

Introduction

Language is a very important tool for human communication as it serves as a bridge to connect individuals, groups and cultures. Mutual comprehension of linguistic rules, cultural backgrounds and social norms is usually needed in order to make a communication to be successful. At first, people were spreading out language through word of mouth, and then gradually evolved to various media, such as books, music, movies and more recently video games. A mix of visual and verbal elements in media are not limited solely to convey information, but they can also reflect new linguistic practices that are adopted by certain communities, thus contributing an important role in influencing and spreading language (Kress & Van Leuween, 2001).

In today's globalized world, video games can be considered as a valid tool that contributes to the important roles of spreading and influencing language use, especially among the younger generation. Digital games can increase language learners' willingness to engage in communication by providing opportunities for language practice and improvement (Reinders & Wattana, 2014). One game that offers such opportunity is Grand Theft Auto IV (2008). Grand Theft Auto 4 is chosen as a tool for the research because the video game is packed with conversation and interaction between the characters that reflect real-life language use. In addition, the game provides subtitles to read along with the spoken dialogues, making it useful to help learners to understand the spoken language better.

This study focuses on the phonological aspect enacted by a Jamaican character, Little Jacob, in Grand Theft Auto IV (2008), as the game features characters from many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, making the dialogues simultaneously rich in cultural meanings. "Little" Jacob Hughes is chosen because the character shows more significance in the story compared to other side characters from the same community as the character appears in the cutscenes and missions of the game many times. Little Jacob can have a conversation with the main character in different contexts, such as during the main missions or during any side activities

that player can choose freely anytime during the free roam activity. The focus on phonological features was due to the importance of this aspect in communication, as it determines one's intelligibility, and the focus on the Jamaican character is attributed to the prominence of the Jamaican communities in Liberty City, the setting of the game.

In Liberty City, the Jamaicans speak two variants of English: Jamaican Patois, a Caribbean creole influenced by West African languages, and Rastafarian English, with the latter being the focus of this research. Rastafarian English is chosen for the research because it is one of the earliest English variants to have existed and the language has certain sounds or sound pattern that may hold cultural or symbolic importance. Specifically, this study addresses two research questions:

1. What are the phonological features of Rastafarian English that is used by Little Jacob in Grand Theft Auto IV?
2. Based on the above phonological features, what cultural meanings can be inferred from the acts of Little Jacob as a Jamaican living in Liberty City?