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THE INFLUENCE OF COMPUTER GAMES ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE
VLIV POČÍTAČOVÝCH HER NA ZNALOST ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA

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AUTHOR
AUTOR PRÁCE
Patrik Prát

SUPERVISOR
VEDOUCÍ PRÁCE
Mgr. Jana Jašková, Ph.D.

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Cílem práce je popsat různé typy počítačových her a posoudit jejich vliv na zlepšování znalostí a dovedností z angličtiny.

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Cole, S. M. (2017). Identity and play in interactive digital media: ergodic ontogeny. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

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Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Jana Jašková, Ph.D.
Konzultant:

doc. PhDr. Milena Krhutová, Ph.D.
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Abstract

Despite the fact that computer games continue to gain in popularity, attitude of majority towards computer games is still rather negative. The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to demonstrate that playing computer games can be beneficial while learning a second language. This bachelor's thesis consists of three chapters in which is dealt with the current state of the English language, acquisition and learning of a second language, and influence of computer games on the English language knowledge. The empirical part of this bachelor's thesis is devoted to the analysis of a survey in the form of a questionnaire.

Key words

English language, second language acquisition, edutainment, computer-assisted language learning, influence of computer games on foreign language

Abstrakt

Navzdory skutečnosti, že počítačové hry stále nabývají na popularitě, postoj většiny vůči počítačovým hrám je stále převážně negativní. Cílem této bakalářské práce je demonstrovat fakt, že hraní počítačových her může být prospěšné při osvojování cizího jazyka. Tato bakalářská práce se skládá ze tří kapitol, ve kterých je probírán aktuální postoj k anglickému jazyku v dnešním světě, osvojení cizího jazyka a vliv počítačových her na znalost anglického jazyka. Empirická část této bakalářské práce se zaměřuje na analýzu průzkumu, který byl tvořen formou dotazníku.

Klíčová slova

Anglický jazyk, osvojení cizího jazyka, edutainment, počítačem asistované učení jazyka, vliv počítačových her na cizí jazyk

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Prohlášení

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V Brně dne ....

(Patrik Prát

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1 Introduction

When I attended primary school, I started to eager entertainment. Exposed to innumerable options, I found amusement in computer games. Despite the fact that I was constantly told to stop wasting my time playing computer games, I did the exact opposite. Unfortunately, we live in era in which the attitude towards computer games is rather negative. There are many critics that claim that the computer games are completely useless, and they do not provide anything useful. According to Kipko (2014) playing computer games is absolutely useless. They do not teach you anything except how to waste time and not to do a real work. In my opinion, his statement is entirely inaccurate. There are definitely certain negative effects of playing computer games, nonetheless, there are numerous favorable factors that exceed the negatives, such as what is going to be dealt with in this thesis; the influence of the computer games on the English language knowledge.

The whole thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter deals with the current state of the English language. The language in considered from two perspectives: English as lingua franca and English as a language of media, edutainment, education, and communication. Further, the work deals with second language acquisition and language learning while describing the main difference between them. The third chapter focuses on two fundamental principles: education and entertainment. Also, a brief history of computer games is provided, and, in addition, computer games are described and divided into subgenres. Furthermore, in this chapter are described foundations of computer assisted language learning, computer games as a learning tools, and influence of computer games on the English language knowledge. Lastly, the empirical part of this bachelor thesis is devoted to the analysis of a survey in a form of the questionnaire.

2 English as a means of communication

Considering the fact that we live in era in which the English language is being used as a lingua franca (ELF), which refers to communication in English among speakers with different first languages, it is undeniable that English has developed into language that is spoken by many. Certainly, the number of non-native speakers of the language considerably exceeds its native speakers. According to Crystal (2003), only one out of four English users is a native speaker of the language, therefore, predominant part of ELF interaction is mediated by non-native speakers. In addition, English has become an international language owing to historical and political events that led into the adoption of the language worldwide. Furthermore, there is a wide variety of factors involved in learning a second language that contribute to one's knowledge. Nowadays, English is used as a language of media, entertainment, education, and communication on daily basis. "If a language is a truly international medium, it is going to be most apparent in those services which deal directly with the task of communication" (Crystal, 2003, p. 114).

2.1 Second language acquisition

Second language acquisition (SLA) is the process of learning a language that is non-native, after the first language is already established. According to Krashen (1987), "second language acquisition can be viewed as a part of "theoretical linguistics", i.e. it can be studied and developed without regard to practical application". He claims that there are two independent ways to develop linguistic skills: acquisition and learning. Krashen (1985) claims that the theoretical foundations of SLA can be explained by his model that consists of five hypotheses.

- **The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis**

  Krashen (1987) claims that the learning and acquisition are distinct processes. Explicitly, according to him, the learning is a conscious process, whereas acquisition is a subconscious one. Hence, the acquisition process in SLA is the same as in the first language acquisition (FLA). "When first language habits are helpful to acquiring second language habits, this is positive transfer" (Littlewood, 1990, p. 17). Further, he suggests that the positive transfer can be demonstrated by a subject-verb-object sequence in declaratives sentences in FLA that would be translated into another language in the same order as in SLA.

• **The Natural Sequence Hypothesis**

The Natural Sequence Hypothesis stresses out that the grammatical features occur in a pre-determined sequence. “For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early while others late” (Schütz, 2017).

• **The Monitor Hypothesis**

The Monitor Hypothesis focuses on explaining the relationship between learning and acquisition. According to Schütz (2017), the monitoring function is the practical result of the learned grammar. Further, Krashen (1987) suggests that the acquisition initiates our utterances in the second language, and for that reason, it is responsible for our fluency. In addition, function of learning is divided into two terms “monitor” and “editor”. Johnson (2013) points out that “the monitor allows a language user to alter the form of an utterance either prior to production by consciously applying learned rules or after production via self-correction”. Additionally, According to Schütz (2017), “the ‘monitor' acts in a planning, editing and correcting function when three specific conditions are met: that is, the second language learner has sufficient time at his/her disposal, he/she focuses on form or thinks about correctness, and he/she knows the rule”.

• **The Affective Filter Hypothesis**

Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis focuses on factors that influence the language acquisition. Nonetheless, affects that influence the language acquisition are considered non-linguistic, such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. He claims that the performers with a high motivation, self-confidence, and low levels of anxiety tend to be the most successful in second language acquisition.

• **The Comprehensive Input Hypothesis**

The Comprehensive Input Hypothesis is focused on dealing with acquiring language. When a certain amount of knowledge is acquired, it represents current competence, which is used in order to progress when acquiring a language. To clarify this statement Krashen (1987) uses a mathematical formula $i+1$, where i represents the current state of the knowledge that is understood and $+1$ represents additional content that is to be acquired.

2.1.1 The role of motivation in SLA

Learning a new language takes time and dedication. The aim of this chapter is to determine the role of motivation in SLA. Motivation has been researched and studied since the beginning of 1990s, which greatly helped in comprehension of the aspects concerned with this topic. The concept of motivation in SLA is approached from several perspectives using number of different methodologies (MacIntyre, Noels & Moore, 2010). According to Layman (adapted from Skehan, 1989, p. 49), motivation can have several sources. One of them might be the learning activity itself. In such case, the stimulus for motivation would be the inherent interest of learning. In addition, he claims that the motivation might be influenced by the success experienced by learners. Especially, he points out that learners who do well are encouraged to study harder. On the contrary, those who do poorly tend to be discouraged by their lack of success. Different point of view on this topic is provided by Gardner (1985). He suggests that motivation can by explained using three components; effort, desire to achieve goals, and attitudes. An effort can be explained as an activity that is required in order to achieve certain goals, which is closely connected to desire. Attitudes are "an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent" (Gardner ,1985, p. 9).

Considering motivation in computer games, according to Ellis (1997), two types of motivation can be identified: Integrative and resultative. Integrative motivation is the desire to become a part of a speech community, which is an important aspect while using language for social interaction. On the other hand, resultative motivation deals with the ability to understand the language exchange among players. In case of a proper comprehension of transferred information players tend to advance their knowledge of the English language.

3 Edutainment

The word edutainment is a neologism, which was derived from two words, education and entertainment. The basic concept of this neologism is rather straightforward, it is based on passing down the knowledge by electronic equipment and at the same time using some elements of the entertainment (Malgorzata, 2016). Nowadays, edutainment can be found practically everywhere including television, radio, computer games, or other media that influence behaviors and opinions of recipients.

Edutainment is an interactive method of learning that allows to acquire language faster in comparison with the standard learning methods. Instead of focusing on the knowledge itself, it rather focuses on the way in which the message is delivered. If information can be presented in an interesting manner, it encourages students to indulge in furthering their knowledge. If the aim is to teach new things and provide permanence of the teaching, teaching methods should be ordered in the direction of students' needs. "The main purpose of edutainment is to attract student's attention on teaching materials during learning" (As cited in–Aksakal, 2016, p. 2). Undoubtedly, Computer technology has a great potential for improving one's knowledge in many ways, such as playing computer games and watching movies.

3.1 A brief history of computer games

In order to define computer games, it is necessary to look into the past. Reaching fifty years back, it all began with introduction of arcade video games and gaming consoles. Throughout the years, the technology underwent development so sophisticated that the arcade playrooms were no longer sought and became obsolete. Consequently, for the convenience, the households were filled with personal computers (PCs), which led to the foundation of gaming as we know it today. In most cases, monitors replaced televisions, joysticks evolved into mice, and aspects that define the game grew in complexity, content, and playability, which are the main factors that differentiate computer games from its predecessors.

3.2 Computer game genres

Computer games are commonly classified into genres in order to determine the style and set of characteristics in terms of gameplay and interactivity. According to Mark Wolf (2001) it is possible to classify computer games in similar manner to films. Furthermore, in his opinion there are games that are similar in genre but quite different in playstyle.

While some video games can be classified in a manner similar to that of films (we might say that Outlaw (1978) is a Western, Space Invaders (1978) is science fiction, and Combat (1977) is a war game), classification by iconography ignores the fundamental differences and similarities which are to be found in the player's experience of the game. Outlaw and Combat, both early games for the Atari 2600, are very similar in that both simply feature player-characters maneuvering and shooting at each other in a field of obstacles on a single, bounded screen of graphics, with cowboys in one game and tanks in the other (Wolf, 2001, p. 115).

3.2.1 Action games

There is a wide variety of action-oriented games that belong to this genre. Frequently, action games are reliant on physical challenges, which requires hand-eye coordination and immediate in time reaction. Typically, the player controls the character that collects objects, avoids obstacles, and fights his way through. In addition, the player usually progresses from level to level while the game increases in difficulty (Oxford, 2017).

3.2.2 Adventure games

Adventure games are based on story line and narrative. Usually, there is an avatar that explores the world, either virtual or based on true events. In order to complete the game, several puzzles must be solved, until the end of the game is reached, and the conclusion provides the outcome of one's tanning.

3.2.3 First person shooter (FPS)

The first person shooter is a genre that is oriented towards weapons and other tools with regard to eliminate all possible threats that might occur. This type of combat is seen from the first person perspective, which means that you observe the game through the eyes of your character. Furthermore, most of the games that belong to this genre have multiplayer mode and for that reason they are found particularly entertaining. Nowadays, the first person shooter is being considered as one of the most acclaimed and commercially successful genres (see Figure 1).

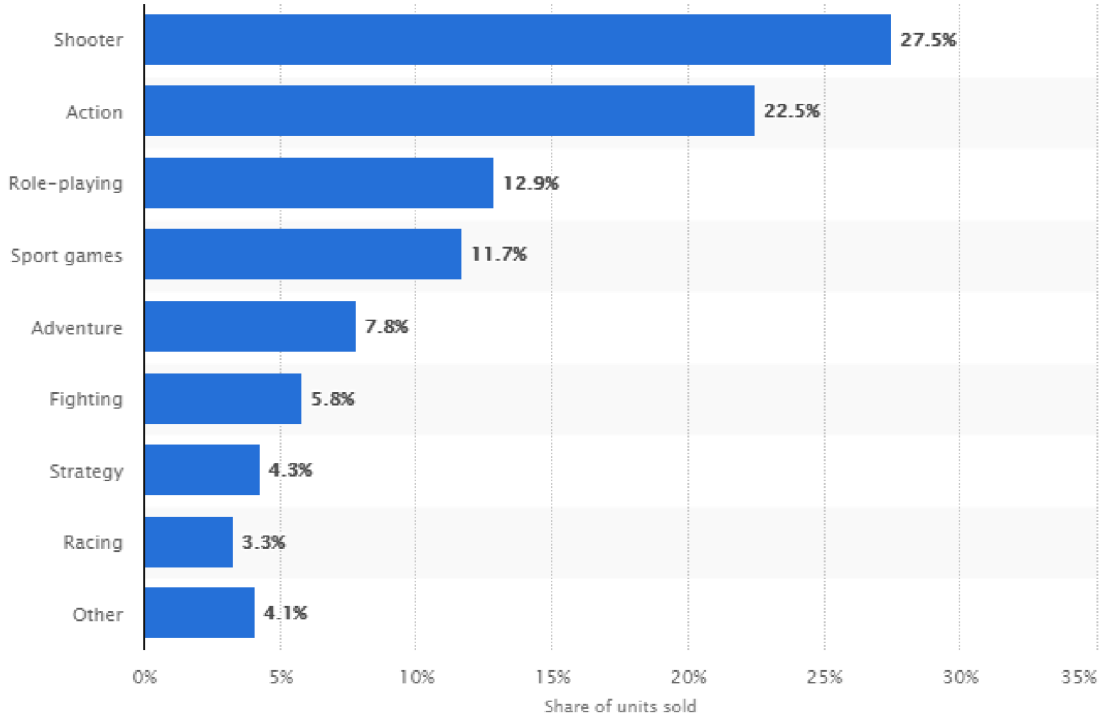

Figure 1. Computer game sales in USA 2016. Retrieved from Statista (2017, November 15).

3.2.4 Role-playing games (RPG)

Role-playing games are set in fictional settings. According to Mawer and Stanley (2011, p. 24) "you immerse yourself in the reality of the game world in which you are playing. This means staying in character when you communicate with other players by speaking (through a microphone) or, more commonly, by chatting (typing on keyboard)". Additionally, owing to role-playing games success, a subgenre was created: Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing game (MMORPG).

3.2.5 Strategy games

Strategygames.biz (n.d.) claims that "a strategy game is any game where the outcome is determined by the choices a player makes. These games are won through tactical thinking rather than force or technical proficiency". Thinking ahead is a fundamental principle, which commonly determines the winning party. Thus, Intelligence and great judgement play an essential role in this type of game.

3.2.6 Multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA)

Multiplayer online battle arena is a subgenre of strategy games. In order to win, every player controls a single character in a team, which consists of commonly 5 players, with a purpose to destroy enemy's base structure. Furthermore, all of the characters have their unique skills and abilities, which players use to contribute to their team planning throughout the game.

3.3 Foundations of computer-assisted language learning

Computers have been around for decades and became an essential part of our modern life. Over the years, there has been a substantial progress in technology that people found themselves in a situation in which they use personal computers almost daily. Therefore, a large number of scholars have been searching of ways in which information technology (IT) could be connected with educational purposes. Consequently, Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) was introduced. Levy (1997, p. 1) defines CALL as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning". Computers have been used for English teaching and learning since the early 1960s. Warschauer and Healy (1998) divide history of CALL into three main stages: behavioristic, communicative, and integrative. "Each of these stages corresponds to a certain level of technology as well as a certain pedagogical approach" (Warschauer and Healy, 1998, p. 1). In the earliest stage, behavioristic, learners observe the information, practice it, and eventually, are given feedback. This method is also called "computer as a tutor" the information is provided via software that is designed particularly for educational purposes. Predominantly, these educational programs are based on grammar and vocabulary tutorials as well as language testing instruments. Despite the fact that behavioristic stage is considered the oldest, some of its elements are still in use. The second stage, communicative, as derived from its name, emphasizes communicative approach. The language is used in order to communicate with others and computers serve as a bridging medium via which such communication is possible. For that reason, this phase is occasionally called "computer as a stimulus". Most commonly, "computers are used to stimulate discussion, writing or critical thinking. Students are encouraged to generate original utterances rather than just manipulate prefabricated language" (Felix, 2003, p. 201). Popular communicative CALL programs focus on expression and development rather than forced repetition. The last stage, integrative, had been created due to the fact that communicative stage became an object of criticism. Critics had claimed that the computer was used in an ad hoc and thus this phase was no longer satisfactory. Therefore, integrative CALL stage was approached in a different

manner. Integrative stage focuses on technological developments, such as multimedia and internet. With creation of the World Wide Web (WWW) and Multimedia CALL new opportunities for the language learning were established. Nowadays, language skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) can be combined owing to the possibilities that multimedia and internet have brought.

3.4 Learning via computer games

Computer games are no longer used only as a source of entertainment. Despite the fact that many argue that computer games are time consuming and promote violence, there are several benefits of playing them, such as improving cognitive function, language learning, quick thinking, and hand-eye coordination. Furthermore, over the last decades, the development of computer games has played a significant role in learning. Playing computer games have proven to be an effective way of obtaining knowledge. "The engagement power of electronic games for this generation (and those to come) may be, if used correctly, the biggest learning motivator we have ever seen" (Prensky, 2007, p. 2). In addition, Prensky (2007) stresses out that there are two key factors that are needed to be taken into account while designing a new game: over the years, the attitude of learners towards playing computer games have drastically changed and therefore, it is necessary to approach designing new games in innovative manner, and secondly, these learners need to be motivated in new ways. Surely, there is a need to differentiate attitudes and approaches in which generations perceive and learn new information. At the present time, it is common that a typical student has spent thousands of hours playing computer games, whereas the older generation seldom use to play computer games, and in case the older generation did, those games were rather simple. Nowadays, the younger generation is computer-wise highly skilled and for that reason must be approached in adequate manner. Gagne's theory suggests that while playing computer games, several different types or levels of learning are needed to be taken into account. Each of these types or levels, requires a different approach to instruction. Therefore, an instructional plan is used to generate stimuli and improve learner's skills. Gagne also claims that these categories of learning are supported in most of the games. Intellectual skills are used to solve problems that occur while playing computer games. Cognitive strategies focus on the manner in which games are won. Also, Gagne suggests that significant number of computer games requires use of a mouse, or a keyboard, which improves learner's motor skills. Moreover, Gagne describes nine events that improve one's ability to learn when playing computer games (Becker, n.d.). The first event (reception) focuses on gaining attention. Normally, when the game is about to start, the learner is presented with the

introduction of the game, which is supposed to get his attention. The second event (expectancy) informs the learner of the objectives. Typically, it is described, how to win the game. The third event (retrieval) targets learner's ability to recall of prior learning. Acquired knowledge from previous levels of the game contributes to successful completion of the game. The fourth event (selective perception) deals with presenting the stimulus. Insufficiently stimulated game is supposed to lose learner's attention. The fifth event (semantic encoding) focuses on learner's ability to play the game. Typically, the learner is expected to adopt his own playstyle and use clues, which are offered by the game in order to finish it. The sixth event (responding) deduces that the gameplay requires interactivity, otherwise, there is no point in playing the game. The seventh event (reinforcement) implies that the learner must be provided with an appropriate feedback on his progression in the game due to the fact he might not be aware of whether he is progressing towards his goals. The eighth event (retrieval) deals with assessing performance. Unclear assessment, ordinarily, leads to loss of interest in continuing to play the game. Lastly, the ninth event enhances retention and transfer (globalization) concludes that the skill and the knowledge learned in one game is often applicable to other games.

3.5 Computer games and language learning

This chapter focuses on examining the educational potential of computer games in language acquisition and learning, particularly, computer games and their influence on the knowledge of the English language. Over the years, computer games and its influence on learning English have been widely researched topics and therefore, several theories were proposed. According to Mawer and Stanley (2011), strong narrative elements are becoming more sophisticated and realistic, which are important factors while learning second language. Existing knowledge of narrative gameplay itself encourages students to produce language. Nonetheless, the storyline is not the only factor involved in producing language. Most commonly, games contain components of English, such as conversations and visual clues, and thus language must be understood and typically used in order to complete the game. Depending on the game, this type of language can either be a content to be understood, or, in case the gameplay takes place online, players are encouraged to communicate with each other in the English language via microphone, or chatting, which significantly improves their knowledge of the language. The necessity to use these communicational tools plays an important role in English language learning via computer games. Seidlhofer (2011) states that the interaction among speakers is necessary. However, since non-native speakers must use the English language to be able to

understand each other, it is highly probable that the English language proficiency of these speakers would be improved. Since the English language is used as a prior language for communication in online games, discussing strategies, making announcements, or generally, reporting on events that occur within the game is not only helpful to make lifelong friendships but also improve one's knowledge of the English language (Mawer and Stanley, 2011). Turgut and Irgin (2009) looked at this issue more in-depth and they claim that players are making use of a vocabulary for their own purposes in complex and pleasurable ways. As a result of this, their vocabulary base is enriched. In addition, they suggest that using language in the "real-world" can easily frighten certain individuals, and therefore communication in a "virtual environment" is considered as more pleasant. "Learners may be more willing to interact with a video game in order to gain valuable linguistic feedback and practice with language before applying their knowledge in the "real world" (Turgut and Irgin, 2009, p. 761).

4 Research

The aim of the empirical part of this thesis is to determine whether, and possibly how, playing computer games influences the players' knowledge of the English language. In order to complete this task, a survey was conducted in a form of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was comprised of 20 questions, which were comprehensibly formulated due to the fact that it is assumed that the participants have the background knowledge and experience in terms of playing computer games. Nevertheless, it will be explained in further detail for better understating.

In total, 60 anonymous respondents, who tend to play computer games, participated in the questionnaire. Considering the age of respondents, a wide range of age groups was covered, ranging from below 15 years of age up to 26 years and above.

Regarding the distribution, I have used Google Forms due to the fact that it allows for convenient sharing of the questionnaire without the need of printing the material out. Thus, I was able to collect data electronically. The major part of the questionnaire primarily focused on obtaining information using questions where participants could select options to answer them. Nonetheless, the questionnaire also included open-ended and semi close-ended questions where respondents were supposed to provide their own answers. In the first part of the questionnaire participants were asked to answer general question regarding their gender, age, and level of language proficiency. Further, the second part of the questionnaire deals with participants' attitude towards playing computer games and communication with other players. In the third part, participants were asked to evaluate to what extent has playing computer games influenced their knowledge of the English language.

4.1 Questionnaire results

All the data was collected solely for the purpose of providing further analysis. Overall, the questionnaire was filled by 60 anonymous respondents in order to determine whether playing computer games affects one's knowledge of the English language.

In addition, I would like to state that all respondents volunteered to participate in the questionnaire. For that reason, I believe that all the collected data is reliable and there had not been any external factors involved that could influence the data credibility.

4.2 Questions

1. What is your gender identity?

Even though all participants have filled the questionnaire anonymously, I found it important to determine the gender identity of respondents due to the fact that one gender could be possibly more prone to playing computer games than another. Also, gender diversity of the questionnaire respondents allows for more objective analysis, and thus more accurate results.

Vast majority of participants responded that they identify themselves as a male (50 respondents, 83.3 %) and 10 respondents (16.7 %) as female. Hence, it could be suggested that the male gender is more prone to playing computer games than female gender. However, in this case, it does not have to be necessarily true due to the fact the number of male and female representatives who have been exposed to the questionnaire, is unknown, and for that reason, it cannot be concluded with an absolute certainty that computer games are being predominantly played by the male gender, nonetheless, it appears so.

2. What is your age?

The second question focuses on the age of respondents. The age of participants may be a contributing factor while filling the questionnaire. The participants' knowledge and experience might significantly differ due to the fact that their age varies. For that reason, I have added this question into the questionnaire. Overall, it can be seen that almost one half of respondents said that they are 22-25 years old (29 respondents, 48 %), who represent the vast majority of enquired respondents. The second largest group, 18-21 years of age, contains 13 respondents (22 %). The third largest group, 15-17 years of age consists of 9 respondents (15 %). The fourth group, above 26 years of age, includes 5 respondents (8 %). And the least occupied group, bellow 15 years of age, consists of 4 respondents (7 %) as shown in Figure 2.

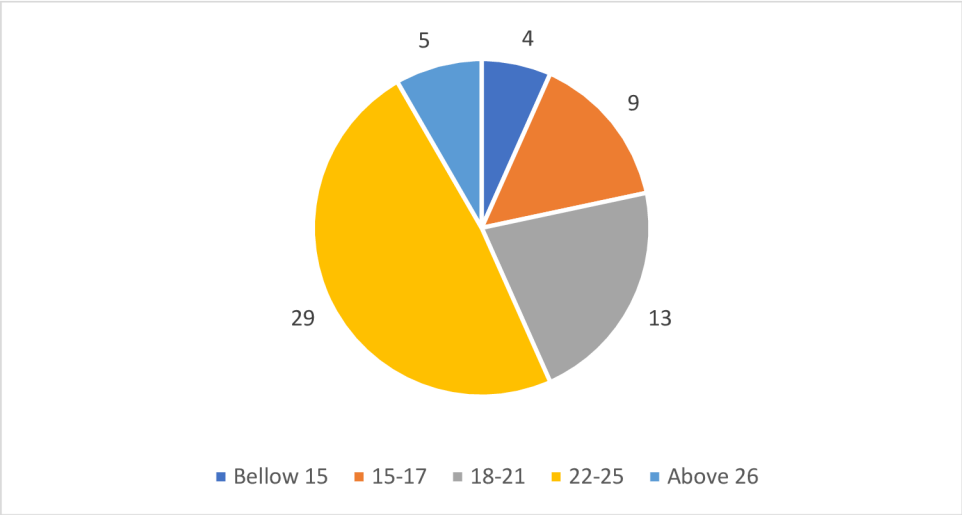

Figure 2. Age distribution

3. How many years have you been studying English language?

This question was added due to the fact that it is essential to differentiate between respondents who have no previous experience with the English language, and those, who have been studying the English language for a longer period of time. In this case, 34 respondents (56.7 %) said that they have been studying the English language for over 10 years. Further, the second largest group, (6-9 years of studying) comprised of 21 respondents (35 %). From these results, it can be deduced that the predominant part of respondents, over 90 %, have been studying the English language for at least 6 years in comparison to the rest of the participants, less than 10 respondents, who have been studying the English language for less than 1 year, up to 5 years (see Figure 3).

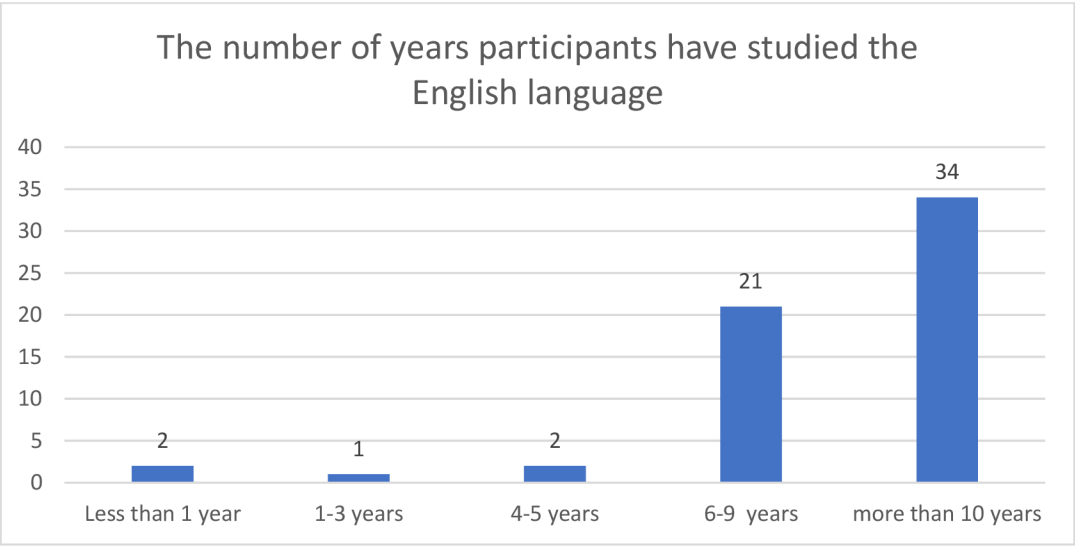

Figure 3. The number of years participants have studied the English language.

4. What is your English language proficiency?

The fourth question investigated what the participants' English language proficiency with regard to CEFR standard is (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), ranging from A1 to C2 Level. Most commonly, participants stated that their knowledge of the English language falls into B1 level (16 respondents, 26.7 %), which represents the Intermediate level of the knowledge. The second largest group, 15 respondents (25 %) claimed that they have language skills in accordance to B2 level (Upper-intermediate). The third largest group, 11 respondents (18.3 %) chose the C1 level (Advanced English) as an adequate evaluation of their language skills. Further, 7 respondents (11.7 %) selected the A2 level (Elementary English), 6 respondents (10 %) chose the A1 level (Beginner), and 4 respondents (6.7 %) picked the C2 level (Proficiency English). Moreover, one respondent (1.7 %) was unable to determine the level of his proficiency (see Figure 4).

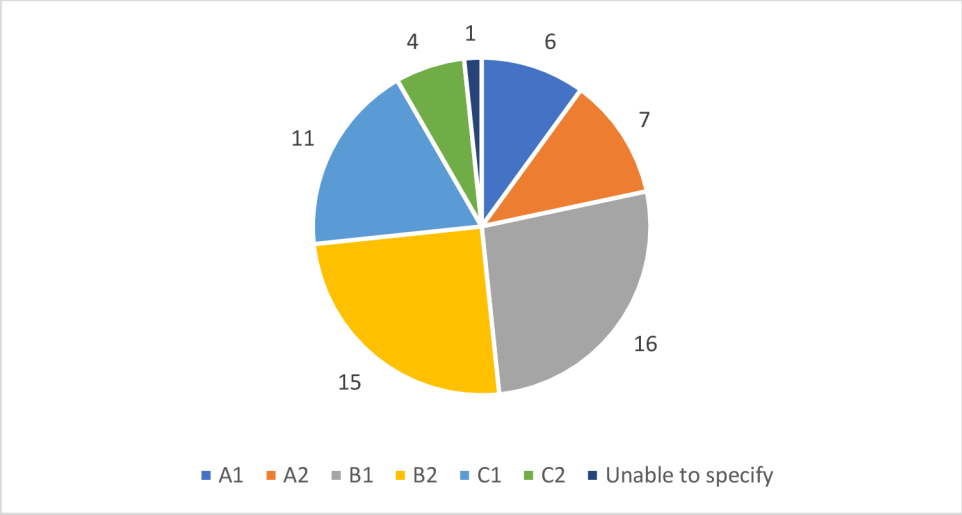

Figure 4. Level of English language proficiency.

5. How often do you play computer games?

The questionnaire included questions concerned with playing computer games and their influence on language learning and second language acquisition (see Chapter 2.1). It can be assumed that the longer the respondents are exposed to playing computer games, the bigger is the chance that they will both subconsciously and consciously improve their language skills and abilities. When playing computer games, a certain amount of knowledge is acquired which represents the current competence that can be used in the future in order to progress when acquiring a language. When the participants were asked how often they play computer games 16 respondents (26.67 %) claimed that they indulge in playing computer games 2-3 times a

week. 15 respondents (25 %) play 1-3 times a month, and 12 respondents (20 %) play daily. Further, 9 respondents (15 %) enjoy playing computer games once a week. Lastly, 8 respondents (13.33 %) tend to play computer games 4-6 times a week (see Figure 5).

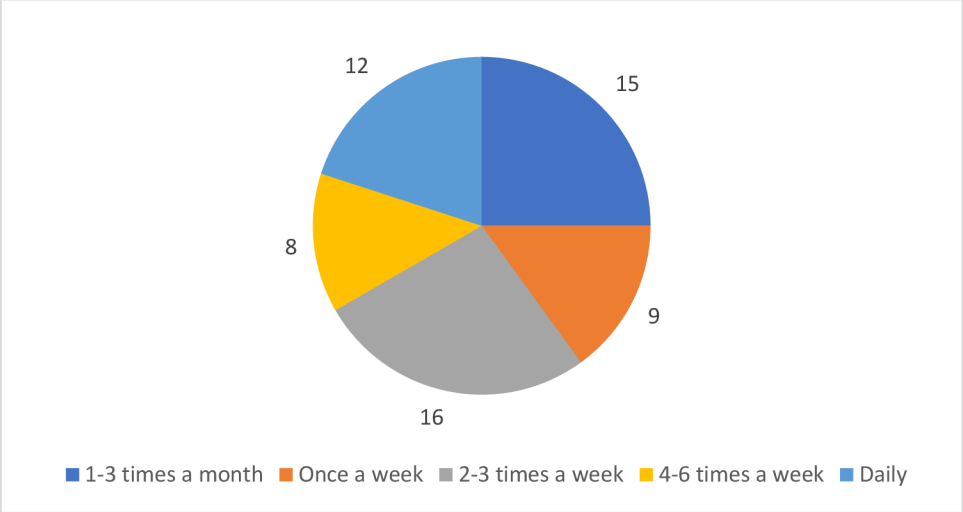

Figure 5. Frequency of playing computer games.

6. What genre of computer games do you play the most frequently?

Due to the fact that there is a large number of computer games genres, it is crucial to determine which of them respondents tend to play the most in order to make the analysis as effective and efficient as possible. It could be suggested that playing different genres of computer games might provide different results in terms of learning the English language and second language acquisition. When asked, the largest number of participants (16 respondents, 26.7 %) claimed that they play First person shooter (FPS) games the most (see Chapter 3.2). The second largest group, 11 respondents (18.3 %) frequently tend to play Role-playing games (RPG). Further, 8 respondents (13.3 %) prefer to play Massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG). Furthermore, 5 respondents (8.3 %) selected Multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) genre, and 7 respondents (11.7 %) were unable to specify the genre. Lastly, 13 respondents (22 %) individually specified different genres (see Figure 6).

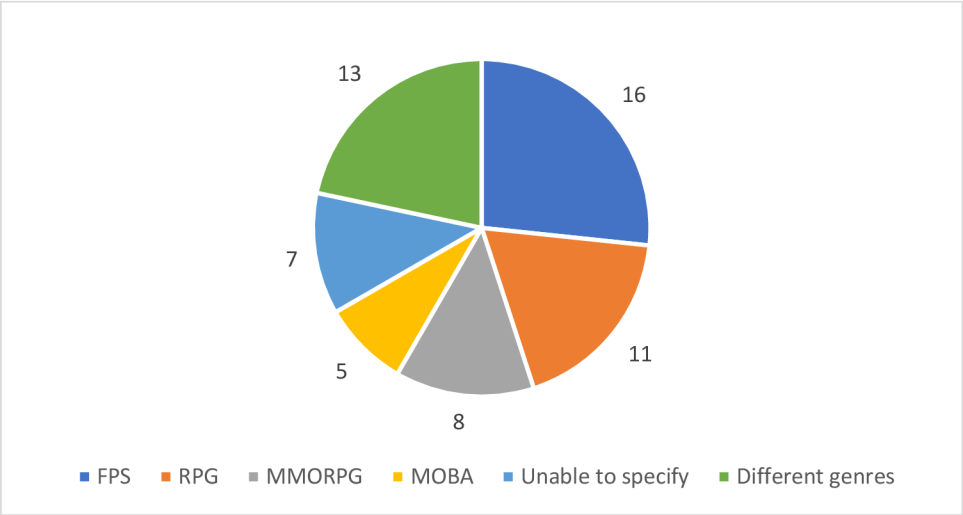

Figure 6. Selected computer games genres.

7. Do the games that you play include components of the English language?

In order to conduct this analysis, it was important to determine whether the games that respondents tend to play include components of the English language. Despite the fact that this question does not target the communication between players yet, the gaming environment makes it possible for the players to significantly increase their knowledge of the English language on itself. When all 60 participants had been asked to respond to this question, 58 respondents (97 %) answered that the games that they tend to play include components of the English language and 2 participants (3 %) responded negatively. According to the obtained results, it is obvious that the English language is a primary language that occurs in computer games, and therefore it could be suggested that playing computer games might be an effective way of learning the English language due to its frequency of occurrence and a fact that players need to deal with the language disposure in order to complete or continue in their games.

8. Do you communicate with other players while playing computer games?

With regard to the previous question, the participants were asked whether they communicate with other players while playing computer games. In case the gameplay takes place online, the players are encouraged to communicate one with another, which might have immense impact on one's knowledge of the English language (see Chapter 3.5). It is not only the content to be understood, but one needs to produce language himself in order to make the communication meaningful which allows for efficient practice of the English language and potential improvement. Out of all participants (42 respondents, 70 %) have a tendency to communicate

with other players while playing computer games. On the other hand, 18 respondents (30 %) stated otherwise (see Figure 7).

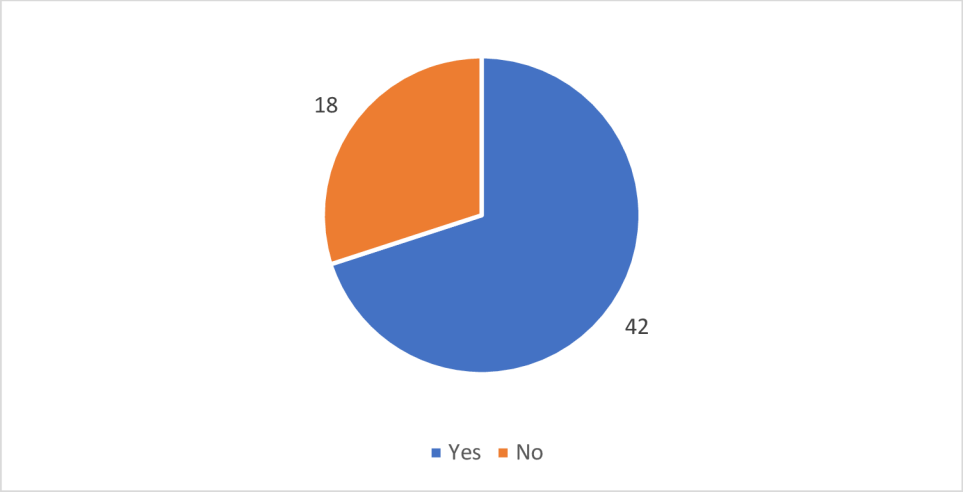

Figure 7. Do you communicate with other players?

9. Do you communicate with other players formally or informally?

Formal and informal language are associated with particular choices of vocabulary and grammar. For that reason, the participants were asked what variety of the language they use while playing computer games in order to determine the manner in which they communicate one with another. The majority of participants (44 respondents, 73 %) stated that they tend to use informal variety of the language. On the contrary, 16 respondents (27 %) claimed to use the formal language while playing computer games. From these results, it can be deduced that most of the computer games players use more casual and spontaneous variety of the language (see Figure 8).

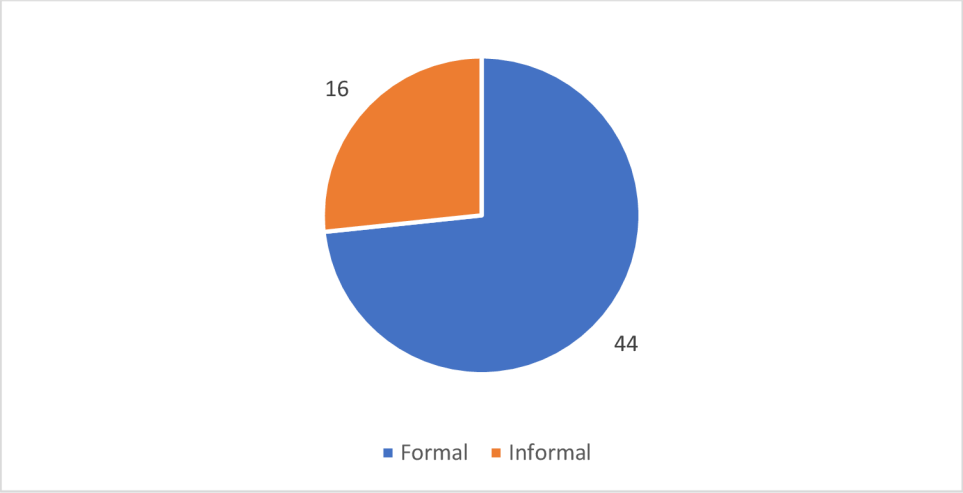

Figure 8. Use of language while playing computer games.

10. What language skill do you use the most while playing computer games?

As previously mentioned, there is a great number of computer games genres which might significantly differ in terms of using particular language skills. For that reason, it was essential to determine which language skill players use the most with regard to second language acquisition. In this case, the majority of participants (40 respondents, 66.7 %) had claimed that the language skill that they used the most was reading. Secondly, 13 respondents (21.7 %) stated that they tend to primarily practise their listening skills. Lastly, 7 respondents (11.7 %), the least occupied group of respondents, mainly makes use of their writing skills. As can be seen, the vast majority of participants responded that they primarily make use of reading while playing computer games. Hence, it could be assumed that these results could lead to the improvement of one's grammatical accuracy, syntactical structures, and expansion of a vocabulary base (see Figure 9).

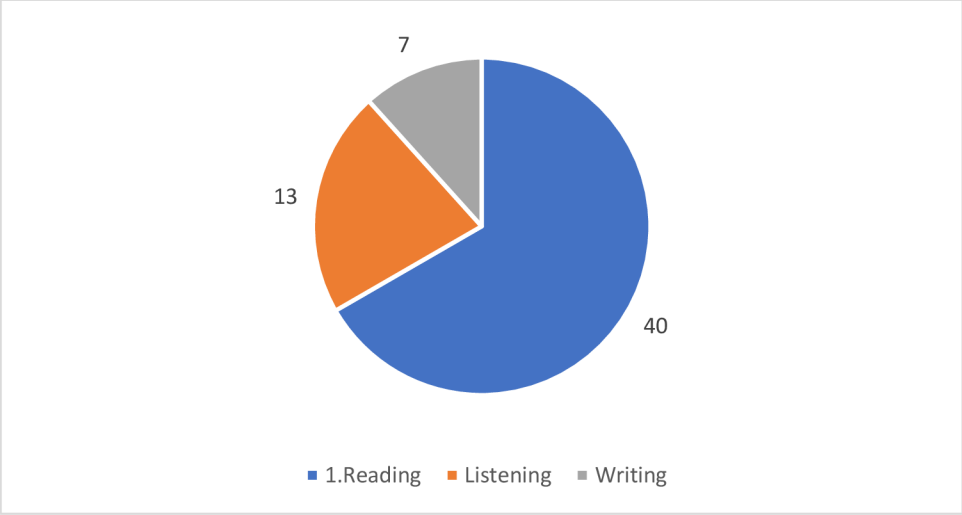

Figure 9. Primarily used language skill.

11. To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your communication skills?

In this case, participants were asked to determine how significantly playing computer games has helped them with their communication skills. Nonetheless, because these skills are very problematic to evaluate, I have used a Likert-type scale with five options where number one stood for the lowest value and number five represented the highest one. When the participants had been asked to answer this question, the predominant group (20 participants, 33.3 %) picked the third option, which represents the neutral value (see Figure 10).

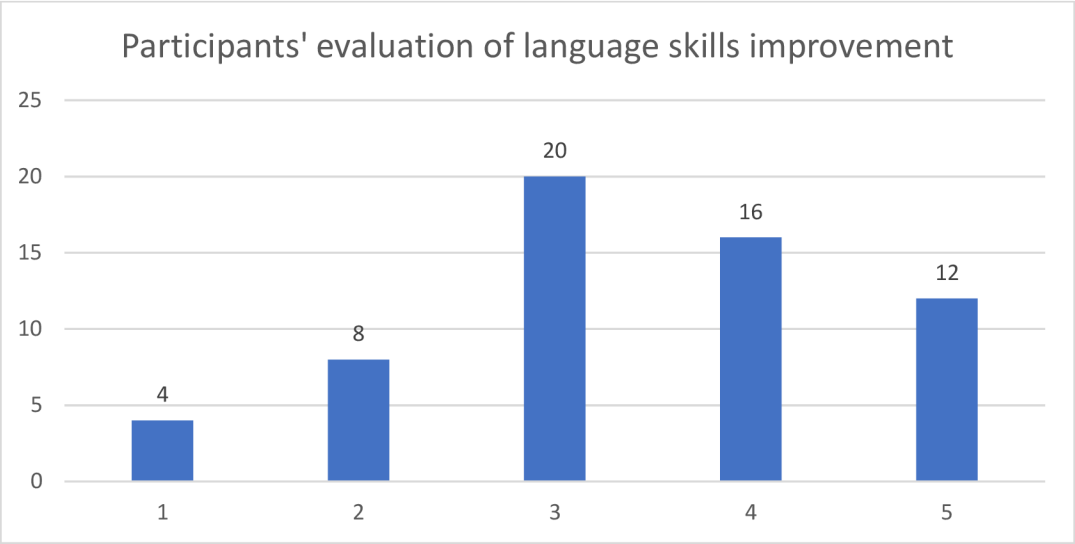

Figure 10. Evaluation of language skills improvement.

12. To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your reading skills?

As can be seen from results of the tenth question, reading appears to be the most commonly used language skill while playing computer games. For that reason, participants were also asked to determine the extent to which they assume that playing computer games have improved their reading skills. In this case, out of all participants, the predominant group (21 respondents, 35 %) selected the fourth options which stands for greatly. Hence, it could be suggested that playing computer games significantly improves one's reading skills due to the fact that players are fairly often exposed to a storyline and narrative elements (see Figure 11).

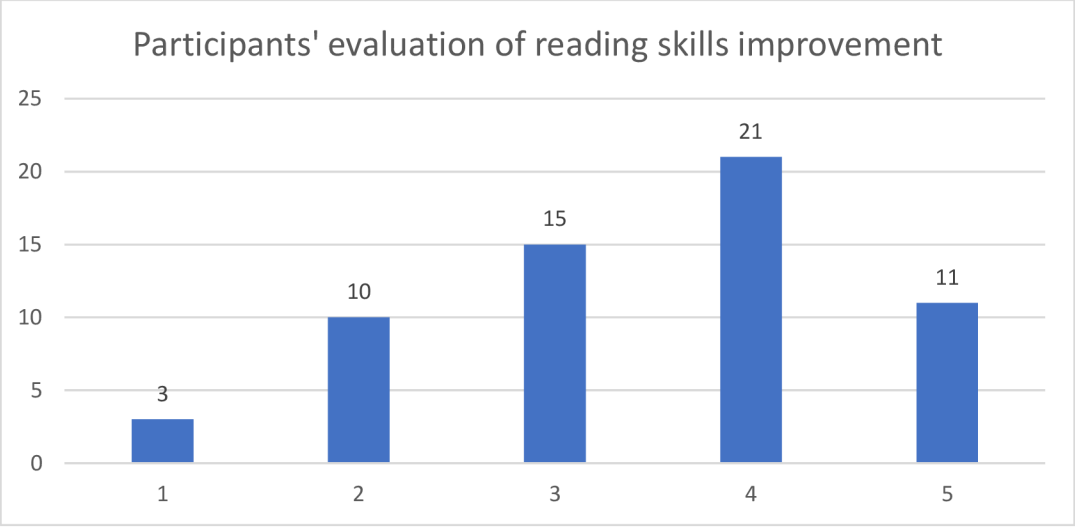

Figure 11. Evaluation of reading skills improvement.

13. To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your listening skills?

In most of the cases, the today's games contain audio elements. In addition, significant amount of computer games, that people nowadays tend to play, takes place online, where it is typical to communicate with other players, which might result into improving individual's listening skills. This question specifically focuses on improving one's listening skills when playing computer games in order to determine the extent to which playing computer games improves the participants' listening skills. Regarding the results to this question, the participants primarily selected the third (18 participants, 30 %) and the fourth option (18 participants, 30 %), which appears to be promising in terms of improving their listening skills (see Figure 12).

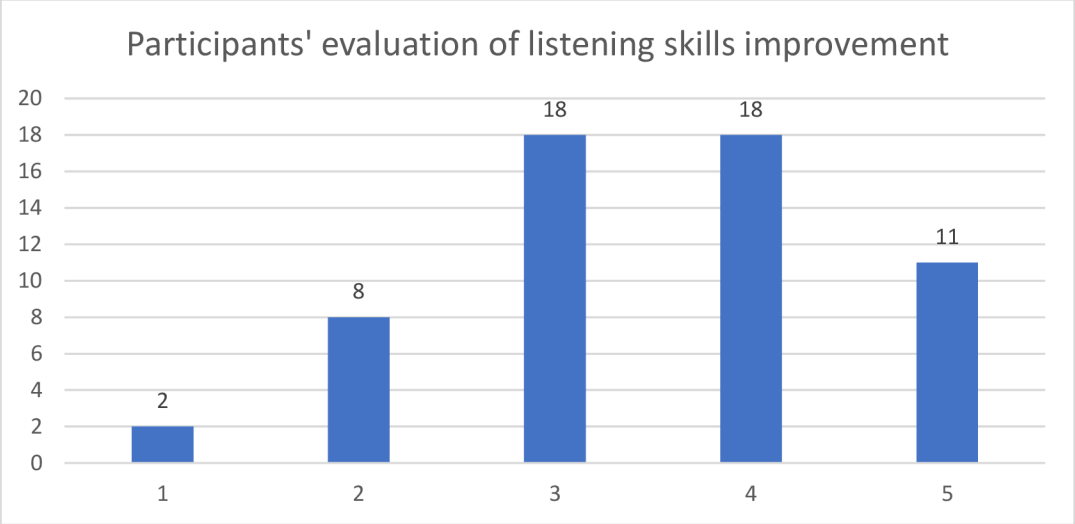

Figure 12. Evaluation of listening skills improvement.

14. To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your writing skills?

While playing computer games, it is fairly common that players tend to communicate one with another in order to win or enjoy the game. In this case, the participants were asked to determine the extent to which playing computer games has improved their writing skills. Predominantly, 23 respondents (43.3 %) selected the third option as their answer, whereas the answers of the rest of the respondents considerably varied (see Figure 13). From obtained results, it could be suggested that playing computer games improves one's writing skills, nonetheless, the results are not as promising in comparison to reading and listening skills.

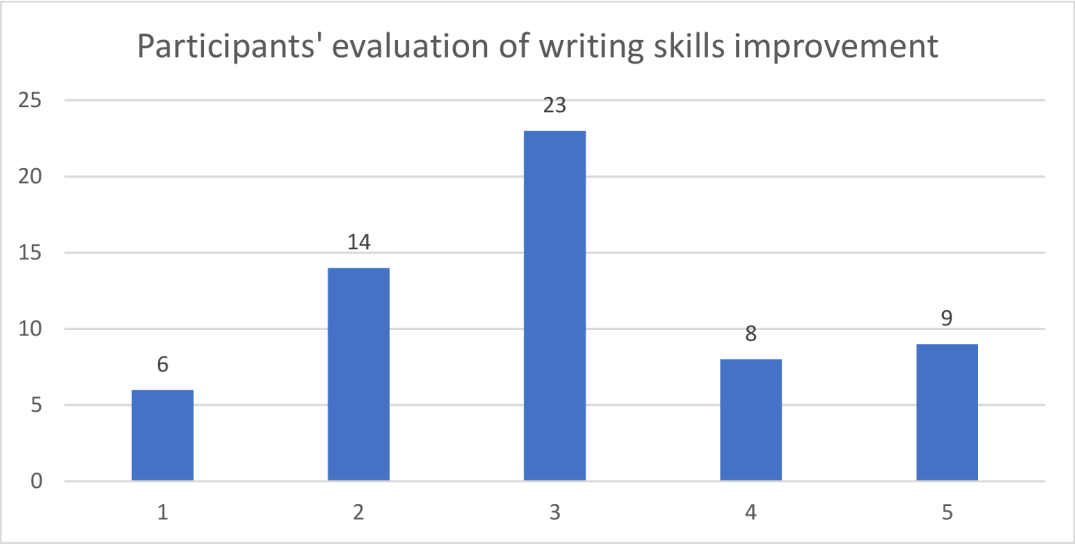

Figure 13. Evaluation of writing skills improvement.

15. To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your vocabulary?

As previously mentioned, due to the fact that most computer games use the English language as their language of operation, the players, undoubtedly, encounter a significant amount of new words that they have never seen before. For that reason, the participants were asked to determine the extent to which playing computer games has improved their vocabulary acquisition. With regard to the findings, the largest number of the participants (20 respondents, 33.3 %) selected the fourth option on the Likert scale, which suggest that playing computer games has greatly improved their vocabulary. Moreover, the second largest group of participants (16 respondents, 26.7 %) chose the fifth option on the scale, which means that substantial part of respondents claims that playing computer games has enormously improved their language skills with regard to vocabulary acquisition. In addition, this is the largest number of selections of the fifth option, on the scale, out of all question. For that reason, it should be emphasized that playing computer games tremendously enlarges one's vocabulary (see Figure 14).

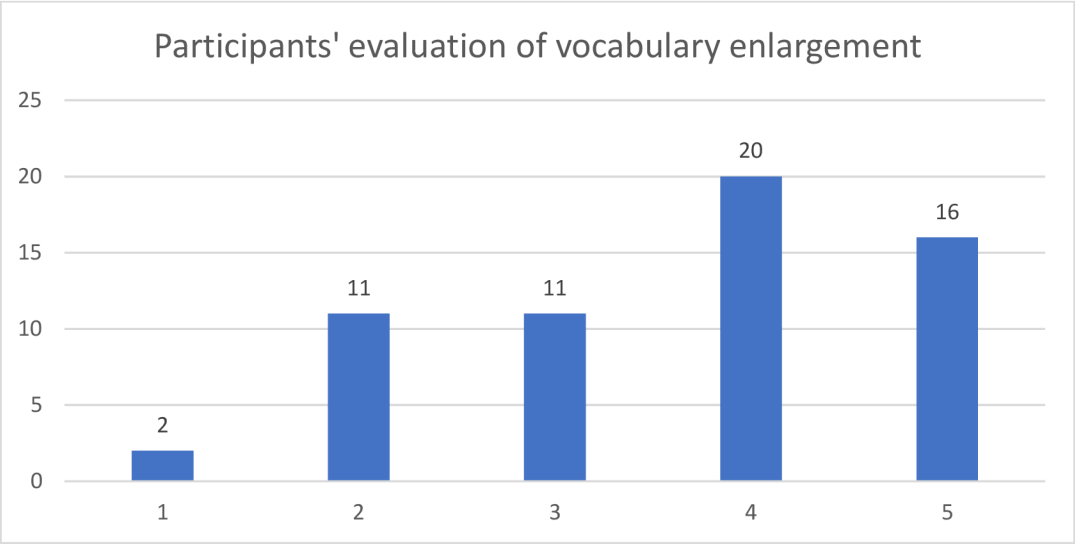

Figure 14. Evaluation of vocabulary enlargement.

16. To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your knowledge of the English language?

In order to determine the extent to which playing computer games have improved participants' knowledge of the English language in general. The participants were asked to evaluate the degree on a Likert scale. A significant number of participants (18 respondents, 30 %) selected the fourth option, which suggest that playing computer games have significantly helped them in terms of improving their knowledge of the English language and English language acquisition (see Figure 15).

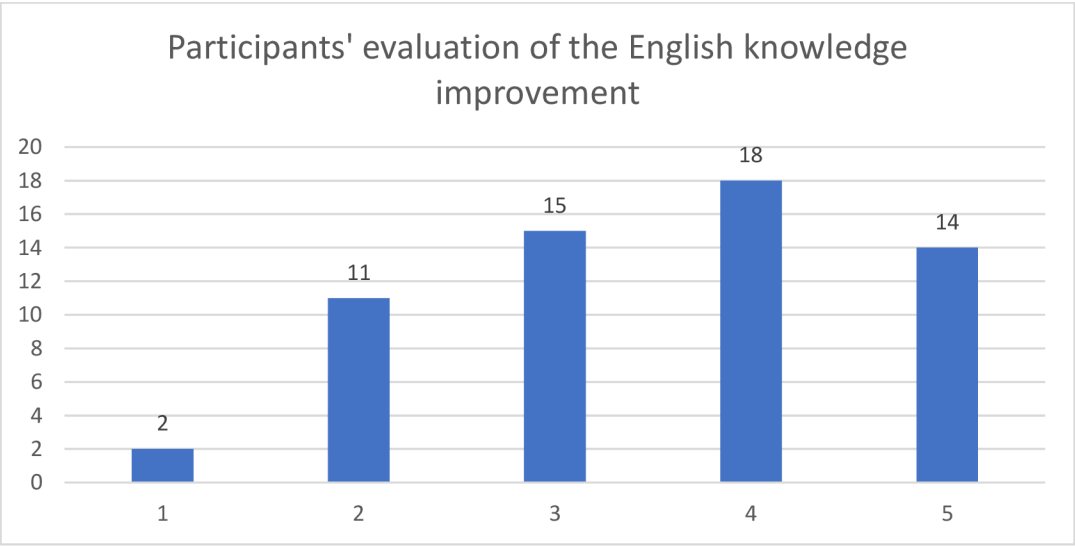

Figure 15. Evaluation of the English knowledge improvement.

17. Do you think that playing computer games is a good way to acquire the English language?

Due to the fact that the respondents were previously asked to determine the extent to which playing computer games have improved their knowledge of the English language with regard to second language acquisition. The respondents shared their honest opinion whether they believe that playing computer games is a sufficient method to acquire and improve their knowledge of the English language. The general analysis of this question gave positive findings where the vast majority of participants (54 respondents, 90 %) agreed that playing computer games is an effective way to acquire the English language. Only a very low number of participants (6 respondents, 10 %) do not believe that playing computer games has been beneficial for them with regard to improving their knowledge of the English language and second language acquisition (see Figure 16).

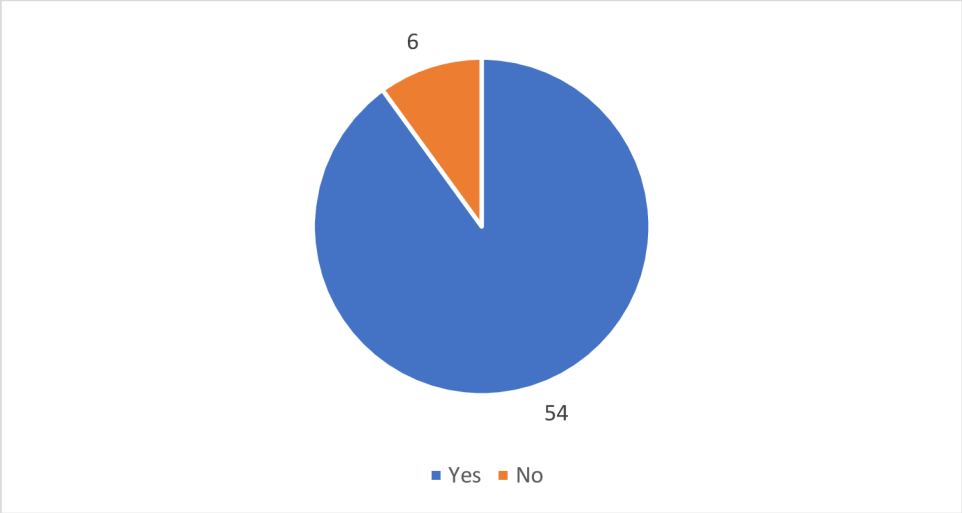

Figure 16. Evaluation of language acquisition.

18. Does playing computer games motivate you to improve your knowledge of the English language?

It is widely known that computer games are becoming more popular than ever due to the fact that they are a great source of entertainment for a large number of players all over the world. For that reason, the respondents were asked to determine whether playing computer games also motivates them to improve their knowledge of the English language. Analyzing the results, the predominant part of participants (38 respondents, 63.3 %) claimed that playing computer games motivates them to improve their knowledge of the English language. While 22 respondents (36.7 %) do not share the same opinion.

19. Do you use the acquired knowledge of the English language you have gained while playing computer games in everyday life?

So far, it has been shown that playing computer games has positive effects on participants' knowledge of the English language. Hence, it was investigated whether the participants use the knowledge, which they obtained from playing computer games, in their everyday life. In this case, the majority of participants (44 respondents, 74 %) claimed that they ordinarily use knowledge of the English language that they had obtained from playing computer games in their everyday lives. Thus, it supports the idea that playing computer can be found beneficial while learning the English language.

20. What do you think has contributed the most to improving your knowledge of the English language?

In order to determine how effective and efficient playing computer games is, the participants were asked what has contributed the most to improving their knowledge of the English language in comparison to the other conventional methods of learning the English language with regard to second language acquisition. In this case, the participants had three options to choose from: computer games, educational institutions, and blank space to fill for their own answers. The obtained results showed that the educational institution still play the most important role in acquiring the English language (27 respondents, 45 %). Nonetheless, a large number of participants (20 respondents, 33.3 %) selected computer games as the most influential factor in terms of second language acquisition and the English language learning. Lastly, some of the participants (13 respondents, 22 %) provided their own answers. Primarily, these participants stated that they find watching TV shows and traveling as the most contributing factors (see Figure 17).

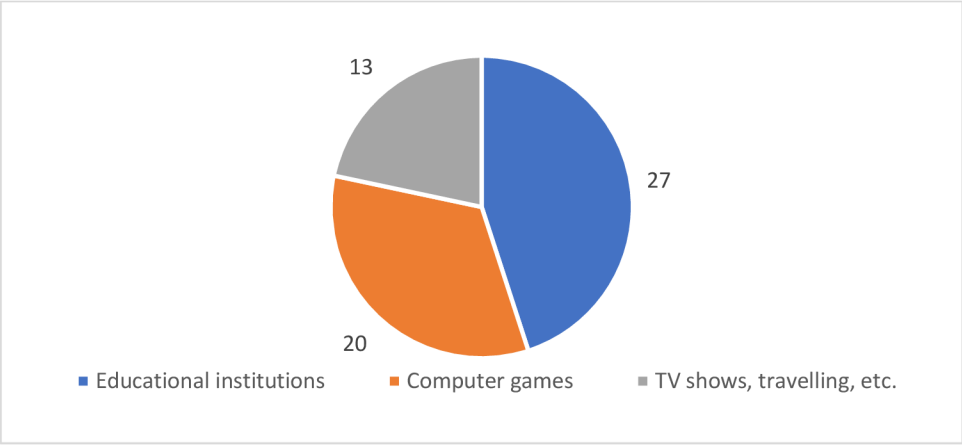

Figure 17. What has been the most influential factor?

5 Conclusion

This bachelor's thesis deals with the current state of the English language, the manner in which education and entertainment is closely connected, learning when using a computer, and lastly, computer games and their influence on the English language knowledge.

It is suggested that the English language is currently used as a lingua franca and a language of media, education, communication, and entertainment, which supports the idea that the English language is a currently one of the most commonly used languages. Therefore, when choosing a new language to learn, English language might be considered. In addition, acquisition and learning of a second language is described, emphasizing the distinction between phenomena themselves.

In the following chapters, it is stressed out that the programs and computer games have been widely used to improve one's knowledge. In the early stages, the software was designed particularly for educational purposes and helped to learn grammatical structures and new vocabulary via repetition. Further, it is elucidated that technological developments, such as multimedia and internet tend to improve learner's language skills.

Towards the end of the theoretical part, this thesis focuses on computer games and their influence on learning the English Language. It is shown that the interaction, most commonly in English, among players is necessary in order to understand each other, therefore, it is highly probable that the English language proficiency of these speakers would be improved. Additionally, interaction between players enriches their vocabulary base and improves their pronunciation.

The empirical part of this thesis deals with the analysis of playing computer with regard to English language learning and second language acquisition. The analysis was conducted in a form of a questionnaire where 60 anonymous participants took part in the survey. The results of the survey showed that playing computer games has positive effects on learning the English language and second language acquisition, which supports the shared knowledge in the theoretical part. The vast majority of participants (54 respondents 90 %) believes that playing computer games has positive effects on their knowledge of the English language. From the obtained results, it appears that reading is the skill that is practiced the most while playing

computer games. In addition, playing computer games significantly enriches players' vocabulary.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that educational institutions still play the most important role in learning the English language, nonetheless, playing computer games can be used as a complementary method to improve one's knowledge of the English language.

From my personal experience, I can tell, with absolute certainty, the computer games have played an important role in learning my second language. Over the years, I have managed to learn grammar and vocabulary due to practicing the language via games and social interaction. In my opinion, computer games are a great means of communication in terms of learning foreign language regardless of assumptions of certain individuals.

6 List of references

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7 List of figures

8 Appendix

The questionnaire

Welcome to the survey on the influence of computer games on knowledge of English language. Thank you in advance for filling out the questionnaire.

My name is Patrik Prát and this survey serves as an empirical part of my bachelor's thesis. The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine whether playing computer games influences the knowledge of the English language.

The survey is completely anonymous, and its results will not be used for any other purpose than for the bachelor's thesis.

The estimated time to fill the questionnaire is approximately 10 minutes.

---

1) what is your gender identity?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2) What is your age?

- ☐ Less than 15 years
- ☐ 15-17 years
- ☐ 18-21 years
- ☐ 22-25 years
- ☐ 26 years and above

3) How many years have you been studying English language?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-5 years
- ☐ 6-9 years
- ☐ 10 years and above

4) What is your English language proficiency?

- ☐ A1
- ☐ A2
- ☐ B1
- ☐ B2
- ☐ C1
- ☐ C2

Specify_____

5) How often do you play computer games?

- ☐ Very rarely (1-3x a month)
- ☐ Rarely (Once a week)
- ☐ Occasionally (2-3x a week)
- ☐ Frequently (4-6 times a week)
- ☐ Very frequently (daily)

6) What genre of computer games do you play the most frequently?

- ☐ FPS (First person shooter)
- ☐ MMORPG (Massive multiplayer online role-playing games)
- ☐ MOBA (Multiplayer online battle arena)
- ☐ RS (Realtime strategy)
- ☐ RPG (Role-playing games)
- ☐ Unable to specify

Specify_____

7) Do the games that you play include components of the English language?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8) Do you communicate with other players while playing computer games?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9) Do you communicate with other players formally or informally?

☐ Formally

☐ Informally

10) What language skill do you use the most while playing computer games?

☐ Reading

☐ Listening

☐ Writing

11) To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your communication skills?

Insufficiently Enormously

12) To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your reading skills?

Insufficiently Enormously

13) To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your listening skills?

Insufficiently Enormously

14) To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your writing skills?

Insufficiently Enormously

15) To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your vocabulary?

Insufficiently Enormously

16) To what extent do you think playing computer games has improved your knowledge of the English language?

Insufficiently Enormously

17) Do you think that playing computer games is a good way to acquire the English language?

☐ Yes

☐ No

18) Does playing computer games motivate you to improve your knowledge of the English language?

☐ Yes

☐ No

19) Do you use the acquired knowledge of English language you have gained while playing computer games in everyday life?

☐ Yes

☐ No

20) What do you think has contributed the most to improving your knowledge of the English language?

☐ Educational institution

☐ Playing computer games

Specify_____