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**Major: Linguistics**

**Investigation the of Effect of Interactive Video Games on English Language Acquisition**

**The Case Study of Undergraduate Students of English at Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla**

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## **Dedication**

*I dedicate this humble work:*

*To the greatest woman who brought me to life and keeps giving me reasons to survive, my MOM, I love you enormously.*

*To my family, young and old, each and every one of you: Thank you for sticking around.*

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## **Abstract**

This study is an attempt to study the effect of interactive video games on the English language acquisition through the experience of students from the department of English of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla. It is mainly hypothesized that regular playing of video games affects the learning process and the learners' motivation to acquire the language used in the game. The study is conducted based on a qualitative research method. The data obtained from a semi-directed questionnaire are analysed to explore the effectiveness of Video gaming as a strategy to improve English language skills. The results we obtained confirmed the hypothesis.

**Key words:** Video games, online games, language acquisition, motivation, Communication, technology

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# **General Introduction**

## **General Introduction**

Video games have always been a concern for parents and care givers: They always raise the question as to whether video games are positive or not, whether they are corrupting our children or they are helping them to develop useful skills.

In this study, a spot of light is to be shed on one of the video games' benefits, with regard to developing one's language skills in general and the English language as a foreign language in particular.

In recent years, the global adaptation of the English language in most programs and technical platforms, especially in the entertainment department of gaming, has paved the way to the unintentional exposure to a new language, particularly for children. Having been assumed as top consumers of video games, children, reflexively and /or deliberately, started learning English. Due to the urge to comprehend the game's instructions and to pass certain quests in the game, gamers tend to put on effort to decode the language with utter motivation and determination. This results in developing and expanding their English language skills.

This study focuses mainly on the data collected through a semi-directed questionnaire which has been distributed to a group of students of the department of English (Kasdi Merbah Ouargla university) during the academic year 2021-2022.

The collected data served as our main source of information and analysis for the present study and to answer the main question of this research.

## **Statement of the Problem**

There is a constant inquiry to discover more on the influence video games have on video gamers' English Language, and the ways and methods they adopt in acquiring the language while playing. Some researchers suggest that video games help learners acquire and memorize vocabularies and sentences while playing unintentionally.

## **Aims of the study**

This study aims to shed the light on the influence of the modern video games on the video gamers' English language acquisition. Moreover, it attempts to identify the effectiveness of the semi-authentic context on learning English.

## **Research Questions**

This study will be conducted to answer the following questions:

- How did video games impact the English Language of the students group of Kasdi Merbah University?
- What solutions did this group of students adopt to develop and master the English language?
- To what extent were these solutions effective?

## **Hypotheses**

Video games might offer a semi-authentic environment for learners to acquire English as effectively as in the environment of the classroom. Following video games instructions and commands help the video gamer develop language awareness via listening and applying the instruction correctly.

## **Methodology**

This study intends to explore the role of video games in acquiring the English language through the quantitative and qualitative data mainly provided by a group of students -from the department of English of Kasdi Merbah university- who had /have a considerable experience with video gaming .A questionnaire is used to collect data.

## **Dissertation Structure**

The dissertation is organized into two chapters .Chapter I reviews the literature and describes the background of this work in which we shall discuss the importance of technology in modern teaching and how teachers turn technology into a teaching tool, along with how they manage to blend entertainment and media as a source of both learning and teaching. There will be a closer look on the history of video games .The meaning behind their naming, their development through the years and their various types and kinds. Last, we will also tackle the linguistic effects of video games on children and gamers: the gamers' tendency in the adaptation of video games' language and its effectiveness as a learning tool. In Chapter II, which reveals the heart of this work, describes the methods of data collection, the results obtained and to what extent they shed light on the hypotheses to our research questions.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **Chapter One: Literature Review**

### **1.1. Introduction**

In the last decades, technology has become a part of our life, and now it is becoming more available and inevitable, at work, in daily activities and even in teaching and learning. Technology has been playing an important role in the educating process for it opens unlimited sources for teaching and provides suitable tools and large variety of software and applications for learners, and among these software and applications, we find video games, though it is not a formal teaching/learning method but they still play an important role in helping students achieve a certain language competence.

Video games are used to motivate and help improving language learning, they helped teachers to create and adopt new teaching methods and enhance their teaching skills. It became an important tool for teachers to facilitate language learning to their students.

### **1.2. Technology in Modern Language Teaching**

Nowadays learners have access to many online resources thanks to the use of digital technologies. Technology-Enhanced Language Learning is the use of technologies in language teaching and learning. Technologies such as computers, cell phones, iPads, etc. with different programs are used to enhance learners' autonomy and making learning more flexible and enjoyable. Learning with technology is being developed rapidly and has the interest of researchers in the field of education.

### **1.3. Technology and Informal Learning**

Informal learning as a concept has been pioneered by researchers such as Dewey (1963). He theorized that learning happens through a person's experiences and he emphasized the importance of lifelong learning, which can be seen as the basis for modern theories on informal learning.<sup>1</sup>

Jay Cross (2007) defines formal learning as learning that happens in official situations such as schools and learning courses. For him, it is official, scheduled and based on curriculums. Traditional school education would fit this definition of formal learning by Cross. Informal learning, on the other hand, is not official and can happen both intentionally or unintentionally.

Informal learning is not based on curriculums, it is practically never-ending. Some examples of informal learning situations Cross gives are asking another person for advice, which is intentional informal learning, or the experience of burning one's finger on a hot stove, which is unintentional informal. He also suggests that the divide between formal and informal learning is not a case of either-or but a gradual scale in-between.

Introducing less formal aspects, such as play, to school education is one way to make formal education less formal on this hypothetical scale. Conversely, introducing formal aspects, such as scheduling informal learning, as voluntary language learning, would make informal learning move towards formal learning on the scale. In practice, learning is more often somewhere in-between the two extremes than it is at either one of them.

Based on that, learning which occurs during playing video games would be classified as informal learning. The learning is incidental and spontaneous and it is not planned or scheduled, it is unintentional act assuming that the main motivation to engage in video game play is for the sake of playing.

## **1.4. Video Games**

In the last three decades, Video Games have been one of the most popular forms of entertainment; they come in different forms and defining them is controversial. That issue cannot be approached unless we see it from different points of view.

Video Games differ from a simple game such as ‘ Super Mario Brothers’ to a complicated one like ‘ Grand Thief Auto ‘ which contains mini-games similar or even more complicated than ‘ SMB ‘ itself; in fact ‘ GTA ‘ has different releases and updates to each release yet all of them are considered as video games.

The present study is concerned with entertainment-focused video games rather than games with educational goals. Therefore, we can define Video Games as electronic games which we play by controlling images or avatars to fulfill a certain goal. They involve a story or a pattern to follow and sometimes they simulate real life situations or games such as sports.

## **1.5. Development of Video Games**

The development of video games is closely linked to the evolution of the computer. In the 1950s, video games were not designed for entertainment but to demonstrate how the new technology works.

### **1.5.1. Tinkering 1950-1970**

In 1958, ‘Tennis for Two’ was the first video game ever made for entertainment. The game consists of a monitor for a piece of equipment on which two people were able to bat a spot of light back and forth. After that, ‘Tennis for Two’ was forgotten for 20 years, but now it is considered the first video game ever.

### **1.5.2. Birth of the Video Game Machines 1970s**

With the foundation of Atari, the company which dominated the video game industry in the 70's and 80's, the golden age of the arcades began. Video games such as 'Pong' and 'Space invaders' achieved a global success making the teenagers of the 1980s gamble their pocket money on video game machines.

Prior to this, computer technology had made significant progress, with the founding of Apple in 1976 and the development of microprocessors. Atari succeeded in pulling off another coup with the Atari 2600 home console: more than 30 million people bought the games console, launched in 1977, which was not restricted to just a single game but, thanks to interchangeable cassettes, offered a theoretically infinite number of games. The games featured very simple graphics and narratives. Levels, by which the game became increasingly difficult, and points systems, were typical features.

### **1.5.6. The Infancy of Video Games-1980s**

Many classic games that are still going strong today came out in the 1980s: Pac-Man (1980), Ultima (1980), Mario Bros (1983), Tetris (1984) and SimCity (1989). This decade is known for the countless new consoles and the new powerful cheaper home computers. This era saw the arose from the ashes of video games, after many companies went bankrupt including the behemoth Atari, a new refined technology and better graphics was introduced by Nintendo new consoles, Nes and Game Boy, and Commodore's console Commodore 64 which gave video games more depth and more original stories and character rather than being based on some Cartoon or family movie.

### **1.5.7. A New Dimension -1990s**

With the introduction of a new dimension in the first half of the decade video Games become even more realistic and convincing, the third dimension

opened a new variety of complex possibilities and idea, and with the launch of Sony Playstation, the Games and Consoles markets witnessed a huge success and the term Video Games is are only for children disappeared with the release of Wolfstein 3D in 1992 which added more violence and action and paved a path to a new type of Video games called 'First Person Shooter'.

### **1.5.8. Gaming Goes Online - 2000s**

At the beginning of the decade, internet was used only for communication and gamers had to play only at LAN parties in a local network. A few years later, the internet use increased significantly and video games companies took advantage of that by realizing new games played mainly on internet such WOW (World of Warcraft). With the development of technology and the introduction of powerful computers and Consoles such as Sony Playstation 2 and Microsoft Xbox, this era produced numerous bestsellers, foremost among them being The Sims (2000), Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (2004), Super Mario Galaxy (2007) and Minecraft (2010).

### **1.5.9. Play Anywhere, Anytime-2010s**

With video games studios taking the advantages of the new technologies and realizing video games on every platform possible, video games became even more accessible and with the variety of types and genres, everyone now developed some taste and interest in video games and more people now are playing video games, especially on their phones, tablets and portable consoles, in the train, bus and even before going to sleep. This decade also introduced the so called walkthrough on YouTube, gamers now are able to record and comment on video games and even receive benefits from gaming.

### **1.5.10. Deeper into the Virtual World-2020's**

From simple dots on a pale-coloured screen to coloured pixels and hyper realistic 3D landscapes: thanks to technical developments, the story of video games is taking gamers ever deeper into the virtual world. What will the video games of the future look like? One thing is certain: the story will continue in the same style. Already, thanks to virtual reality, gamers can almost completely immerse themselves in a game. But this technology is still in its infancy. Better graphics resolution, tactile controllers and lighter devices will define the future of the gaming industry.

## **1.6. Video Games Types**

There are many different video games types, and they are categorized based on their characteristics and their underlying objectives not by the type of their gameplay. Some games fit into more than just one category and some fit in subgenres, categorizing a video game can be confusing but by breaking down the game mechanics we can understand how categorizing works.

In this work, we will be mainly focusing on games that can be used as learning materials, which contain instructions and well written stories.

### **1.6.1. Action Games**

Action is always number one pick for entertainment, and action games are no exception, built on comprised of physical challenges player must overcome where he is in control of and the center of the action because of that action games are usually easy to get into and overcome and that make them by large amount the most popular games genres.

### **1.6.2. Platformer**

The name itself explains itself, built on the interaction between the gamer and the platform by running, jumping or falling throughout the gameplay. Super Mario Brothers is the best known of the genre.

### **1.6.3. Shooter**

This game allows players to use weapons to eliminate or take down other players or enemies in order to win the game, shooters have three subgenres known as the following:

- FPS (First Player Shooter): played from the main character point of view. Such as Call of Duty.
- TPS (Third Person Shooter): Played from a point which the playable character can be seeing such as PUBG and Frotnite.
- TDS (Top-Down Shooter): Played from a point of view which is above the playable character, usually a space ship, game such as Galaga fits in this genre.

### **1.6.4. Action-Adventure Games**

This genre is a combination of two mechanics .Action which we already discussed and adventure with a game that is based on several quests that must be conquered using a specific tool or process. Tomb Raider is most known game for this genre.

### **1.6.5. Survival Horror**

They are games oriented for adults, they include blood and gore with gloomy and terrifying sttings, Resident Evil is the best example of this.

### **1.6.6. Metrovania**

The name is a combination of two famous games, Metroid and Castlevania, they are the most basic Action-Adventure genre and require players to search, unlock and upgrade weapons to overcome obstacles and access special areas in the game.

### **1.6.7. Adventure Games**

They are the games that our study is mainly based on, they are known as text-based games with give player instructions, quests and puzzles to overcome. Players must achieve a good level of language understanding and game commanding to conquer these games.

### **1.6.8. Text Adventure (Interactive Games)**

A text-based game allows players to input commands such as ‘move’, ‘take’ and ‘attack’ in order to achieve a quest or finish a mission.

### **1.6.9. Graphic Adventures**

Text-based games kept developing as the computers did, with the introduction of the interactive pictures programmers took full advantage of that and created games which mixes graphics and text and players take the orders as a text and apply it on the picture in front of him, such as ‘take the towel’, ‘find the frog’ and ‘check the bed sheet’.

### **1.6.10. Visual Novels**

They are extremely popular in Japan. Visual games are based, usually, on novels or TV shows, the ending of these video games depends on the choices and traits the player develop through responding to specific points in the game. These games are heavily based on texts.

### **1.6.11. Role-Playing Games (RPG)**

The second most popular video game genre, they are games that feature a fantasy settings and usually they are based on Japanese myths and folklore.

### **1.6.12. Action RPG**

It is a combination of the two genre we discussed earlier, Action and role-playing games.

### **1.6.13. MMORPG (Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games)**

They are mostly evolved from text-based games, MMORPG allow thousands of players to interact with each other and collaborate to achieve a certain objectives.

### **1.6.14. Tactical RPG**

They are games evolved from board games and players take turns to play.

### **1.6.15. First-Person Party-Based RPG**

In contrary to MMORPG, FPPBRPG are not online games, and the player takes control of a party of different playable character with special moves and powers, the player must take advantage of that and conquer the game strategically.

### **1.7. Games and Language Acquisition**

In recent year, teaching and learning adapted new technologies thanks to the availability of modern devices such computers, tablets, smart phones and consoles, emerging a new term called ‘technology-enhanced language learning’ in the teaching and learning domain.

Due to the widely spread of the modern devices, Multimedia including Video Games have became related more and more to learning especially with the recent pandemic, people spent a lot of time at their houses and they had to find a new methods of learning and multimedia was their only choice due to the extensive play of video games, gamers found themselves more fluent in using English to communicate, best examples of that are the non-English streamers, who started their career with a weak non balanced English but in a short period of time they became fluent and mastered English perfectly.

### **1.8. Game-Based Learning and Fundamental Principles**

The research in the digital Game-Based Language Learning (DGBLL) field is building its findings on far older concept of play and its educational characteristics and potential. Therefore, to understand DGBLL, it is necessary to first introduce the notion of play and how it influences language learning in general. Play is essentially a process through which children are able to gain social, intellectual, physical and emotional abilities. Play is not only beneficial for the development of those abilities but together with them it also plays an important role in L1 learning.

In terms of L2 acquisition and play, game-based language learning (GBLL) has been part of this relationship for many years, helping not only children but also adults to develop new language skills and knowledge in a more entertaining and motivating way. Wright et al (1984) define language game/play as “an activity which is entertaining and engaging, often challenging, and an activity in which the learners play and usually interact with others.”

Furthermore, they see more benefits in using games for language learning in the way that they: “encourage many learners to sustain their interest ...”, “create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful [enabling] ... learners to experience language”..., “provide repeated occurrence and use of a particular form ... [which] involve the emotions, and the meaning of the language is thus more vividly experienced”.

Juul (2003), on the other hand, elaborates on the concept of play/game by hypothesising that there are six fundamental play/game features that comprise classical play/game: “a rule-based formal system.”, “with variable and quantifiable outcomes”,... “where different outcomes are assigned different values...”, “where the player exerts effort in order to influence the outcome...”, “the player feels emotionally attached to the outcomes...”, “and the consequences of the activity are optional and negotiable”.

## **1.9. Video Games Language Acquisition Principles**

Through a focus on the nature of play and its use for L2 acquisition, scholars were slowly making a case for including video games as a valuable educational tool. The initial research mainly focused on the elements which enable a video game to be utilised during the learning process. According to Prensky (2001), there are six video game elements which are necessary to make video games a useful tool for learning and to help engage the learner as well.

The first structural element, the author argues to be an indispensable part of video games, are rules. He argues that rules establish an inner framework constrained by set limitations which regulate the video game affordances and consequently player's behaviour. Following structural elements, Prensky lists, are goals and objectives, which are linked to motivation.

Another structural video game element, Prensky further identifies, is challenge. Challenge is integrated into a video game through critical thinking about tasks, with the aim to stimulate and maintain players' focus. Interaction, according to Prensky, seems to be also an integral feature for learning, because in terms of video games it outreaches into the social sphere, especially with the growing popularity of multiplayer video games, enabling players to form mutually educational social relations. The last element is representation, it links all the previous video game features together with a story. In other words, the narration, even more, enhances the engagement effects of all the elements listed above and this way making learners/players more involved in a video game, but also, more importantly, in the process of L2 learning.

### **1.10. Task-Based Language Teaching**

Many of the structural video game elements presented above have one idea in common, they revolve around the central unit of every video game called task. From the L2 acquisition point of view, the concept of task is integrated into the CLT approach of task-based language teaching (TBLT). In order to understand the importance of TBLT in relation to language acquisition through video games, characteristics of a task need to be described. Ellis (2003) suggests that a pedagogical task should have the following features:

“a task constitutes a plan for learner activity; a task involves a primary focus on meaning; a task involves real-world processes of authentic use; a task can involve any of the four skills; a task engages cognitive processes ... such as

selecting, classifying, ordering, reasoning, and evaluating information; a task has a clearly defined communicative outcome”. (pp. 9-10)

In terms of the application of these on the video game environment, a player is expected to actively engage in performing a meaningful, authentic and cognitively challenging task in an environment where the input consists of a variety of multimodal components. Purushotma et al. (2009) therefore propose that the scope of TBLT in the digital game format

“should provide a framework that emphasizes goal-directed activities within constructed gaming environments” (p. 6).

Not only that, but the scholars also propose ten SIEs design principles that are meant to facilitate L2 learning by drawing from the TBLT theory. Briefly, they suggest that an edutainment video game should have as a good:

“design of failure states as for success states; instruction needs to ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning of words ...”; “communication and input mechanisms should have a playful spirit...”; “terminology should be presented through optional supporting material ...”; “learning content should be organized around tasks ...”; “new 23 concepts should be introduced gradually ...”; “assessment should intelligently track free production tasks throughout the game ...”; “consider the full range of gaming platforms available ...”; “instructional activities should be designed to teach ... performing similar activities [and] multiplayer games should provide players with meaningful and distinct roles”. (pp. 7-23)

Regardless that the principles were suggested with SIEs in mind, all of them can easily be applied to any COTS video game and as such narrow down the number of video games available to those who are the most suitable for L2 learning.

## **1.11. Conclusion**

To sum up, technology has recently become a crucial tool for both teaching and learning, especially the entertainment aspect of it. Thanks to the Modern Teaching Methods that have cleared the air and corrected certain misconceptions related to gaming in particular, the use of entertainment and media in learning is no longer considered a pointless way for wasting time.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

## **Chapter Two: Research Methodology**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter technically represents the practical part of the research work. Data collecting method used is a “Questionnaire” which includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Firstly, we will discuss the research sample and based on what criterion the participants are chosen.

Next, a general description of the questionnaire’s schema is to be provided, along with a thorough explanation of each question and the reason behind it.

Lastly, we shall analyze and comment on the data provided by the sample through graphs for quantitative results and quotations for qualitative ones.

### **2.2. The Participants**

The sample consists of a group of volunteered students from Kasdi Merbah University from the English department precisely from different levels (from 1<sup>st</sup> year License to 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Master), aged from 18 to 27 and genders with medium averages from 10 to 15. These students studied English on regular bases for the last 8 to 10 years and they maintain a good control of the language.

They all share the same mother tongue language and English is a foreign language to them. These students were selected due to their familiarity with video games and their vulnerability mostly male students. They were proposed by the supervisor due to her good knowledge of them and her good communication and relationship with them.

### **2.3. The Questionnaire**

The first part of the questionnaire focuses mainly on the participants' background, their level in English and their average since they are a group of university students.

The second part focuses on English in their daily activities, such as hobbies and interests.

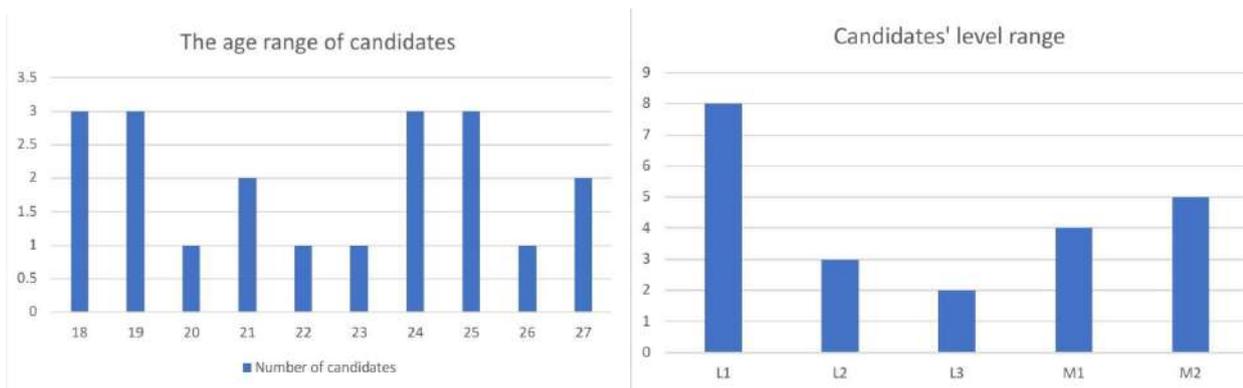
The third part focuses on video games and the language used in these games, how they see it and to what extent these video games helped them develop their English language skills mainly their receptive skills, listening and reading.

Finally, we focus on the video games community and multiple player video games, what difficulties they have faced and how they had overcome those difficulties .And lastly; we see how video games developed their productive skills in writing and speaking and to what extent.

We added an open question at the end of the questionnaire to have more details that could add valuable information to data.

### **2.4. The Questions**

The study requires real candidates, so personal information was needed to make this study more valid and authentic. We also we needed to know the candidates age and level to determine the age range and study level.



**Figure 1:** level and age ranges

### **How many years have you been studying formal academic English?**

This question was necessary to determine if our candidates have met Video Games before or after studying English, if it was before they took any English courses we wanted to know how they saw English back then, what methods they have used and how they dealt with the language itself.

### **What is your average?**

The average itself was not that important in our study, but we wanted to focus on the academic achievements of these candidates rather than their fluently of English because Video Games helps our candidates not only on the English language level but also on their career and academic level.

### **Do English courses at your department fulfill your language needs?**

This question was to determine if the English our candidate are taking in their department is fulfilling their needs or not. Most of the candidates think that the courses they are taking are not enough to fulfill their English language mastery because the courses in their department are more academic and cannot be used out of the academic sets and environment. They had to take other courses outside the university to make good use of the academic package they

have. Some candidates hinted that they listened to music and watched movies to become more fluent in English and used other materials to fulfill their needs.

Participant A answered the question as follows:

*“No, it’s more academic than I need”*

Participant X answered the question as follows:

“I met a lot of difficulties in public speaking and it was hard for me to participate in Oral sessions, and due to my informal learning Writing was not my cup of tea.



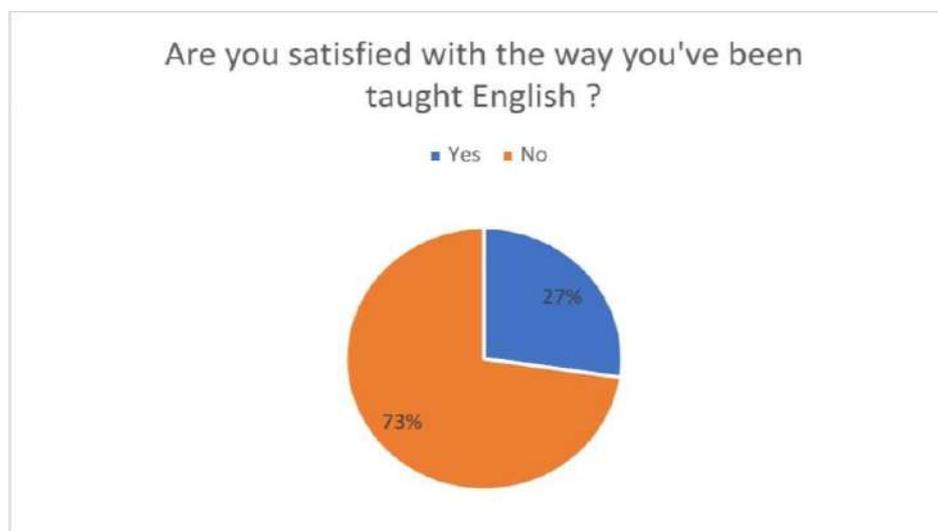
**Figure 2:** Candidates’ opinion about the courses they take in university.

### **Are you satisfied with the way you’ve been taught English**

This question was to determine if the candidates are satisfied of the way they have been taught. Most of the candidates were satisfied whereas others hinted that the program itself was hard for them, they faced new terms and new ways of learning English, a different way than the way they have taught in high schools. Some candidates also hinted that they have faced difficulties understanding hard vocabularies and the formal language used in the academic courses.

Participant C answered the question as follows:

*“No I cannot use it outside university, and the vocabularies and terms are hard to understand”*



**Figure 3:** Candidates' satisfaction about the courses they take at university.

### **Do you have any hobby?**

This question was to determine whether our candidates have hobbies and they practice them frequently, focusing mainly on our scope of study which is video games.

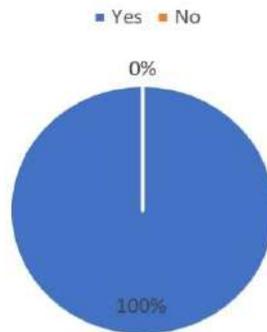
### **Do you think learning English through your hobbies is more efficient?**

This question was to determine if candidates had alternative ways to learn English. All candidates answered with yes. They find more fun and motivation when they are learning English from their hobbies as they do not feel stressed and they do not have evaluation to worry about. They are just learning through what they truly love.

Participant K answered the question as follows:

*“Yes, I learnt English through music and movies and it helped me out in my communication with other people more than the English I learnt in university”*

Do you think learning English through your hobbies is more efficient?



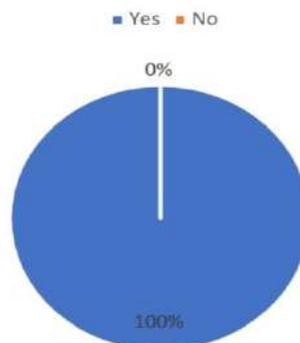
**Figure 4:** Candidates’ opinion about learning through their hobbies.

### **Is video games part of your hobbies?**

This question was to determine if video games were part of our candidates’ hobbies. And since our candidates were carefully selected, video games take a huge part of their free time.

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Is Video Games part of your hobbies?



**Figure 5:** Candidates and video games as part of their hobbies

## What do you think of the English language used in Video Games?

This question was to determine how our candidates find English used in Video Games in general whether it were hard, medium or easy, how they evaluate the conversation, storytelling and how they manage to make use of the language used in video games. Most of the candidates ranked the language used in video games as medium whereas the more experienced gamers think the language used is easier due to the familiarity and the experience they have in the domain.

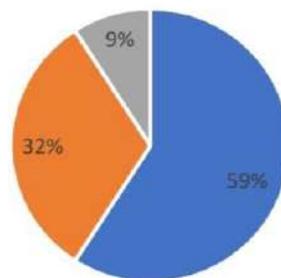
Participant M answered the question as follows:

*“Video games, especially visual novels consist of a really well written stories with a really good English and sometimes even better than the one in the real novels”*

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What do you think of the English used in Video Games ?

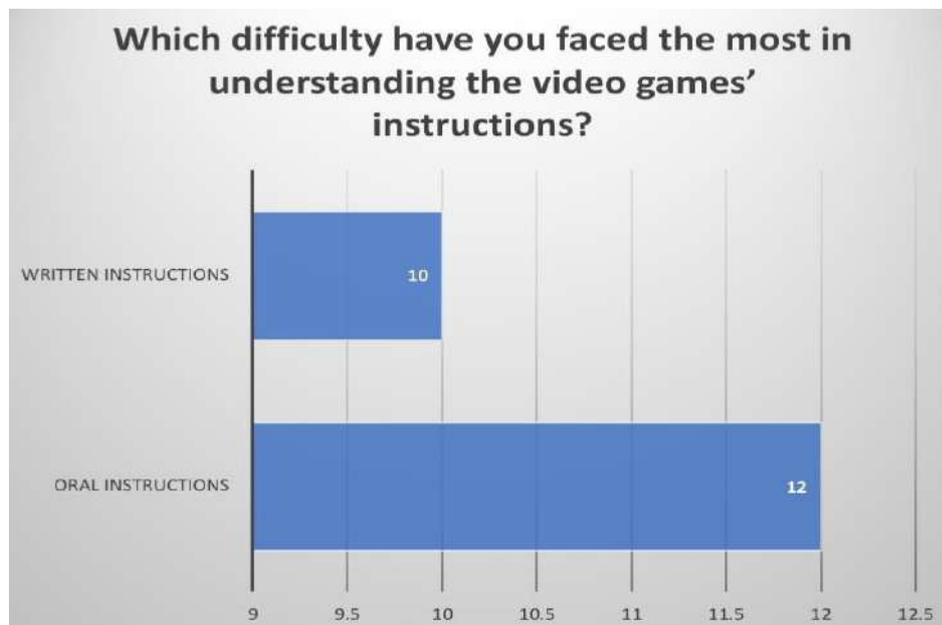
■ Easy ■ Medium ■ Hard



**Figure 6:** Candidates' opinion about the language used in video games

## Which difficulty have you faced the most in understanding the video games' instructions?

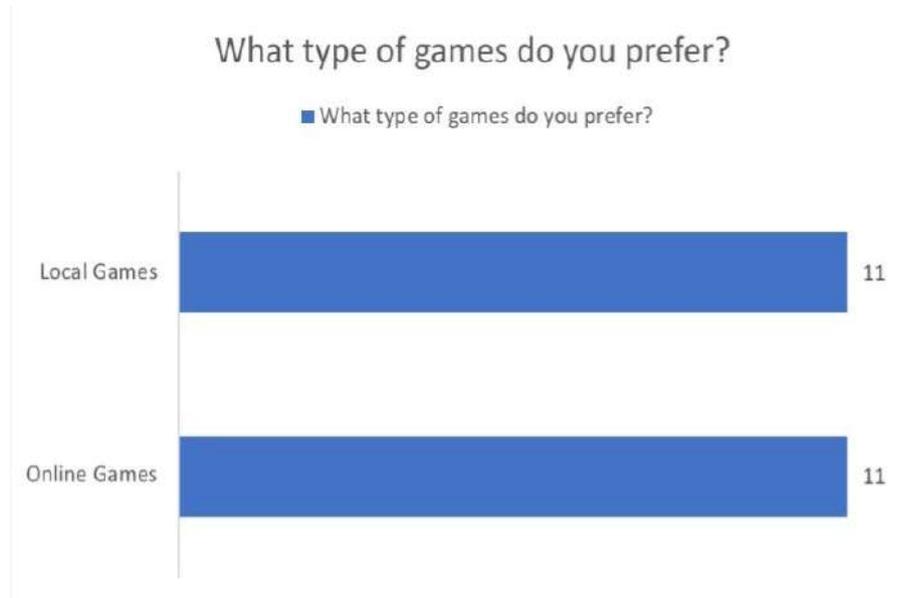
This question was to determine the difficulties our candidates face when it comes to the instructions they receive, usually oral and written instructions. The candidates were divided into two equal groups: the first which has a problem with the oral instructions due to the fact that their sound instruments were not functioning properly and the sound and the pronunciation was not clear, and some hinted that old games such as arcade game used musical instruments to deliver orders therefore the oral instructions were hard to be understood. The other half of the candidates hinted that they have faced hard time reading and understanding written orders because of their lack of vocabularies and their level in English in general. Others stated that the instructions were so fast to be read and some old games do not have rewind or checkpoint so it was hard to restart the mission or understand the instructions. In general, all candidates hinted that they were forced to learn new vocabularies, either by processing the game further or by analyzing the context.



**Figure 7:** Oral instructions and written instruction ,which one is more difficult?

## What type of Video Games do you prefer?

This question was to determine which type of Video Games our sample are engaging more into, it helps us to see whether they are engaging in online games or local games because every type develops more skills than the other.



**Figure 8:** Local Games and Online games, which game they prefer?

## Online games require a lot of communication; do you take part in these communications? Why or why not?

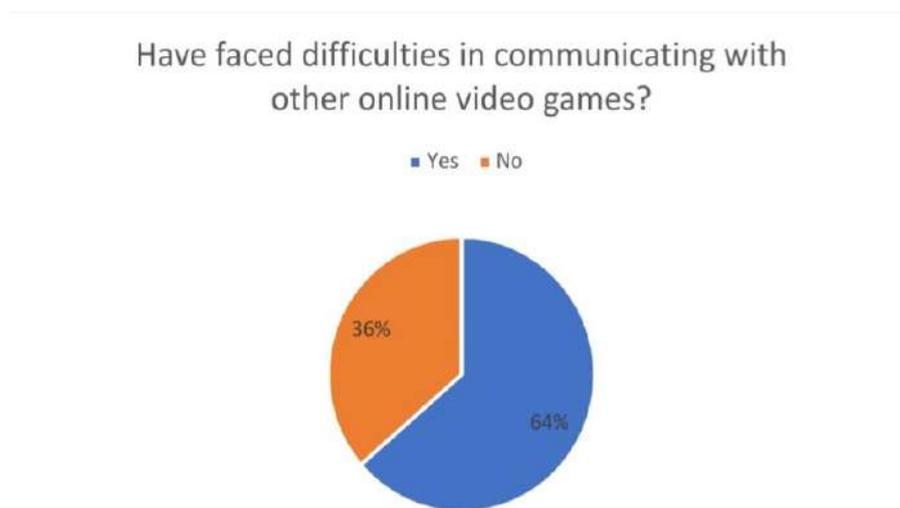
This question was to determine whether the sample is engaging in oral or written communication, productive skills particularly, with other players in English. Most of the sample answered 'yes' because they have to cooperate with other players in Arena and TDMs, building a strategy or giving a teammate a useful piece of information is crucial for them to win the game. Feedback is usually necessary for a better teamwork results.

## Have you faced difficulties in communicating with others in online games?

This question was to determine if the sample has faced any difficulties. Some had faced difficulties communicating in English in general, either because native speakers speak so fast or the non natives miss pronouncing a lot of words, or they have weird sentence structure due to their tongues. Others hinted that they had hard time delivering a message or combining a sentence or understanding some abbreviations due to their low level in English.

Participant R answered the question as follows:

*“yes specially with Indians and eastern Europe, those have problem in pronunciation and they are hard to understand”*



**Figure 9:** Have you faced difficulties in communicating with others in online games?

## How did you overcome these difficulties?

This question was to determine how our sample overcame these difficulties. Many of them found other ways of communication rather than language, they use guns to shoot at the object they are pointing to,

or they use number of shoots to determine how many enemies are there, others used some name spells to send messages whereas others type codes and emojis in the chat bar.

Participant R answered the question as follows:

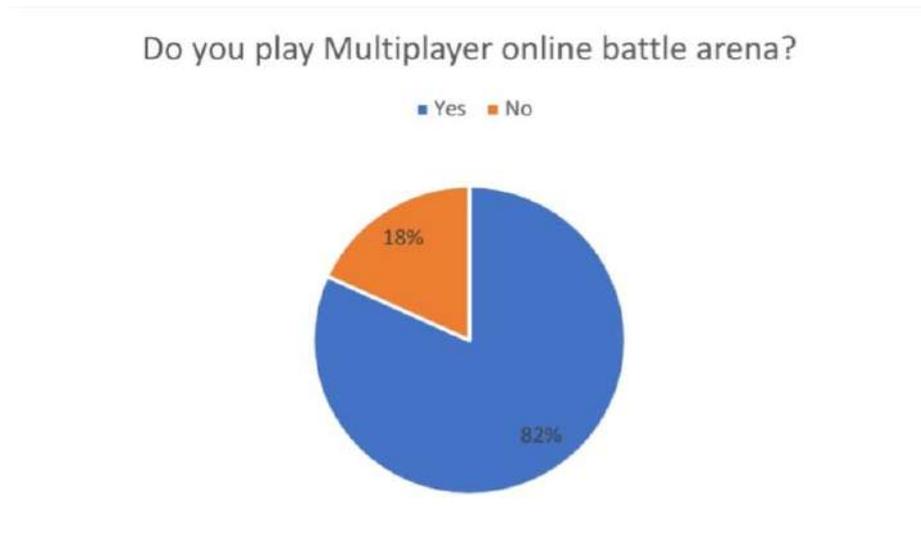
*“I use the chat bar to clarify or to ask for explanation specially when it comes to phonemes, and sometimes I recall the context in my head”*

### **How do you describe the language used in the chat room**

This question was to determine how our sample evaluate the English they see in the chat room. Most of the sample thought that the English used in the chat room was more informal and slung than that is in movies or any other media. The use of fragments and abbreviation made it near impossible to be understood by someone who is not familiar with video games.

### **Do you play multiplayer battle arena?**

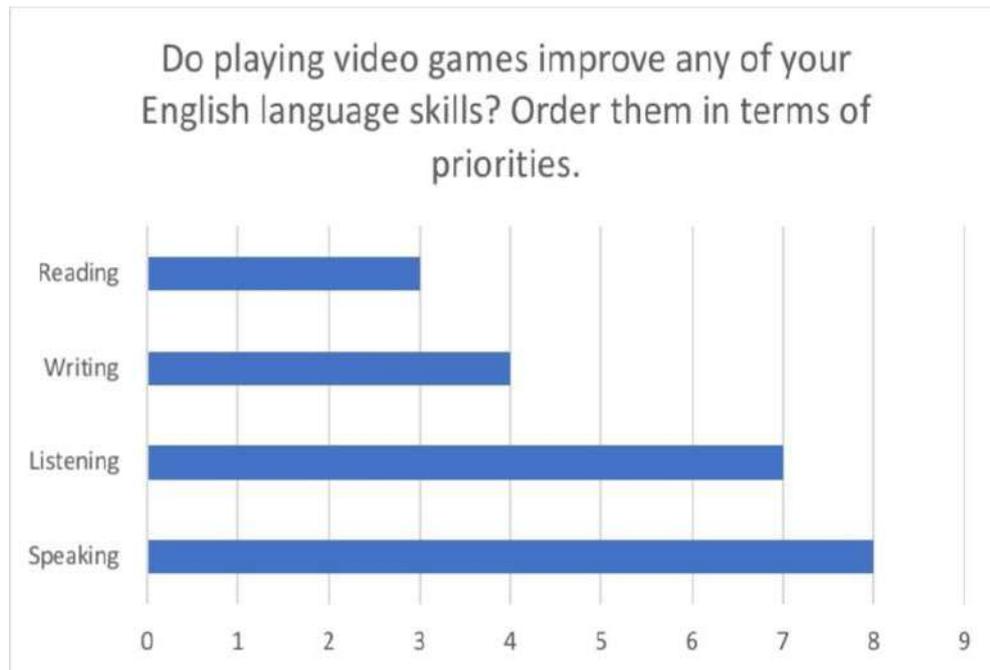
Arena is considered as the most known gaming style in recent years. Arena itself does not mean arena as we know it, it could be a hangar, a stadium and even a dragon nest. People play in teams in this arena to conquer it and claim presents. Teams need to communicate heavily to claim to win. Therefore, this question was needed to determine whether our candidates engage in heavily communicative games.



**Figure 10:** Do you play multiplayer battle arena?

**Do playing video games improve any of your English language skills?  
Order them in terms of priorities.**

This question was to determine which of the language was more developed and affected by video games. Our participants hinted that their speaking skill was developed more than any other skill due to the fact that they had to practice English more orally than writing, the second skill was listening, since it is related to the speaking process, finally writing and reading were ranked the least of the skill due to the fact that our participants have already developed these two skills in their academic setting and environment.

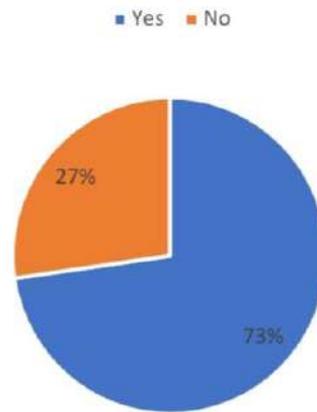


**Figure 11:** which of the language skills is more affected by Video Games?

**Do you usually watch streamers on social media?**

This question was to determine whether the participants watch streamers or not. Streamers usually do a live play and walkthroughs and they explain missions and tasks to the audience. This process helps audience to understand the instructions of the game better than translating them or try to decipher them. Most of the participants answered with yes, but they did not watch streamers for the sake of learning the language but to develop their gaming skills and master them.

Do you usually watch streamers on social media ?



**Figure 12:** Do our candidates watch streamers?

### **Do you think watching streamers improved your English**

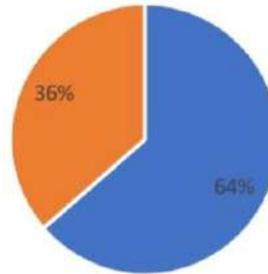
This question was to determine whether the participants learnt something from watching streamers or not. Some participants stated that they learned new vocabularies unintentionally, and they started using words and sentences related to these streamers while others said that they watched streamers for the sake of learning new vocabularies.

Participant K answered the question as follows:

*“Watching streamers really helped me improve my listening skill, and I found myself repeating some words they use without paying attention”*

Do you think watching streamers improved your English ?

■ Yes ■ No



**Figure 13:** Do you think watching streamers has improved your English?

**Did the English language you learnt from video games help you with your academic achievements? Explain**

This question was to determine if the language our participants learnt from video games helped them in their academic achievements. Some participants hinted that video games helped them develop confident and opened the way for them to practice their English more and more .This could help them participate in classrooms and talk more freely in their oral sessions, not only that, some hinted that video games helped them develop creativity and sake multiple solutions to one problem and think outside the box.

Participant M answered the question as follows:

*“Video games helped me with my oral test, I had fear of public speaking and thanks to video games and their chat rooms I overcame this problem and I get one of the highest mark in the second semester after a really bad one in the first”*

**Add something you really wanted the questionnaire sheds lights on but it did not.**

Participant R answered the question as follows:

*“Playing video games helped me not only with my language skills, but with overcoming my communications setbacks as well; in other words, it helped me become less shy and more confident to speak out in chat rooms and team mates without being judged or correct for my grammatical mistakes: the environment video games provided me was stress free and encouraging to learn and have fun at the same time”.*

Participant M answered the question as follows:

*“I really wanted this questionnaire to ask whether video game changed my life or not, I really had violence problems I used to hurt people but after introducing to video games I oriented this violence to video games and I became less violence and less reckless, I learnt English and thanks to video games I chose it as a major in university”*

Participant X answered the question as follows:

*“People have a retarded idea about video games affecting their kids in a bad way, video games can be a tool of learning and a tool of achieving an academic success”*

Participant B answered the question as follows:

*“as a parent I will leave my kids play video games and learn English and surprise their teachers with a new vocabularies as I did and I hope you advice parents to do that too in your memoire”*

Participant N answered the question as follows:

*“I learnt English from video games more than any other tool or media, thanks to my friends from different cultures and backgrounds I learnt English and received feedbacks and corrections from them and that would never happen if video games didn't brought us together”*

## **2.5. Main Findings**

Candidates hinted that they learned new vocabularies while playing Video Games especially the type of games that requires more attention of the players and more tasks to progress in these games. Moreover, Video Gamers who play on multiplayer mode or watch streamers have learned more vocabularies from the other players and streamers than the Video Game itself, Video Gamers share the same culture of gaming so communicating was smooth and well structured which led them to gain and exchange new vocabularies and to be benefited from feedbacks that other players provide them concerning their language use.

## **2.6. Recommendations**

Video games are important tools of learning and motivation. Young children spend a really considerable amount of time playing, and as parents or teachers we can benefit from it by suggesting educational games and guide them to make use of their playing time and make it more beneficial and educational.

Also, we recommend teachers of different modules, especially courses of oral, writing and phonetics to take video games as a serious tool for

teaching; some games are oriented for teaching purposes to mention few: Visual Games and instructional games.

At last, we hope people change their retarded idea about video games being a waste of time and start focusing on the bright side of them, they teach more than waste time, not only on the communicative level but also on the academic level as shown on our research.

## **2.7. Limitations of the study**

At this point, it would be prudent to mention few barriers hindered the running of the research process:

- Finding equilibrium between work and study was extremely tough especially of the difficult work conditions.
- Also, time restrictions cut the chances in achieving better results in this dissertation.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

In conclusion, video games played a huge part in developing our candidates' English as it shows in the questionnaire's answers, and not only that, video games helped them develop each skill individually and taught them how to overcome their weaknesses.

## **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

The present study examined a group of students from Kasdi Merbah University and how video games influenced their English language level. The study was conducted as a qualitative study through a questionnaire (See appendix 1 page 43) submitted to them. It consisted of open-ended questions to get some background information as well as questions directly related to the research aims of the present study.

Data was analyzed and discussed in the second chapter and the best answers were taken as quotations while other similar answers were hinted in general. In addition, some notable remarks were taken into consideration which may lead to develop this study in the future.

The primary results of this work show the positive impact of playing video games on vocabulary knowledge acquisition. They help many participants in learning vocabulary and mastering the language. They learned strategies to take notes and recall them when needed.

In conclusion, video games can be a useful tool if they are well used; the amount of motivations and challenges they provide helps players to develop not only their language skills but also their social, problem solving and communication skills.

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## Appendix 1

### The questionnaire

Name:

Gender:

Age:

First language:

Level:

**Answer the following questions according to your opinion and experience:**

1- How many years have you been studying English?

2- What is your average?

3- Do English courses at your department reflect your language needs?

Yes  No

4- Are you satisfied with the way you've been taught English?

Yes  No

5- If no, Explain.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6- Do you think learning English through your hobbies is more efficient?

Yes  No

7- What do you think of the English language used in Video games?

Easy  Medium  Hard

8- Which difficulty have you faced the most in understanding the video games' instructions?

Oral Instructions  Written Instructions

9- What type of games do you prefer?

Online Games  Local Games

10-Online games require a lot of communication; do you take part in these communications? Why or why not?

.....  
.....  
.....

11- Have faced difficulties in communicating with other online video games?

Yes  No

12- If yes, how did you overcome these difficulties?

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13- How do you describe the English language used in the chat room?

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.....

14- Do you play Multiplayer online battle arena?

Yes  No

15- If yes, how do you collaborate with other teammates?

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.....  
.....  
.....

16- Have you ever faced problem concerning the language barrier? How did you overcome this problem?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

17- Do playing video games improve any of your English language skills?  
Order them in terms of priorities.

Listening  Speaking  Writing  Reading

All of the above

18- Do you usually watch streamers on social media ?

Yes  No

19- Do you think watching streamers improved your English ?

Yes  No

20- If yes, explain.

.....  
.....  
.....

21- Did the English language you learnt from video games help you with your academic achievements? Explain.

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22- Add something you really wanted this questionnaire sheds lights on but it did not.

.....  
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## Glossary

**Action-adventure:** A game where players overcome a series of small and large obstacles while progressing through multiple levels or scenarios.

**Augmented reality (AR):** An experience that combines gameplay with augmented reality features overlaid on a physical location. Examples of mobile AR games include *Pokémon Go* and *Jurassic World Alive*.

**Battle royale:** An online game in which the game map serves as an arena for many combatants to find and fight one another, with a typical goal of being the last player standing.

**Bullet hell:** Games that rely on shooting weapons and dodging return fire as their primary mechanics, often on an exaggerated and grandiose level.

**Casual:** Games that offer quick entry into gameplay through minimal mechanics.

**Cooperative:** A game or style of gameplay that rewards collaboration rather than pitting players against each other.

**Couch co-op:** A cooperative multiplayer game that can only be played by having two or more players in the same physical location.

**Downloadable content (DLC):** Additions or expansions to a game that can be downloaded and added through a typically simple in-app installation process.

**Educational:** A game whose purpose is to educate players in a particular skill or subject matter.

**Esports:** Professional competitive gaming events.

**Fantasy:** See **role-playing game (RPG)**.

**Fighting:** A game whose primary mechanic is hand-to-hand combat in a **player(s) versus player(s)** (PvP) setting.

**First-person shooter (FPS):** A game from the shooter's perspective, as they point the gun at different targets.

**Free-to-play (F2P):** A game that is free to download and play, though the studio/publisher may monetize it through **microtransactions** (such as **IAPs**), rewarded videos, ads, or other means.

**Horror:** A game whose design and mechanics are built around inducing fear and dread in players.

**Hyper-casual:** A game that usually offers a single, easy-to-understand mechanic that leads to instant gameplay gratification.

***In-app purchases (IAPs)***: Additional or replenishable items you can buy from within a game.

***Massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG)***: A role-playing game that typically allows hundreds or thousands of online players to play and interact in the same gaming world.

***Match 3, or match-three***: See **tile-matching**.

***Metroidvania***: A subgenre of action-adventure games whose design and mechanics are heavily inspired by the games *Metroid* and *Castlevania*.

***Microtransaction***: A small transaction completed online, usually for an in-app purchase.

***MOBA***: See **multiplayer online battle arena**.

***Multiplayer***: A game that allows more than one player to play at any given time.

***Multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA)***: A type of strategy game that has teams of players pitted against one another, with each team's members coordinating their attacks and defenses to achieve victory.

***Non-playable character, or non-player character (NPC)***: An in-game character controlled by artificial intelligence (*AI*).

***Open-world***: A game where the player is given an extremely large world in which to explore and play.

***Party***: Typically 4- to 8-player multiplayer games that allow friends to compete against one another for rewards and victory.

***Platformer***: A game that is typically two-dimensional, in which players run, climb, and jump on platforms in order to make progress.

***Player(s) versus player(s) (PvP)***: A game where one or more players compete against one or more players.

***Point-and-click***: A game that relies on mouse clicks in order to advance characters, solve puzzles, and make choices.

***Puzzle***: A game that requires players to solve visual or logic problems, find matching items/patterns, etc., to accumulate points or move to a new level. Games like *Monument Valley* fall in this genre.

***Racing***: Any game whose primary mechanic is competitive racing against AI or other players.

**Real-time strategy (RTS):** A game in which players typically control a squadron of characters and try to dominate a computer or player-controlled opposing army. Games like *Civilization*, *Age of Empires*, and the original *Warcraft/Warcraft II* fall in this genre.

**Rhythm:** A game that relies on controller inputs that correspond with rhythmic prompting, usually through music or sound effects combined with visual cues.

**Roguelike:** A type of role-playing action-adventure game in which players typically have one life to make it to the end of the game, or at least very limited opportunities for resurrection.

**Role-playing game (RPG):** An immersive play style that typically encourages immersion and interaction, as well as the ability to heavily customize and personalize your playable characters. Sci-Fi and Fantasy are popular types of RPG.

**Sandbox:** A game that allows players to build their playable world around them.

**Shooter:** A genre of game based on gunplay. There are **first-person shooters**, **third-person shooters**, and other subgenres.

**Simulation (Sim):** A game that imitates real-life activities and functions, usually in a very accurate way.

**Souls-like:** A type of action-adventure game that typically relies on “dodge or die” mechanics à la *Dark Souls*.

**Sports:** A game where a team or individual sport such as football, soccer, tennis, or cycling has been simulated.

**Stealth:** A game that relies on players remaining hidden and covertly making their way past or through obstacles to succeed.

**Strategy:** A game that requires planning and organization to advance (and to avoid setbacks) towards achieving an end goal.

**Survival:** A game in which it is necessary for players to keep their characters safe and healthy, usually by outrunning enemies while seeking food, water, and shelter.

**Text-based:** A largely obsolete style of gameplay in which players are presented with scenarios in text form, and they must respond with text commands to advance the game.

**Third-person shooter:** A shooter game where the perspective is from an “objective” camera, showing the shooter and their environment.

**Tile-matching:** A game where players must identify or match a number of similar tiles. A common type is a match 3 (match-three) game. *Tetris* falls into this genre.

***Virtual reality (VR):*** A game that requires players to wear a virtual reality headset and use input devices such as a keyboard or hand controllers to experience gameplay in a virtual 3D environment. Examples include *Beat Saber* and *Rock Band VR*.

***Visual novel:*** A game style that relies on static sprites or art pieces that correspond with text-based storytelling, typically played by choosing predetermined responses to the story being told. Often uses an anime style.