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Bakalářská práce

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The Influence of Videogames on Everyday Life with Focus on Learning English

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Čestné prohlášení

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Abstract

The main purpose of this thesis was to describe videogames and their potential influence on second language learning in the Czech context, and hopefully enrich the field of videogame study, specifically in the area of digital game-enhanced language learning. The empirical part aimed to investigate public opinion of Czech people, who play videogames, on possible correlation between videogame playing and English language acquisition, which might appear in their everyday life. The data were collected via questionnaire and the results indicated that acquisition of new vocabulary, reading and listening comprehension as well as communicative competence may be improved by digital game-enhanced learning. The immersive story is a videogame element that, with regards to motivation of the player, showed its impact on foreign language learning, and based on the experiences of respondents, the most suitable videogame genre for English language learning happened to be the Role-playing games (RPG).

Annotation

This Bachelor's thesis describes videogames and their potential influence on English language learning in the Czech context, further focusing on digital game-enhanced language learning with the intention of enriching the field of videogame study. The first part consists of theoretical background that clarifies the definition of videogames, formats and elements of videogames, videogame genres, digital games and language learning, the importance of subtitles in videogames, and the limitations that incorporating digital games into language learning might have. The empirical part consists of analysis of the results achieved by a questionnaire, and comparison of the results with the knowledge and data found by other researchers via their studies, to date.

Key words

Videogames, game-enhanced learning, definition of videogame, videogame formats, elements of videogames, videogame genres, digital games and language learning.

Klíčová slova

Videohry, učení podpořené hraním videoher, definice videohry, video-herní formáty, elementy videoher, video-herní žánry, videohry a učení jazyka.

Contents

Introduction

This Bachelor's thesis aims to investigate the public opinions of Czech people who play videogames on possible correlation between videogame playing and English language acquisition, which might appear in their everyday life. Videogames have rapidly become part of our lives, whether we play them or not. Recent statistics on videogame sales have proved the dominance of videogames on the entertainment market, showing that the gaming industry in the United States has outdistanced all other entertainment industries. For example, the global revenues of the gaming industry in 2018 reached $151.2 billion, while film revenues at the box office amounted only to $41.7 billion. The reality of the few facts mentioned above combined with personal experience with the topic together form the reason for investigation in this field of study. The thesis should provide additional data supporting or refuting the possible influence of commercial videogames on foreign (English) language learning and use, and thus enrich the academic discourse in the field of videogame study.

The thesis consists of two parts; the first part is theoretical and focuses on providing sufficient theoretical background related to the studied topic. This part encompasses the key information necessary for definition and classification of the central theme of study – videogames – and also maps the existing research done in the area of game-enhanced learning and learning language through digital games in general.

The second part is practical and contains the analysis of a questionnaire devised to investigate the views of Czech players on the studied topic, and comparison with findings discovered in other studies. The empirical part aims to find answers to these questions: 1) What language skills might be improved by game-enhanced learning? 2) What videogame aspects might have an influence on second-language (L2) learning? 3) What videogame genres might be more suitable for L2 learning?

Finally, this thesis utilizes data and results from empirical research and findings from the conducted questionnaire as a primary source.

Theory

1. Videogame as a concept

It is not a simple task to define the term "videogame", for its meaning is rather broad, and as James Newman writes in his book *Videogames* (2004), it is partly because of the enormous variety of game types that are being produced. Firstly, neither the videogame industry nor the academic community are unanimous in agreeing on one official name for its product which results in a number of seemingly synonymous designations, such as digital games, computer games, or interactive entertainment (Newman, 2004, p. 9). Secondly, the disunity in defining a videogame derives from the different perspectives on what a videogame is and what differentiates it from other forms of entertainment. It is only natural that a need to organize the propositions of researchers who contributed to the study of videogames arose and the two fundamental approaches to conceptualize videogame playing – narratology and ludology – were created (Peterson, 2013, p. 18). Last but not least, there is also the existence of other factors, such as varied videogame formats, platforms and genres, which make the question of defining videogames problematic to answer.

1.1. Narratology and Ludology

Narratology is a theory that accents the role of narrative in digital games; i.e. to understand videogames in academic research, theories of narrative should be applied (Atkins, 2003; Laurel, 1991; Murray, 1997). However, even perceiving digital games as stories can be viewed from multiple angles. For example, both Laurel (1991) and Murray (1997) argue that computers might be, in fact, viewed as a new medium, and that computer games might have the form of interactive drama (Laurel, 1991), or might even create a new form which Murray entitles "cyberdrama" (Murray, 1997). Another perspective is offered by Marie-Laure Ryan in her book *Avatars of Story* where she states that "computer games present all the basic ingredients of narrative: characters, events, setting and trajectories leading from a beginning state to an end state" (Ryan, 2006, p. 181). Recently, there has been conducted some research studying the influence of narrative in games on language learning, which indicates that the story-telling in narrative-based games helps improve learning achievements (Chen, Chen, Dai, 2018).

Ludology is an alternative approach which emphasizes the importance of focusing on aspects of gameplay, such as rules and goals, rather than on the narrative when conceptualizing

the digital games (Eskelinen, 2001). Eskelinen further asserts that "the basic components and aspects of the gaming situation, (are) essentially different from the basic constituents of narratives and dramatic situations" (Eskelinen, 2001, p. 175). As definition of computer games from a ludic perspective might be Frasca's (2001) proposition that "computer games are any forms of computer-based entertainment software, either textual or image-based, using any electronic platform such as personal computers or consoles and involving one or multiple players in a physical or networked environment" (Frasca, 2001, p. 4).

It is fair to say that both approaches accentuate different but equally significant conceptions of videogames and there are researchers who attempt to unite both theories under one complex idea that would comprise the fundamental elements of both views to present a more suitable definition of videogames. Juul (2005), for example, claims that the relationship between narrative and player experience during gameplay should be re-analysed and, in that regard, he (Juul, 2005, p. 130–132) presents a hierarchy that categorizes computer games into abstract games (Tetris), iconic games (playing cards), incoherent games (Donkey Kong) where the story is insufficient or secondary, and coherent games which offer a sufficient and comprehensive story world (World of Warcraft). Nowadays, it is a common opinion among ludologists that narrative sequences can occur in computer games and that narratology may provide a sufficient apparatus for better comprehension of elements of digital games (Ang, 2006).

1.2. Videogame formats

To understand videogames properly, it is necessary to consider all the possible variables that the field of digital games can offer. A fine example might be the formats or platforms of videogames, for the reason that they might affect the design of a game and even the player's style of playing (Reinhardt, 2019, p. 89). In his book *Gameful Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, Reinhardt distinguishes two videogame formats – digital games and pervasive games – providing definitions which together create yet another explanation of what the term "videogame" might encompass. According to Reinhardt, digital games (videogames) are software programs played on various platforms such as consoles (e.g. Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo), PCs, mobile phones or tablets; their interface is controlled manually by a player using either keyboard and mouse or a game controller; and they may run through the Internet, be played through a browser, or be available for download (Reinhardt, 2019, p. 88). Pervasive games (e.g. *Pokémon Go*), on the other hand, connect reality with the virtual design of a game,

as the players need to use portable devices and travel to special but real locations where a playable event happens in a real time, which is why they are also known under the name augmented reality games (Reinhardt, 2019, p. 88). However, the digital games format might also include another videogame type called virtual reality games marked by its special headset with goggles (e.g. Oculus Rift, Oculus Quest), and there is also a fast-growing videogame branch that connects elements of sport with virtual games, known widely as eSport (Reinhardt, 2019).

1.3. Elements of videogames

Gradually, the essence of what might the term "videogame" convey becomes clearer as the academic field of videogame studies grows on the numbers of studies, experiments and research. However, whereas researchers often deviate a little from each other's conceptions regarding the nature of play in the digital games, a majority agreement is apparent in the question of what its distinguishing features are (Peterson, 2013, p. 19). Moreover, as multiple researchers have noted, understanding how certain elements of videogames function is ground-breaking information that might play a key role in recognizing the potential for second language (L2) learning and also in designing and researching future gameful second language teaching and learning (L2TL) (Sykes, 2008; Reinhardt, 2017; Cornillie, 2017). Reinders (2012) adds to Prensky's (2001) notions about the conception of videogames, arguing that among the common elements that might be seen in most of the videogames are: rules, goals and objectives, challenge and opposition, outcome and feedback, competition, interaction, conflict, and the representation of a story (Reinders, 2012). That claim is endorsed also by Kapp (2012), whose list of typical videogame elements consists of goals, rules, feedback, storytelling, competition, and conflict, but also cooperation, time, aesthetics, levels, curve of interest, and reward structures (Kapp, 2012, p. 31–33).

The elements of digital games might also be seen categorized in literature depending on their in-game function. For instance, Wolf and Perron (2003, p. 14–15) suggest that videogames are characterized by four fundamental elements – graphics, interface, player activity, and algorithm. *Graphics* represent the visual display that players see on the monitor during gameplay; *interface* stands for either hardware or onscreen visual features that players use during gameplay to control the game, such as menus or buttons, and by that positively influences player activity; *player activity* represents the player's physical actions and mental processes when playing videogames and depends to some extent on the game algorithm;

algorithm means the software program that controls all the audio-visual content of the videogame. From the elements described by Wolf and Perron (2003), player activity, especially, has acquired a substantial interest from the theorists and researchers on account of its educational potential (Petersen, 2013, p. 36). Another categorization of digital game elements was provided by Werbach and Hunter (2015), who attempted to organize the features into three leading categories: components, mechanics, and dynamics. The majority of the elements stated by Werbach and Hunter (2015) are ranked among the components which are essentially the tools for creating a gamified environment in any field of interest (e.g. achievements, avatars, boss fights, content unlocking, leaderboards, levels, points, quests, virtual goods). The mechanics are the fundamental processes that keep players in the flow of the videogame by enabling the gaming events and action to move forward (e.g. challenges, chance, competition, cooperation, feedback, rewards, transactions). The dynamics represent highly abstract elements of videogames that create the meaningful gamified system which strikes deeper levels of players's perception; Werbach and Hunter (2015) describe five such elements: constraints, emotions, narrative, progression, and relationships.

1.3.1. Videogame elements involved in learning

Many researchers have mentioned the learning potential that videogames might offer, and it is almost four decades since Crawford (1984) articulated the assumption that videogames may contain elements which can support learning (Crawford, 1984). One of those theorists who attempted to investigate the influence of specific videogame elements on learning, and whose work remains influential until today, was Prensky (2001), who identified twelve gaming factors: rules, goals, objectives, outcomes, feedback, conflict, competition, challenge, opposition, interaction, representation, and story that might, in his opinion, constitute efficient tools for learning facilitation. As Prensky notes, rules provide limitations and framework that help players orient themselves in the game environment, whilst goals and objectives, represented in games by, for example, scoring systems, increase players' motivation. Outcomes and especially feedback influence emotional involvement through informing the players whether they are winning or losing, which increase players' motivation to learn and reach a better score. Conflict, competition, challenge, and opposition are elements that may also stimulate players' excitement while playing and may be supportive in learning problem solving skills. In Prensky's opinion, interactivity is another key factor that eases learning, mainly for the social aspect that occurs around the digital games. That social aspect can be seen largely in online multiplayer games where players meet and have the opportunity to learn from each other.

The last element mentioned by Prensky is representation or story, which may be interpreted as the narrative of the game which strengthen players' engagement in play. As the above descriptions of game elements suggest, one of the supposedly positive characteristics of well-designed digital games, as Prensky argues, is their ability to motivate players, bring them joy and excitement, and provide the player with deep involvement that might correspond with learning in the flow state, which Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has defined.

1.4. Videogame genres

Due to the vast variety of game types, many people who are invested in game studies have attempted to classify videogames by genres in order to raise the level of understanding of digital games (Newman, 2004). Reinhardt (2019) agrees with that statement, saying that the concept of game genres is yet another key to differentiate between what is and is not a game (Reinhardt, 2019, p. 90). Reinhardt defines videogame genres as "categories for games that have similar mechanics, player behaviour and themes" (Reinhardt, 2019, p. 90). However, classification of videogames into game genres might present a challenge because the genre categories change over time, due to emergence of new types of games which incorporate more than one characteristic genre (Reinhardt, 2019). Berens and Howard (2002), for example, provided a list of seven main videogame types (genres), consisting of: action and adventure; driving and racing; first-person shooter; platform and puzzle; role-playing; strategy and simulation; sports and beat-'em-ups (Berens and Howard, 2002). Those seven categories might be also seen as twelve separate genres of games that often overlap each other; nevertheless, multiple studies have reached the conclusion that specific videogame genres support L2TL (de Haan et al., 2010; Shintaku, 2016; Lacasa et al., 2008; Zhao, 2016; Zheng et al., 2012; Miller and Hegelheimer, 2006).

The next subchapters are focused on the essential genres of digital games as described in *Gameful Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Learning* (Reinhardt, 2019, p. 90–93).

1.4.1. Action games

Action games are usually based on controlling a single avatar in real time and as Reinhardt (2019) notes, physical (hand-eye-body) coordination and time pressure are characteristic features; nevertheless, they may also contain a strong narrative. Several subgenres have been recognized as derivations of action games, namely: fighting (e.g. *Tekken*, *Street*

Fighter, *Mortal Kombat*), survival (e.g. *Dying Light*, *Last of Us*, *Days Gone*, *Resident Evil*), shooter (e.g. *Counter Strike*, *Overwatch*), and platform (e.g. *Ori and the Blind Forest*). As has been already mentioned, it is often the case that mechanics from different genres overlap, and thus the hybrid genres, such as action-adventure (e.g. *Uncharted*, *Arkham Batman*, *Marvel's Spiderman*) or action-role-playing (e.g. *The Elder Scrolls*) are sometimes admitted as an independent videogame genre. Since the genre of action games is not limited to only single-player or multiplayer experience, it might facilitate language learning and use through player cooperation (e.g. team communication in Counter Strike). In addition, reacting to audible or textual instructions during the gameplay, comprehending rules or managing time pressure might also support language learning. One example of a study aimed at the effect of an action videogame on second language acquisition (SLA) was conducted by J. deHaan, W. M. Reed, and K. Kuwada in 2010, which investigated the effect of interactivity with a music video game (*Parappa the Rapper*) on L2 vocabulary recall. Eighty participants (65 males, 15 females) aged 18–24 were paired; one was playing the game, and the other was watching, and their goal was to remember the vocabulary from the game and recall the words immediately after the play and after 2 weeks. The study showed that the "watchers" group recalled significantly more vocabulary items than the players immediately afterward and their vocabulary retention was also better. Even though players did not attain the same results as the watchers, the study still proved that videogames might be possible sources of linguistic information for language learners, and also demonstrated that the potential of digital games for SLA depends on the type of videogame (deHaan et al., 2010).

1.4.2. Adventure games

Adventure games let the player explore a virtual environment while also introducing the story and believable characters to him/her, and may also surprise the player with puzzles. However, since pure adventure games are not that common, it is more likely to find a videogame whose genre involves some characteristics of adventure games. In this category are to be found popular story-driven videogames, such as *The Walking Dead* or *The Wolf Among Us*, and the subgenres also include: visual novels (*Doki Doki Literature Club!*), text adventures (*Night House, Torn*), interactive fiction (*Late Shift*), and hidden objects (*The House of da Vinci*). The important elements that may facilitate learning and use of language are the story (i.e. the audio-visual and textual content is perceived by the player, evoking reaction), the option to choose and make decisions (i.e. player must know the context and later consequences of his/her in-game actions), solving logical sequences (i.e. problem solving), and interacting with the in-

game characters (i.e. leading multiple-option conversation with non-player characters) or with real players. As stated in Computer Games and Language Learning (Peterson, 2013), multiple studies and experiments have been conducted in the early stages of game studies, regarding the use of text-based adventure games in computer-assisted language learning (CALL) (Jones, 1986; Culley et al., 1986; Palmberg, 1988; Cheung and Harrison, 1992) The researchers claimed that playing text-based videogames had positive effect on learners' motivation; as a result of competitive elements of the game, learners had been stimulated to produce target language output and also showed a good receptive knowledge of vocabulary and program-specific lexical items acquired while playing the game. Moreover, learners enjoyed practising English through this type of videogame. In addition, more recent research by Neville, Shelton, and McInnis (2009) focused on the influence of text-based games on SLA, and indicated that learners who played the game showed better vocabulary retention and produced longer and richer TL assessments than their peers who learned vocabulary the traditional way.

1.4.3. Role-playing games

Role-playing digital games, or RPGs, are marked by their character-developing mechanics which offer players the option of continual levelling of in-game avatars. They further offer vast virtual playgrounds with countless objectives, quests or missions, whose completion gives players experience points (XPs), in-game currency or another specific reward, and where players may interact either with non-player characters (NPCs) or real players. Gee (2005) describes RPG games as a videogame genre that is based on a rich, branching narrative and players' decision-making which shapes the path of the playable character in the virtual story. Reinhardt (2019) distinguishes two main subgenres, simply titled as Western RPGs (e.g. *The Elder Scrolls, Fallout, Kingdom Come: Deliverance, The Witcher, Mass Effect, Cyberpunk 2077*) which let the player follow his/her own storyline by decision-making, and Eastern RPGs (e.g. *Final Fantasy, Ni No Kuni*) where the player leads a group of characters through an essentially linear narrative. A study conducted by Piirainen-Marsch and Tainio (2009) investigated the use of the popular RPG *Final Fantasy X* in an informal setting, and discovered that players' repetition of game characters' utterances, obtained while following the narrative, produced a context that was beneficial for learning and using target language (TL), and also supported cooperation, interaction between players and enjoyment.

1.4.4. MMORPGs

Massively multiplayer online role-playing games, in short MMORPGs, are considered a hybrid genre, blending the characteristic elements of RPG with the aspect of MMO which, according to some theorists, contributes to creating social dynamics responsible for L2 learning (Lai et al., 2012; Peterson, 2016). These might be viewed as a subgenre of RPG, however, their impact on the gaming community is large enough for accepting them as a genre of their own. Videogames such as *World of Warcraft*, *Path of Exile*, and *Guild Wars 2* are examples of this game type. According to Reinhardt (2019), this hybrid genre might facilitate language use and learning through sophisticated character creation (i.e. players view their in-game avatars as their in-game identity, which supports motivation and immersion in play), comprehending rules, following stories, decision-making, interacting with NPCs, and cooperating with other players. In recent years, many researchers have focused on the use of MMORPG in CALL, which led them to multiple positive findings. Thorne (2008) claimed that his study, focused on the effect of interactivity in the game *World of Warcraft* on language learning and use, proved that the examined videogame provided not only a context that facilitated language learning, but also a high degree of motivation that supported players' engagement in TL conversation. Another study, by Rankin, Gold, and Gooch (2006), indicated that, depending on learners' English language proficiency, playing the MMORPG Ever Quest 2 facilitated vocabulary learning and retention, reading comprehension, and conversational skills. Similar results were found in a study by Suh, S. Kim, and N. Kim (2010), where the experiment group exhibited an increased level of listening comprehension, reading, and writing than the control group, which did not play the English-language MMORPG *Nori School*.

1.4.5. Simulation games

Simulation games offers player the chance to try things or professions which they cannot do in real life in believable and sophisticated virtual environments. The genre might involve elements of strategy, for example in videogames like *Cities: Skylines*, *Roller Coaster Tycoon* (and other "Tycoon" videogames in general), or *SimCity*, where players are encouraged to build and manage a representation of a system (e.g. prison, city, theme park, school, restaurants, offices or studios, colonies), or even elements from other videogame genres, thus creating several subgenres, such as military simulation games (e.g. *Arma*), hunting simulation games (e.g. *The Hunter*); vehicle simulation games may be divided further into flight simulation (e.g. *Microsoft Flight Simulator*) games or driving simulation games (e.g. *Euro Truck Simulator*).

According to Reinhardt (2019), among the aspects that may influence language learning and use are organizing, planning, strategizing, and comprehending rules. Several studies have been conducted, investigating the possible use of simulation videogames in CALL. For example, studies by Miller and Hegelheimer (2006), and later by Ranalli (2008) were both focused on the videogame *The Sims* and they found similar results. Both studies showed that when a simulation game such as *The Sims* is combined with related additional supportive materials, the acquisition of targeted vocabulary may be improved, depending on the level of language proficiency of the learner.

1.4.6. Strategy games

Strategy games emphasize players' strategic progression through the game, involving planning skills and thinking two steps ahead of the opponent; some strategy videogames may also contain the element of real-time battles (e.g. *Starcraft*). The aspect of real-time fighting in particular promotes such games to the competitive sphere of gaming - eSport. Real-time strategy is considered as a subgenre, and so is turn-based strategy (e.g. *Civilization*, *Total War*, *Europa Universalis*, *Stellaris*). The combination of strategy and action creates a hybrid genre titled MOBA that also has high competitive potential and is characteristic of epic multiplayer online battles in virtual arenas (e.g. *Dota 2*, *Smite*, *League of Legends*). Elements that might support SLA are, according to Reinhardt (2019), long-term planning and tactical thinking, comprehending rules, cooperation with other players and measured risk-taking.

1.4.7. Sports games

Sports videogames focus on transferring real-life sports into the virtual environment with, usually, as much verisimilitude to the original as possible. Depending on one's point of view, sports digital games might be considered as a subgenre of action games since they share most of the mechanics – and also potential language learning features. Videogames such as *FIFA*, *NHL*, *NBA* or *Pro Evolution Soccer* are some of the most popular examples of this type of game. Also, research was conducted by deHaan (2005) examining the possibility of playing a Japanese-language baseball videogame to increase the level of listening comprehension and kanji symbol identification. Although deHaan confessed this research had certain limitations, results showed that the learner indeed improved his listening comprehension skills, moreover, his reading skills were supposedly enhanced as well.

2. Learning language through digital games

The academic focus on digital games and their use in education as a facilitator of language learning has already been around for a couple of decades; however, with the extremely fast evolution of digital games and the videogame industry in general, the need for more research in that area has grown rapidly. As it already has been exemplified, it represents a fascinating topic for a number of theorists (e.g. deHaan, 2005; Renalli, 2008, Thorne, 2008; Piirainen-Marsch and Tainio, 2009) and their studies repeatedly made a case for the beneficial impact of playing videogames on many aspects of language learning and use (e.g. learning vocabulary, listening and reading comprehension, speaking skills) (Parsayi and Soyoof, 2018). To state yet another example, among other researchers, Chik (2014) supported the notion that videogames incorporate specific elements that show potentially positive properties for language learning.

One of the influential attributes of digital games that indicates beneficial results regarding the use of videogames in language learning and use, is the narrative element which provides the meaningful context (i.e. scenes, situations) in which the targeted language is presented (Chen et al., 2017). This characteristic is in accordance with situated learning theory (Lave and Wenger, 1991), which suggests that learning potential might be considerably greater when it happens in specific situations, rather than if it occurs out of context. As Zhi-Hong Chen, Howard Hao-Jan Chen, and Wan-Jhen Dai stated in their case study focused on using narrative-based contextual games to enhance language learning:

> Contexts offer students rich information, including objects themselves as well as the relationships among various objects. Such rich information is helpful in comprehending and retaining knowledge. (Chen, Chen, and Dai, 2018, p.187)

Moreover, contexts potentially induce deep emotions in players, which complements the level of immersion in the play and thus contributes to enhancement of learning (Haring, Chakinska, and Ritterfeld, 2011). Another case study discovered that the contextual game-based learning system called *PlanetAdventure* helped increase the level of English of the participants, specifically their reading skills and vocabulary knowledge and retention (Chen, Chen, and Dai, 2018, p.192).

2.1. Digital game-enhanced language learning

Digital game-enhanced language learning (DGELL) is based on the premise that vernacular, off-the-shelf videogames (i.e. digital games designed for entertainment purposes) might have the potential for providing their players context for L2 learning (Reinhardt and Sykes, 2014) ("vernacular" means a videogame made solely for the purpose of entertainment of its consumers, i.e. players). Reinhardt and Sykes (2014) further explain that unlike game-based research that investigates the use of videogames which are made specifically for the purpose of learning, game-enhanced research examines commercial videogames and their possible potential for L2TL and use in the classroom environment. The authors also argue that vernacular videogames might be, in the same way as magazines, novels, websites or movies, a valuable source of practice to learn languages, assuming that they are appropriately incorporated into the school curriculum and pedagogically adjusted for the purpose of learning.

Specific examples of the studied influence of commercial videogames on language learning exist. Newcombe and Brick (2017) claimed that the game *Assassin's Creed Syndicate* offers a source of opportunities to learn more specific varieties of English language, due to the main characters of the story who present the player with aural output in which collocations, sociolect phrases, phrasal verbs and idioms are incorporated. This way, in-game situations emerge that might also improve the cultural awareness of players and facilitate linguistic comprehension (López-Barrios, 2012). Another instance of possible players' exposure to language via a commercial videogame was noticed by Newcombe and Brick (2017) who claimed, acknowledging the work of McCall (2011) on using videogames to teach secondary history, that digital games such as *Civilization* contain detailed language information regarding the theme of the game (e.g. religion, culture, technology), which expose players to new vocabulary and phrases in specific contexts (e.g. history), that might facilitate second language acquisition and motivation.

2.2. Subtitles as an enhancing element of DGBLL

One of the broadly acknowledged aspects of digital entertainment (i.e. videogames, films, series) that promote active viewing are subtitles. Captions, provided they are not in the mother tongue of the player/viewer, play an important role in language learning, and they are considered as another element in digital games that might enhance listening comprehension (Hsu, Hwang, Chang, and Chang, 2013). This notion has been presented by Carolyn Parks (1994), who stated that:

Students using captioned materials show significant improvement in reading comprehension, listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, word recognition, decoding skills, and overall motivation to read (Parks, 1994).

King (2002) agrees with Parks' (1994) affirmation and further adds that subtitles can also enhance the spoken fluency of the language learner. The main reason, producing the benefits of subtitles for language learning, is the triple connection between image on the screen, sound in one language, and text which may potentially be translated to another language (Talaván Zanón, 2006). A summary of the major benefits of captions in language learning activities, based on previous work of Jane King (2002), has been listed by Noa Talaván Zanón (2006), who proposes that use of subtitles:

- Supports rapid reading skills by following the captions in quicker dialogue sequences.

- Can improve pronunciation consciously and also unconsciously.

- Facilitates the learner's following of the narrative.

- Might improve the learner's ability to recognize words.

- Unites the reading and listening skills into one comprehension ability.

- May strengthen comprehension of idiomatic expressions and vocabulary.

- Can elicit the learner's motivation to practise a second language (here, English) outside the school environment.

Despite the fact that research conducted on the use of subtitles in the context of language learning proved that advantages of such use of captions exceed the disadvantages, Talaván Zanón (2006) mentions two limitations which, in his point of view, need to be taken to account. Firstly, the possibility that the learner unconsciously neglects the aural part of the dialogue due to his/her increased concentration in reading the captions needs to be acknowledged; however, he proposes a solution in gradually teaching the learners to notice both, the text and the audio, by preparing tasks which would support that specific ability in the learners. And secondly, it is not a rare phenomenon that learners, once they learn the habit of reading subtitles, experience difficulties due to unnecessary subtitle watching. Again, he suggests a solution in the form of prepared tasks which would alternate between viewing with subtitles and without them.

3. Limitations of language learning via digital games

Although multiple studies report positively on the influence of videogames on foreign language learning and use, the research has also noted a number of limitations. Jonathan Newcombe and Billy Brick (2017) stated that the potential benefits of digital games, with regards to language learning, are most likely incidental, due to the absence of the paedagogical factor that would focus the player on the specific targeted language. This claim is in line with Esimaje (2012), who is of the opinion that the role of the teacher as a facilitator of language learning is essential for learners to deeply understand the meaning of words and phrases in L2. Furthermore, aspects such as the perceptions of the educator, the value of the content of the videogame, the learner's engagement with the medium, the ability-level and age appropriateness, comprehensibility for language learners, and the teacher's knowledge of the videogame, play main roles in deciding whether a certain videogame might be perceived as a learning tool (Newcombe, Brick, 2017).

Survey

4. Aim and methodology

The aim of the research was to investigate the opinion of the Czech public on a possible correlation between videogame playing and English language learning and use, and by that contribute to the academic field of videogame studies, since not much research in the Czech Republic has yet been conducted on this topic. Thus the research itself was intended to shed light on this area of study, and rather than bring breakthrough evidence to the table, was aimed to prove or disprove already made notions regarding the usefulness of videogame playing in foreign language learning – specifically, whether the claims that digital games may improve knowledge of English vocabulary, reading and listening comprehension, writing skills, and communicative competence.

The instrument used for gathering data was a questionnaire that consisted of nineteen questions in total, with two questions of the branching type, thus the real number of questions that respondents had the opportunity to answer was seventeen. The questionnaire included both, open-ended and close-ended questions (dichotomous, multiple choice), and was created on the www.vyplnto.cz website and distributed via various social media (Facebook, Messenger, Twitch). The questionnaire was chosen for economical use in distributing it to the highest number of people, and for easier generalization of the gathered data. A total number of two hundred anonymous respondents contributed to the survey, which was open from 18 May 2022 to 31 May 2022.

The data from the questionnaire were analysed using the mixed-methods approach. The website www.vyplnto.cz processed the close-ended questions which were then further enumerated, and the open-ended questions were individually considered and then searched for any linking or recurring themes.

4.1. Research questions

The questions in the survey focused mainly on the participants' experiences and opinions regarding the potential influence of digital games on English language learning and use, thus supporting or refuting the importance of game-enhanced language learning. With accordance to the aim and objectives of this thesis, questions regarding videogame genre, motivation, use of subtitles in videogames, and the potential respondent's personal experience

with learning English language via videogames were asked. Since the focus of this thesis is on Czech videogame players, the questions were formulated in Czech. Here are examples of such questions, with translations in English:

CZ: S jakým jazykovým nastavením hrajete nejčastěji videohry

ENG: *In what language setting do you usually play videogames?*

CZ: Mají podle Vás titulky ve videohrách smysl?

ENG: *In your opinion, do subtitles in videogames have any purpose?*

CZ: Myslíte si, že na Vaši momentální úroveň anglického jazyka mělo pozitivní vliv mimo jiné i hraní videoher?

ENG: *Do you think that playing videogames, among other things, had a positive impact on your current level of English?*

CZ: Kdybyste měli vybrat jednu nebo vice konkrétních videoher, o kterých si myslíte, že nejvíce zlepšily Vaši úroveň anglického jazyka, které by to byly?

ENG: *If You were to choose one or more videogames that, in your mind, increased your level of English language the most, which games would they be?*

CZ: Rozhodněte, do jaké miry níže zmíněné video-herní aspekty motivují hráče k tomu, aby NEPŘESTAL hrát určitou videohru?

ENG: Could you d*ecide, and to what extent, whether the videogame elements mentioned below motivate player to keep playing a certain videogame?*

5. Analysis (of the Survey Results, and Discussion)

This chapter provides an analysis of the results given by the survey, and also a discussion, where the findings are compared to the data described by other researchers in this field of study so far. In addition, the results in this chapter are divided into demographics/personal and those concerning the possible influence of videogames on players' language learning.

5.1. Respondents

The research was not focused on a specific group of videogame users; in fact, the questionnaire was intended to provide more general data about the characteristics of Czech players. From the overall number of respondents (200), 186 were males (93%) and only 14 were females (7%) which is a ratio that does not align with the current statistics presented by the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE). ISFE (2021) in their presentation *Key Facts 2020* stated that based on their survey, 47% of players in Europe are women, however, the statistics include only the biggest videogame markets, situated in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and England, and therefore they may not be applicable to Czech videogame market and the current situation in the Czech Republic. On the other hand, the way the questionnaire for this thesis was distributed might have affected the gender gap result, too, since, for example, the majority of viewers on the streaming platform Twitch.tv, where the questionnaire was also posted, are males.
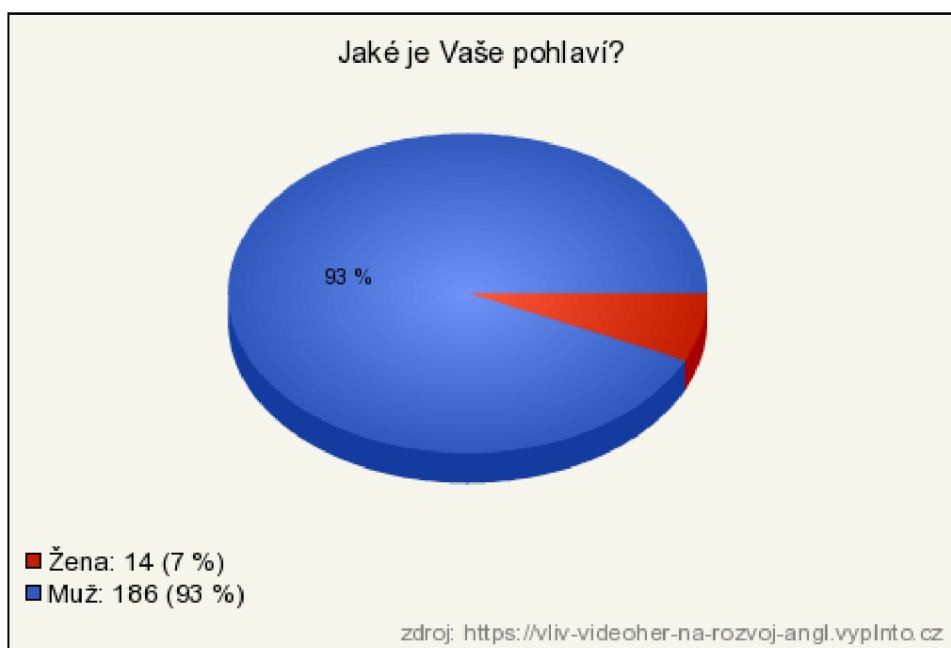
Figure 1. Gender of the respondents

Furthermore, the survey indicated that players aged from 21 to 30 were the majority (47%) of the respondents; players aged from 16 to 20 were the second most numerous (45%); nine respondents stated their age as 12 to 15 (4.5%); six respondents were 31 to 45 years old (3%); and only one respondent stated his age was less than 12 years old (0.5%). These numbers are again slightly deviated from the survey statistics provided by IFSE (2021), however, the limitations that were already mentioned with regards to the issue with gender gap need to be considered here as well.
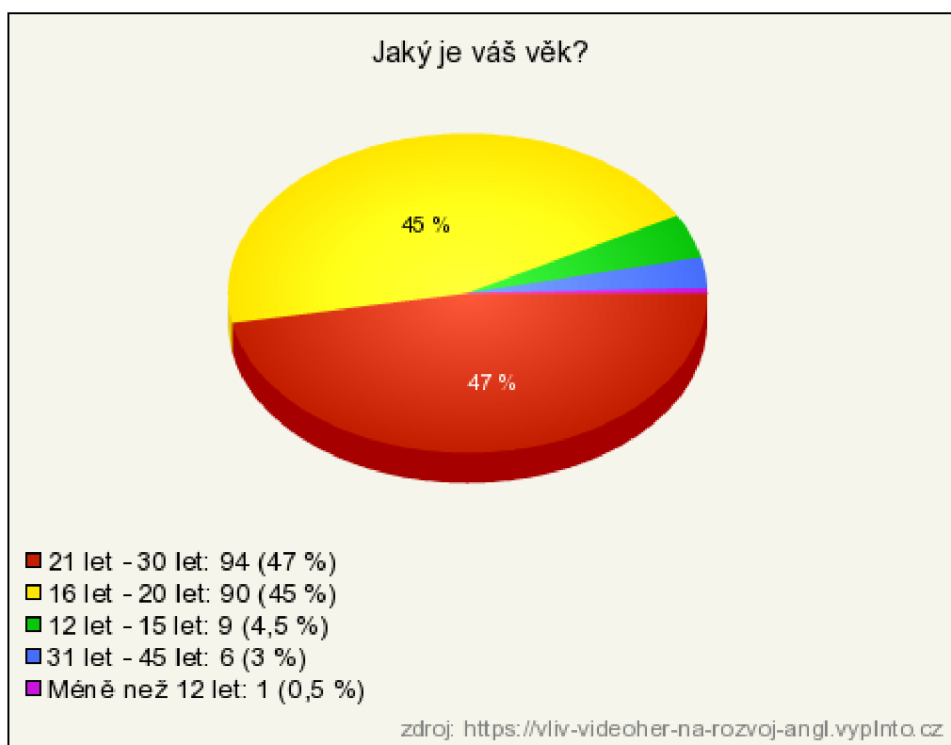

Figure 2. Age of the respondents

It was discovered that from the total number of two hundred participants, high school students play games the most, making up 35% of all responses, while college/university students and people working jobs each represented 29.5% of the total responses. Nine pupils studying at elementary school participated in the survey (4.5%), and there were even three respondents who receive a pension (1.5%). However, taking to account the previous results, it may be concluded that none of the three participants, who receive a pension, were in an advanced age.
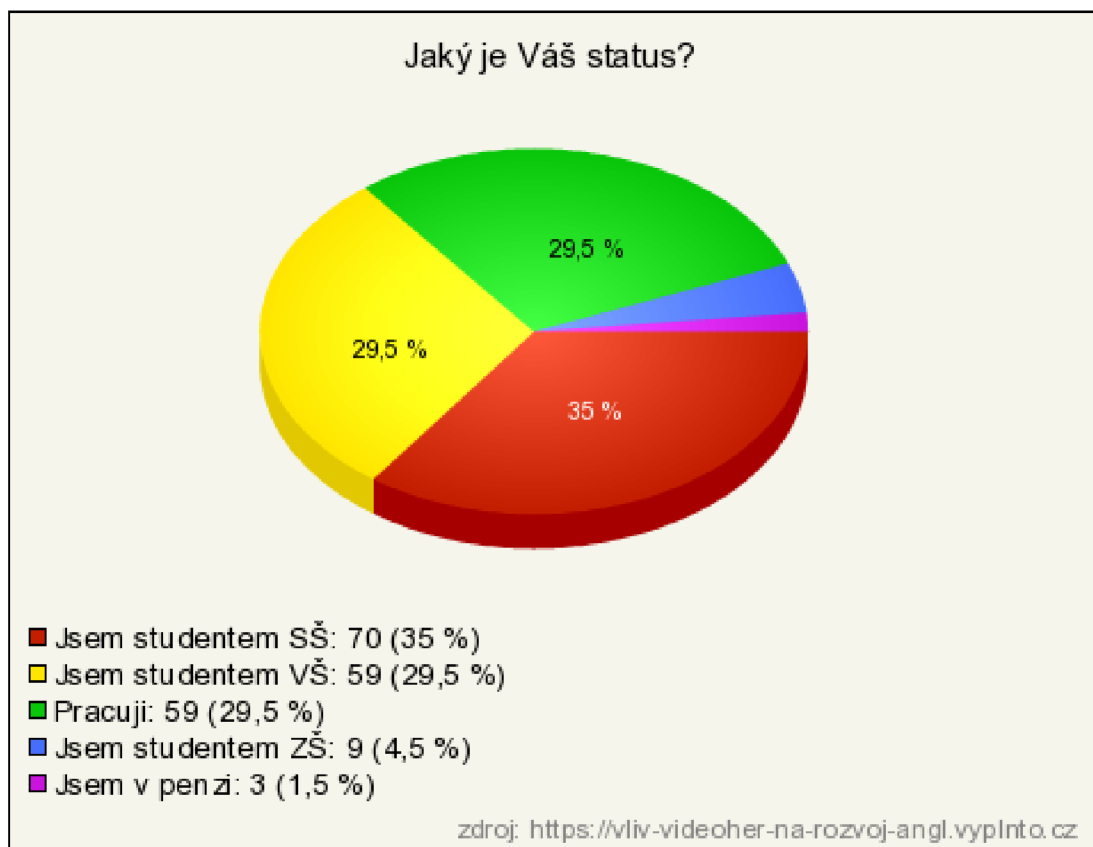
Figure 3. Status of the respondents

Finally, the last of the sorting questions, was surveying the respondents' level of English language proficiency. The answers showed that most of the participants would rank their level of English language knowledge in the B2 category (48.5%). Participants at the C1 level of English constituted almost exactly half the number of B2 learners (24%). The B1 category of English language proficiency had 32 respondents (16%). A small portion, twelve participants (6%), stated that their English was on the C2 level, and a minority of respondents professed having level A2 (4%) and A1 (1.5%).
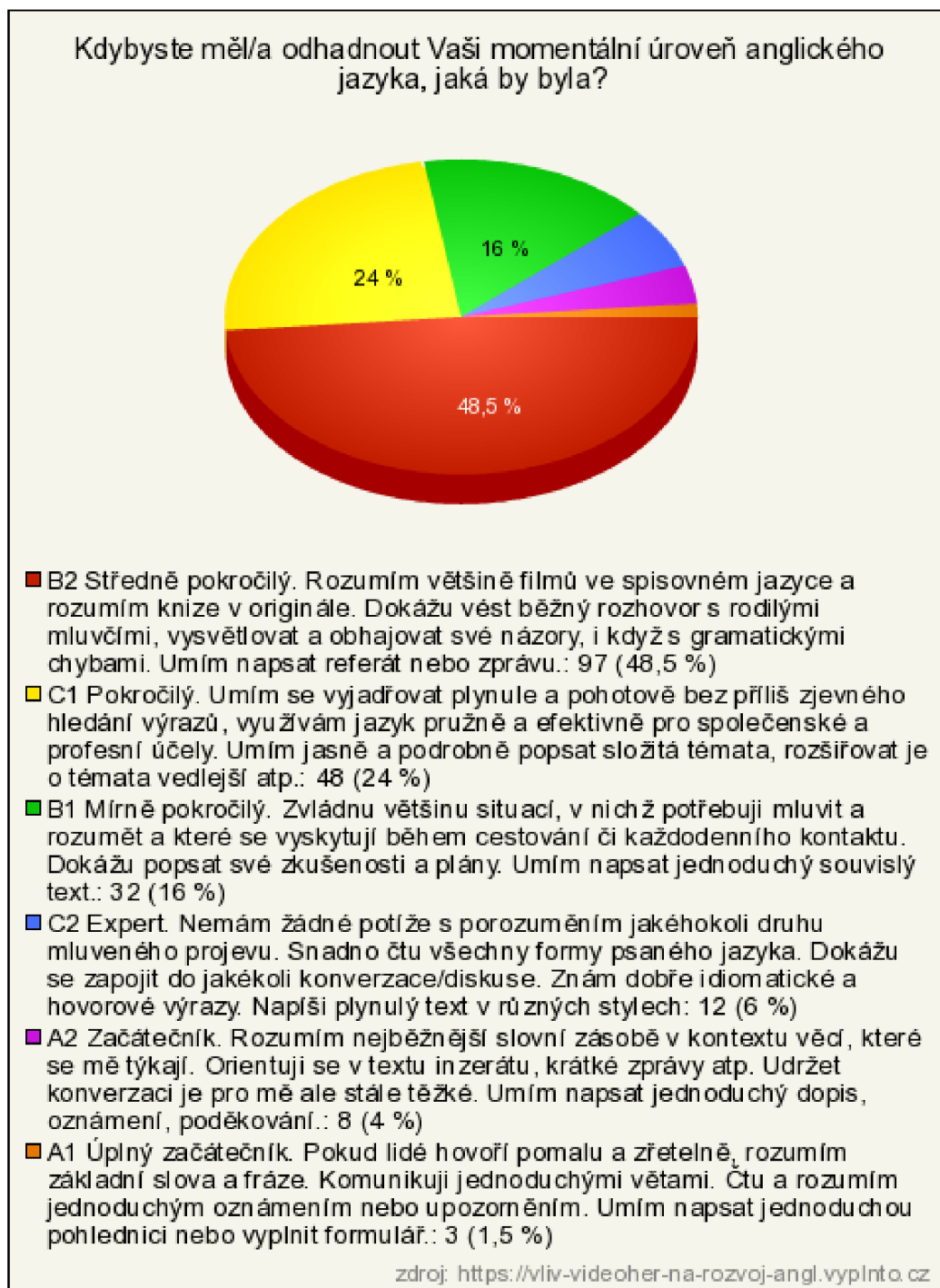
Figure 4. The level of English language proficiency of the respondents

To conclude this subchapter, all the acquired personal and demographic data showed mutual and meaningful continuation as to English level, which suggest that the responses were consistent and no element of randomness occurred. Also, as mentioned previously, there was an apparent deviation in a few selected statistics compared to the survey conducted by ISFE (2021) which might imply that partly misleading results have been achieved. Nevertheless, the surveyed data showed greater agreement than disagreement with the statistics provided by ISFE (2021).

5.2. Videogames and English language learning: Results

Two of the first questions in the questionnaire were aimed at clarifying to what extent are videogames part of respondents' life. It was discovered that from the 200 respondents 75 of them play videogames every day (37.5%), and majority of the total number of participants plays daily circa 2h – 3h (39%). A similar amount of participants (72) stated that they play digital games twice to six times a week (36%), only 5 respondents play less than twelve times a year (2.5%), and 27 participants also confirmed that they don't play digital games daily (13.5%). Altogether, the results show that generally, most of the respondents play videogames at least two times a week or more, which indicates that digital games play a considerable role in their everyday life, and may be in that sense comparable to other regular hobbies such as sports or arts.
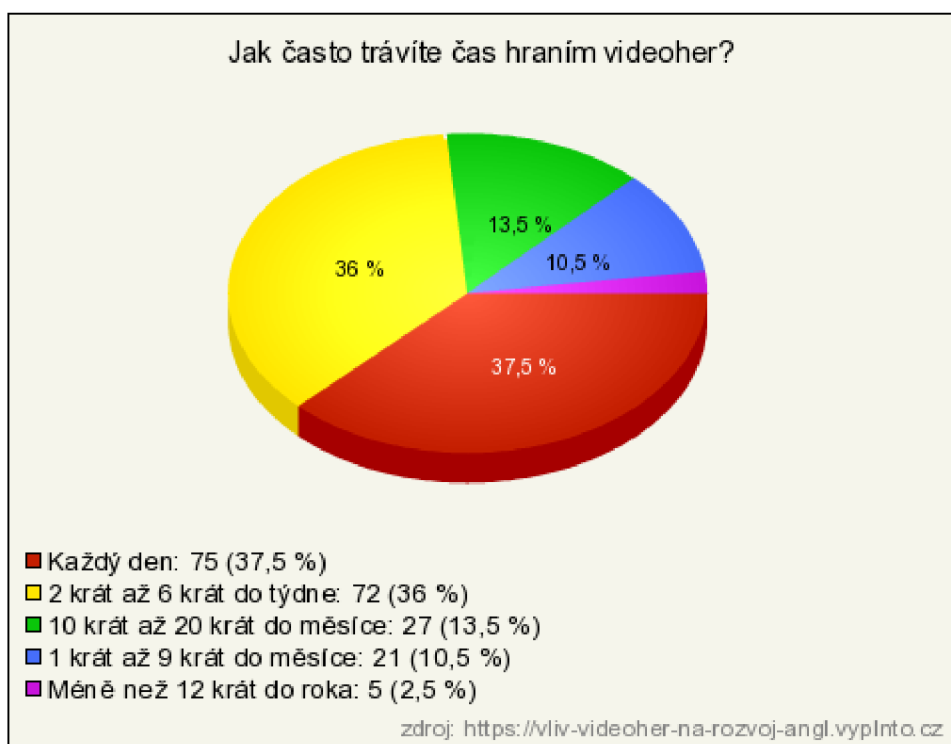

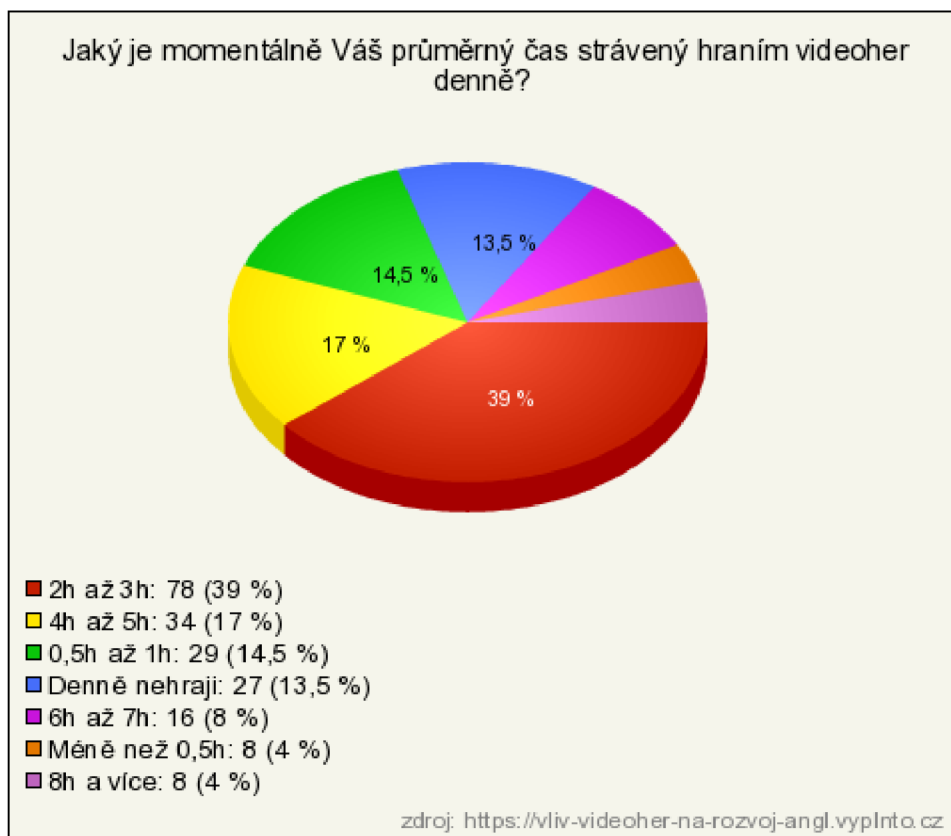Figure 5. How often the respondents play videogames?

Figure 6. The current daily average time spent playing videogames

5.2.1. Use of subtitles in digital games

A few of the questions in the survey were focused on the element of subtitles in videogames, since previous studies suggested the importance of subtitles on language learning (e.g. Hsu, Hwang, Chang, and Chang, 2013; Parks, 1994; King, 2002; Talaván Zanón, 2006). And it is important to note that an almost unanimous agreement was achieved in the question "*In your opinion, do subtitles in videogames have any purpose?*", when 99.5% of all the respondents expressed positively. The results to the question, regarding the players' preferred in-game language setting, indicated that 96 (48%) of the 200 respondents prefer to play videogames in English language with English captions, and claimed that in this type of language setting the subtitles facilitate learning sentence structures, new words, correct spelling, pronunciation, and also represent a form of English reading practice, which is beneficial for the SLA. A few respondents commented that this language setting is valuable for them, since it is important to connect the newly heard word with its transcription (and an image, if possible) to memorize the word easier, for the brain perceives the English language in multiple ways. This claim is in accordance to the statement of Talaván Zanón (2006), regarding the beneficial impact of triple connection of image, sound and text. Respondents who prefer to play digital

games in English with Czech captions numbered in 71 (35.5%), further stating that Czech subtitles in videogames help them with listening comprehension, memorizing new English vocabulary, due to the created connection between English words and their translation, and also help with understanding the game tasks. In addition, many respondents considered this type of language setting the most beneficial to learners with lower level of English. Results further showed that 14.5% of respondents prefer videogames in English and without subtitles, while those who prefer playing only in Czech were 2%.

Overall, the respondents presented similar arguments to the question of purpose of subtitles in videogames, stating that captions help players with following the narrative and understanding certain potentially more difficult dialogue sequences (e.g. dialogues, containing strong accents, slang, or fast speech), facilitate the comprehension of phrases and sentences, and support language learning, in terms of spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, reading efficiency, structure of sentences and listening comprehension. These results correspond with the findings of Hsu, Hwang, Chang, and Chang (2013), Parks (1994), King (2002), and Talaván Zanón (2006). Only one respondent disagreed with the question, however, no further comments have been made to explain his/her choice.

Figure 7. In your opinion, do subtitles in videogames have any purpose?

Figure 8. Preferred in-game language setting of respondents

5.2.2. Impact of videogame playing on level of language

One of the key questions of this questionnaire asked participants whether they think playing videogames had, among other things, impact on their current level of English language. Clear results have been collected, indicating that majority of respondents believe that videogames have affected their current level of English (99%), as opposed to the two respondents who disagreed (1%).

The recurring themes of respondents' answers incorporated the influence of videogames on vocabulary knowledge increase, due to factors such as: to progress in game, learning new words to understand in-game tasks, is necessary; players are exposed to many forms of the foreign language; the motivation to learn words or even search for their meaning in dictionary is necessary in order to comprehend the story; reading in-game texts and subtitles; certain game mechanics (e.g. connecting words with their images when collecting items or browsing through inventory in games such as Wow or Minecraft) which facilitate language learning. Among other frequent answers was that online multiplayer games with voice-chat (e.g. Counter Strike: Global Offensive) provide suitable environment for practicing (and thus developing) English communicative competence, for the community in these games is demographically and culturally varied. On the other hand, there might be a potential risk that player may absorb bad speaking habits (e.g. incorrect pronunciation). The fact that videogames offer players to visit

different cultures, and thus hear the distinctive variations of English language and be also socially enriched, may count as another benefit of digital games, as has been acknowledged by a few respondents. That is in accordance with claims that videogames may be viewed as products that carry multiple cultural themes, and are essentially cultural texts (Reinhardt, 2013), moreover, playing videogames may be presented as socio-literacy practise (Thorne, Black, and Sykes, 2009). A few respondents also stated that playing videogames motivated them to become better in English, and there were also opinions that due to the respondents' passion in playing videogames (in English), they considered English lessons at school easier.

To conclude, the survey showed that respondents perceived playing videogames as influential to their English language development, mostly for the amount of visually or audibly acquired language input provided by videogames in meaningful contexts. That is in line with Parsayi, and Soyoof (2018) who claim that the story-based structure and the attractive context presented in videogames is beneficial for the language learning.

Figure 9. Do you think that playing videogames, among other things, had a positive impact on your current level of English?

The participants were also asked to decide whether playing videogames was influential to their development in particular aspects of language proficiency, specifically *vocabulary*, *pronunciation*, *the knowledge of English phrases*, and *spelling*. The results showed that all the provided language categories were, according to respondents' opinion, positively influenced by playing videogames. It was found that the videogame playing impacted *vocabulary knowledge* the most (99% agreed), then it was *the knowledge of English phrases* (88% agreed), then *pronunciation* (70.5% agreed), and then the *spelling* (54.5% agreed). The almost perfect consensus that respondents expressed for the influence of videogame playing on vocabulary acquisition is not surprising, for studies have described this phenomenon multiple times (e.g. Chen, Chen, Dai, 2018; Parsayi and Soyoof, 2018; Dehaan, Reed, Kuwanda, 2010).
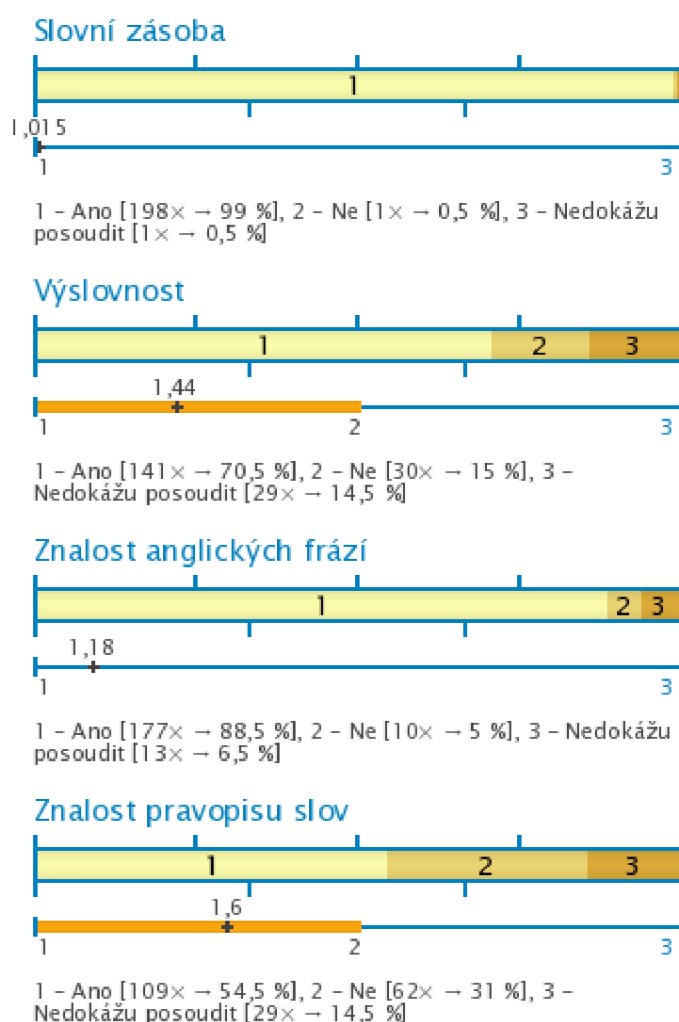
Slovní zásoba

1,015

1 – Ano [198× → 99 %], 2 – Ne [1× → 0,5 %], 3 – Nedokážu posoudit [1× → 0,5 %]

Výslovnost

1,44

1 – Ano [141× → 70,5 %], 2 – Ne [30× → 15 %], 3 – Nedokážu posoudit [29× → 14,5 %]

Znalost anglických frází

1,18

1 – Ano [177× → 88,5 %], 2 – Ne [10× → 5 %], 3 – Nedokážu posoudit [13× → 6,5 %]

Znalost pravopisu slov

1,6

1 – Ano [109× → 54,5 %], 2 – Ne [62× → 31 %], 3 – Nedokážu posoudit [29× → 14,5 %]

Figure 10. Aspects of language potentially influenced by videogame playing
source: https://vliv-videoher-na-rozvoj-angl.vyplnto.cz

The next section in the questionnaire was intended to collect data about the potential impact of videogame playing on the *vocabulary* and the four essential language skills: *listening comprehension, communicative competence, reading comprehension* and *writing competence*. The respondents were instructed to rate each category on the Likert scale which was selected to provide more complex data.

The results indicated that, overall, the majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that playing videogames had positive impact on all five language skills. Participants tended to strongly agree to the *listening comprehension* category, where 69.5% strongly agreed, 26% agreed, 1% could not say, 3% disagreed, and 0.5% strongly disagreed. Even more respondents strongly agreed to the impact of videogames on *vocabulary* (71%), which was again the highest consensus among the respondents. Considerably high consensus appeared also in *reading comprehension*, showing that 64% strongly agreed, and 28% agreed. On the other hand, the percentage of uncertain participants increased in the *communicative competence* category, where strongly agreed only 33%, agreed 38%, could not say 15.5%, disagreed 11%, and strongly disagreed 2.5%. And slightly more disagreement occurred in the *writing competence* category, where only 22.5% strongly agreed, 38% agreed, 16% could not say, 19% disagreed, and 4.5% strongly disagreed.

Similar results might be seen when comparing those three of the survey items. There is a general agreement among the respondents that knowledge of vocabulary, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension are the leading aspects influenced by playing the digital games.

Hraní videoher v anglickém jazyce mělo pozitivní vliv na moji schopnost porozumět mluvené řeči. (Poslech)

1 – Nesouhlasím [1× → 0,5 %], 2 – Spíše nesouhlasím [6× → 3 %], 3 – Netuším [2× → 1 %], 4 – Spíše souhlasím [52× → 26 %], 5 – Souhlasím [139× → 69,5 %]

Hraní videoher v anglickém jazyce mělo pozitivní vliv na moje dovednosti v mluveném projevu (Mluvení)
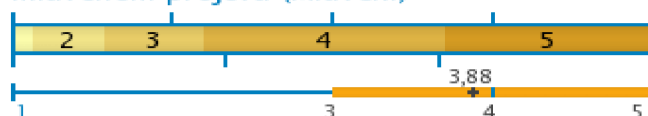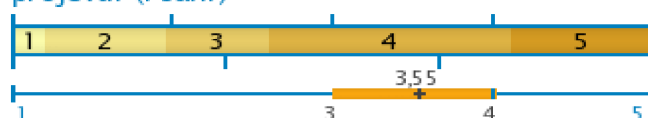
1 – Nesouhlasím [5× → 2,5 %], 2 – Spíše nesouhlasím [22× → 11 %], 3 – Netuším [31× → 15,5 %], 4 – Spíše souhlasím [76× → 38 %], 5 – Souhlasím [66× → 33 %]

Hraní videoher v anglickém jazyce mělo pozitivní vliv na moji schopnost číst text v anglickém jazyce. (Čtení)
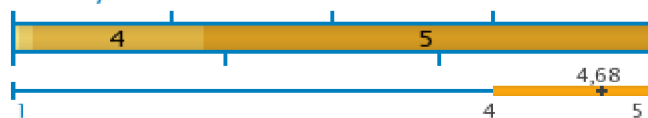
1 – Nesouhlasím [1× → 0,5 %], 2 – Spíše nesouhlasím [6× → 3 %], 3 – Netuším [9× → 4,5 %], 4 – Spíše souhlasím [56× → 28 %], 5 – Souhlasím [128× → 64 %]

Hraní videoher v anglickém jazyce mělo pozitivní vliv na moje dovednosti v psaném projevu. (Psaní)

1 – Nesouhlasím [9× → 4,5 %], 2 – Spíše nesouhlasím [38× → 19 %], 3 – Netuším [32× → 16 %], 4 – Spíše souhlasím [76× → 38 %], 5 – Souhlasím [45× → 22,5 %]

Hraní videoher v anglickém jazyce mělo pozitivní vliv na rozvoj mojí anglické slovní zásoby.

2 – Spíše nesouhlasím [1× → 0,5 %], 3 – Netuším [4× → 2 %], 4 – Spíše souhlasím [53× → 26,5 %], 5 – Souhlasím [142× → 71 %]

Figure 11. Influence of videogame playing on language skills – Likert scale

source: https://vliv-videoher-na-rozvoj-angl.vyplnto.cz

5.2.3. Videogame genre preference and impact

This subchapter includes three items from the survey that focused on the videogame genres, with the intention to discover which genres might be generally more suitable for language learning, according to the opinions of the respondents.

The first item was aimed at the genre preferences of participants. The survey showed that the most popular was RPG genre. Action-shooter games, Story-driven Adventure games, and Action games were also in the top five. Since the respondents could choose multiple options, the results do not add up to the 100%, also a custom answer option was available, which resulted in a few misleading answers (e.g. respondent stated a videogame instead of a videogame genre), therefore the final appearance of the figure might seem slightly odd.
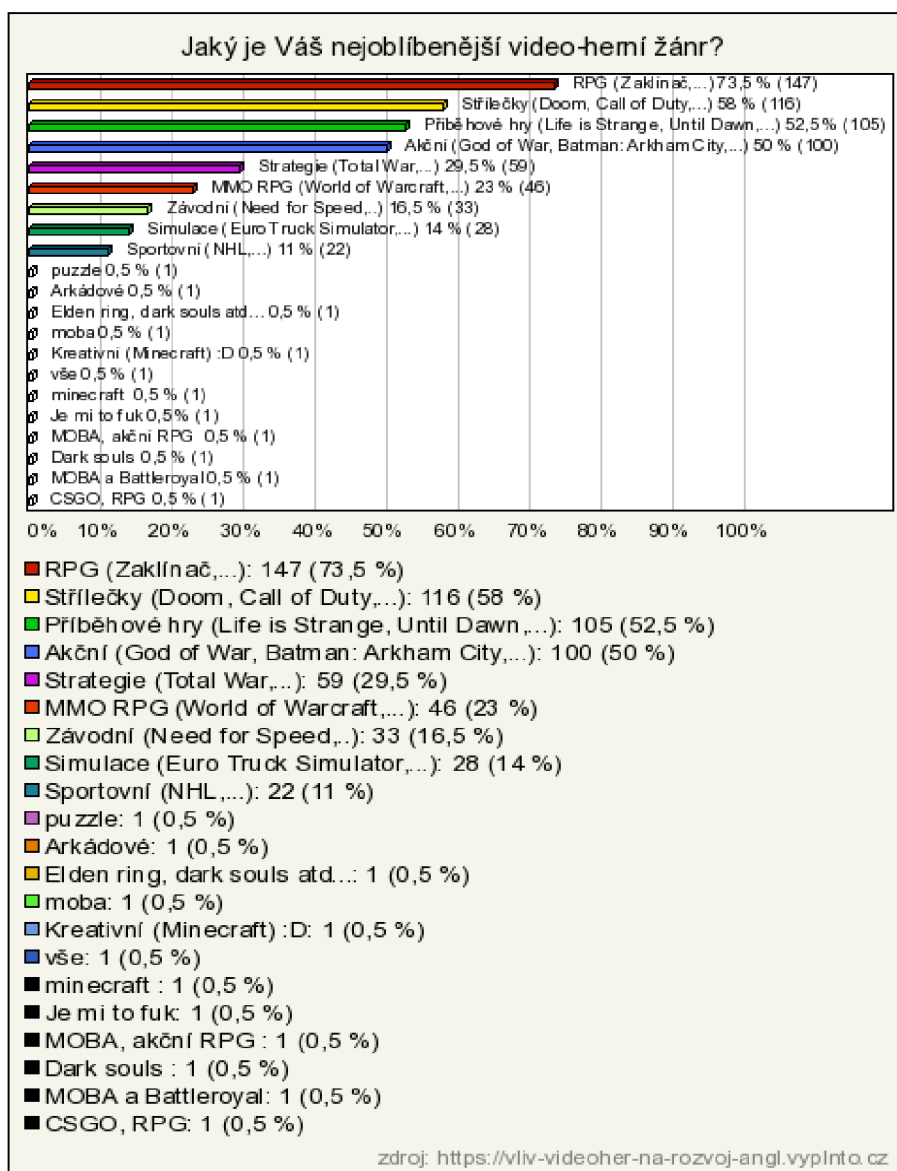

Figure 12. Preferred genres

The second item focused specifically on finding the most influential videogame genre, based on the question: *If you were to choose one or more videogames that, in your mind, increased your level of English language the most, which games would they be?* After classification of the videogames mentioned by each respondent, results discovered that the two most popular videogame genres that, according to the experiences of respondents, might have influence on English language learning were Action (76) and RPG (75). Simulation genre had 45 votes, Story-based Adventure games had 23 votes, MMORPG had 22 votes, online multiplayer First-person shooter (FPS) had 16 votes, and Strategy had 13 votes. Since the respondents could write one or more games as a single answer, the results do not add up to the 100%. The mostly mentioned RPG was the game Witcher, and among the simulator games the Minecraft occurred most often. Respondents further commented that MMORPGs such as World of Warcraft enhanced players' vocabulary and also communicative competence (e.g. use of English phrases), when buying or selling virtual items. This information, regarding the WoW, corresponds with the study by Kristi Newgarden and Dongping Zheng (2016), focusing on recurrent language activities in World of Warcraft. Moreover, one respondent shared an observation that in RPGs players need to select answer during the in-game dialogues, which means that reading comprehension is necessary. Also a few respondents commented about the influence of online multiplayer FPS games on communicative competence which might be increased based on the players' activity in voice-chat.

In the third item, responders rated selected videogame genres on the rating scale from one (*) to five (*****) stars, and there was also an option "*have not played*". The results discovered that, according to the opinion of respondents, Story-driven Adventure games (e.g. Life is Strange, Until Dawn, Walking Dead) and RPGs (e.g. The Witcher, Kingdom Come: Deliverance, The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim) were chosen by the majority of the respondents as the most influential videogame genres, regarding the English language learning. On the other hand, the less impact had Sports videogames (FIFA, NHL, NBA) and Racing videogames (Grand Turismo, Need for Speed, F1). However, the statistics suggest that the low scores of both genres might be caused by the lacking knowledge of high number of participants.

Overall results, after comparison of the three items from the questionnaire, indicate that the most influential on the English language learning, and also the most popular genre was RPG. However, the Action, the Simulator, the Strategy, and mainly the Story-driven Adventure genres all showed great potential for game-enhanced learning, as the results suggest.

Závodní (Gran Turismo, Need For Speed, Assetto Corsa, Collin McRae Rally, F1,...)

1	2	3	4

2,285
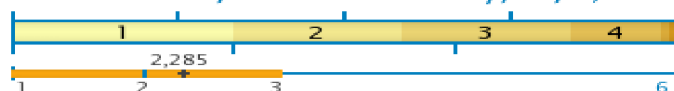
1 – Nesetkal jsem se [66× → 33 %], 2 – * [51× → 25,5 %], 3 – ** [51× → 25,5 %], 4 – *** [27× → 13,5 %], 5 – **** [2× → 1 %], 6 – ***** [3× → 1,5 %]
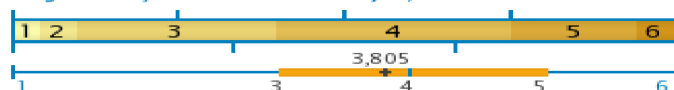
Sportovní (FIFA, NHL, NBA,...)

1	2	3	4

2,175
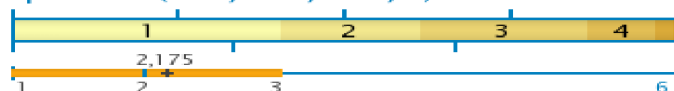
1 – Nesetkal jsem se [80× → 40 %], 2 – * [42× → 21 %], 3 – ** [50× → 25 %], 4 – *** [20× → 10 %], 5 – **** [7× → 3,5 %], 6 – ***** [1× → 0,5 %]

Strategie (Total War, Sid Meier's Civilisation, Frostpunk, Age of Empire,...)

1	3	4	5	6

4,1

1 – Nesetkal jsem se [33× → 16,5 %], 2 – * [5× → 2,5 %], 3 – ** [10× → 5 %], 4 – *** [48× → 24 %], 5 – **** [69× → 34,5 %], 6 – ***** [35× → 17,5 %]

Střílečky (Doom, Call of Duty, Battlefield, Call of Juarez, Counter Strike,...)

1	2	3	4	5	6

3,805

1 – Nesetkal jsem se [7× → 3,5 %], 2 – * [11× → 5,5 %], 3 – ** [60× → 30 %], 4 – *** [71× → 35,5 %], 5 – **** [38× → 19 %], 6 – ***** [13× → 6,5 %]
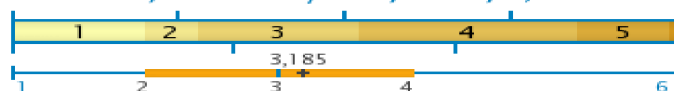
Příběhové hry (Life is Strange, Until Dawn,...)

1	4	5	6

5,35

1 – Nesetkal jsem se [14× → 7 %], 3 – ** [1× → 0,5 %], 4 – *** [10× → 5 %], 5 – **** [37× → 18,5 %], 6 – ***** [138× → 69 %]

RPG (Zaklínač, Kingdom Come Deliverence, The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim...)

4	5	6

5,505

1 – Nesetkal jsem se [4× → 2 %], 2 – * [2× → 1 %], 4 – *** [12× → 6 %], 5 – **** [47× → 23,5 %], 6 – ***** [135× → 67,5 %]

Simulace (Farming Simulator, Euro Truck Simulator, Cities: Skylines, Arma,...)

1	2	3	4	5

3,185

1 – Nesetkal jsem se [39× → 19,5 %], 2 – * [16× → 8 %], 3 – ** [48× → 24 %], 4 – *** [66× → 33 %], 5 – **** [28× → 14 %], 6 – ***** [3× → 1,5 %]

Akční (God of War, Batman: Arkham SAGA, Assassin's Creed,...)

1	3	4	5	6

4,46

1 – Nesetkal jsem se [11× → 5,5 %], 2 – * [1× → 0,5 %], 3 – ** [17× → 8,5 %], 4 – *** [63× → 31,5 %], 5 – **** [72× → 36 %], 6 – ***** [36× → 18 %]

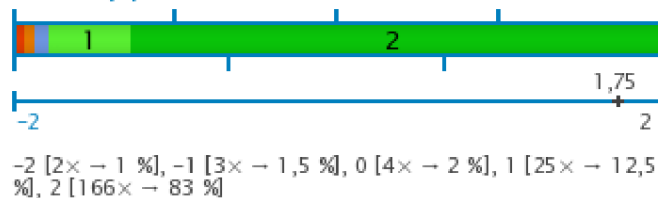Figure 13. Impact of selected videogame genres on L2 learning

source: https://vliv-videoher-na-rozvoj-angl.vyplnto.cz
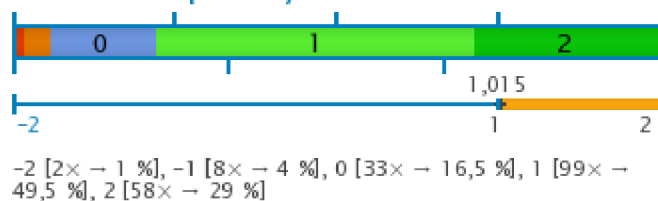
5.2.4. Videogame elements and motivation

In this subchapter the focus is on the motivation, which players experience during gameplay, that is believed to be beneficial for learning in general, and on the videogame elements that might support it. Respondents were instructed to rate five selected elements, which casually occur in digital games, on the five-point scale (++, +, 0, -, --). The options consisted of *immersive story*, *videogame characters*, *enjoyable gameplay*, *soundtrack*, and *virtual world*. The respondents were asked to decide to what extent do those videogame elements mentioned below motivate players to keep playing a certain videogame?

The results discovered that the greatest impact on players' motivation to keep playing the videogame, and thus be exposed to the learning process longer, had, in minds of the respondents, the *immersive story*. That is in accordance with many researchers (e.g. Novak, 2015; Ke, 2016; Qian, and Clark, 2016). For example, Novak (2015) proposes that players do many in-game activities (collaboration, planning, interaction) thanks to the narrative environment that supports the players' action through various motivational elements. Also the story is considered one of the key motivational elements for digital game-based learning (Novak, 2015; Ke, 2016; Qian, and Clark, 2016). Another significantly influential elements were *enjoyable gameplay* and *videogame characters*. The in-game characters may also represent an element of motivation, since the players often perceive the main character of the game (i.e. the one that the player controls) as themselves (Chen, Chen, Dai, 2018). Although the *soundtrack* and the *virtual world* did not achieve higher results, their ratio was still above average and thus acknowledged as elements that may potentially motivate players to stay in the videogame environment. Moreover, deHaan, Reed, and Kuwanda (2010) proposed in their study that element of music (i.e. soundtrack) in digital games affects actions and interactions of players, which facilitates vocabulary acquisition and comprehension.
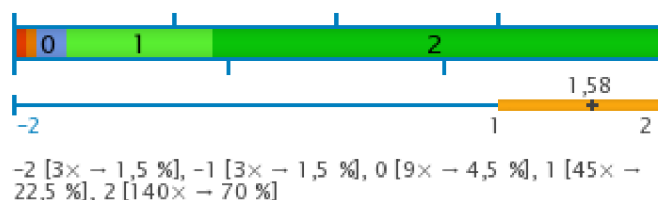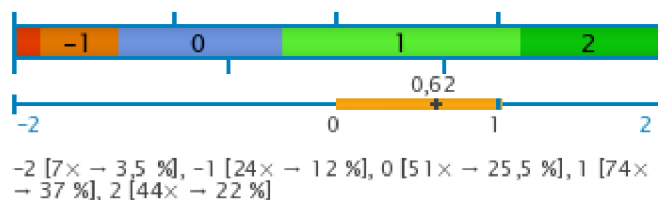
Poutavý příběh

-2 [2× → 1 %], -1 [3× → 1,5 %], 0 [4× → 2 %], 1 [25× → 12,5 %], 2 [166× → 83 %]

Video-herní postavy

-2 [2× → 1 %], -1 [8× → 4 %], 0 [33× → 16,5 %], 1 [99× → 49,5 %], 2 [58× → 29 %]

Zábavná hratelnost

-2 [3× → 1,5 %], -1 [3× → 1,5 %], 0 [9× → 4,5 %], 1 [45× → 22,5 %], 2 [140× → 70 %]

Soundtrack

-2 [7× → 3,5 %], -1 [24× → 12 %], 0 [51× → 25,5 %], 1 [74× → 37 %], 2 [44× → 22 %]

Virtuální herní svět

-2 [2× → 1 %], -1 [9× → 4,5 %], 0 [38× → 19 %], 1 [93× → 46,5 %], 2 [58× → 29 %]
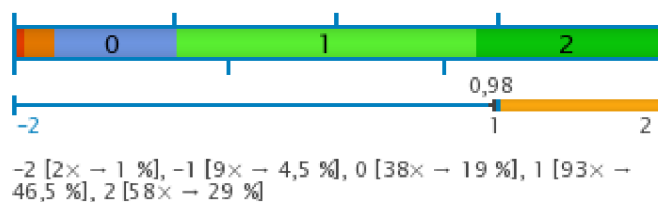
Figure 14. Videogame elements that may indirectly motivate players in learning

source: https://vliv-videoher-na-rozvoj-angl.vyplnto.cz

Conclusion

The main purpose of this thesis was to describe videogames and their potential influence on second language learning in the Czech context, and hopefully enrich the field of videogame study, specifically in the area of digital game-enhanced language learning. The empirical part aimed to investigate public opinion of Czech people who play videogames on possible correlation between videogame playing and English language acquisition, which might appear in their everyday life.

In the empirical part the three original questions were answered via analysis of questionnaire. The results indicated that acquisition of new vocabulary, reading and listening comprehension as well as communicative competence may be improved by digital game-enhanced learning. In addition, it was discovered that skills such as pronunciation, spelling, or the knowledge of English phrases may be potentially enhanced as well. In this regard, findings of this thesis support the data from other studies (e.g. deHaan, 2005; Renalli, 2008, Thorne, 2008; Piirainen-Marsch and Tainio, 2009; Parsayi and Soyoof, 2018; Newcombe, and Brick, 2017; McCall, 2011).

The data provided by the survey suggested that all five selected videogame elements supporting the players' motivation might be useful in foreign language learning, especially the element of immersive story. The main findings relate again to the data found in other studies, thus supporting the claims made by other researchers in this regard (e.g. Chen et al., 2017; Chen, Chen, and Dai, 2018; Haring, Chakinska, and Ritterfeld, 2011; Novak, 2015; Ke, 2016; Quian, and Clark, 2016; deHaan, Reed, and Kuwanda, 2010).

The analysis of the questionnaire also permitted answering the last question, thus discovering what may be the most suitable videogame genre for the English language learning, according to the overall opinion of two hundred respondents. The results showed that RPG is that genre; however, this claim should be taken with caution, for there is not enough studies conducted in this topic, to date.

An advantage of the thesis was the insight observations obtained directly from the videogame players, nevertheless, due to the highly opinion-based character of this thesis, most of the results are rather hypothetical and should be applied with caution and only as a secondary source of data. On the other hand, this thesis brought yet another evidence of the potential of digital game-enhanced language learning, and might thus help others in future research.

Summary

The aim of this Bachelor's thesis is to investigate the potential influence of videogames and their specific elements on English learning and use, focusing mainly on the impact of digital game-enhanced learning from the perspective of Czech videogame players. This thesis highlights the theoretical benefits of videogame playing, drawing on the existing research done in this area, and compares it with opinions of two hundred Czech respondents who shared their experiences in a questionnaire, which was analysed by the mixed-methods approach. Generally, the results remained consistent with the findings of other researchers, showing that vocabulary acquisition, reading and listening comprehension, communicative competence, pronunciation, spelling, and other aspects of language may be influenced by videogame playing. Similarly, findings discovered that videogames may have an impact on learners' motivation to learn, especially due to the element of immersive story in videogames. And lastly, the most suitable videogame genre for English learning appeared to be the RPG, however, more specified research should be conducted in this regard.

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List of abbreviations

CALL – Computer assisted language learning

DGELL – Digital game-enhanced language learning

FPS – First-person shooter

ISFE - International

L2- Second language

L2TL – Second language teaching and learning

MMO – Massively multiplayer online (game)

MMORPG – Massively multiplayer online role-playing game

MOBA – Multiplayer online battle arena

NPC – Non-player character

PC – Personal computer

RPG – Role-playing game

SLA – Second language acquisition

TL – Target language

WoW – World of Warcraft

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Appendix A

1. Kdybyste měl/a odhadnout Vaši momentální úroveň anglického jazyka, jaká by byla?

- *A1* (Jsem **úplný začátečník**. Pokud lidé hovoří pomalu a zřetelně, rozumím základní slova a fráze, týkající se mě, mé rodiny, práce a podobně. Komunikuji jednoduchými větami o základních věcech např. o koupě jízdenky. Položím otázku a odpovědi rozumím, pokud je jednoduchá. Čtu a rozumím jednoduchým oznámením, plakátem nebo upozorněním. Umím napsat jednoduchou pohlednici a odkaz nebo vyplnit formulář.)

- *A2* (Jsem **začátečník**. Rozumím nejběžnější slovní zásobě v kontextu věcí, které se mě týkají např. rodina, práce, nakupování, moje město. Orientuji se v textu inzerátu, oznámení, krátké zprávy, v jízdním řádu. Navážu společenský kontakt, ale udržet konverzaci je pro mě těžké. Umím napsat jednoduchý dopis, oznámení, poděkování.)

- *B1* (Jsem **mírně pokročilý**. Rozumím pointě televizního programu nebo zpráv o aktuálních událostech. Zvládnu většinu situací, v nichž potřebuji mluvit a rozumět a které se vyskytují během cestování nebo běžného každodenního kontaktu. Dokážu popsat své zkušenosti, plány a jednoduchý příběh. Umím napsat jednoduchý souvislý text na témata, která dobře znám nebo která mě osobně zajímají.)

- *B2* (Jsem **středně pokročilý**. Rozumím delším přednáškám, pokud mi je téma dostatečně blízké. Rozumím většině filmů ve spisovném jazyce a rozumím knize v originále. Dokážu vést běžný rozhovor s rodilými mluvčími, aktivně se zúčastnit diskuse o známých tématech, vysvětlovat a obhajovat své názory, i když s gramatickými chybami. Umím napsat podrobný text o tématech, které znám, napíšu referát nebo zprávu.)

- *C1* (Jsem **pokročilý**. Rozumím delší promluvě, i když není jasně strukturovaná a vztahy jsou pouze naznačeny. Čtu faktické a literární texty, přičemž dokážu ocenit rozdíly v jejich stylu. Umím se vyjadřovat plynule a pohotově bez příliš zjevného hledání výrazů, využívám jazyk pružně a efektivně pro společenské a profesní účely. Umím jasně a podrobně popsat složitá témata, rozšiřovat je o témata vedlejší, rozvíjet konkrétní body a zakončit svou řeč vhodným závěrem.)

- *C2* (Jsem **expert**. Nemám žádné potíže s porozuměním jakéhokoli druhu mluveného projevu, ať už živě nebo z vysílání. Snadno čtu všechny formy psaného jazyka, včetně abstraktních textů. Dokážu se zapojit do jakékoli konverzace nebo diskuse. Znám dobře idiomatické a hovorové výrazy. Umím napsat jasný plynulý text v různých stylech.)

(Úrovně anglického jazyka dle CEFR)

2. Jak často trávíte čas hraním videoher?

- Každý den
- 2 krát až 6 krát do týdne
- 10 krát až 20 krát do měsíce
- 1 krát až 9 krát do měsíce
- Méně než 12 krát do roka

3. Jaký je momentálně Váš průměrný čas strávený hraním videoher denně?

- Denně nehraji
- Méně než 0,5h
- 0,5 až 1h
- 2h až 3h
- 4h až 5h
- 6h až 7h
- 8h a více

4. S jakým jazykovým nastavením hrajete nejčastěji videohry?

- *V českém jazyce/mateřském jazyce bez titulků*
- *V českém jazyce s anglickými titulky*
- *V anglickém jazyce s českými titulky*
- *V anglickém jazyce s anglickými titulky*
- *V anglickém jazyce bez titulků*

5. Mají podle Vás titulky ve videohrách smysl? (větvící položka)

- Ano/ne

6. (Nepovinná položka) Za předpokladu, že jste u předchozí otázky odpověděli *Ano*, pokuste se zdůvodnit, proč mají podle Vás titulky ve videohrách smysl.

- _____

7. (Nepovinná položka) Za předpokladu, že jste u předchozí otázky odpověděli *Ne*, pokuste se zdůvodnit, proč nemají podle Vás titulky ve videohrách smysl.

- _____

8. Myslíte si, že na Vaši momentální úroveň anglického jazyka mělo pozitivní vliv mimo jiné i hraní videoher? (větvící položka)

- *Ano*
- *Ne*

9. (nepovinná položka) Pokud jste u předchozí otázky zvolili *Ano*, uveďte důvody, proč jste tak zvolili.

- _____

10. (nepovinná položka) Pokud jste u předchozí otázky zvolili *Ne*, uveďte důvody, proč jste tak zvolili.

- _____

11. Jaký je Váš nejoblíbenější video-herní žánr?

- Závodní (Need for Speed,…)
- Sportovní (NHL,…)
- Strategie (Total War,…)
- RPG (Zaklínač,…)
- Příběhové hry (Life is Strange, Until Dawn)
- MMO RPG (World of Warcraft)
- Střílečky (Doom, Call of Duty,…)
- Simulace (Euro Truck Simulator,…)
- Akční (God of War, Batman: Arkham City,…)
- Vlastní odpověď: _____

12. Kdybyste měli vybrat jednu nebo více konkrétních videoher, o kterých si myslíte, že nejvíce zlepšily Vaši úroveň anglického jazyka, které by to byly?

- _____

13. Ohodnoťte pomocí hvězd vliv vybraných video-herních žánrů na rozvoj anglických jazykových schopností hráče. (*Předpokládá se, že hry u jednotlivých žánrů hráči hrají buď v anglickém jazyce bez titulků, v anglickém jazyce s anglickými titulky, v českém/mateřském jazyce s anglickými titulky nebo v anglickém jazyce s českými titulky*)

- Závodní (Gran Turismo, Need For Speed, Assetto Corsa, Collin McRae Rally, F1,…)
  Nesetkal jsem se   *   **   ***   ****   *****
- Sportovní (FIFA, NHL, NBA,…)
  Nesetkal jsem se   *   **   ***   ****   *****
  Strategie (Total War, Sid Meier's Civilisation, Frostpunk, Age of Empire,…)
  Nesetkal jsem se   *   **   ***   ****   *****
- Střílečky (Doom, Call of Duty, Battlefield, Call of Juarez, Counter Strike,…)
  Nesetkal jsem se   *   **   ***   ****   *****
- Příběhové hry (Life is Strange, Until Dawn
  Nesetkal jsem se   *   **   ***   ****   *****
- RPG (Zaklínač, Kingdom Come Deliverence, The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim…)
  Nesetkal jsem se   *   **   ***   ****   *****
- Simulace (Farming Simulator, Euro Truck Simulator, Cities: Skylines, Arma,…)
  Nesetkal jsem se   *   **   ***   ****   *****
- Akční (God of War, Batman: Arkham SAGA, Assassin's Creed,…)
  Nesetkal jsem se   *   **   ***   ****   *****

* = nejmenší vliv, ***** největší vliv

14. Myslíte si, že Vám hraní videoher pomohlo rozvinout tyto aspekty anglického jazyka?
- Slovní zásoba   Ano/Ne/Nedokážu posoudit
- Výslovnost   Ano/Ne/Nedokážu posoudit
- Znalost frází   Ano/Ne/Nedokážu posoudit
- Znalost pravopisu slov   Ano/Ne/Nedokážu posoudit

15. V následující sérii tvrzení se pokuste určit, do jaké míry mělo u Vás hraní videoher pozitivní dopad na osvojování základních anglických jazykových dovedností.
- Hraní videoher v anglickém jazyce mělo pozitivní vliv na moji schopnost porozumět mluvené řeči. (Poslech)
  Nesouhlasím.   Spíše nesouhlasím.   Netuším.   Spíše Souhlasím.   Souhlasím.
- Hraní videoher v anglickém jazyce mělo pozitivní vliv na moje dovednosti v mluveném projevu (Mluvení)
  Nesouhlasím.   Spíše nesouhlasím.   Netuším.   Spíše Souhlasím.   Souhlasím.
- Hraní videoher v anglickém jazyce mělo pozitivní vliv na moji schopnost číst text v anglickém jazyce. (Čtení)
  Nesouhlasím.   Spíše nesouhlasím.   Netuším.   Spíše Souhlasím.   Souhlasím.
- Hraní videoher v anglickém jazyce mělo pozitivní vliv na moje dovednosti v psaném projevu. (Psaní)
  Nesouhlasím.   Spíše nesouhlasím.   Netuším.   Spíše Souhlasím.   Souhlasím.
- Hraní videoher v anglickém jazyce mělo pozitivní vliv na rozvoj mojí anglické slovní zásoby.
  Nesouhlasím.   Spíše nesouhlasím.   Netuším.   Spíše Souhlasím.   Souhlasím.

16. Rozhodněte, do jaké míry níže zmíněné video-herní aspekty motivují hráče k tomu, aby NEPŘESTAL hrát určitou videohru?

- Poutavý příběh

++   +   0   -   --

- Video-herní postavy

++   +   0   -   --

- Zábavná hratelnost

++   +   0   -   --

- Soundtrack

++   +   0   -   --

- Virtuální herní svět

++   +   0   -   --

17. Jaký je Váš status?
- Jsem studentem ZŠ
- Jsem studentem SŠ
- Jsem studentem VŠ
- Pracující
- Jsem v penzi

18. Jaký je váš věk?
- Méně než 12 let
- 12 let – 15 let
- 16 let – 30 let
- 21 let – 30 let
- 31 let – 45 let
- Vice jak 45 let

19. Jaké je Vaše pohlaví?
- Muž
- Žena