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INFLUENCE OF VIDEO GAMES ON THE ACQUISITION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

In the past decade or two, there has been an obvious increase in the number of school children proficient in English. One of the reasons is the number of English classes per week, but even more importantly, it is the influence of the media. Students are greatly exposed to video games. In this paper, a survey was conducted in order to find the connection between video-game playing and English proficiency. Ninety six students filled out the survey answering a range of question on the quantity and quality of their video game playing. The conclusion drawn was that video games have a profound impact on language learning. The areas of most benefit were vocabulary and pronunciation. As a form of highly desirable entertainment, video games provide a positive and motivating atmosphere, which is perfect for adopting a foreign language.

KEY WORDS: video games, influence, English, second-language acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

Ever since English became a *lingua franca* in all areas from business, science, diplomacy, information technology and other parts of our everyday lives, people from around the world have been learning it as a way to open as many doors in life as possible. From job opportunities to holiday prospects to increasing the amount of potential entertainment, English has become an integral part in the lives of many people across the globe. After World War 2, with the rise of the United States as a world superpower and the advent of new communication channels, the influence of English is felt everywhere.

The most important facet of the American culture that let English infiltrate the world was the entertainment industry. From Hollywood to the various music outlets, the Ameri-

can dream spread out, bringing with it the English language. One entertainment area that became a steady supplier of non-native English speaker to the world was the development of video games. Video gaming was not always a way to acquire language, since the very first video games were made out of old radar equipment designedto simulate a game of table tennis. Until the mid-1980s, video games were nothing more than a bunch of shapes shooting or moving towards other shapes on a black and white screen, with barely any depth to the gameplay other than being a reflex test. They could not contain any narrative because of their lack of attractive graphics and a plot. Gradually, however, games have become more and more complex both in terms of gameplay and story, and as such have become phenomenal sources first for passive, but laterincreasingly for active language interaction. Thus, they have become a multimillion dollar business.

In the past few decades, more and more people, especially children, started playing video games and many video games characters became cultural icons. The technology of video gaming has advanced far enough to be compared to movies, cartoons and books in their capacity to tell an engaging story, to be well presented and directed. Video games have two important advantages over these mediums: interactivity and the facilitation of communication.Facilitation of communication is especially important in increasing the proficiency of a non-native English speaker. Most games tend to have either vast internal lore or a variety of systems interacting within the larger gameplay systems. Both of these factors create a need for players to flock unto various communication platforms to discuss the games or to find out how to get past a difficult level, thus facilitating language use. The language of international communication is, of course, English.

Another facet of communication is the reliance of certain games to be played by multiple people. This has the benefit of having players engaged in "on the spot" communication, especially in regard to teamwork-focused games like tactical first person shooters. These games require not only great reflexes and tactical thinking, but also communication skills and verbal coordination with other players. In large part due to these advantages, video gaming has become the latest domain of English as the world communication tool,and it seems appropriate, therefore, to try and analyse the influence video games have on learning English.

So, the aim of this work is to examine the influence of video games on the acquisition of English. First, relevant research will be reviewed, and then the relationship between video games and other media will be established. In order to investigate the impact of video games on the English-language acquisition, a survey was given to non-English-speaking video games players about the influence of those video games on their English proficiency. The result of the survey will then be analysed. Finally, the question how specific features of video games contribute to language learning will be examined as well.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Before delving into the literature focused on the influence of video games on language acquisition, it is pertinent to explore some of the concepts on language acquisition in

general. The book *Introducing Second Language Acquisition* by Saville-Troike (2006) is a great resource for understanding language acquisition and, for our purposes specifically, second-language acquisition. On page 17 the book provides a very simple yet incredibly useful table on first and second language development:

2.2 First vs. second language development	
L1	L2
INITIAL STATE	
Innate capacity	Innate capacity? L1 knowledge World knowledge Interaction skills
INTERMEDIATE STATES	
Child grammar	**Learner language**
Basic processes	
Maturation	Transfer
Necessary conditions	
Input Reciprocal interaction	Input
Facilitating conditions	
	Feedback Aptitude Motivation Instruction . . . .
FINAL STATE	
Native competence	Multilingual competence

This table very simply breaks down the basic stages and processes that take place in language learning. The author argues that the initial stages of language learning both for the native language acquired in childhood and potentially for any subsequent languages learnt a degree of innate ability is required. In the initial stage, second-language learners will also possess the knowledge from their original language as well as various other skills, which provide a baseline for learning.First the basic process of linguistic competence in the original language takes place. Cross-linguistic competence is a part of the transfer, since some aspects of languages translate without a hitch across languages.Once the basic transfer is over, the necessary part of learning begins. Input is the most important part of language learning. It provides learners with the key aspects of language: words, sentence structure, phonology etc.

Four components need to be satisfied for the final state of full multilingual competence to be achieved:1. Feedback with error correction; 2. Aptitude with facilitation of memory capacity and analytic ability; 3. Motivation; 4. Instruction, or in the case of school children, teaching. The third point, motivation, is by far the most relevant regarding video games and their influence on language acquisition. According to A. Doring, children develop high confidence in adopting the language in a "low-affective" atmosphere for learning (2002, 56). Video games and cartoons engage the attention of learners,create a non-threateningatmosphere in presenting information and have potential to encourage

thinking process and discussion skills (Clark 2000). So, learning a foreign language while playing video games is very effective because it is highly motivating due to its entertainment value, and there is no pressure or evaluation methods that could deter players from openly engaging in using the language.

In the past few years, a few studies trying to analyse the influence of playing video games on the language-learning process have appeared. Concerning positive effects gaming could have, at firstarguments were presented that video games had benefits on things like anxiety and motivation, but the question of the influence of video games on language learning has yet to be fully explored.

Researchers Reinders and Wattana (2011) in their article „Learn English or die: The effects of digital games on interaction and willingness to communicate in a foreign language," highlight a few studies that have been done on how digital gaming could help with language acquisition. The first study they mention was conducted in 2010 by deHaan, Reed, Kuwada. It was designed to compare the increase in vocabulary of participants who actively played a game as opposed to participants who only watched the game being played. The study found that people who only watched gameplay reported higher result than the people who were actively playing. The researchers then concluded that "…interactivity is therefore not necessarily conducive to language acquisition." (cited in Reinders 2011). The authors point out,however, a few problems with the study. The first is that language was not the key aspect within the goal of the game played, and thus the comprehension of the vocabulary was not necessary. Second, the genre of the game did not have a story component to it, which would require the player to be able to comprehend what was being stated and how to respond to the games challenges correctly.

Another interesting study that Reinders and Wattana (2011) discuss was done by Chen and Johnson in 2004. They used a commercial role-playing game called *NeverwinterNigths* (developed by Bioware in 2002) and modified it to have a language learning aspect to "…promote a state of 'flow' and motivate students to practice language skills." (cited in Reinders 2016). The authors found that depending on the amount of experience an individual has with playing games, the better chance they have to acquire the secondary skills the game might affect.

A very important element of video-game playing is interaction, described as something that relates to all interpersonal activity that happens either in real life or via electronic means, like the internet or over the phone. Reinders and Wattana state that in order for language acquisition to be most effective, a learner must be able to produce "comprehensible output" in addition to getting "comprehensible input" of the target language (Reinders 2011). This requirement describes certain video games perfectly, since most of them will provide a hefty English vocabulary and grant the player many opportunities to use that vocabulary to communicate with other players.

The final important point that the authors make is about the willingness to communicate. The key problem is that despite the reception of a sufficient amount of "input",the players will not automatically be willing to use it. The explanation given by various previous

linguists are predisposition toward verbal behavior, shyness or unwillingness to communicate (Reinders 2011). The willingness to communicateis the key in being able to acquire a second language, and one of the best ways to do it is to increase the likelihood of people using the language not only in a scholastic environment, but in more natural ways. One of those ways, as the researchers point out, is by playing video games, specifically, massively multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPGs). Since people perceive video games asan entertaining, low-anxiety environment, and in the case of MMORPGs and other games have a multiplayer component, they provide and easy and natural way to produce language. They thus provide the other half of language acquisition through interpersonal player interactions through the web (Reinders 2011).

In his article "Video Games as Opportunity for Informal English Language Learning: Theoretical Considerations", R. G. da Silva discusses ways in which language learners could use video games as a way to increase their proficiency using video games. The article describes two particular types of skills that video games help cultivate: receptive skills (reading and listening) and expressive skills (writing and speaking) (da Silva 2014). The way video games cultivate receptive language skills is by giving players new vocabulary and then immediately providing them with the proper context. This is done by stimulating the player's other senses and by showing players corresponding images or having a character perform a corresponding action.

Da Silva also points out a few studies showing that simple interaction with non-player characters (NPCs) can be very helpful. Heargues that games are a great way of teaching people about various types of language quirks such as accents. Understanding what NPCs in games are saying is very important for completing the objectives of the game.Expressive skills are cultivated within gameplay as well. The author explains two important concepts, "transmedia"and"participatory culture."A researcher by the name of Thompson in his study in 2013 pointed out that over time video games have become more and more difficult, acquiring hidden secrets or difficult puzzles, so a collective intelligence is necessary to fully experience the game. For these reasons, and with the widespread use of the internet, massive amounts of gaming communities have appeared in order to solve these predicaments. He states that video games have become "transmedia" because they shattered the boundaries of their own medium. Since the discussion of certain games has moved into other media forms, in order to fully understand all the underlying mechanisms of games, people started to look for information outside of them. This causes discourse to happen and language input/output to appear (cited in da Silva 2014).

The other study that da Silva refers to is an example given for personal and interactional functions of language. The study done by Rankin in 2008 looked into MMORPGS and found that allowing non-native players to communicate within an international community of players, which includes native-speakers, directly leads to a better form of language acquisition, thus developing the personal and interactional functions of language (cited in da Silva 2014).It was concluded that in-game group building either through guilds or parties inside MMORPGs like *World* of *Warcraft* facilitate the regulatory function of

language, since most of these groups have their own internal rules that are either made by the game developers or are agreed upon or enforced by other players.

In his article "L2 Acquisition From Video Games With Minimal Exposure", L. H. Theodorsen reiterates the importance of comprehensible input and output as an important factor in second language acquisition. He notes that there is something called language *intake* that is similar to input, but that it is "input that has been processed in the working memory and made available for further processing". There are ways that learners process input in manners that are sub optimal, and this could be the case with video games, since, depending on the game, gameplay sessions could be stressful and attention could be, therefore, diverted from processing language, Theodorsen argues. The player are nevertheless more attentive to key words that convey meaning instead of the complementary words like inflections, pronouns and prepositions (Theodorsen 2015).

Theodorsen introduces the concept of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) method of creating tasks for language learning and applying the same logic to the design of a video game. "Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) proposes the notion of 'task' as a central unit of planning and teaching. Although definitions of task vary in TBLT, there is an agreement that a task is an activity or goal carried out using language, such as finding solutions to a puzzle, reading a map and giving directions, making a telephone call, writing a letter, or reading a set of instructions and assembling a toy," he explains (Theodorsen 2015). TBLT helps understand how video games have a great potential in being language learning tools, since the player is active within the world which provides a huge amount of linguistic input with corresponding visuals, auditory stimuli and context.

A few of the design elements described are particularly useful for language learning and can be found in almost any modern game. The most important principle is that of information "on demand":information and tools to solve the problems presented to the player are available immediately, which is a key component to the games progress in most genres. In addition to the gameplay tools that the players are presented,the same happens with the way language is presented to them. It is always presented with context, most importantly context that arises directly from player actions (both in terms of gameplay systems as well as the narrative choices if applicable by genre), which allows players to be emotionally invested in the story and thus acquire the language even better (Theodorsen 2015).

This article also describes the concept of *interconnection of visual and word*. Video games connect language with visual, auditory cues as well as interactive 3D representation of an object inside the game world. This allows a player to associate a linguistic phenomenon through multiple senses, which enhances the learning of the word. Hedescribes *Computer assisted language learning* or CALL. A study done by Ranalli in 2008 looked at a game called *The Sims* to see if a commercial title could be adapted to suit a vocabulary learning exercise. In the study, researcher paid extra attention to the supporting material and how it affects applied language learning. He also tried to find which aspects of gameplay were most effective for the adaptation of games into a learning tool (cited in Theodorsen 2015). So, this study tells us that with proper adaptation commercial games can easily be

turned into edutainment while simply building on top of an innate usefulness of games to teach language.

Another relevant article is Olli Uuskoskis' "Playing video games: A waste of time... or not?"The author describes a study done by Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio in 2009 that investigated one potential aspect of video games as a language learning tool. The researchers watched and transcribed recordings of two teenagers playing Final Fantasy X, and they focused on how the players then repeated the dialogue spoken by the in-game characters. Thevarious linguistic details found in video games are particularly flexible resources, and a socially shared experience provides extra proficiency with the players' second language, the authors concluded. They argue that being able to mimic the speech characters produce in the game allows the player to transfer the words spoken into his/her own vocabulary and is later on able to use those same linguistic resources outside of a gaming situation (cited in Uuskoski 2011). Video gaming is not necessarily a social experience, and language is not always a key part of a game, the author states, but the study still highlights an immense potential that games have in terms of being a useful tool in language acquisition (Uuskoski 2011).

In conclusion, the theoretical body of work about the influence of video games on language acquisition seems to point toward the fact that video games can be massively useful in teaching a language.Most of the researchers agree that video games provide a very comprehensive set of extra stimuli that help involve players in the language they are exposed to through gameplay. Visual cues, voice acting, discourse, narratives and context are all parts of games and, when paired with linguistic resources, enhance the learning process. Video games also activate incidental learning,where the previously mentioned context allows the player to make educated guesses as to what an unknown word might mean, and as a result gaps in player knowledge of the language can be easily filled in without using a dictionary. Children are not inclined to use dictionaries, even on the computer, anyway.

Many researchers also looked into the potential of video games to be a form of "edutainment" (education + entertainment) for the language learning purposes. While there were efforts to design games specifically for language learning, research suggests that even commercial games have the potential to be valuable tools for learning without using any supplementary material for teaching purposes.Another great side effect of gaming that encourages development of language skills in learners is related to the concept of transmedia. Video games are complicated systems with many sub-systems that have lots of gameplay nuances, a vast narrative with complex back stories to track, or secrets that are difficult to find. As a result, communities spring up to try and solve these mysteries. The communities built around video games provide a motivation to use the language, greatly increasing the players' proficiency.

As with any form of language learning help, video games have their drawbacks as well. Several studies suggested that certain games, especially older games, cannot be used for these purposes since they do not include language, or language is barely relevant while playing. Another problem that games have as a learning tool has to do with cognitive

overload. If a game is too complicated or too involved, then the brain simply does not have the capacity to properly play the game and passively (or actively) learn a language.

METHODOLOGY

In order to assess influence of video games on language learners, the main tool used was a questionnaire.A questionnaire previously used to investigate influence of cartoons on foreign-language acquisition (Postic 2015) washeavily modified to examine the influence of video games on learning the English language. It contained nine questions related to the use of video games and their impact on English-language acquisition. Apart from asking the students to quantify the time they spend playing video games, it asks them to assess the influence the game playing had on their knowledge of the foreign language. The children were also asked to give the average evaluation they obtained in their English language class.

The questionnaire was given to 96 children ages 11-15.Beside establishing the connection between the video games and English-language learning, the questions were designed to test a few of the points discussed in the theoretical section of the paper.Once the data was collected,all the answers were reviewed and analysed, and conclusions formulated.

THE EMPIRICAL SURVEY

The very first thing that needs to be established while conducting the research on the influence of video games on learning the English language is how video games are similar to other, more traditional, forms of media. Video games are in a unique position, as they can be easily compared to other mediums, but they also possess a few traits that are completely unique to gaming.Books are the first medium that certain video games can be compared to, since video games allow for a wide array building up the plot. Just like books, video games generally do not have the problem of pacing, since neither medium is constrained by the average run times of movies. A movie being too short or too long can be a big problem, but books and video games can, for the most part, be as long as they want as long as its content is engaging. Also, certain video games have extensive use of written materials, either for world building, by creating a written book within the world to read, or for budgetary reasons and creating character dialogue via text.

Movies and cartoons are another medium that video games can be compared to. Ever since modern 3D video game engineshave been implemented, and after a few landmark video games like *Metal Gear Solid*, video games started to implement more and more techniques associated with film. Nowadays, a lot of games have "cut scenes" that are scripted, shot, and acted out just like movie scenes, but instead of filming live actors (sometimes actors with motion capture technology), game developers use the in-game graphics engine to create and direct scenes inside games. In terms of language learning, this helps the player learn proper pronunciation by being constantly exposed to the language spoken properly. Games that allow players to choose a response by their playable character are particularly useful in that respect.

In regard to learning languages through the medium, video games have a few advantages that make for a better learning tool. There are a few reasons why playing a game provides a better language learning environment. The first reason is the idea of "quiet time"; there are portions of games when not a whole lot is happening on screen. This time can be used to actively search for words and word meanings in a dictionary while playing. In this way, the playeris not pulled out of the game while trying to figure something out, while with a book it would be a lot less seamless. The second reason is that games often include a lot of visual cues in reference to in-game objects. When a word or a phrase comes up,one can also see the object on screen, which is a great way of associating words with visual objects. T/his circumstanceenables a much quicker learning environment.The third reason is that games, even in the most rudimentary cases, revolve around player agency. Instead of being a passive observer, a player in the game is an active participant. So instead of just observing what is happening, the players' actions have a direct impact, so the playershave to actively think what they are doing, how they are doing it and how thisis going to affect the game world or the story. Due to the active nature of these games, the player has to spend more time comprehending the words that appear on screen in order to make the most efficient decision with the given variables.

Lastly, unlike every other form of entertainment media, video games can be actively enjoyed with multiple people at the same time. In terms of influencing the language learning of an individual, multiplayer games provide players a chance and the motivation required to fully embrace and practice the language. Multiplayer games often require a lot of player cooperation, some games provide certain features to help players move in a particular direction, which naturally makes the players cooperate. This environment in a game provides an incentive for players to practice the usage of the language, since their enjoyment of the game, which comes from the accomplishment of in-game tasks, is directly tied to it.

Here is some statistical data from the survey given to middle and high school students: Out of the 96 people who were asked about the influence of video games on their language


Did video games help you learn English?
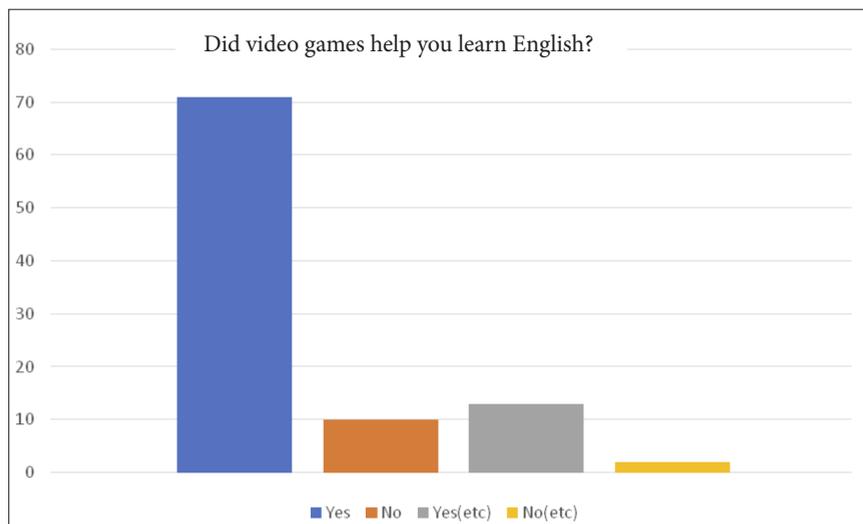
learning. 71 of the people responded positively in varying degrees. Out of those 96, 15 respondents did not play video games. So, out of the 96 people who took the survey, 81 people played video games and only 10 of them said that video games did not influence their language learning.

The next thing to consider is the English grades the students who played video games provided.

Grades of the people who played video games
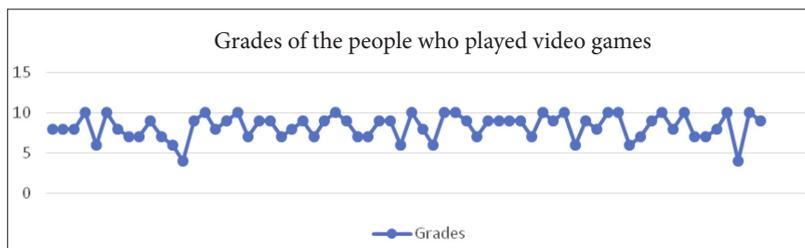
From this data, it is difficult to extrapolate anything, since the data does not include enough variables. For our purposes, these grades could imply that video games do not have much of an effect on language learning considering that the only grade not represented in this line chart is 5, one grade above failing, with the rest being evenly represented. The high grades could suggest that video gaming helps significantly, but the low grades could mean that it is a detriment orthat the pupil is spending too much time playing and not studying.

Grades of people who did not play video games
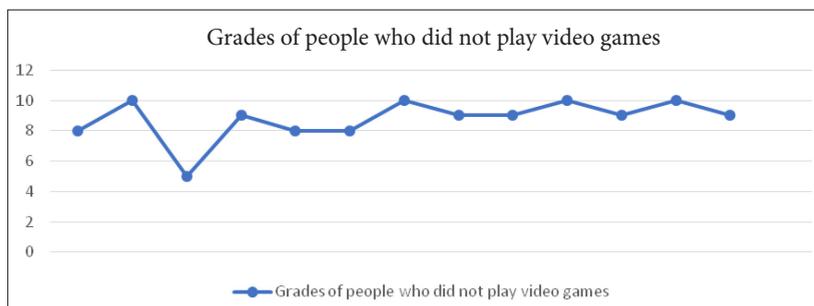
Comparing the grades of people who played video games and those who did not cannot be done fairly, since the amount of people who played video games far outweighed the number of people who did not, so comparing the two groups would bear no usable results.

Next, the answers to the questions on the questionnaire should be considered:

Question 1: What in your opinion has helped you learn English the most?

Out of the 71 people who answered that video games helped learning the English language, 20 responded that video games were the main or one of the main influences that helped them learn the language. This represents quite a large percentage of the students, which suggests that video games are a substantial influence on language learning. The other answers included were: movies, cartoons, the internet in general,school and parents. These answers were expected.

Question 2: Have you ever used the internet or played video games before the age of 12?

All the people who responded to this question responded positively, which suggests that both the internet and video games have become an omnipresent part of everyday lives of children and thus will, at the very least, influence their language usage.

Question 3: If you responded to the last question positively, do you think video games helped you learn English? If so, please elaborate on how they helped you learn English.

Many of the people who responded to this question did not specify how video games helped them learn; they only mentioned that they did. However, the people who did elaborate gave a few different answers. The most commonly expressed opinion was that video games help expand the vocabulary of the player, since most games provide a lot of textual and audible information, and thus continuously reinforce the new vocabulary. The reinforcement of the vocabulary comes in the form of many repetitive actions during gameplay, which will burn certain words into the mind of the player. For example, the game series called *Dark Souls* prides itself on having a high difficulty, so a player will constantly be dying, which brings up this screen:
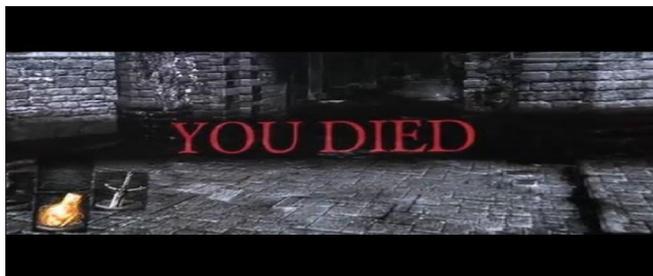
So, by the end of the game the player will know exactly what this means. It is a way of making a player aware of a phrase that is unique to games, because in any other form of media outside of song choruses, an egregious repetition like that would be a sign of poor writing on the author's part.

The next common answer was the fact that games often have object highlighting in the games, as for example here:

This provides the player with a contextual prompt, which works as a collocation set, a great way of providing context to words. The example above reads, "a door can be unlocked".

A fewstudents who responded to the questionnaire specifically mentioned this kind of aspect as a contributing factor to language learning during gameplay. The next frequent answer was that video games provide a good way of learning proper pronunciation via cutscenes. Lastly, an answer was given about video games helping practice speaking due to the multiplayer and cooperative nature of many games.

Question 4: How much time do you spend playing video games?

Hours Played per Day

Hours played per day

n/a   <1h   1-3h   3-6h   6h+
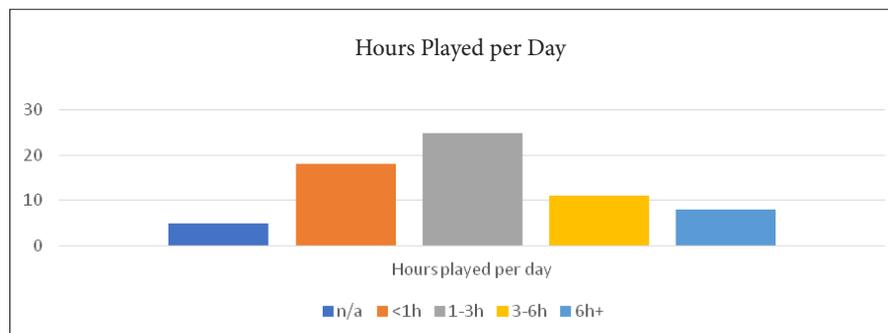
Looking at the answers for this question, a question arises. Does the number of hours spent playing video games every day correlate to the average grade that the student has in English? From the data collected, there does not seem to be a correlation between the amount of time spent playing and how good the players evaluation is, but this could also be a problem with the research method, orwhich games the student had been playing.

Question 5: What types of games and genres of games do you play?

The answers to this question varied quite significantly. In terms of specific games, a few can be singled out like: *Counter Strike: Global Offensive,* which is potentially a very good tool to learn language since it is a multiplayer game with a massive focus on team cooperation. *League of Legends* is another commonly mentioned game, and could be very useful for language learning for the same reasons, but could be potentially more helpful since this game encourages the players to seek information outside of the game, on various internet forums, which facilitates communication and language learning even further.

Online multiplayer gamestend to facilitate a way of speaking that is fairly obstructive to proper language learning, however. Since most online games have a focus on action, quick decision making and specifically quick relay of information, in online games speed of communication is more importantthan form and sometimes correctness, which provides a substantial problem for learning. This can be bypassed by using a microphone. On the other hand, since speed is favored, the language user is thrust into a position to choose words and phrases in order to relay the relevant information as fast as possible, which is a great way to practice producing language under stress.

Another interesting point to be made is that quite a few of the respondents mentioned action-adventure games that are very focused on telling a story with Hollywood-like levels of production and a very similar style to how Hollywood movies are presented, which really shows a parallel way that video games and movies/cartoons can influence video game play-

ers and film viewers in their language acquisition. Games like *GTA V* and *Tomb Raider*are games that provide many ways to acquire language. Unlike other games, since most of the word input that the player gets in these type of games is heard and not read, this provides not just the contextual clues to understand new words, but also a great auditory aid for speaking. This is especially pronounced in *Tomb Raider,* where every character speaks in proper diction without any aberrant accents.

Apart from the action-adventure games, quite a few respondents mentioned racing games, which could be a great source of technical vocabulary, and some of the respondents mentioned games specifically made for girls, which could be a source of related vocabulary.

Another interesting point to note is that a few people mentioned playing educational games. This type of gamesisoften considered to be a waste of money for the regular consumer, but there are notable exceptions. *Typing of the Dead* is a very good example of an educational game not targeted for alanguage learner, but a great way of teaching people how to type fast. In this game, the player fights off zombies by typing, which is both entertaining and provides a very clear educational benefit.

Question 6: Have you ever used a word or a phrase that you have heard in a video game?

Only 5 people answered "no" to this question, which highlights that video games can be a huge source of, at the very least, spoken language. As mentioned before, video games provide a huge source of vocabulary, and the answers to this question show that games have a very real way of hammering words and phrases into the players' mind. This of course can backfire somewhat, as one of the respondents answered with the phrases: "so

long sucka!" and "I'm Batman," which are not particularly great examples of learning, but still shows that media can help acquire language in a very substantial way.

Question 7: Have you ever noticed that, while speaking English, you speak similarly to a character in a video game?

The answers to this question were split right down the middle. This suggests that video games have quite a substantial influence on how the player will speak, which can be helpful in teaching people how to speak properly, but not everyone acquires speech skills in this way. Another thing that could be extrapolated from these answers is that the writing team behind these games is particularly proficient increating engaging characters, which could lead to the motivation factor of language learning, since motivation is one of those key components to language learning. This could suggest that the more interesting a game's characters and plot is, the more of an influence the game will have on acquiring the language.In order to increase the uniqueness of a character, however, some players have accents or speak in broken English, which could influence the players' speech negatively.

Question Nr.8: Do you use English on the internet? If so please elaborate.

Everyone answered this question positively, but barely anyone elaborated on it. The answers provided make the idea of transmedia, as proposed by Jenkins, difficult to substantiate as a way to provide another avenue of language acquisition. The assumption with was that people who played video games would use internet resources to figure out a problematic situation they found in a game, whether it is a difficult boss or a puzzle they cannot solve. Strangely, however, quite a few of the answers made note of the person using internet translators, which could mean that the person found a word or phrase inside the game and wanted to look it up in order to figure something out.

Question 9: How do you personally evaluate your knowledge of the English language?

The answers to this question were particularly varied with most people thinking that their level of English was either average or really good. Most of the answers also coincided with the evaluation that the school gave to the student.

Overall, from all the answers given by the students, it appears that video games have a considerable influence on language learning. It is difficult,however, to quantify precisely how much of an impact games do have. The time spent playing or the types of games played could all be a determining factor as to how much of an improvement to language usage games provide. From the data collected, it is hard to draw a conclusive answer if games provide a lot of help. Most telling is the graph that shows just how varied the grades are of the people who play video games. One thing that is very clear from the answers of this questionnaire is that video games are an undeniably great resource for vocabulary expansion, since almost everyone that took the questionnaire confirmed that video games provide a great amount of new words to learn. Another way that video games improve language skills is how they help people with spoken language, since certain games both encourage communication and have movie-like qualities that create an auditory environment for passive language learning.

CONCLUSIONS

After the empirical survey, the connection between playing video games and acquiring the second language was established.

1. Recently, quite a few scholarly papers about the relationship between the two have appeared. Most of the research done was related tothe Plass and Jones integrated model of second-language acquisition, with ideas about multimedia being most applicable for video games.

2. The connection between video games and other forms of media is fairly evident. The forms of media closest to video games are books and movies/cartoons. Still, video games have the advantage of being interactive and are thus able to actively engage the consumer.

3. The theoretical literature suggests quite a few ways in which video games influence language acquisition in a positive way.

4. The questionnaire has been particularly helpful in determining ways in which playing video games can help learn a language both in active ways and in the passive exposure to the language during play.

5. Video games have quite a few advantages in learning a language. The most obvious example is how video games provide visual cues alongside words in order to tell the player the name of an object, which is not something one can find in a movie or a book. Interactivity is another important feature of video games that help with language acquisition, since proper understanding of what is going on and how to achieve objectives is crucial. This circumstance encourages the player to figure out what the game is saying. As a result of this encouragement, the player will start actively learning the unfamiliar words and phrases.

6. So, the results of the survey establish a definite relationship between video games and the positive impact they have on learning the English language.

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KOMPIUTERINIŲ ŽAIDIMŲ ĮTAKA ANGLŲ KALBOS ĮSISAVINIMUI

Santrauka

Šiais laikais anglų kalba darosi vis svarbesnė visuose komunikacijos lygmenyse. Šalyse, kuriose anglų kalba nėra gimtoji, kaip Lietuvoje, efektyvus užsienio kalbos mokymas tapo prioritetu.Per pastaruosius dešimt metų pastebima, kad daugelis mokinių ne tik puikiai moka anglų kalbą, bet ir ja kalba beveik tobulu amerikietišku akcentu. Pastarieji šiame projekte dalyvavusių žmonių gebėjimai po išsamių mokslinių tyrimų buvo susieti su tuo, kad tiriamieji vaikystėje žaidė kompiuterinius žaidimus. Palaipsniui augantis skaičius žmonių, kurie pukiai kalba angliškai, sutapo su kompiuterinių žaidimų paplitimu. Šio straipsnio tikslas buvo išnagrinėti kompiuterinių žaidimų įtaką anglų kalbos įsisavinimui. Daugumoje mokslinių darbų, tiriančių santykį tarp kompiuterinių žaidimų žaidimo ir anglų kalbos išmokimo, aprašoma, kaip kompiuterinių žaidimų žaidimas gali lemti kalbų mokymąsi. Per pastaruosius dešimt metų lingvistai ir kognityviniai psichologai vis labiau domisi kompiuterinių žaidimų įtaka užsienio kalbų išmokimui, tačiau specialus, visapusis tyrimas dar nebuvo atliktas. Šis darbas atskleidžia užsienio kalbų mokymosi ir medijų įtakos vaikams ryšį.

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: kompiuteriniai žaidimai, įtaka, anglų kalba, antros kalbos įsisavinimas.

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INFLUENCE OF VIDEO GAMES ON THE ACQUISITION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Summary

Nowadays, the English language is becoming increasingly important on all levels of communication. In non-English speaking countries, like Lithuania, effective English language learning has become a priority. In the past ten years it has become evident that a lot of students not only speak perfect English, but they speak with a native or near-native American accent. After a comprehensive research, English language proficiency was linked to video-games playing. The aim of this work was to analyse the influence of video games on the acquisition of the English language. Many scholarly papers examining the connection between playing video games and English-language learning describe in which way video-game playing can influence language learning. In the past decade, linguists and cognitive psychologists are more and more interested in the influence of video games in the acquisitin of a foreign language, but a narrowly targeted, comprehensive research has not been conducted yet. This work reveals the influence of the media, especially video-game playing, on the foreign-language learning on the scale never found before.

KEY WORDS: video games, influence, English, second-language acquisition.