

Univerzita Karlova
Pedagogická fakulta

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

2017

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Expanding Vocabulary with the Help of Computer Games

Rozšiřování slovní zásoby skrze počítačové hry

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Studijní obor: Angličtina a matematika se zaměřením na vzdělávání

2017

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v Praze dne

.....

podpis

Ráda bych zde poděkovala svému vedoucímu bakalářské práce Mgr. Jakubu Ženíškovi za odborné vedení této bakalářské práce.

ANOTACE

Cílem této práce je poukázat na spojení mezi hraním počítačových her a rozšiřováním slovní zásoby v angličtině. Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na již existující výzkum moderních metod vyučování. Také představí počítačové hry coby možnou platformu výuky jazyka. Je zde zmíněno, co tyto dva fenomény může spojovat. Také uvádí konkrétní počítačové hry a specifické příklady toho, jak si můžou hráči těchto her zlepšit slovní zásobu. V závěru shrnu svá zjištění.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

počítačové hry, slovní zásoba, získávání znalostí v angličtině, učení se, edutainment

ANNOTATION

The aim of this thesis is to point out the connection between playing computer games and expanding vocabulary in English. This thesis will show the summary of existing research of modern teaching methods. It will introduce computer games as a potential platform for second-language acquisition. It will also be mentioned what might link these two phenomena together. It will also present concrete computer games and give examples as to which concrete contributions they might provide in the field of vocabulary expansion. The findings will be summarized in the conclusion.

KEYWORDS

computer games, vocabulary, English acquisition, learning, edutainment

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1 Introduction

Playing video games has become a regular part of many young people's lifestyle. An increasing amount of spare time is spent exactly on this hobby. In my experience, children usually justify playing video games to their parents. One such regular justification is their alleged improvement in English fostered by gaming. As anecdotal evidence, I know many people who claim playing video games enhanced their grasp of English, particularly by enriching their vocabulary. I have been playing computer games myself and my impression is that gamers generally have a rather advanced vocabulary in certain areas. Therefore, the largest part of my motivation comes from the curiosity about the science behind learning from this sort of entertainment, or rather edutainment.

There are many ways to learn from computer games. I consider the exposure to natural, authentic language as the most significant part of playing video games in relation to second language acquisition. The language acquisition is not fostered solely by playing computer games, but also by researching games online, looking for instructions and communicating with other gamers.

There has been substantial research on the effect of multi-media learning but the field of learning through computer games is still quite new. The primary research regarding computer games deals with its disadvantages. This resulted in a wave of research dealing with the advantages of computer games, such as attention span, reaction time and so on. Most of the research that involves language learning is in the field of serious edutainment games, i.e. games explicitly designed to teach pupils. The number of studies considering vocabulary acquisition through computer games has been increasing substantially.

This thesis deals with possible ways in which vocabulary can be acquired while playing computer games. It also gives examples of what such vocabulary might look like. It aims to establish certain principles that would support the hypothesis that playing computer games can help build up the gamer's vocabulary. It does not claim that people can learn English simply by playing computer games, nor does it insist that all principles are valid for everyone. The second chapter explains basic pertinent terms such as game, computer game or genre. The third chapter presents modern teaching methods and a link between using these and playing computer games is established. The fourth chapter seeks to outline the learning principles which apply to all or most computer games. These are

motivation, learning from multi-media sources and being a part of a community. In this chapter there are also some words and mostly abbreviations used by all or most gamers regardless of the specific genre they play. In the fifth chapter, I introduce most frequently played genres and several specific games and attempt to show where the potential for learning lies within these specific games. The predominant emphasis is put on League of Legends and World of Warcraft, but Hearthstone, Minecraft and Counter Strike are also described in some detail.

The hypothesis is that playing computer games in English can have a positive effect on building and expanding vocabulary of the participant.

To illustrate the content of the thesis I offer a Word Cloud (Fig. 0).



Fig. 0. Word Cloud

2 Game

2.1 Definition

Everyone can understand what a game is by intuition but there is no one fixed definition. Game is a very broad term that includes sport games, board games, computer games and many others. For the purposes of his thesis we will use Whitton's definition which characterizes game as:

- “a challenging activity
- structured with rules, goals, progression and rewards
- separated from real world
- undertaken with a spirit of play” (5).

This definition is sufficient for this thesis.

2.2 Game in Education

As a follow up to his taxonomy, Whitton claims that “[t]here are many examples of the use of games for learning in formal education” (12). Games combine the principles of fun and active learning, which makes them appealing to students.

When looking at the first 14 or 16 years of life there are two main phases. In the first seven to nine years, children have a strong ability to imitate. In the following seven years the ability and tendency to imitate decreases and instead new abilities of imagination and memory slowly take its place. To gain a positive relationship with the language that is being taught, a pupil should experience learning full of fun, games and positive emotions (Dvořáková 28).

The ability to imitate is important in learning a foreign language. Children repeat after their teacher; they learn intonation and pronunciation by imitation. Later in life, memory becomes a vital part of learning a new language, because of the expansion of the vocabulary necessary for having a fluent conversation. Pupils can either learn new words by drilling – repeating the words at home or they can learn them by playing a game, sometimes even without noticing it. Pupils learn still by imitating but they also engage

their new ability to memorize by using mnemonic devices and drilling. Games offer the possibility to “anchor the vocabulary in context” (Dvořáková 27) and they also allow a great amount of repetition of new lexicon to provide practise without it becoming boring. All in all, it is widely assumed that an engaging game will make learners focus, which is sometimes hard to do in regular classes.

2.2.1 Edutainment

Edutainment is quite a new phenomenon. “Since the early 1990s interest has surged in developing edutainment software, namely applications that possess the allure of electronic games while achieving educational goals” (Okan 255). It typically relies on visual materials and stresses the importance of entertainment value when acquiring information.

Okan draws attention to the fact that information cannot be acquired without “work and serious study” (255). This hints at the fact that comprehensive knowledge of a problem can be attained only by serious study. However, it does not state that some parts of the target knowledge cannot be acquired through play.

Computer games, as represented in this thesis, can be considered edutainment to a certain extent. However, while edutainment games are typically designed in a way that fosters learning, the process of playing commercial computer games may only stimulate language acquisition as a side-effect, as standard commercial computer games are not tailored for that purpose. The principles that enable learning from commercial computer games are represented in Chapters three and four. Even though these principles permitting learning are not the focus of game designer, they are present. Edutainment is therefore used as a contrastive rather than correlative term within this thesis. While any playful activity that perceptibly stimulates learning fits the general definition of edutainment, the term typically denotes activities that are demonstrably tailored for the purposes of education via entertainment, hence the composite term “edu-tainment.”

2.3 Computer Games

To define a computer game, only slight addition has to be given to the previously delivered summary definition of games. A computer game is simply a game that is played via computer as opposed to video games that can be played on a number of mediums. There is some overlap but games that can be only played at on console will not be addressed within the scope of this thesis. The following text will focus on computer games.

2.3.1 The Development of Computer Games

Computer games are now a global phenomenon. But it was not always so. The computer was originally meant only for the facilitation of scientific work. The first computer game was devised by William Higinbotham in the year 1958 and it could be played at the “annual visitors’ day organized by the Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton” (Dalakov). He wanted to entertain the guests and show them that science was there for the public benefit. It was a very simple game called Tennis for Two. “Players served and volleyed using controllers with buttons and rotating dials to control the angle of an invisible tennis racquet’s swing” (Dalakov). As computers were not the standard equipment of a household, the first video games were played at the arcades. These were places where children would go after school hours and play such games as Pac Man or King Kong. With the boom of personal computers, games were designed so that they could be played at home.

The development of computer games relates to the availability of the internet, whose original purpose was for the communication in the army. When personal computers were introduced to the market, the internet still had not. Therefore, the first computer games were single-player games. A classic example would be the well-known game Solitaire. With the development of the internet, multi-player games became not only possible, but also popular.

Through this development, computer games have become the thriving industry we know it to be today.

2.3.2 Genres Today

Most games that come out today are actually a mix of genres, but one normally tends to be more dominant, or preponderant, than the others. Which one is more dominant is not always clear as there are disputes over establishing a particular leading genre on many game forums. A research from the year 2013 (Fig. 1) shows the most frequently played

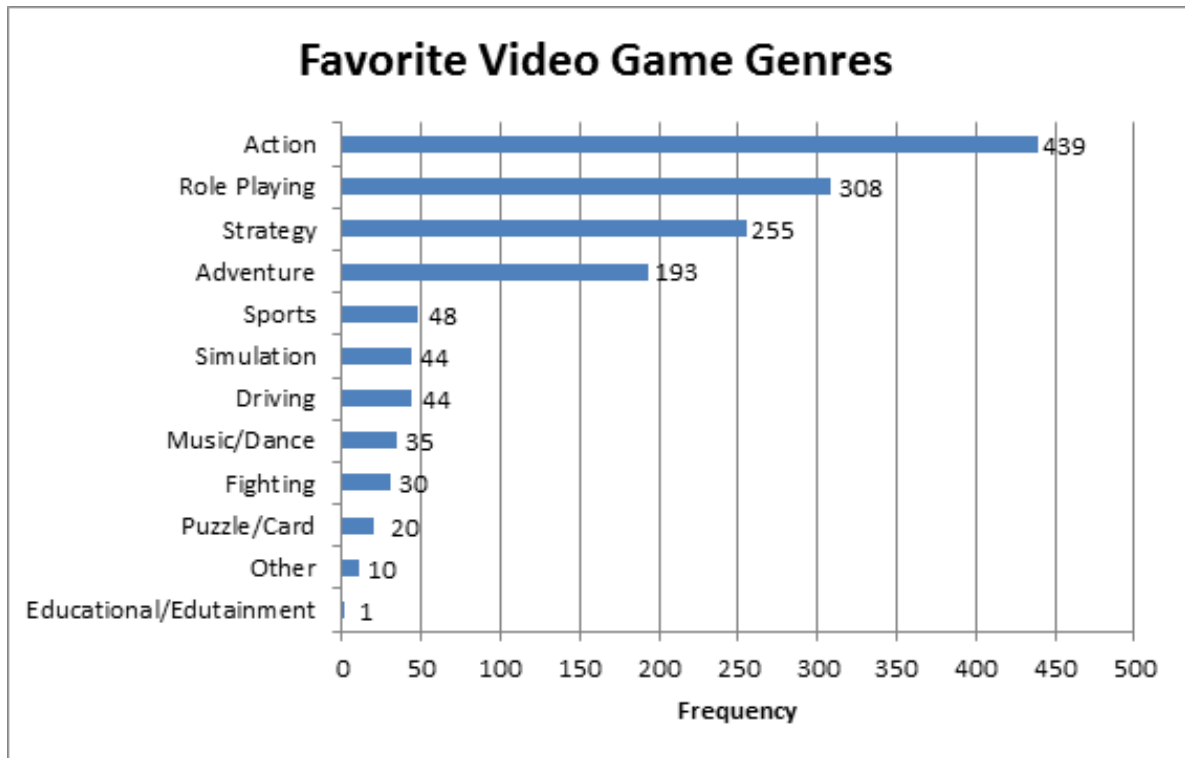


Fig. 1 Most played PC games

genres. It presents a quite good insight into the problem; however there are some genres (e.g. Shooter and Multi-player Online Battle Arena) covered in the Action genre but for the purposes of this work, they should be distinguished. The research is also a little outdated.

The second graph (Fig. 2) reflects research done two years earlier and presents the most frequently played games. In the second place is Counter Strike: Global Offensive, which is a part of the shooter genre, which is not distinct in the first graph (Fig. 1). The game that was ranked first (Fig. 2) by a large margin was League of Legends, which belongs to Multi-player Online Battle Arena, which is also a genre not represented in the first research (Fig. 1).

In neither research is there a distinction by age. Several genres are played by people regardless of age, but the most frequently played games might differ in each category.

There are many reasons for that, an example would be that younger players would not own and play a number of expensive games, for example Fallout 4; these games would be played mostly by people that already have a job and consider gaming their hobby.

Each genre has a slightly different potential to provide a study ground for foreign language acquisition. The differences will be discussed in Chapter 5. However, as was mentioned before, modern games are a mixture of genres, therefore the contributions overlap to a large degree and the biggest distinction is just the change of vocabulary used in a game depending on the specific content. That is the reason for discussing individual games and not only genres.

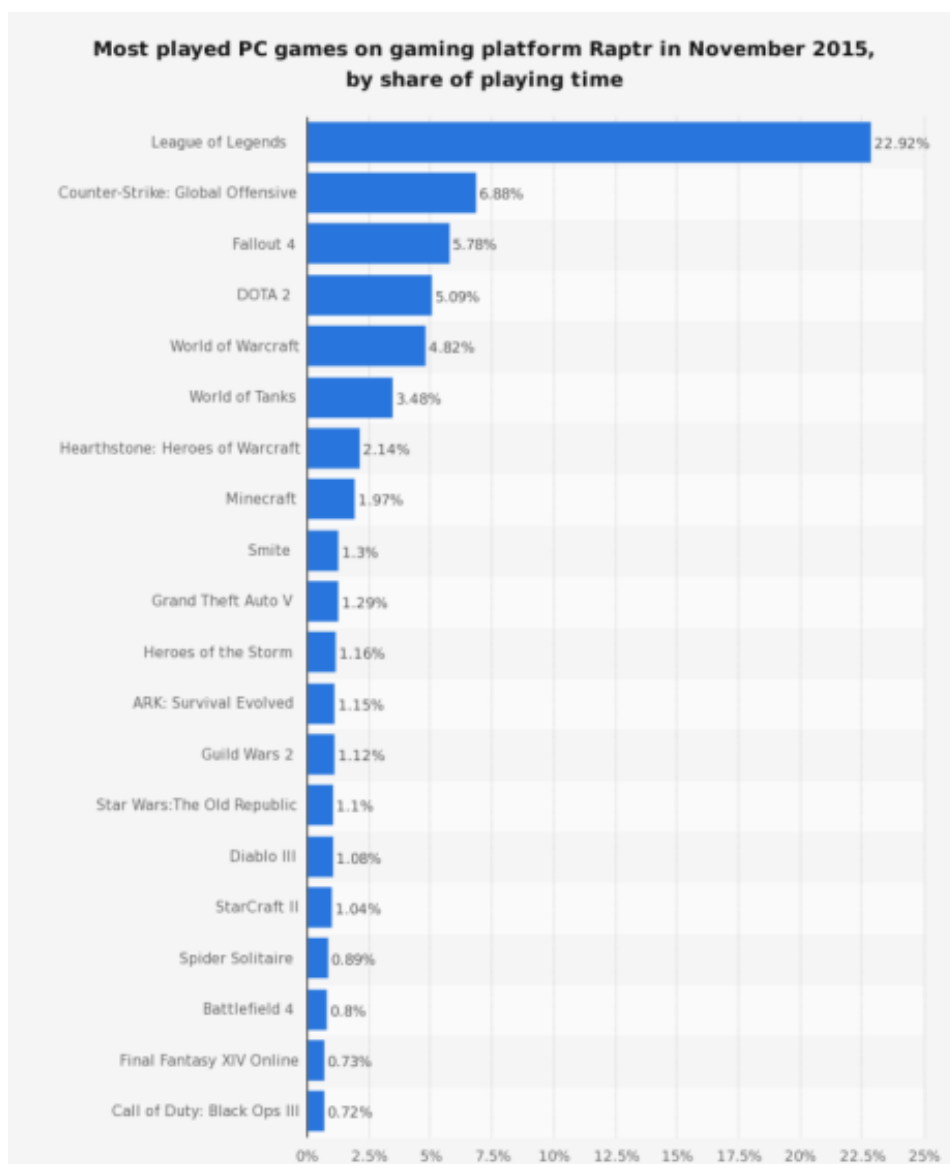


Fig. 2 Favorite Video Game Genres

3 Modern Teaching Methods and How They Relate to Gaming

3.1 Direct Method

The direct method is a current trend in education. The best known representative is the communication method described below. The opposite is the indirect method which is considered outdated and is best known as the grammar-translation method. “The absence of translation and theory is characteristic of direct method” (Choděra 95, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová). However, the absence of translation is not quite complete, because pupils, especially in their “first phase of semantic interpretation” translate silently in their mind (Choděra 95).

Since the primary language of computer games is English, children are exposed to English, usually only with the help of pictorials, without any sort of translation, as they have to guess an unknown word based on a picture or context. This describes the basic principles of the direct method. In the classroom, learners might receive additional clues from their teacher. However, even though the direct method does not promote the use of dictionary, it does not forbid it and the absence of more clues in a game can be compensated by the use of dictionary on the part of an inquisitive child eager to explore the lore of the game.

“Direct methods are often interpreted as an analogy of a child learning his or her mother tongue” (Choděra 95, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová). There are of course differences; the most obvious one would be that children do not go to school to learn the basics of their mother tongue; they do not take notes and revise at home. In other words the “learning is not formal and is incidental” (Choděra 95, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová).

Computer games have similar features as the direct method outlined above. Furthermore, the learning environment of such games is informal and the learning is spontaneous.

That being said, there are significant dissimilarities between acquiring their mother tongue and learning a second language by playing computer games. An important one is the physical absence of another person, because imitation is also influenced by gestures

and reading lips. Another important difference is the limited vocabulary that usually focuses only on the subject matter of the game. Finally, even though there is the motivation to use the language to be able to communicate with other people playing the game (not necessarily only teammates), there is not such strong motivation as there is to use the mother tongue, where the support of parents or guardians plays a vital part. The motivation behind learning a first language is fully subconscious and it is motivated by acquiring primary means of communication (intrinsic motivation), while when learning a second language, the motivation is not as pressing (extrinsic motivation).

3.1.1 Communication Method

The communication method is the most prominent representative of the direct method and therefore is nowadays most commonly used in schools, language courses and other institutions where learning a foreign language takes place.

“Communication method resides in the following principles:

1. respecting the mother tongue
2. oral foundation
3. the priority of speaking over language theory
4. the development of language awareness
5. the development of speech habits
6. the priority of hearing over sight
7. the unity of the language and extra-linguistic facts
8. complexity” (Choděra 121-122, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová).

In regard to computer games, most of these principles are satisfied but some may be met only partially or not at all. There are some strong similarities when learning a foreign language by playing computer games and by using the modern communication method.

Respecting the mother tongue

The foreign language should not be taught at the cost of the mother tongue. In computer games, it is standard to use the English language; it does not however require

abandoning the mother tongue completely. When talking about the game with other players who speak the same first language, it is regular to speak in the native language.

Since some words were used through the game without the benefit of a translation, they might understand the semantics but be unaware of the translation; possibly, it might not yet exist. This results in borrowing and creating tentative neologisms that somewhat resemble the English ones but have been altered in form and sound (taking Czech as an example, frequently used word within a game in to invite a player, which has been adapted into the Czech language as “invitnout”); possibly the usage of conjugation or declension. This might be considered to be on account of the mother tongue. But it also gives the learner the ability to recognise these words in the English original and understand team communication better.

Oral foundation

Speaking plays an important role in communication. The term oral does not only include the inherent part of communication – speaking, but also the ability to understand the other participants of a conversation.

In computer games, listening is a virtually ubiquitous activity because the characters talk. But there is also the option in most games nowadays to actually speak to teammates, which provides the player with both parts of the conversation.

The priority of speaking over language theory

An intuitive argument can be made that when a pupil learns too much theoretical grammar, they will have trouble speaking because it will take them very long to double-check their utterance so that they feel there are no mistakes. For a beginner it is important to start speaking even when there are mistakes. The idea is that as they proceed, they will learn more theory and stop making mistakes.

When playing a game, the speaking comes usually at a point when it is urgent to deliver some information, therefore it might not be correct, but it will be spoken with confidence. The reason for that is that what matters to players is that they get the message across and that it is understood. This statement is true for some computer games more than

other. In Counter Strike what matters is the communication and not the mistakes, in World of Warcraft, speed is not essential so mistakes are corrected by other players, and in League of Legends grammatical mistakes and misspellings are mocked by teammates. However in all these games a typical player would rather convey the message than lose the game.

The development of language awareness

The Association for Language Awareness defines language awareness “as explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use”. It is important to know when and where to use what words.

Games do not provide comprehensive knowledge on when to use what register but it grants insight into informal register when chatting within a game and also into what words go together in a certain topic depending on the subject matter of the game, for example in Hearthstone the character says “Not quite what was planned”. When chatting with other players, informal register is typically being used.

The development of speech habits

A speech habit can be defined as a development wherein an individual has a word they overuse or a word they say in a certain situation. Every person has their own and unique speaking habits. It is important to help learners develop these when learning a new language so that they do not acquire poor speech habits with mistakes.

A computer game works with speech habits on two principles. One is quite positive: the game provides the player with a recorded audio by a native speaker. These usually do not contain mistakes. These phrases are often repeated throughout the game and so the gamers internalize sample sentences or chunks of speech. In these sample sentences, they can change words and get new statements that are also correct.

On the other hand, the characters are often intentionally made to be linguistically inaccurate. The vocabulary will be very informal, words shortened and the grammar quite poor to make the character sound more authentic. For example a pirate would not speak in

BBC English. Game developers also incorporate different accents, for example a Russian or French accent, which does not necessarily help in acquiring near-native speech habits.

Other speech habits that arise from playing computer games are the exchanges among the players themselves. The players often feel the need to express themselves very quickly, sometimes at the cost of grammatical accuracy. While speaking with a degree of fluency is better than being hindered by grammatical accuracy, particularly for beginners, players who are able to say a sentence correctly might still choose to leave out articles and only use present simple even when it is not possible to speak faster. Unfortunately, if players speak in such a manner often, they could develop the need to speak in the same way in other situations.

Some game communities look down upon those who cannot write and speak in English properly, which is an additional motivational impetus towards trying to write the best they can. These communities (mostly League of Legends) also provide feedback when somebody makes a mistake, thus helping to improve their speech habits.

The balance of auditory and visual input

As was mentioned above, listening is a vital part of playing computer games. It also provides much visual stimuli and text. When listening is taking place there might be the option to turn on subtitles, either in English or another language. Computer games generally do not emphasise auditory over visual input, but rather give them the same value.

The unity of the language and extra-linguistic clues

Extra linguistic clues are speech fragments expressed with attitude, intonation and body language.

Characters in computer games always speak in accordance with the extra-linguistic clues, when they are asking question they use the proper intonation and with nowadays' graphics even their facial expressions match what they are saying. These aspects can provide the gamer with clues as to what they are saying if an unfamiliar word is used. Furthermore, characters will speak as they would in a movie, so a pirate will speak and

have the attitude of a pirate and a maid will use approximated medieval English and behave in such manner. In this principle computer games are very accurate.

Complexity

Language should be learned as a whole and in context. In computer games, as was established, there is enough vocabulary, speaking, writing and listening. What is missing is grammar. It is partly compensated by sample sentences provided by catch-phrases that gamers can adapt to their needs when communicating, and the feedback from teammates when making a mistake.

3.1.2 Audiolingual Method

Audiolingual method only operates in the target language just as the direct method, but unlike the direct method, it focuses on grammar. It does not explain grammar in the native language. “Set phrases are memorised with a focus on intonation. Vocabulary is thought in context. Audio-visual aids are used” (Taylor).

In computer games, lexis is learned in context with the help of guessing the meaning through visual elements.

Phrases

As James Nattinger points out, “[v]ocabulary is stored redundantly, not only as individual morphemes, but also as parts of phrases, or even longer memorized chunks of speech, and that is oftentimes retrieved from memory as there preassembled chunks. This prefabricated speech has both the advantage of more efficient retrieval [...]” (63).

There are many types of phrases in computer games and they are used plentifully. Some phrases give helpful advice (in *Deadpool* when unable to eliminate an enemy, the character suggests you should visit a store and purchase a stronger gun) and some inform the player that the action they are about to take is not possible within the game (in *Tomb Rider* when attempting to open a door, you get the retort “The door is locked”). There are

also catch-phrases of characters that are computer controlled, representing teammates, enemies or the player himself or herself.

With remembering all of these, gamers may acquire a rich stock of set phrases. The vocabulary is set in context but many of these catch-phrases might be clichés that they are able to use in other situations. In many cases, these catch-phrases can also become a part of a normal conversation by simply substituting some words (e. g. Hearthstone's "I am running out of time" might become I am running out of patience or money in a conversation).

3.1.3 Audio-visual Method

This method is based on the assumption that learning "is more effective if spoken form precedes written form" (Ekapt). The lesson has three parts. First, there is a "filmstrip and tape-presentation," afterwards the material is explained by the teacher and finally the dialogue is repeated several times to be memorized (Ekapt). It works on similar principles as Audio-lingual method, but it promotes the usage of videos which form an important part of computer games. Dialogues in computer games are often heard more than once. By multiple repetitions, these conversations are memorised by gamers.

3.1.4 Reading Method

This method suggests that students should be provided with a text that features one new word for every fifty they recognize (Choděra 95). In fact, Nattinger suggests that "Guessing vocabulary from context is the most frequent way we discover the meaning of new words" (67). Should students figure something out on their own, it has a better chance of remaining in their memory. As Carter says, "The learner must be allowed to be vague about meaning at first, precision will come later" (45). First the children will make an assumption as to what the semantic meaning might be, based on clues they have. In computer games these clues may include the subject matter of the game, the context, audio recording (for example the word is cat and the gamer hears a meow), a picture or a video. It may seem that guessing a word in a computer game is somewhat easier, but new words

come up in games (at least in the beginning) much more often and it is important not to dissuade the child from trying to understand.

3.1.5 Task-Based Learning

This method is most commonly used in such subjects as math or physics, because it is easily implemented. Students receive factual information, a problem, but not the answer, and have to devise a suitable solution. Its adaptation in language is explained by Richard Frost, who claims that in a lesson using the task-based approach “the teacher doesn’t pre-determine what language will be studied,” with the lesson being “based around the completion of a central task and the language studied is determined by what happens as the students complete it”. So the students get a task (i.e. to devise a shopping list for a wedding ceremony, plan a trip to the mountains, etc.) and they have to fulfil that task in the target language.

Discovery Method

Discovery method is a specific use of the task-based learning. The learners are looking for solutions by experiment, manipulating with their environment or asking appropriate questions. “Practise in discovering for oneself teaches one to acquire information in a way that makes that information more readily viable in problem solving” (Bruner 26).

In many computer games, there are passages involved in which the player is required to solve a problem. “There is a wide variety of types of puzzles used in digital games, including: cryptic, lateral thinking, logic, memory, musical, numeric, riddles, spatial, tactile, verbal, and visual” (Whitton 32). Some of these require using English or thinking in English to move to another stage in the game.

Also, guessing important words that are needed to be understood in the game from context might also be considered using of the discovery method. If the player does not leave the game interface to consult a dictionary, the word will be guessed based on the clues provided by the game, such as pictures, audio, context, and therefore remembered.

3.2 Situational Sets

According to James Nattinger “[s]ituational sets are cohesive chains of lexical relationship in discourse. These are groups of words that are associated because of the subject of the text, its purpose or its construction. They are words related to a particular situation” (65). This is a principle used by many student books. The units are usually thematically ordered and so the vocabulary is focused on a particular topic. That is because “[w]ords are stored in a network of associations” (Nattinger 62). Some games only concentrate on one topic and most games have one central topic, even if there are others as well. Certain vocabulary is encountered at certain places, if the player approaches a vendor that sells cloths, the vocabulary will be concentrated around this topic.

Even vocabulary with no clear associations will be connected with playing the game and with this connection, it should be easier to recall.

4 General Learning from Computer Games

4.1 Motivation

Motivation is a key element in learning a foreign language. “We attempt to reach our goal proportionately to our motivation” (Howard 164). In this sense, motivation can be both helpful and harmful. “Motivation of a pupil can be positive, neutral or negative (Chovancová 10, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová). There are two basic types of motivation – intrinsic and extrinsic.

Intrinsic motivation is the result of wants and interests of a person. If the learners see that the result is worth the effort, they will learn better. This will especially work if they have a motive to learn; in the case of a foreign language – they might want to travel and socialize with people of other cultures, in the context of computer games, the motive might be that they want to understand the story and improve their ability to communicate with their teammates. This shows that computer games are not only the tool in bettering vocabulary but also provide motivation for pupils to pay more attention in language classes. In fact, gaming can spark interest in learning new languages.

Extrinsic motivation does not rely on the students’ spontaneous motivational boost like the first type. This sort of motivation generally comes from what parents tell their children to do, the grade the pupils receive and the prospect of punishment or reward. It is still functional in combating procrastination, although if there is intrinsic motivation, procrastination might not even occur.

Nicola Whitton suggests that “[g]ames are intrinsically motivating for many players; people will take part voluntarily for no other reason than to play the game” (69). Whitton describes four types of players according to their play style; each play style has a different motivation to play the game. These styles can drift depending on the mood but a player has a dominant style. Achievers play to accomplish the game goal. Explorers want to discover as much of the virtual reality as possible. Killers are “people who use the game to cause distress to other players”. Most important in the context of computer games are Socialisers, namely gamers who play to socialize, implying communication with other players, and to role play, meaning they care about the story and want to understand it. (74)

“Reading fulfils a motivational function – curiosity and a thrilling story motivate pupils to other activities” (Besedová 42, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová). Some genres of computer games fulfil the same function, especially Role Playing Games. “[...] a compelling ongoing story with an element of mystery can help stimulate curiosity and keep students engaged” (Whitton 76). In Role Playing games, a story is a relevant part of the experience. Most gamers would not choose to play this genre if they did not want to understand the story since the plot makes up a large part of the game. This hints that gamers who choose RPG are motivated to understand and will try to do so.

If the game they chose has a thrilling story which holds their interest, they will likely search for other games that could provide the same, thus engaging in more stories and thus expanding their vocabulary. “Crucial influence on comprehension of the text has its impressiveness; pupils paradoxically will understand a more difficult text that interests them than an easier text that does not speak to them” (Dvořáková 37, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová). So it is better when a learner plays an RPG with complex or specialized vocabulary if they want to understand it, since they are invested in the story, than if they read an article adequate for their level of English that they do not care about.

Whitton suggests that the intrinsic motivation for some learners in games is fun (120). He supports this claim by providing a study that was conducted in China. For the purposes of this study was constructed a game, the genre was MMORPG (massive multi-player role playing game) and it was especially designed to teach English to primary school children. The results showed that the parts of the game that were designed to foster learning were less effective than “battles” which were designed for fun. He suggests the reason was that the battles provided “instant gratification” and did not need as much effort as the “situated scenarios and problem solving quests” did (Whitton 61). This shows that learning often occurs in situations which ostensibly provide less potential for learning, but it is more entertaining than other instances. Since the activity is satisfying, the chances of repeating the activity are higher and repetition is the key to mastering a skill, speaking a foreign language included.

4.1.1 Pro-Gaming

An immense source of motivation for a particular group of players is the prospect of pro-gaming. Certain games offer the possibility to take part in a tournament to win a substantial amount of money. Dota 2, a Multi-player Online Battle Arena game has bestowed an incredible amount of 20,770,640 dollars on 80 of the best pro-gamers in The International Tournament of 2016 (E-Sports Earnings).

In addition to the financial price, pro-gamers are also regarded as celebrities within the gamer community. With winning a tournament or being a particularly valuable player on the team comes prestige.

Professional gaming presents an option to make gaming a career; thus earning money becomes entertaining and work becomes a hobby.



Fig. 3 LCS pro-gaming League of Legends 2016

4.1.2 Emotions

As Martin Kregel posits, “[o]ur brain consists of three parts. The evolutionary eldest part is in charge of the basic bodily functions. The next part (the middle brain) controls emotions. And the evolutionary youngest part governs all conscious processes such as thinking, deciding and learning” (Kregel 74, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová). The elder the part of the brain, the more priority is assigned to it. Since the

part that manages emotions is older than the part that learns consciously, emotions have higher priority. If bad emotions are associated with language learning, the person is less likely to learn than a person with a positive relationship to that language.

Emotions decide what is and is not important to a person and according to that, they also take part in deciding if and where and information will be stored. “Emotions are classified into activating emotions (happiness from learning, fear, anger) and deactivating emotions (feeling secure, boredom, hopelessness)” (Janíková 92, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová). When playing a game activating emotions are usually represented. A game as a voluntary option for spending free time brings happiness. The progress a gamer makes when learning something is evident in-game, which brings happiness from learning. Fear can be induced either by horror games or by the possibility of being looked down upon when not speaking in a sufficient level of English to one’s teammates. But the need to convey the message prevails and fear acts as a motive to write the best message possible at the given level of English. Anger is evoked by the part of the game when there is a difficulty that is too hard to overcome and the player keeps dying. More significant in the context of learning English from computer games is when anger arises in the connection to a teammate making a mistake, possibly a repeated one. In such a case, the anger is a motivation for conversation.

Deactivating emotions appear in games too, but not in an amount that is so significant. Feeling secure only comes after truly mastering a game, which rarely happens, and if it does, the player might choose to start playing something more rewarding. Boredom is present when an easy task must be accomplished in order for the game to continue. This may provoke boredom, but it is also possible that it will inspire anger, which is an activating emotion. Hopelessness is another companion of anger and it might become a part of the gaming experience when encountering seemingly impossible tasks. Once again, gamers might choose to leave the task unfinished and choose a more rewarding game. This is not an exhaustive description of all the possible emotions, and the reasons behind them, a player might experience while playing. It merely provides some insight into the matter to illustrate that activating emotions would often prevail over deactivating ones.

Martin Krengel comments on the importance of positive attitude as “[t]he premise for the processing of information is a positive attitude [...] Positive emotions amplify the desire to learn” (74, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová). The purpose of games in general is to create an environment filled with positive feelings. So it is apparent that situations created by playing games establish a beneficial environment for learning in most instances. Positive emotions will motivate pupils to continue in their studies. If the first exposure to a foreign language is positive, the better the chances are of future active involvement in languages classes.

In language classrooms, learners often work with texts and exercises that do not correspond to their needs and are confronted with topics distant from their reality. Mindless repetition of the same sort of exercises which they do not find helpful will result in a drop of interest. Task will be completed passively and without emotions and, as was mentioned above, positive attitude is advantageous when trying to remember something (Janíková 79).

4.2 Memory

Memory is dependent on many factors, arguably the most important of which is repetition. “Human learning is a slow process that can happen over months and years rather than hours and days. The necessary ingredients are time, goal-orientation, supportive feedback, accumulated successful practise and frequent review” (Hattie and Yates 113). Computer games, depending on the genre, are usually played for longer periods of time and repeatedly, granting the need for repetition. Even in the games themselves appears the repetition of certain catch-phrases and names of items that reoccur. According to Krengel, to improve retention of an information as best as possible, we should, “repeat any new learned items in a few minutes, in an hour, in a day, in a week, in a month and in half a year” (186). This rule does not need to be kept precisely, but it provides a guideline on how much repetition is encouraged to remember a particular piece of information. When playing a computer game, catch-phrases will be repeated in a few minutes and given that the game is played for an hour, the repetition will come again. As most games are played regularly, it is safe to assume that the next repetition will come in a day or at most in a few

following days. The same is true of the other time repetitions, implying that computer games provide the ideal amount of repetition (or more) but not less than is advised for effective retention.

Language does not need to be learned by drilling, since spontaneous and organic language acquisition is also possible and happens unconsciously. As psychologist Pavel Říčan points out, “[s]toring information into memory happens spontaneously” (72, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová). People remember random facts, but some information is more likely to be remembered than other. To use another insightful summary by James Nattinger, “[f]unction words can be committed to memory rather quickly, simply because there are few of them and because they reoccur frequently, just as there should be little problem in storing concrete nouns, since these words carry with them a definite image” (Nattinger 67). Words or phrases people hear often are often remembered faster and better, because of the repetition. In computer games there are items that not only reoccur often, but they also occur with a picture of what the words represents, thus literally carrying an image with them which helps the participants in storing them in memory. “The principle of vocabulary learning which emerges is that the more words are analysed or are enriched by imagistic and other associations, the more likely it is that they will be retained” (Carter 12).

In computer games, all vocabulary comes in context. Associations are formed with situations and other vocabulary presented in the game. Another important mental connection made within the realm of computer games is between the word and its representation, which is usually a picture or an animation. “It has been established that students who learn new vocabulary by playing a computer game will remember more vocabulary compared to students who learn new vocabulary using the traditional method” (Chovancová 37, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová).

The factors that help in the retention of new words are: constant repetition, positive emotions connected to playing the game, intrinsic motivation to learn the new vocabulary and the creation of new associations.

4.3 The Role of English in Computer Games

English as a lingua franca obviously has its place in computer gaming. It is usually the easiest to download games in English, so most of the vocabulary is English even in single-player games. Online computer games have the largest impact. Players encounter other players from all over the globe and to communicate using English is necessary to be understood by everyone, or at least the vast majority.

Besides English being a lingua franca, the United States of America is the biggest developer of computer games. The two most successful companies are Blizzard Entertainment and Electronic Arts, both of which are American. The third one is French company Ubisoft, known especially for its game Assassin's Creed, which is most readily available in English.

Computer games are dominated by English and it plays a significant part in more than one area. In the games themselves, there is the story and the labelling of objects that are needed to complete the player's objectives. Since computer games are a combination of visual aids, sound and text, their connection to multimedia learning must be mentioned. The communities in games use English as the primary means of communication. The formation of a community that is located in a specific country with a specific native language is not uncommon; however, this is only a sub-community with each player also belonging to the basic one (relying on English as the language of the gaming discourse). And even in such communities, the English vocabulary is adapted into their language system. So the communication among players must be mentioned as a learning tool as well.

4.3.1 Multimedia Learning

Multimedia content is such that is composed of different forms of, for example, textual content, visual stimulation in the form of pictures, animation and videos, audio content and content one can interact with. "Most modern digital games employ an array of media types, including visual elements, animations, cut scenes and videos, text, speech, sound effects and music" (Whitton 168). Furthermore, the main point of digital, including

computer, games is for them to be interacted with. This is why they inevitably feature multimedia content which will be shown to be beneficial in learning foreign languages.

What we remember

According to Janíková, “based on a research, we remember

- 10% of what we have read,
- 20% of what we have heard,
- 30% of what we have seen,
- 50% of what we have seen and heard,
- 70% of what we have said ourselves,
- 90% of what we have done ourselves” (25).

In computer games text, visual and audial facts are combined and presented together.

Principles of multimedia learning

There is a great amount of repetition in computer games. This courts the fact that “[o]ur brains learn from mere exposure to reoccurring patterns in our environment” (Hattie and Yates 143). An example would be the scripted conversations between game characters or catch-phrases. These are sample sentences that are well remembered. These sentences tend to be either clear from context or otherwise decipherable. If they are neither, some players might seek to translate them in order to understand what the characters keep repeating.

Hattie and Yates point out that “[l]aboratory studies reveal that we all learn well when the inputs we experience are multi-modal or conveyed through different media” (115). Consequently, learning through multimedia exposure has become a subject of research. Whitton mentions twelve generally accepted principles of multimedia learning (170). Four of these will be mentioned and it will be discussed how they relate to computer games. They are Spatial Contiguity principle, Temporal Contiguity principle, Multimedia principle and Personalisation principle.

The first one is “Spatial Contiguity principle” and it states that “people learn better when corresponding words and pictures are presented close to each other” (Whitton 170). Computer games are always supported with visual stimuli and it would be nonsensical for the content of the game not to match the visual side. Moreover, there are concrete items represented by the picture of what they mean and usually there is also the name or description of what they mean. These items usually include clothing, food, drink and so on. These items are kept in itineraries where they can be always revisited and the name and the picture of that item seen. This overlaps with the “Temporal Contiguity principle” which says that “people learn better when corresponding words and pictures are presented close to each other” (Whitton 170).

Next principle is called “Multimedia principle” and it states that “people learn better from words and pictures than from pictures alone” (Whitton 171). There are possible parts of a game where pictures are presented alone or with audio, but they are mostly presented with text. The picture always corresponds to what the text says, even if it is not the name of what is in the illustration.

And finally, there is the “Personalisation principle” which states that “people learn better when words are in a conversational rather than a formal style” (Whitton 171). There is a wide range of styles in computer games, including formal, but even the formal style tends to be presented in an entertaining form which enables the repetition of the style to be amusing. However, most parts of games are in a conversational style, and so is the communication in communities and among teammates.

The VAK theory

The VAK theory is also called “The Theory of Visual-Auditory-Kinaesthetic Learning Styles” (Whitton 168). In addition Nicola Whitton stated that “[t]his hypothesises that people have distinct sensory learning preferences, with every person having a dominant input through either the visual, auditory or kinaesthetic sense” (168). This has not been proven to be relevant. One of the reasons is that it is not measured scientifically, but every person decides for themselves what learning style is most likely to help them reach their full study potential. However, there are slight changes in people’s perception to

different learning approaches. A particular style is more comfortable for some and with certain styles some might learn faster. It is not necessary for teachers to implement every teaching style into all the lectures because these changes are only minor. Still, they should not be ignored. Computer games include a basis for all the study types.

Visual

For visual learners, the most important part of receiving new information is to be able to see it. It is possible that this group is the most numerous, since Whitton states that “Of all our senses, sight is dominant for most people in gaining understanding about the world” (173). Many authors agree that concrete words are better remembered when they are described by a picture rather than a definition (Carter 39, Hattie and Yates 115, Krenzel 141, Whitton 172). Computer games feature a range of images, videos and animations to support the needs of visual learners.

4.3.1.1.1 Dual Coding

According to Whitton, dual coding is a theory devised by Clark and Paivio. It was published in the year 1991. It is one of the most relevant theories of multimedia learning (169). “These theories suggest that in the human brain there are two separate parallel cognitive subsystems: one that specialises in the processing of non-verbal information, such as graphic or visual information, and the other that deals with language. Dual coding therefore suggests that presenting information simultaneously in both visual and verbal forms should improve learning, as both channels are receiving and processing information at once” (Whitton 169).

This theory does not only focus on the importance of presenting images to depict nouns; it mentions the importance of having visual and audio stimuli at the same time; a feature that is often seen in computer games. Sometimes audio reads what is in a picture, but mostly there is text (a visual stimulus) that is read out loud or there is a video content that underlines what is said in the audio content.

Audio

A definition provided by Besedová states that “[a]uditory means are used for listening, oral and written reproduction and other usage in foreign language classes; for example in learning pronunciation, rhythm, accent, melody, intonation of the language, etc.” (128, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová). Listening activities are an inherent part of foreign language learning. They appear in every course book. People who study by themselves usually have a self-study book with a CD for listening activities, or they listen to a broadcast or TV shows. Listening and repeating helps to improve production in the target language but it also increases the level of comprehension. Listening to native speakers is considered an advantage. The audio components of computer games are dubbed by native speakers and thereby function as a bona fide listening activity. The whimsical way of saying catch-phrases encourages players to repeat the phrases and thereby build sensitivity towards intonation and melody of the target language.

The sound in the majority of games provides additional information. It can indicate where an enemy is or that a powerful spell is about to be cast. In addition to this, a voiceover gives information about the remaining time until something happens, so players tend to keep the sound on and listen attentively, improving the chances of learning something.

Kinaesthetic

Kinaesthetic learning is also called tactile learning. It is suggested that tactile learners need to interact in order to learn. “In the context of learning, games are exciting because they are all about action and interaction, rather than passively watching or listening” (Whitton 9). To interact in a game requires understanding and active communication.

4.3.2 Community

Communication

Going to live abroad is a common method for quick acquisition of a language. “By living in a foreign country, you will meet native speakers every day, and so you find the secrets of a foreign language in a non-violent and yet very effective way” (Franců 60). Today, people who wish to extend their language competencies have many options to do so. Thanks to modern technologies, they can be in contact with a foreign language of their choosing every day. They can use the internet to listen to broadcasts, read articles or watch movies in their target language. Additionally, they can also play computer games where there is a chance, in the case of English a very high chance, they will be in a contact with native speakers, and if not, the game still provides similar stimulus to already mentioned options.

The point of going abroad is to be able to be a part of authentic communication in the target language. Janíková suggests that the aim of foreign language teaching is to prepare the pupils for communication in out-of-school context (56). This means that the exercises and tasks presented to pupils attempt to simulate authentic conversations. These exercises might take the form of a game. Computer games offer many sample situations where a conversation is taking place. It can be in the story where two characters are talking to each other, it can be the player interacting with a game character and it can be in the form of player-to-player communication. Either way opportunities for conversing arise in a plentiful amount.

The opportunities for communication occur in both written and oral form. “The development of the ability to use a foreign language happens with the help of oral and written interaction” (Janíková 56, as translated by Kateřina Erlebachová). In these activities students need to use the language as a tool to achieve a goal. It is important that the communication revolve around a particular topic. It is also necessary that the aim of the conversation is clear. In computer games, both oral and written communication take part. The goal and topic of each exchange with a non-player computer characters is given by the game and the objectives the player is completing. In player to player communication, the

main topic of the conversation usually would be the game, but it can change to a more personal debate; however the aim of the conversation is always clear from the context. The conversation, especially on the first encounter, would usually not stray away from the basic personal information and game discussion.

Being a part of a community

Computer games were initially meant for players to play alone, because there was no network system in place. Since then, single-player games have much evolved. “Even though these [single-player] games were designed to be played by one person, they were still often used in social situations with players working collaboratively to solve problems or taking turns to play while watching others” (Whitton 53). Social situations concerning single-player games do not only revolve around working together to solve a problem or to take turns, but they might also discuss the game after the playing time is over. “The growth in networked computers has led to a massive increase in numbers of networked games and the ways in which games support collaborative activities” (Whitton 53). With multi-player games, the possibilities for cooperation and game-centered communication grew wider. And since multi-player games are generally played online, not only friends from real life were there to talk about games, but also a whole gamer community was formed.

A membership is acquired by playing computer games and wanting to be a part of the community. The advantage is being able to ask for help and chat with other people of similar interests and shared values. There are in-game chats and online forums for these purposes. “While collaborative gaming is often viewed as people playing in real time in the same virtual space, there are many ways in which collaboration and learning can happen before, during, around and after game play” (Whitton 58). Gaming is a hobby like any other. People tend to choose to spend time with people who have the same interest as they do themselves. When a person takes up a new hobby, they need to learn the vocabulary that goes with it to be able to communicate with other members of the community. To be able to talk about gaming, people need to acquire a certain set of words to be understood and accepted in the conversation and the community. Since talking about a game is not always just with friends of the same native language, many of the game related words were

adapted to other languages in their English forms as to be able to communicate in international environment in English and in domestic environment in native language.

The interaction in games does not have to be only written in the in-game chat it can also be vocal communication. Many games come with the option to turn on voice communication in the game itself, but before this was an option, players were using Skype to communicate with friends and later Team Speak, which enabled all the player of a team to communicate with each other in real time without having to add anyone as a friend to the Skype list. The communication with not only the team but the community usually happens after or before the game on miscellaneous forums. For people who are really committed to playing, there is the possibility of going to a gaming convention, where they will also be able to socialize with their community.

Members of the community do not discriminate based on age and are seen as equal. Furthermore, children can become quite skilled in computer games, thus gaining the ability to explain some principles to other gamers. "Peer feedback provides a valuable platform for elaborative discourse" (Hattie and Yates 70). When children have the chance to learn from peers, they often prefer it to learning from their superiors. In communities, children tend not to feel as though they are being schooled. Everybody who treats other members with respect and does not break any rules nor steps over any guidelines gets treated with respect as well. Children prefer to learn from each other; they understand each other better and communities provide them with chances to do so. This does not only apply to game mechanisms but English as well. Being corrected by a peer provides more motivation to improve one's linguistic competence.

Negative attitude towards non-English speakers

Players find it necessary to learn English not only because the communication would stagnate, but also modern gaming community looks down upon those who cannot speak English. So these players become discredited (Hamza 46). One of the respondents in Hamza's research said that he had experienced quite a bit of mocking for the incorrect use of grammar and not only first-hand but he has also seen it to happen to other players (43). Another respondent said that the advantage in playing computer games is certainly the

improvement of his English level skills. He says that he could not imagine not communicating with the team (43). Apparently, communication has become a very important part of gaming and players who refuse to communicate are at a disadvantage because their teammates might choose to kick them off their team and possibly even report them which could result in a ban – not being able to play for a given amount of time. Therefore, there is a necessity to communicate with the team and there is a motivation to do so correctly, with proper grammar and in the case of a voice chat, proper pronunciation, to avoid being mocked.

Communication between Czech players

There is an international gaming community, but there are also sub-communities. These can be communities for a specific game or a specific region. Czech players form a Czech gaming community. There are forums that are in the Czech language. As was mentioned previously, gamers borrow words from English to communicate in their native language. This may be due to the fact that there is no appropriate Czech translation, it is not known to the participants, or it is just the easiest way, since it is easier to communicate in the international group when using words in their English form.

To demonstrate, “to cast a spell” is a typical phrase in World of Warcraft or League Legends, two of the most played games. In Czech it became “kástit spely”. There are strong similarities in spelling and in pronunciation and players that use it have the semantic understanding of what it means. Even players, who do not usually participate in an English conversation and only use the borrowed expression in Czech, will understand this phrase in the original language.

4.4 Specific Gamer Vocabulary

Some abbreviations and some words are not necessarily associated only with a certain game or a particular genre; they are associated with gaming in general. With many games there is an overlap in the possible vocabulary used.

These words or expressions include Achievement, Experience, Pay to Win, Pay to Play and Free to Play. It can be sorted into groups of communication words, Words describing some game facts or situations and Words describing the player.

Many abbreviations are used among gamers for economic reasons. While gaming, it is essential not to waste time. These abbreviations might be known to some extent to non-gamers as well. It is probable that gamers will be able to decipher more of the abbreviated expression and understand the meaning of the individual words.

4.4.1 Communication Words

The gaming community tends to abbreviate recurrent statements, with many of these abbreviations subsequently acquiring a codified status. FTW (for the win), AFK (away from keyboard), please uninstall (an insult to an unskilled player, suggesting it would be better if the addressed player stopped playing), brb (be right back, similar to AFK), ASAP (as soon as possible), dunno and IDK (I don't know), ofc (of course), IRL (in real life) are a few selected examples. The practical linguistic utility of these expressions generally does not extend beyond the realm of gaming, at least not for the time being. However, their offhand usage still constitutes immersion in idiomatic English, which should be seen as beneficial for a non-native participant.

4.4.2 Words Describing Some Game Facts

A similar argument can be made in reference to other phrases in English gaming lingo with limited connotative value. PvP (player vs. player), ping (network latency between the computer and the server), boss (a difficult creature to kill), respawn (coming back to life after having been killed), buff (increase in power), nerf (decrease in power), build (what the player uses; what items and equipment), DPS (damage per second) KS (kill steal, when someone who did not do the substantial amount of damage gives the final shot

and obtains the kill), mob and bots (computer controlled monsters), ability power, attack damage, level, farm (kill weak computer controlled units in order to gain money, resources and experience), TP (teleport), bugged (some problem with the system) are words chosen to illustrate this particular vocabulary.

4.4.3 Words Describing the Player

A noob (a new, unskilled player), a camper (a player who hides and kills from a distance), a spammer (a player who often writes unnecessary messages that may agitate the teammates), OP (overpowered, a player whose character has strong abilities), salty (sad, weeping player), smurf (a player of a higher level playing at a lower level), using cheats, healer, tank (a player who plays for a character that is difficult to kill because of high health points), main (the main character the person plays as) are a few of the words used.

5 Specific Contributions of Concrete Genres and Concrete Games

5.1 Game Companies

As has been pointed out, the first three most successful video companies only produce games for game consoles. Since this thesis only deals with computer games, the fourth highest ranking company is the first that is relevant for our purposes.

5.1.1 Blizzard Entertainment

Blizzard Entertainment has the annual revenue of \$4.85 Billion. It is an American video game developer. Dan Wilson attributes their success to the fact that “Blizzard started with the simple idea of making adventure strategy games modelled after role playing games, introducing fantasy and science-fiction elements to the genre”. Its most popular games are StarCraft (a strategy), World of Warcraft (MMORPG), Hearthstone (a card game) and Heroes of the Storm (MOBA).

Dan Wilson comments on the incredible success of Blizzard Entertainment by acknowledging that “[b]lizzard was one of the first companies to introduce LAN gaming, allowing players to connect computers together to create a massive battle with all of your friends – without needing to go online”. When the option to play online was no longer only for a chosen few, the success of the company grew immensely. Their biggest income is from the World of Warcraft game, where players have to pay a monthly fee to be able to keep playing.

5.1.2 Electronic Arts

The second highest earning company is Electronic Arts, the revenue of which is \$4.14 Billion. It is also an American video game company. “From the beginning, thanks to titles such as Road Rash, Madden Football, NHL 95, and many more, Electronic Arts quickly became one of the biggest video game producers in the world. Electronic Arts continues to dominate the world of sports gaming, their games regularly featuring on best of lists thanks to their realistic, quality gameplay” (Wilson).

5.1.3 Ubisoft

Ubisoft is a French company with the revenue of \$1.61 Billion. “It is responsible for bringing the world critically acclaimed, financially successful titles such as Rayman, Assassin’s Creed, and Far Cry” (Wilson). Assassin’s Creed and Far Cry are the easiest to obtain in English despite their French origin.

5.1.4 Riot Games

Riot Games has an honorary mention in this thesis, since it produced world’s most played game – League of Legends. That is a free to play game, but there are in-game purchases that are not necessary to the game, but can speed up the process of levelling up, purchase a hero faster or change the appearance of the in-game character. Not only is League of Legends the most successful game, it is also the only game of the company. That makes it so much more impressive that they earn \$1.6 billion in annual game revenue (Blakely and Helm).

5.2 Most Played Games

Each game will represent a genre and it will be shown what sort of vocabulary each game offers. It is not necessary to choose two games for each genre. Both League of Legends and DOTA 2 (Fig. 2) were established to be games that are played a great deal. Both represent the MOBA genre, but League of Legends will be chosen as a representative of the genre, since it is played more. Games and genres selected are: League of Legends (MOBA), World of Warcraft (MMORPG), Counter Strike: Global Offensive (Shooter), Minecraft (Open-world game) and Hearthstone (Collectible card game). RPGs (Role-Playing Games) are often played (Fig. 1) as well. The problem is that there is no strong representative of this genre that would be played by the majority of gamers, not even in a certain age or region category. But it also is one of the genres with the biggest potential for learning. That is why it cannot be completely omitted and the benefit of the genre is discussed even if there is no game representing it.

It is important to remind of that modern computer games do not fit only into one category. Most games could be chosen to represent multiple genres, but they were assigned

to the genre of which they have the most dominant feature. Action game is shown as the most played genre (Fig. 1), but it is very difficult to locate a game that would be purely action. Most of the games that will be discussed, including League of Legends, have characteristics of an action game.

Strategy is discussed only without a representative, because the biggest contribution of the Strategy genre to English acquisition is communication with the team. The elements of this genre occur in games that are further discussed and therefore it is not necessary to choose a game to represent this genre.

It should be noted that a great deal of games are available even in Czech, for example League of Legends has had a Czech translation for two years now. These translations are not becoming very popular and this thesis focuses mainly on players that are exposed to the game in English.

5.2.1 Strategy

According to Mark Wolf Strategy games are such that “emphasize the use of strategy as opposed to fast action or the use of quick reflexes, which are usually not necessary for success in these games” (15). There is an important distinction here between playing alone and playing as a part of a team. The more significant from the perspective of learning from computer games is the teamwork variant. It features multiple players working together and devising a strategy to defeat the enemy, thus making the communication the key. Even if a player is not actively taking part in communication, he or she at least needs to understand what is being said to be able to continue to be a part of the team. Elements of using strategic communication appear in the games League of Legends and World of Warcraft, which will be discussed later.

An example of a game that can be played in a single mode would be Civilization. It is a game with a long tradition that has already released six games, with the same premise, to lead a civilization through ages and become a mighty world power. According to the official site of the game, it features military power, technological advances or even diplomacy, such as negotiation or trading. Players wage wars and attempt to build an

empire that will prevail. They can also explore other worlds and cities (About civilization VI).

The game itself provides new vocabulary, which is the main contribution of strategy games that do not have to be played in a team. Civilization as an example is a strategy that would provide vocabulary from the following topics: materials to build with, military vocabulary, vocabulary necessary for negotiation, etc. Another possible strategy game contribution is attempting to understand someone explaining their strategy in English in order to be able to use it later. It is described in more detail in the Collectable Card Games chapter.

5.2.2 Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA)

According to Nosrati and Karimi “[m]ultiplayer online battle arena (MOBA), more commonly known as action real-time strategy (action RTS or ARTS), is a sub-genre of the real-time strategy (RTS) genre, in which usually two teams of players compete with each other in discrete games, with each player controlling a single character through an RTS-style interface”. In other strategy games, multiple characters or even a whole army can be controlled by a single person. The element of controlling a single unit comes from an action game; therefore it can be argued that MOBA is a combination of RTS and action games. Even though other genres contributed to the development of these games, RTS and action are the most prominent elements.

MOBA is played in a team and it can be either against bots (i.e. computer controlled units) or against other players. “There are two opposing teams whose goal collectively as a team is to destroy their enemy's base to win. [...] Defensive towers are in place to prevent this, as well as weak computer-controlled units which are periodically spawned at each base and which travel down pre-programmed paths toward the opposing base” (Nosrati and Karimi).

Before the game starts, the gamer should be familiar with the champions and their abilities. The abilities differ among all the characters that players are able to choose from. There are five main classes of heroes, characters, AP carry (ability power carry), AD carry

(attack damage carry), Support, Jungler and Tank. Each of these classes has different advantages and disadvantages. Each class has a recommended position.

In the first phase of the game, the player chooses whether they want to play against real players or computer controlled bots. After that they are placed in a queue where they have to wait for their team to be assembled. When other players are found, the gamer is moved to a virtual space called a lobby. This is where the first communication amongst teammates happens. At this stage, each person chooses a hero – a character that will portray them in the game. Players are supposed to agree on their team composition. Each class should be represented. Deciding which hero to choose sparks up the first strategic discussion that takes place in the lobby.

After this, they are taken to the game, where they can continue to chat and additionally, there is the option to chat with the enemy team as well. There are usually three lanes and a jungle (a place between the lanes) but the numbers can differ. Every hero goes to their starting position and, shortly, the game begins.

First, there is a “laning phase”, when heroes generally should stay in their lane. They attempt to “farm”, which means that they try to kill weak computer controlled units to gain gold and experience. With the gained gold they can visit a shop to buy items to help them gain better attributes (i.e. offensive and defensive capabilities) with experience, the champions grow stronger and can power up their abilities. To farm properly, the player has to understand the abilities (spells) of the hero. The description of the spells is written in English. There are also videos available, before the game loads, where the abilities are explained and shown. The proper understanding of how each of the abilities works is the key to victory. With spells being such an important part of the game, the names of some spells are used in chat as well, when a player wonders why a certain spell was not used in a certain time or for other purposes. The names of some particular spells have become well known and players use them in natural communication amongst themselves. But there are also cases of choosing another word to describe the spell (Dark Passage is called the Lantern). Examples of such names and nicknames (in League of Legends) are: Lantern, Hook, Shield, Flash, Teleport, Death Lotus, Bouncing Blade and Battle Roar.

The next phase is when the teams try to group up to make a play on the enemy team. In this phase, players will try to kill the enemy. As a reward, they receive a greater

amount of gold and experience; in addition, the character that was killed is unable to play for a short period of time. They try to kill stronger computer controlled units to obtain gold, experience or some temporal enhancement of the player's abilities.

In the late game, the main purpose is to take objectives, meaning the destruction of defence towers and of the base. Destroying the base will result in victory. In order to do so, players attempt to kill the whole enemy team or a larger part of it and then they "push", meaning that they destroy as many towers as they can in an attempt to reach the base.

This was the general description of the genre. It is a very popular style of playing, but the games are very similar. Most played games are DOTA 2 and Heroes of the Storm but the absolute favourite is League of Legends.

League of Legends features some additional options: For example the player can prepare masteries before the game starts. Masteries are a set of enhancements that can be placed on the hero throughout the whole game. There is a limited amount that can be chosen from and the number of masteries a person gets to choose depends on the level of the player. Another enhancement a player can use is runes. They can be purchased with game currency (influence points) or real life money (transferred into a second possible game currency called Riot points). Both masteries and runes are described in English and they offer a significant enhancement to the hero, and so it is important that the player understands what he or she is choosing and when it can be used in the game.

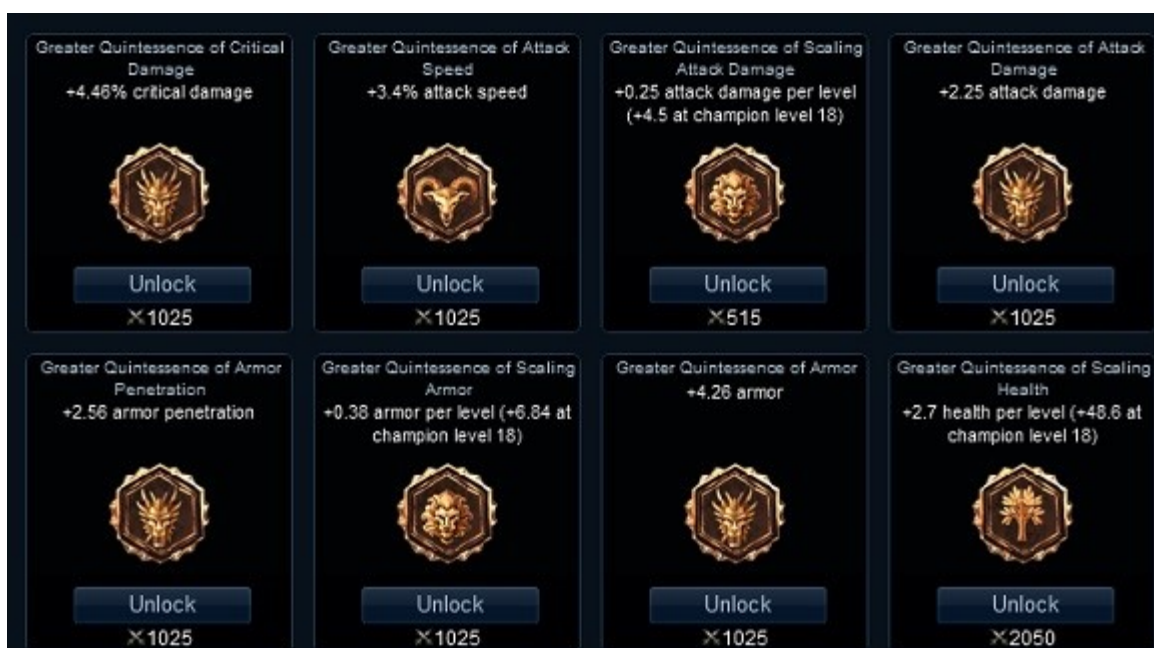


Fig. 4 Runes in League of Legends

Within the game there is a store where players can spend their gold to purchase items to boost their heroes in a certain category. The category of purchase should be chosen based on the class they decided to play as. These categories are: health, armour, magic resist(ance), health regen(eration), tenacity, damage, critical strike, attack speed, life steal, ability power, cooldown reduction, mana, mana regen, boots and consumables. Once again, to be able to choose a correct item for the character and the strategic gameplay that the team has agreed on, it is vital, that the player understands the meaning of all these words. In addition, the items are described in more detail. There are not only the categories described above; those are only the main ones. Items can have special abilities, meaning that they can be used in a similar manner to using a spell. That description provides more



Fig. 5 League of Legends shop lol screenshot

information about the possible uses of the item. Most players would be able to understand this description, but it is not as important to gameplay as understanding the key words established above. Some items are shopped for so often that the name is remembered by a majority of players, such as Boots of Speed, The Bloodthirster, Doran's Blade, Infinity Edge, Phantom Dancer, Deathfire Grasp and Health Potions and so on (League of Legends Most Purchased Item Statistics). It is probable that after using these names on an everyday basis, gamers will understand their meaning.

Another way in which players can improve their vocabulary is in the individual stories of the characters. Each character has a lore that no one reads or at least not many players, but League of Legends occasionally produces a video of the story or a song that is sung about or by a new character. These videos have immense viewership and popularity. The official channel on YouTube has close to eight million subscribers (RiotGamesInc). There are many other options to learn English from watching League of Legends related

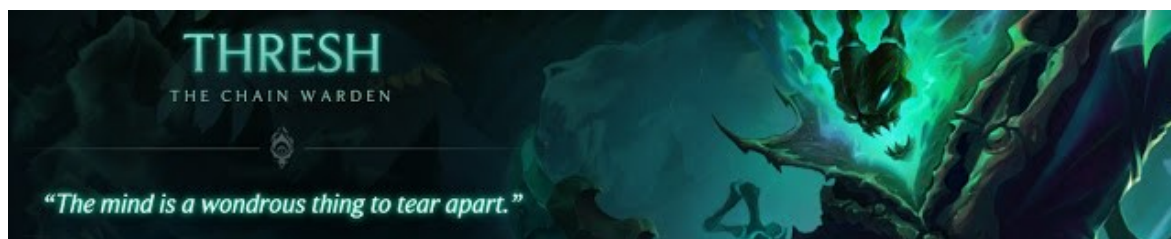


Fig. 6 The phrase of Thresh

videos. There are new champion spotlights, featuring the characters' new abilities, the names of their spells, how they might be used in a game and what the characters' catch-phrases are.

But the most popular League of Legends videos are streams. Many young gamers earn money by making videos and streaming their games live. There are even Czech streamers that do their broadcast in Czech, but it is most common to do the broadcasts in English, so that there is a bigger potential for an audience. It is no coincidence that a great percentage of the most popular streamers are English speaking.

In the previous section, catch-phrases were mentioned. Possibly, they are the biggest contribution to English learning. Every character has a few sentences programmed that they say when they fight and move around, some of these are associated with a certain spell they have. There is one that is always repeated when choosing a character in the lobby after clicking on the icon representing the hero. These phrases are often repeated and often heard. They tend to have an entertaining way of production, such as a funny accent or exaggerated intonation. Therefore they are amusing to repeat and most players do so (as can be seen in watching streams for example). Another sort of sentences that appear in a substantial amount are the sentences the narrator of the game says. Probably, these are well known and remembered by all the players that play League of Legends in English. The sentences or phrases heard in every game are: "Welcome to Summoner's Rift!"; "Thirty

seconds until minions spawn!” and “Minions have spawned!”. Other sentences that are in most of the games are: “A summoner has been disconnected/ reconnected!”; “Your turret/inhibitor has been destroyed!”; “Your inhibitor is respawning soon!”; “An enemy has been slain!”; “An ally has been slain!”; “You have been slain!”; “Killing Spree!”; “Rampage!” “Dominating!”; “Godlike!”; “Executed!”; “Shut down!”; “Victory!”; “Defeat!” and other of this sort.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the main contribution to English learning is through a communication with the team. Sadly, the term “toxic” is strongly associated with the League of Legends community. Therefore, the assessment of the communication in teams will be presented in a manner comparing typical players and toxic players.

Haewoon and Blackburn describe typical communicational behaviour as follows: “Typical players chat relatively more at the beginning of a match, which is mainly for ice breaking, morale boosting, and sharing early strategic information”. Toxic players become active in communication usually around the mid-game, which is the second stage that has been represented in the game description. “We find that several discriminative bi-grams of typical players are about strategies, while most of toxic players’ bigrams are bad words” (Haewoon and Blackburn).

Communication often needs to be fast, so players communicate mostly in abbreviations or emoticons. The meaning of the abbreviations used is known not only for its semantic meaning, but the players also tend to know the meaning of the individual words. Another possible communication are words that were assigned a certain meaning, e.g. “blue” can mean a variety of things and the player needs to understand from context. It may mean I want to kill the blue creep, or it can be an invite for someone on the team to come and kill the blue creep. Communication in sentences tends to be used mostly in arguments and in the development of strategy.

There are certain phrases that are used by both the typical players and toxic players. “Some words for strategic team manoeuvres (e.g., ‘come’, ‘ult’, ‘blue’, ‘ward’) are used by toxic players, but this ceases at some point during the match. Some words primarily used for communicating movements with partners in the same lane (e.g. ‘back’, ‘b’, ‘brb’ (be

right back), ‘omw’ (on my way), ‘k’ (okay)) are also used by toxic players, but again, after some point toxic players stop this form of communication” (Haewook and Blackburn).

Some examples of typical abbreviations used in League of Legends are: gl (good luck), hf (have fun), u2 (you too), brb (be right back), omw (on my way), oom (out of mana), cs (creep stats), cc (crowd control), OP (over powered), dmg (damage), ult (the ultimate spell activated by the R key), cd (cooldown), cdr (cooldown reduction) and so on. At least some of these might help in English acquisition.

5.2.3 Role-Playing Games

Role-playing games are usually third person games, which is a sub-genre of action games. This means that the player sees a whole person representing them and the monitor does not appear to be the gamer’s own vision. “The genre of adventure or role-playing games (RPG) is closely tied to the literary genre of fantasy” (Apperley 19). The centre of RPGs is a strong story with fantastic elements. The story can be altered depending on the playing style but also on the extent to which the game allows modifying of the story. For example in *Witcher 3: The Wild Hunt* there are many scenarios that the player can trigger by the actions taken and not taken and there are multiple ways the story can end; in *Skyrim* there is one main fairly unchanging story, but the player can customize the game by choosing what minor quests will be accomplished and what territories explored; in *Tomb Raider* the story is set and the only freedom of the player is exploring caves and similar surroundings and finding artefacts that unlock mythical stories told by Lara, the game protagonist.

Strong characters are the key feature of these games. “RPGs are games in which players create or take on a character represented by various statistics, which may even include a developed persona. The character’s description may include specifics such as species, race, gender, and occupation, and may also include various abilities, such as strength and dexterity, to limited degrees usually represented numerically” (Wolf 14-15). There is not always the chance to personalize the character, for example in *Tomb Raider* (resp. *Witcher*), the protagonist is Lara Croft (resp. Geralt of Rivia). On the other hand in *Skyrim*, there is a wide range of features to choose from to customise the final in-game

character. Whether the characters are firmly pre-set or modified, they are an important part of the story.

Apperley states that “[t]he original RPG games were single player” (19). But even these were not solitary practise; gamers would gather around to take turns or help each other get through difficult instances. The story of the game also would be discussed after finishing the game thus providing a topic for social interactions with other gamers. As the network developed, so did the game and multi-player games gained on popularity.

RPGs tend to change to a great extent depending on what sort of a genre they are mixed with. But what all of these games have in common is that the most prominent reason for playing them is the story line. It tends to be in English and it tends to be followed closely by the players since it is the main motivation for playing such a game. Typically there is a complex and extensive story and as such, it is likely to provide the player with a great amount of new vocabulary.

5.2.4 Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPG)

Nosrati and Karimi define MMORPG as “a genre of role-playing video games in which a very large number of players interact with one another within a virtual game world”. As in all RPGs, players assume the role of a character and take control over its actions. “MMORPGs are distinguished from single-player or small multi-player RPGs by the number of players, and by the game's persistent world, which continues to exist and evolve while the player is offline and away from the game” (Nosrati and Karimi).

Nardi and Harris provide a thorough description of World of Warcraft, the most played MMORPG: “Based on a Tolkienesque high fantasy motif, World of Warcraft is a MMORPG in which players create characters with distinctive looks and qualities such as intellect, strength, stamina, and agility. Characters acquire equipment such as swords, armour, and jewellery; develop skills such as attacking and healing; and slay an array of imaginative monsters dwelling in caves, dungeons, and encampments in varied landscapes in the land of Azeroth. The game can be likened to an animated cartoon in which the player controls the character with a mouse and keyboard. Characters travel on foot, by boat or air,

through fields, farms, deserts, mountains, seas, and other distinctive scenery for which WoW is known”.

The game itself encompasses the killing of monsters, exploring, completing quests and competing in battlegrounds. Players can also chat with their friends, take up a profession and try to obtain more skill in it. Players can spend some time in cities: in banks or by training or trading. There are large parties formed to take on high difficulty quests and dungeons filled with monsters of exceptional numbers as well as strength. Raids are typically performed by even more players. World of Warcraft presents a cosmos full of possibilities, as well as the potential for acquiring new vocabulary.

In world of Warcraft, there are two major groups of enemies. First, the players need to decide for which, Alliance or Horde, they want to play. Each of these factions is represented by certain races. The races in Alliance are Human, Dwarf, Night Elf, Gnome, Draenei, Worgen and Pandaren. In Horde the races to choose from are Orc, Undead, Tauren, Troll, Blood Elf, Goblin and Pandaren. In both factions, it is possible to choose from all the classes, which are druid, priest, warrior, rogue, mage, hunter, paladin, shaman and warlock (though not all races can portray all classes). A special class is a Death Knight; players only get a chance to play this class after reaching a certain level with another character. Each class has different abilities and therefore entails a different play style. An example: Priest’s weakness is his health, which is the warrior’s strength. This encourages either temporal or more permanent collaboration.



Fig. 7 Choosing race and class

A player has four secondary professions that any player can do and gets to choose two primary professions. The secondary professions are Archaeology, Cooking, Fishing and First Aid. These enable players to learn words such as fishing rod, bandage, anti-venom, bait, ingredient, herb, baked, roasted, spicy, crispy, flour and so on. Primary professions are Alchemy, Blacksmithing, Enchanting, Engineering, Herbalism, Inscription, Jewelcrafting, Leatherworking, Mining, Skinning and Tailoring. Since the player is only able to choose two professions and changing them later on is complicated, it should be an informed decision; hence the names of the professions need to be understood in order to make an informed choice. After choosing a profession, the real potential for learning vocabulary unveils.

The player should choose professions that go well together, for example herbalism and alchemy. To level up in herbalism, the player travels the map and collects herbs, flowers and other plants, thus learning their names, for example rose, lily, green tea leaf, rain poppy, weed and others. These herbs can be used in alchemy when creating potions. With this combination, the player will learn the names of herbs and also names for aspects that can be modified with a potion, such as health, speed, invisibility, armour and so on. Mining can be paired with Blacksmithing, Engineering and Jewel crafting. In these cases, mining is the profession done in terrain and it can expand vocabulary of metals such as gold, silver, iron, copper, tin and precious stones such as jade, ruby, opal and so on. The acquisition of vocabulary is analogical in all other cases.

This is another reason for communication among players and forming bonds. Players can trade with each other the items that they have crafted or collected and did so while using the skills provided by their profession.

Items can be purchased in in-game stores, where they are sold by computer characters, in an auction house, where they are being sold by real players or they can be obtained by killing monsters or completing quests and claiming them as rewards. Items can be either carried in bags and they serve multiple purposes (healing, selling them, crafting from them and so on) or they can be equipped, in which case they are called equipment.

All items are distinguished according to their qualities; they can be poor, common, uncommon, rare, epic, legendary and heirloom. These words are generally known by WoW

players. Some examples of the non-equipment items are food (soup, melon juice), materials (linen cloth, wool), potions and elixirs, quest items (key) and so on.

The equipment is made from various materials and only some classes can wear certain materials. The materials are: cloth, leather, mail and plate. They can only be placed on certain parts of the body (undoubtedly, a character will not wear pants on his head). The parts are distinguished in the game as follows: head, neck, shoulder, back, chest, wrist, finger, feet, legs, waist and hands. There is also a slot for a shirt and two slots for a trinket. And the items have appropriate names, such as trousers, hat, belt, boots, ring and so on.



Fig. 8 Equipment in World of Warcraft

The player gets to choose a weapon; it again depends on the class, for example a mage can have a staff and a warrior can have a sword. There are one-handed and two-handed weapons and some classes have the option to equip a shield as well.

The stats that can be improved by wearing armour are strength, agility, stamina, intellect, spirit and armour. Usually when deciding between two items, one would benefit one area and the other would benefit a different one. So it is important to understand these words and their implication for the play style and to know what occasion the character is being dressed for.

Enemies that are controlled by the computer are usually objectives to be slain. They are distinguished into certain categories: demon, elemental, beast (wolf, tiger, spider, etc.), humanoid and so on. When fighting a humanoid, when their health runs low the chat

typically reads “Tries to run away in fear”. When attacking a boss, it will say in chat what the boss is saying as well, but the sayings differ.

Friendly NPCs, which are usually found in a friendly city, can speak to the player even if they do not have a quest to offer. Some examples of what they say are: “Can I help you?”; “See you around.”; “State your business!”; “Need something?”; “Be careful!”; “Time is money, friend!”.

There are certain groups of NPCs (non-player characters) that can be interacted with to a larger degree even without the player receiving a quest from them. There are class and profession trainers that a player must visit after gaining a certain number of experience points to learn new spells. Information as to where these NPCs can be found can be given to the player by a guard of the city. Of course, the player needs to know the name of the character he is looking for. There are Auctioneers, Bankers, Flight masters, Innkeepers, Repairers, Vendors, and so on. Some of these can be found in special buildings, i. e. auction houses, banks, shops etc.

One of the main features of the game is completing quests. A computer unit gives



Fig. 9 Classic quest log

the player a task to accomplish. There is a lore that comes with every task, but it is not necessary to read. The task is summarized at the end of it and that is the part that is important to read and understand to be able to finish the quest and claim the rewards.

There is an option to add a person to the player's group and if both players are completing the same quest, they can help each other, complete task simultaneously and not steal from each other. This is a reason for a great deal of interactions in WoW.

After reaching the maximum level, it is always raised with a new data disk; the game is not finished, in fact, this is where the game begins. Up until now it was being described what the game can do to expand the players' vocabulary and the possibilities are almost endless. However, as it usually is in multi-player games, communication has a great effect as well.

In World of Warcraft, players can become parts of guilds. Each guild has a name that was given to it by the player that created it. Guilds are groups of people. "An important focus for many guilds is collecting reliable players for advanced play" (Nardi and Harris). The reason for this is that guilds are usually assembled to provide players with teammates for quests and dungeons that require a larger amount of players and raids that can require from 10 to 40 players, depending on the difficulty. In high level raids, strategy becomes really important, so guilds want to have players that understand their spells and abilities properly and can speak English well because when devising strategy, communication is key. When a person makes a bad move in a high-level raid, it could result in the whole party being killed and having to start over.

Consequently, Nardi and Harris suggest that "[a]s with most MMOGs, there is a lot to learn. For example, players must understand different spells and when to use them; have some comprehension of the different classes so that when playing with others the character is positioned correctly and acts in a way that complements others' abilities; be able to predict how monsters will react; and know which equipment is best for the specific way the character has been created and for different contexts of battle". All of this was mentioned already but all of this also fosters player interaction. Players tend to offer spontaneous help to strangers and it is customary to respond when asked. That is why it is easy to surmise that the learning "occurs when the learner needs and wants it, in the context of solving a problem the learner genuinely wishes to solve" (Nardi and Harris). Learning of new English vocabulary occurs in a similar manner. When a player is giving advice to another, usually in English, and there is a word the player does not know, he or she might ask the player giving the advice or simply use a dictionary. Since the vocabulary

is important to them, to be better at the game, they will ask about the word and try to remember it, since they genuinely want to.

World of Warcraft is a good game to play with friends or even family and it is a good place to meet strangers and befriend them. Players can trade with each other (offer each other their items), they can duel (test their skills in a friendly battle) and they can type miscellaneous commands into chat, for example dance, drink, flirt, hug, cheer, joke, laugh, smile and similar. Depending on whether someone is targeted, it will either read: “Player has burst into dance” or “Player dances with [the targeted player]”.

Communication when helping usually happens in sentences but there are many abbreviations used in the game as well. They do not differ from MOBA or general abbreviations except for the description of the game, like SW for Storm Wind, which is a name of a city in World of Warcraft. Well known is XP, which stands for experience. Other abbreviations of this sort include names of spells, which are mostly remembered by all players, regardless of the class or hero they play as and names of places around the colossal map. When applying to go to a dungeon with a party, players might characterize themselves as DPS, meaning damage per second. Players of WoW might use advanced abbreviations such as IMHO (in my humble opinion) or RTM (read the manual). A player might ask wfm, wait for me, when in need of gaining more health or mana before another battle.

In the game, people mostly have to speak English, since there was not a Czech version created so far. The game has to be paid for monthly, and so many gamers choose to play on unofficial servers. The best known server in the Czech Republic is Twinstar. The game itself is in English but the community is mostly Czech and Slovak, though it is not uncommon to meet non-Czech speakers and then players engage in an English conversation. Even on the official server, there are some realms (the best known is Drak'thul), which has a Czech community. The game, however, remains in English. But even in Czech communities, there are certain aspects of English conversations. Some English words are adapted to Czech and used as such, for example invite has become “invitnout” and cast (cast a spell) has become “kástit”. Using these words will help comprehension when encountered in an authentic English conversation.

World of Warcraft is an RPG, which suggests a story. Except for the stories that feature in the giving and receiving of quests, there was not a story mentioned, but Blizzard is well known for its beautiful cinematics, which convey the story. There are also many books with the story of World of Warcraft and recently, in the year 2016 a movie was released. It had a great success among fans of the game. Of course, movies are dubbed into native languages of all the gamers, but more and more people choose to watch movies in the original language with subtitles, thus being in the presence of authentic English.

5.2.5 Shooter

Mark Wolf characterizes shooter games as “[g]ames which involve two or more players, or one player and a computer-controlled player, shooting some form of projectiles at each other, and in which all players are provided with similar means for a fairly balanced fight. These games usually emphasize manoeuvrability and sometimes the outwitting of the opponent. [...] The basic play of the game is to shoot the opponent while avoiding getting shot” (7).

Shooters have strong elements of action games, in fact “The action genre consists of two major subgenres: first-person shooters and third-person games” (Apperly 17). First-person shooters are games that will be discussed in this paragraph. These games are played in such a manner that the screen appears to be the gamer’s own vision. Third person action games mostly overlap with Role Playing Games, as was mentioned already.

The main distinction in shooter games depends on whether they are multi-player or single-player. The biggest contribution to the English acquisition in single-player shooters lies in the story. These games tend to have a strong story designed to keep the player hooked long enough to finish the game. Consequently, this sort of a game is played when a gamer wants to understand the story, which is usually in English, and thereby is actively engaging in English listening or reading activity. Examples of such games are: Far Cry and certain parts of Call of Duty.

Call of Duty, among many other games, can be played as a multiplayer. In multiplayer, the first thing a player needs to do is choose whether they would like to play against other gamers or computer units. After that, they need to decide what mode they

would like to play. Examples of modes that generally appear in shooters are death match, domination, capture the flag, free for all and others. When choosing a mode, it is necessary to understand how to play it and what the goal is. In free for all, the point is to kill as many other players as possible. It is possible to kill anyone playing; there are no teams. If the person playing does not read the description, it could result in unnecessary deaths. In the mode capture the flag, the goal is to steal an object (usually a flag) of the enemy team and bring it to your team. This shows that the modes differ significantly and without the understanding of how to play each mode the game loses sense.

In a large percentage of shooter games, players choose which class they want to play. There are assault, medic, engineer and scout classes. Assault style is oriented on fire power; Medic is there for healing and helping teammates rather than dealing big damage; Engineer specializes on explosives and building of defensive structures and Scout can cause a great harm on long distances but is very vulnerable up close. These classes are always described when choosing. Their abilities differ slightly over the range of shooter games, so it is not enough to understand just the basics. The description provided should be read in detail to understand what the advantages and disadvantages are in order to be able to choose a playing style appropriate for chosen class. Not being able to understand everything is not a problem, since if a player reads the description, they will know what to try in game to understand what the available abilities do, thus understanding new vocabulary from context.

After choosing a mode and class, the gamer is now able to start playing. Communication is vital in multi-player. In some shooter games (Battlefield), the teams can have as much as 32 players in them, which makes the communication difficult but also absolutely vital. The biggest part of the communication that takes places is reporting on enemies' positions. Most shooter games have the possibility to use voice chat, instead of regular chat, because communication needs to be fast. Exactly due to that fact, players use it and will communicate even if they are not comfortable communicating in English in other situations. Proper communication can increase the chances of winning immensely.

Games nowadays try to appeal to players so that they will not get bored and stop playing. They attempt to do so by introducing certain "levelling up" features. In every game, the player will gain experience points. After a certain amount of points gained, new

guns are unlocked. There is an option to choose among many guns in the game. People playing shooter games will have a rich gun-related vocabulary, for example shotgun, sniper rifle, assault rifle, LMG (light machine gun), SMG (small machine gun), grenade launcher and others. In addition to being able to name a great number of guns, players of modern shooters are also able to name what parts the gun consists of, for example: scope, trigger, magazine, sight, silencer and others.

One of the most popular games (Fig. 2) is Counter Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO). It is the most commonly played and the newest edition of Counter Strike, which is a game franchise with a long tradition. This game is eminently popular on the professional level. Even regular players play in a competitive mode to compare their expertise to the skill of other players and try to reach the top places on the charts. This system is called ranked. In the ranked mode a player will not be able to stay on a team without communicating. There is a “kick” option which will remove a player from the team. It can be for several reasons and not communicating with the team is one of them. Most children are not afraid to express themselves in these games.

In CS, there are two teams of five. These teams play thirty rounds in each game. They play fifteen as terrorists and the other half as counter terrorists. At the beginning of each round, there is the option to shop for guns and gun equipment. The weapons are placed into a few basic categories: pistols, heavy, SMGs, rifles, gear and grenades. There is a range of extra equipment in others: defuse kit, Kevlar vest, Kevlar helmet, grenades, flash bangs, decoy grenades and so on.



Fig. 10 Choosing a weapon in CS:GO

The two most played modes are the Bomb Defusal mode and the Hostage Rescue mode. In the first game terrorists have two places where they can plant a bomb and counter-terrorists either need to stop them from doing so or defuse it in order to win. In the second game, terrorists have hostages and counter-terrorists are trying to free them. In both cases, the game ends either by a certain time interval or when one of the teams is dead (i.e. all five players were killed) or the bomb explodes or with the hostages being taken to safety.

There are certain sentences said in these games by an announcer: “The bomb has been planted!”; “Defusing the bomb!”; “The bomb has been defused!”; “Counter terrorists win!” “Terrorist win!”; “Hostage has been rescued!” and so on.

Voice chat is mostly used for communication in CS:GO. As was mentioned before, the most important thing in communication is to inform one’s teammates about the enemy’s whereabouts. To do so, players must know the names of possible locations. There are maps describing the locations and it provides the gamer with some basic vocabulary such as: stairs, double door, outside, inside, tunnels and some more advanced vocabulary: vent, ramp, pit and so on.



Fig. 11 Map's callouts

Other expressions used in voice chat are “rushing (A/B)”, “need help”, “I hear them”. Counter Strike puts emphasis on the hearing potential of gamers. Not only can they hear

the enemy, but there are keys on the keyboard which, when pushed, make the character say something relevant to the game, for example: “sector clear”, “need back up”, “enemy spotted”, “roger that”. These sentences will also show up in the in-game chat. Undoubtedly, the main reason for using them is to communicate a message. They become meaningless without appropriate comprehension. They are used quite a bit in games, which draws at the conclusion that most gamers understand these sentences.

After using explosives, the in-game character gives out a warning without having to press any additional keys. These warnings include: “Fire in the hall!”, “Throwing a smoke grenade!”, “Throwing a flash bang!”. These sentences are often repeated, since the use of explosives is quite common. Therefore they are easily committed to memory.

CS:GO is one of the most viewed games via streaming and the commentary tends to be in English.

5.2.6 Open-World Games

Open-world games are also referred to as sandbox games or free-roaming games. As these names suggest “[a] sandbox is a style of game in which minimal character limitations are placed on the gamer, allowing the gamer to roam and change a virtual world at will” (Techopedia). There are many elements in these games and the gamers get to choose which they find interesting and which they are going to ignore. There are mini-games, story-lines, tasks and so on. The possibilities are not infinite because of the limitations of developing games. Vastly popular open-world games are Skyrim and Minecraft. Minecraft is a game that is played more by young gamers, since it is newer and relatively easy to control. It is also the game that was placed as the eighth most played game (Fig. 2).

There are two modes, creative and survival. In survival mode, players need to mine for materials to build their construction and fight waves of creatures referred to as mobs. To survive, they must win when fighting mobs, hide in the night and eat. They are also able to explore the world. The enemies in the game are Creeper, Zombie, Skeleton, Enderman, Pigman, Ghast, Silverfish, Spider and Cave Spider. Most of the names do not make much sense, but for example Skeleton is a fairly relevant word to learn in reference

to human anatomy, thereby transcending the narrow realm of the gaming lingo. The same is true of some of the most used items for satisfying hunger within the game, such as “melons, bread, mushroom stew, chicken, beef, pork chop and rotten flesh” (Jan).

The creative mode enables the player to create and destroy structures easily. “Players use cubes with different textures like soil, sandstone, wood and wool to build in a real-time, computer generated 3D environment that features a day and night cycle and weather” (Brand and Kinash). There are also other materials. The main contribution to the expansion of the gamers’ English vocabulary in the creative mode consists of the names of miscellaneous materials.

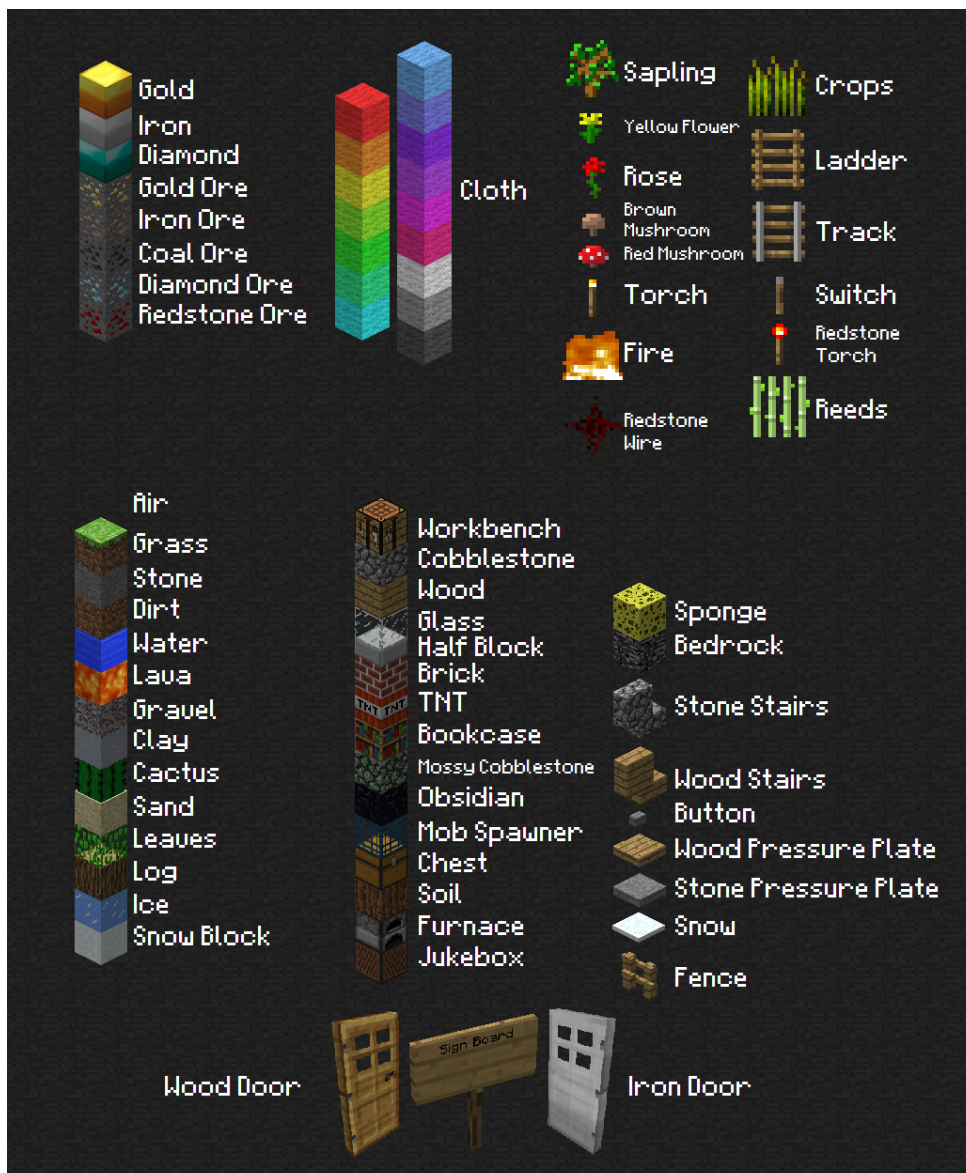


Fig. 12 List of block types in game

5.2.7 Collectible Card Game

According to Mark Wolf, collectible card games are “[g]ames which are adaptations of existing card games, or games which are essentially like card games in that they are primarily card-base. While most Card Games use the standard four-suit deck, some games use specialized cards” (6).

Hearthstone is the seventh most played game (Fig. 2). It was developed by Blizzard, the company responsible for World of Warcraft. Hearthstone is inspired by World of Warcraft; its full name is Hearthstone: Heroes of Warcraft. Some of the vocabulary comes from the original game, for example the heroes.

There are nine heroes available to all players. They are called Druid, Hunter, Mage, Paladin, Priest, Rogue, Shaman, Warlock and Warrior. These overlap with the classes that gamers can choose in World of Warcraft.

This is a fast-paced strategy card game. It is played by only one player and it can be played either against another person or a computer unit. At first, the player chooses a hero and a card deck he or she compiled. Then they are matched with an opponent. There is no in-game chat and the only communication is possible through the six sentences every hero has. They are produced in a slightly different manner, but the meaning remains the same.

When a player clicks on the hero, there are six options presented: Thanks, Well Played, Greetings, Wow, Oops and Threaten. After clicking on an option that would say



Fig. 13 Hearthstone offers only six communication options, rather than full chat.

what the player wants to communicate, the hero's voice will say a sentence depending on the class. For example Oops: Priest will say "Not quite what was planned" whereas Druid will say "A natural mistake". These sentences are often heard, since they are played out of boredom when a player waits for the opponent to decide what they will do.

There are sentences the heroes utter without the need of pressing any icons. An example would be, since it is a fast-paced game, "I am running out of time" and other variations, depending on the hero. These sentences occur when there is little time left, when the player is running out of cards; there are too many minions on the board, attempting to attack an invalid target and so on. It is clear; the player needs to understand what these sentences mean to be able to play properly.

There is no other option to chat with the competitor, unless the player and the person with whom he competes are in each other's friends list. It is possible to play against a friend. In that case, they can chat via the Blizzard chat. Friends can have conversations even when playing different games, as long as they are from Blizzard.

There is special vocabulary for this sort of a card game. There are special cards designed for the game. There are some basic cards available to all players. Other cards are available for in-game currency (gold) or real life money. A player cannot buy a particular card, it is always random. The cards are then divided according to how likely a player is to obtain them, distinguishing between Common, Rare, Epic and Legendary level rankings.

The cards are separated into three groups – spells, weapons and minions. Minions are further divided into these categories: Pirate, Beats, Murloc, Mech, Dragon, Giant and Demon. Most minions do not fit into these categories and do not have this sort of a name tag. Many of these cards are used in a number of card decks. So the names of these cards are easily remembered. The cards also feature pictures, so it is usually not hard to guess the meaning if not already familiar with it. Some examples are: Fireball, Sheep, Mind Control, Resurrect, Flamestrike, Frostbolt, Savage Road and so on.

There are a few cards that have only the information of how much attack and health they have and how much they cost but the vast majority of the cards have a further description, describing in detail what the card does. There are certain key words that are not explained in the description anymore, because they are accepted as a part of common knowledge. These are: Overload, Summon, Immune, Stealth, Divine Shield, Secret,

Windfury, Charge, Enrage, Silence, Taunt, Discover and so on. These words are understood for what their effect is either on the opponent or his cards. The in-game meaning is very similar to the denotation of the word.

Hearthstone is also popular among streamers. This is where the strategic element of the game comes into play in English acquisitions. Streamers, usually in English, explain why they played a certain card to clarify their strategy. The major point of watching these videos is entertainment, but a significant part of watching streams is to understand more strategies and become a better player. That is why players try to understand and do understand a great deal from the context of what happened next and from already known words that the streamer uses, thereby acquiring new vocabulary that is not only game related but also strategy related.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a theoretical basis for the statement that computer games can prove beneficial towards acquiring and expanding the gamers' English vocabulary. The stated language acquisition is not fostered merely by playing computer games but also by adjacent activities, such as researching the games and instructions online or communication triggered by the computer games.

Similarities can be found between modern teaching methods and gaming. The most notable portion of attention in this thesis is assigned to the comparison of the communicative method, which is the predominantly used method in education systems nowadays, and which displays some analogies to gaming.

It has been established that certain features provided by gaming, such as motivation, emotional response, learning within a community, frequent communication in English and numerous repetition can be beneficial to some learners. These are provided by gaming in general and are not limited to a specific genre or a specific game. Both the intrinsic and extrinsic spectrum of motivation is mentioned, also touching on the fact that the gaming environment uses both positive and negative motivational impetus. The possibility of pro-gaming career is briefly mentioned as an example of purely extrinsic motivation. Learning, as well as communication, within a community is realized in English since it functions as a lingua franca. There is generally a negative attitude towards non-English speakers in most gamer communities. Even in specifically Czech communities, there is a particular English lexicon which gamers understand. In this chapter, there are represented words and abbreviations that tend to be understood by gamers generally, regardless of what genre they partake in.

Finally, there are given a few examples of specific potential contributions of certain games. The games chosen for this analysis are frequently played games that would have the most impact on an average gamer. The predominant emphasis is put on League of Legends and World of Warcraft, but Hearthstone, Minecraft and Counter Strike are also described.

My original plan was to conduct a questionnaire but I have decided to postpone it and do so in my future work for two reasons. Firstly, I have decided to cover the theory in a more extensive manner and not to overshadow it with the aforementioned questionnaire.

Secondly, I believe the questionnaire could provide some interesting outcomes and would be more interesting to do as a follow-up to this theoretical basis in a more extensive manner. All in all, the thesis concluded that playing computer games in English can have a positive effect on building and expanding vocabulary of the participant. As it is, the aim of the thesis has been rather modest, namely to provide a basic research-based overview of areas in which PC gaming can function as unintentional edutainment in the area of second language acquisition.

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