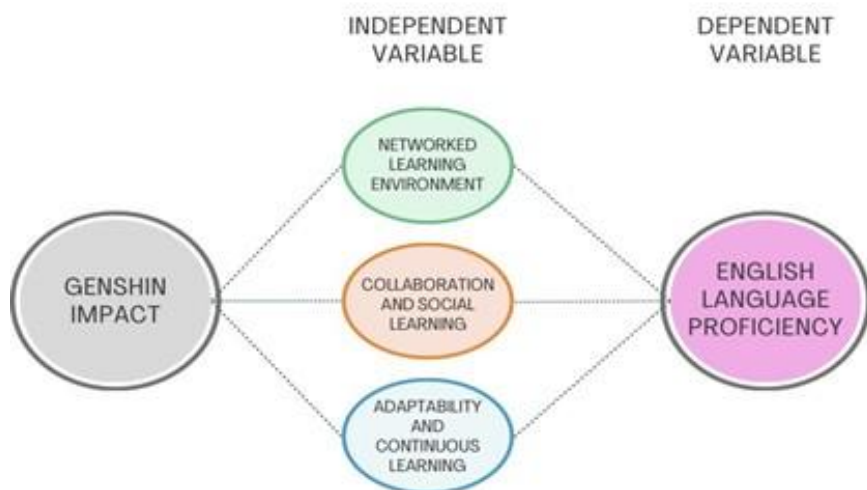


Fig. 1 Connectivism in Genshin Impact context

Connectivism, as a learning theory, asserts that learning is a network-based process, and that the ability to navigate these networks is a vital skill in the digital age (Hendricks, 2019). Several major linkages appear when exploring the relationship between the Connectivism theoretical framework and Genshin Impact, a popular open-world action RPG. To begin, connectivism says that learning takes place within networks. In the case of Genshin Impact, the game offers a large and linked open world in which players can participate in a variety of activities. The variable here is the degree to which Genshin Impact's networked learning environment enhances language acquisition. This includes player interactions, group efforts to complete missions, and the social aspects of language acquisition within the game.

Secondly, Connectivism promotes collaborative learning and the need to tap into collective intelligence (Nair, & Mathew, 2019). Genshin Impact includes multiplayer elements that let players work together on tasks, share strategies, and communicate with other players in the game's community. The variable is the extent to which these collaboration opportunities help to develop language proficiency. This involves the development of communication skills through in-game interactions and the exchange of language-related information among players.

Lastly, connectivism emphasizes the importance of learners adapting to changing information landscapes. Updates, fresh content, and challenges are introduced on a regular basis in Genshin Impact, pushing players to constantly learn and adapt. The variable is the extent to which the game's demands for flexibility and constant learning contribute to language proficiency improvement. This includes determining how new language elements introduced in updates and expansions improve learners' linguistic ability.

In summary, the three independent variables within the connectivism theoretical framework pertaining to Genshin Impact as a language learning tool are the game's networked learning environment, the collaborative learning opportunities it provides, and the adaptability and continuous learning required within the game, all of which contribute to language proficiency improvement. These characteristics help to understand the potential impact of the Genshin Impact on language learning in the context of connectivism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The incorporation of technology in language acquisition has been a focus of educational study, with a growing

body of literature showing the benefits and problems of this integration. Language learning apps and online platforms, for example, provide different and dynamic alternatives for language acquisition.

Recent research has focused on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in language learning platforms, highlighting its potential to revolutionize language acquisition. Wang and Zhang (2022) provide insights into the benefits of AI-driven language learning tools, emphasizing their adaptability and personalized learning experiences for learners. AI-powered language apps and platforms offer tailored feedback, adaptive exercises, and real-time assessment, enhancing learners' engagement and proficiency. This underscores the evolving role of technology in language education, with AI offering innovative solutions to address the diverse needs of language learners.

Despite the benefits, difficulties such as the digital divide and the requirement for effective technology integration teacher training exist. Nonetheless, literature emphasizes the changing landscape of language teaching, with technology playing a critical role in building dynamic, learner-centered environments. Gamification in education has gained traction over the years, employing game design ideas to improve learning experiences. Integrating gaming components into educational environments, such as points, badges, and leaderboards, stimulates students by tapping into their natural motivation and boosting engagement. Immersive environments in video games are increasingly being used to teach complicated concepts and skills, enabling interactive and dynamic learning experiences.

According to research, gamification in education has a good impact. Deterding et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review of the literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of gamification in educational contexts. Their findings suggest that gamification elements, such as points, badges, and leaderboards, have a significant effect on student engagement and learning. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of defining gamification more precisely to facilitate its effective implementation in educational settings.

Immersive environments in video games have emerged as powerful tools for teaching complex concepts and skills in education. Gee (2020) explores the role of video games in enhancing learning experiences and promoting critical thinking. By immersing students in virtual worlds, educators can create dynamic and interactive learning environments that foster engagement and deeper understanding. Genshin Impact, an action RPG published in September 2020 by Chinese game developer miHoYo, has achieved enormous popularity for its breathtaking open-world design, interesting storyline, and vivid characters. The game's popularity may be seen in its rapid global success, with over 21 million downloads within a few days of its introduction and significant income generated through in-game purchases (Sensor Tower, 2020).

While Genshin Impact is largely an entertainment platform, it does have some instructional potential. The huge fantasy world of the game is inspired by real-world settings, offering players access to a variety of civilizations and environments. Its complicated element structure fosters cognitive skills by encouraging strategic thinking and problem-solving (Cohen, 2021). Furthermore, the character advancement system in the game involves resource management and decision-making, giving players the opportunity to acquire critical thinking skills (Finkel, 2021).

However, extreme gaming should be avoided because it can have harmful implications. Genshin Impact's educational potential stems from its capacity to immerse players in a visually stimulating world, providing opportunities for cultural immersion and cognitive skill development

METHODOLOGY

The research design for examining Genshin Impact as a learning tool for vocabulary acquisition and communication skills adopted a descriptive quantitative method. This method was chosen for its ability to provide a clear and comprehensive overview of participants' perceptions and experiences. Descriptive quantitative analysis allowed for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data, providing valuable insights into the phenomenon under investigation. The questionnaire utilized in the survey was adapted from previous studies by Azizah & Warni (2024) and Farhan (2022), ensuring the reliability and validity of the instrument. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), to gauge participants' responses accurately.

The survey comprised four sections containing a total of 46 questions. It was administered to a sample of 100 Malaysian tertiary-level students who met the research criteria, specifically those who had experience playing Genshin Impact. Utilizing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), the questionnaire aimed to accurately assess participants' responses. These 46 items were divided into the following sections: Section A focused on Background Information and included 3 questions, Section B addressed Familiarity with Genshin Impact with 4 questions, Section C delved into Vocabulary in Genshin Impact, and Section D explored the Chat Feature in Genshin Impact. The survey was distributed to 100 Malaysian university students, ensuring a diverse sample to represent various perspectives. By employing a descriptive quantitative method and utilizing a validated questionnaire adapted from previous studies, the research aimed to provide a robust analysis of the role of Genshin Impact in vocabulary acquisition and communication skill development.

RESULTS

Table I: Familiarity with Genshin Impact

ITEM	STATEMENT	LIKERT SCALE				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
B1	I play Genshin Impact frequently.	34	15	14	16	21
B2	I am familiar with a wide range of characters and their abilities in Genshin Impact.	40	17	12	11	20
B3	I actively participate in multiplayer/cooperative gameplay in Genshin Impact.	30	17	14	13	26
B4	I stay updated on Genshin Impact events, updates, and community discussions.	30	19	16	16	19

In Table I, the results of the familiarity section regarding participants' engagement with Genshin Impact are presented. The data indicates that a significant proportion of the participants are familiar with the game, with varying levels of involvement. Specifically, 34% of the participants reported playing Genshin Impact frequently, demonstrating a substantial interest in the game. Moreover, 40% of the participants stated that they are familiar with a wide range of characters and their abilities in Genshin Impact, indicating a deeper level of engagement and knowledge about the game's intricacies. Additionally, 30% of the participants actively participate in multiplayer or cooperative gameplay, highlighting their social interaction within the game environment. Furthermore, 30% of the participants stay updated on Genshin Impact events, updates, and community discussions, showcasing their ongoing interest and involvement in the game's community.

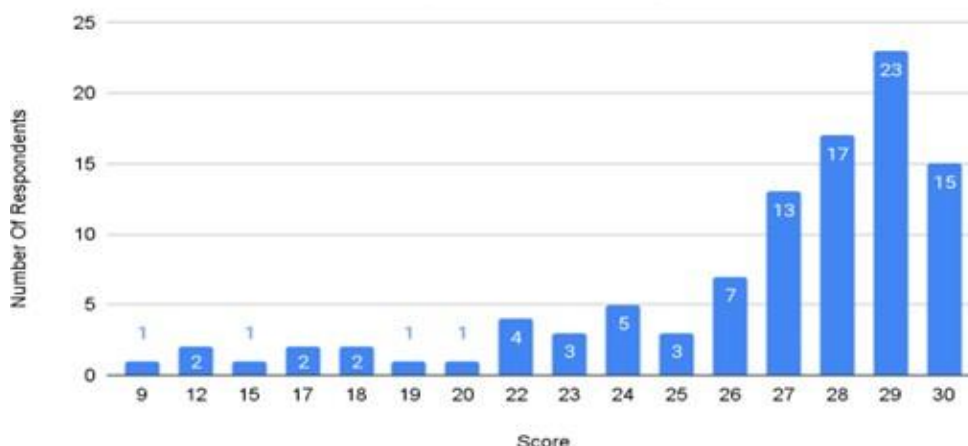


Fig. 2 Respondents' score in Genshin Impact Vocabulary Test

The findings derived from the vocabulary section of the study provide valuable insights into the performance of participants in vocabulary tests related to the game Genshin Impact. The data reveals varying levels of proficiency among participants in terms of their familiarity with game-specific vocabulary, as evidenced by their respective scores. Notably, the mode of the vocabulary section, indicating the most frequently occurring score, stands at 29, with 23 participants achieving this score. Moreover, the mean score of 26.35 signifies the average performance across all participants. The range of scores reflects a spectrum of achievement, with the lowest score recorded at 9 correct responses and the highest at 30 correct responses.

Table II: Chat Feature in Genshin Impact

ITEM	STATEMENT	LIKERT SCALE				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
D1	Learning English using the Genshin Impact chat feature increases my interest in learning.	35	16	29	11	9
D2	I am learning English by using the chat feature on Genshin Impact.	20	19	28	15	18
D3	Learning English through the chat feature allows me to communicate with more people, whether they are friends or strangers.	28	36	16	7	13
D4	Using the chat feature to learn English is an entertaining method of learning a foreign language.	31	32	18	8	11
D5	Using the chat feature makes me want to improve my speaking skill in English.	32	28	18	10	12
D6	Communicating in English with other people using the chat feature expands my vocabulary in the language.	29	36	14	11	10
D7	Learning English through the chat feature on Genshin Impact increases my attention to being good at English.	29	29	24	9	9
D8	Using the chat feature to learn English makes me feel less nervous communicating with others.	23	31	24	11	11
D9	Using the chat feature when playing Genshin Impact improves my communication skill in English.	35	24	20	10	11

According to the data presented in Table II, for item D1, 35% of participants strongly agreed that utilizing the Genshin Impact chat feature enhances their interest in learning English. Additionally, 16% agreed, 29% were neutral, 11% disagreed, and 9% strongly disagreed. For item D2, 20% strongly agreed, 19% agreed, 28% were neutral, 15% disagreed, and 18% strongly disagreed regarding learning English through the Genshin Impact chat feature.

Item D3 revealed that 28% strongly agreed, 36% agreed, 16% were neutral, 7% disagreed, and 13% strongly disagreed about using the chat feature to communicate in English with a wider audience. Similarly, item D4 showed that 31% strongly agreed, 32% agreed, 18% were neutral, 8% disagreed, and 11% strongly disagreed regarding the entertainment value of using the chat feature for learning English.

For item D5, 32% strongly agreed, 28% agreed, 14% were neutral, 10% disagreed, and 12% strongly disagreed

regarding the impact of the chat feature on their desire to improve English speaking skills. Item D6 indicated that 29% strongly agreed, 36% agreed, 14% were neutral, 11% disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed concerning the expansion of vocabulary through communicating in English using the chat feature.

Item D7 showed that 29% strongly agreed, 29% agreed, 24% were neutral, 9% disagreed, and 9% strongly disagreed about the effect of using the chat feature on increasing their focus on excelling in English. Regarding item D8, 23% strongly agreed, 31% agreed, 24% were neutral, 11% disagreed, and 11% strongly disagreed regarding feeling less nervous when communicating with others in English using the chat feature.

Lastly, item D9 revealed that 35% strongly agreed, 24% agreed, 20% were neutral, 10% disagreed, and 11% strongly disagreed regarding the improvement of communication skills in English through using the chat feature while playing Genshin Impact.

DISCUSSION

In the world of digital gaming, where immersive virtual worlds meet educational potential, Genshin Impact stands out as an example of a game that not only entertains but also teaches. MiHoYo created an open-world action RPG, which has captured millions of gamers worldwide since its release (MiHoYo, 2023). While its stunning visuals, fascinating tale, and novel gameplay mechanics are its main draws, Genshin Impact also provides an exceptional opportunity for vocabulary growth, particularly among Malaysian tertiary-level students.

The study of language acquisition within the immersive virtual world of Genshin Impact reveals interesting insights about the game's potential as a catalyst for vocabulary development and language learning. This phenomenon acquires momentum when evaluated through the lens of the Connectivism Theoretical Framework, which holds that learning thrives when people engage with their surroundings, particularly in digital areas (Hendricks, 2019). Within the context of Genshin Impact, players not only immerse themselves in its gorgeous sceneries and riveting gameplay, but they also face problems that require adaptation and learning as they navigate through a complex tapestry of jargon and terminology unique to the game's universe.

Section C of the study focuses on players' proficiency in the game's language, with the majority of respondents scoring well on a vocabulary exam tailored to Genshin Impact terminology. This proficiency is directly linked to their familiarity with the game's characters and abilities, as discussed in Section B. These findings highlight the dynamic nature of learning in the game, as players are constantly exposed to various language stimuli, forcing them to adapt in order to comprehend and use them successfully. This continuous method reflects the concepts of adaptation outlined in the Connectivism Theoretical Framework, in which learners actively engage with their surroundings and adapt to new challenges and knowledge (Nair & Matthew, 2019).

Furthermore, the study found a significant positive relationship between using the in-game chat feature in Genshin Impact to communicate in English and expanding one's vocabulary in the language. This finding emphasises the importance of social interaction inside the gaming environment in promoting language acquisition (Sumaiya et. al., 2022). Through real-time discussion with other players, users are exposed to a wide range of words, phrases, and expressions, increasing their vocabulary through social interaction. This component of the game corresponds to the concept of continuous learning in Connectivism, in which learners engage in continual interactions and collaborations to create knowledge and understanding.

The combination of these research findings emphasises the transformative power of video games like Genshin Impact as informal language learning tools. The game promotes active involvement, flexibility, and ongoing learning by immersing players in an engaging virtual world rich in linguistic challenges and social interactions (Pitarch, 2018). Players are not passive users of knowledge, but rather active participants in their own learning journey, constantly adapting to new content and social interactions in order to improve their vocabulary and language abilities.

Furthermore, the study's findings on the correlation between gameplay and language acquisition are consistent with broader discussions on the importance of digital environments in current education. As technology

continues to transform the educational environment, educators and researchers are beginning to recognise the potential of digital platforms, such as video games, to complement traditional teaching approaches and foster immersive, interactive learning experiences (Damaševičius & Sidekerskienė, 2024).

In essence, Genshin Impact's prowess as an educational tool intertwines seamlessly with its role as a source of entertainment, offering Malaysian tertiary-level students a stimulating avenue for vocabulary expansion and language learning within a captivating virtual universe. The rise of digital gaming as a platform for learning and social engagement has cleared the door for novel approaches to skill development, including communication abilities (Reinders, 2016). Within this context, Genshin Impact stands out as a prime example of a game that not only entertains but also promotes meaningful social interactions and language practice via its chat component, particularly in multiplayer mode. Respondents' conclusions about the chat feature's efficacy in enhancing their communication skills are consistent with the Connectivism Theoretical Framework's principles, which emphasise networked learning environments, cooperation, and social learning.

The chat function in Genshin Impact is a dynamic tool for facilitating communication among players, allowing them to exchange messages, coordinate strategy, and engage in social interactions inside the game environment (Azizah & Warni, 2024). This function allows users to practise and enhance their communication abilities in real-time conversations with other gamers. The majority of responders agree that the chat feature allows users to practise communication skills, demonstrating its effectiveness as a learning tool in the gaming setting.

Furthermore, the sense of anonymity and decreased pressure associated with speaking via the chat feature may help respondents feel less uncomfortable when interacting with people in English. For many players, the immersive aspect of the game creates a welcoming setting in which they can explore with the terminology they've learned through gameplay (Ding et.al., 2018). This is especially important for Malaysian tertiary-level students, who may face difficulties in practicing English communication skills in typical educational settings.

The relationship between respondents' positive experiences with the chat feature and the Connectivism Theoretical Framework variables of networked learning environments and collaboration demonstrates the interconnectedness of learning across digital gaming communities. Genshin Impact offers a rich and dynamic networked learning environment in which participants may collaborate, communicate, and learn from one other. The chat component allows players to build connections, share knowledge, and manage the game's problems jointly, generating a sense of communal learning and teamwork.

Furthermore, the social learning component of Genshin Impact goes beyond gameplay mechanics to include larger socio-cultural interactions within the gaming community. As participants interact with one another via the chat feature, they not only improve their communication skills but also learn about different cultural perspectives, linguistic differences, and social norms (Thurairasu, 2022). These encounters help to deepen one's understanding of language and communication in a global context, strengthening the social learning principles underlying the Connectivism Theoretical Framework (Zhou & Wei, 2024).

The ramifications of these findings go beyond gaming, implying that digital platforms such as Genshin Impact have the potential to be useful instruments for communication skill development, particularly among Malaysian university students. Using the inherent social and collaborative elements of digital gaming, educators may harness the potential of immersive virtual environments to improve language learning experiences and encourage meaningful communication skill development.

Finally, the positive feedback on the chat feature of Genshin Impact demonstrates its success in boosting player communication skills, which is consistent with the Connectivism Theoretical Framework's concepts. Players grow and perfect their English communication skills as they engage in networked learning environments, cooperate with other gamers, and participate in game-facilitated social interactions (Vathanalaoha, 2022). These findings underscore digital gaming's transformational potential as a platform for language learning and skill development, especially in Malaysian tertiary education.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study of Genshin Impact as an educational tool within the Connectivism Theoretical

Framework indicates its varied potential for language learning and skill development, notably among Malaysian tertiary-level students. Genshin Impact goes beyond typical gaming experiences by providing immersive gameplay, a rich virtual world, and dynamic social aspects that enable meaningful learning experiences based on collaboration, communication, and continual learning.

The association between high vocabulary test scores and familiarity with Genshin Impact demonstrates the game's usefulness in vocabulary acquisition, which is consistent with the connectivist framework's concepts of adaptability and continuous learning. By immersing players in a broad linguistic environment and introducing them to new vocabulary and terms, the game fosters adaptation and encourages continuous language exploration and acquisition.

Similarly, positive feedback on the chat feature in Genshin Impact confirms its importance in strengthening communication skills among players. The chat component encourages language practice by allowing for real-time contact and collaboration within a friendly virtual community, as well as lowering obstacles to English communication. This finding is consistent with the connectivist emphasis on networked learning environments and social participation, showing the transformative power of digital gaming as a platform for language learning and skill development.

Overall, the findings indicate that Genshin Impact can be a useful supplement to standard language learning methods, providing a dynamic and engaging environment for vocabulary acquisition and communication skill development. However, it is critical to recognise that, while Genshin Impact has potential as an educational tool, it must be carefully integrated into a broader curriculum customised to the specific needs and aims of Malaysian tertiary-level students.

As educators and students alike investigate the educational potential of digital gaming, Genshin Impact serves as a shining example of how technology can improve language learning experiences, foster collaboration and social learning, and empower students to thrive in an interconnected world. By embracing innovative educational approaches and using the potential of immersive virtual environments, we can open up new pathways to language competence and skill development, ensuring that learners have the tools they need to flourish in an increasingly globalised world.

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