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Zadání: Tato diplomová práce se bude zabývat frekventovaně užívanou terminologií ve videohrách a videoherním průmyslu samotném. Práce je rozdělena na dvě části, teoretickou a praktickou. Teoretická část vymezí rámec videoherního diskurzu, dále teorii lexikologie a také problematiku s ní spjatou. Praktická část se bude věnovat samotné analýze videoherní terminologie, její etymologii a jednotlivým lingvistickým jevům, které jsou pro tento diskurz typické.

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Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá jazykem a frekventovaně užívanou terminologií ve videohrách a videoherním průmyslu samotném. Práce je rozdělena na dvě části, teoretickou a praktickou. Teoretická část představí videoherní průmysl, vymezí rámec videoherního diskurzu, dále teorii lexikologie, terminologie a také problematiku s nimi spjatou. Praktická část se bude věnovat samotné analýze videoherní terminologie, její etymologii, slovtvorbě a jednotlivým lingvistickým jevům, které jsou pro tento diskurz typické. Materiál analýzy tvoří data nashromážděná z webových stránek zabývajících se tématem videoher různorodého charakteru a také data z několika největších současných anglických korpusů.

Klíčová slova: videohry, terminologie, lexikologie, analýza

Abstract

This master thesis deals with the language and the most frequently used terminology in videogames and the videogaming industry in general. The thesis is split into two parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part introduces the videogaming industry, sets the boundaries of the videogame discourse and delves into the theory of lexicology and terminology. The practical part analyses the videogame terminology, its etymology, word-formation processes and individual linguistic occurrences typical for this kind of discourse. The data used for the analysis are collected from various webpages dealing with the topic videogames as well as data from some of the biggest contemporary English corpora.

Keywords: videogames, terminology, lexicology, analysis

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto práci vypracoval samostatně. Veškeré prameny a literaturu, které jsem pro vyhotovení práce využil, řádně cituji a uvádím v seznamu literatury a internetových zdrojů.

V Opavě dne 30. června 2021



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INTRODUCTION

As the presence and popularity of videogames continue to grow, so does the importance they have. The impact they have is not only social, economic, and psychological but also linguistic. Videogames as a medium have become an everyday form of entertainment for billions of people and as a result, online social circles are formed and created as well as the need for communication. Such communication can be described as very particular due to the media it appears in, its communicators and because language is a very nuanced and complex tool, it transforms rather flexibly and gracefully to suit the needs of its users. Therefore, this thesis will aim to explain some of the particularities of videogame language, mainly through exploration of the most common videogame terminology, how it is formed, its etymology, contextual usage, and other typical phenomena appearing in videogame language.

The first, theoretical, part of the thesis will provide the necessary information to understand the videogame industry and its importance as well as the necessary linguistic theoretical background upon which the analysis will be built. Because videogames are a digital medium, it is necessary to introduce how computer-mediated communication works, how it interacts with other multimodal aspects and how it correlates to traditional linguistic disciplines such as morphology, lexicology, and more modern terminology. The linguistic theory itself will use examples from the videogame discourse instead of general textbook English ones, mainly so the theory does not feel disconnected from the subsequent term analysis.

As to the theoretical part, the analysis will be of qualitative nature. Because of the sheer number of speakers that engage in videogame communication, the amount of lexis and language generated is astonishing. Instead of trying to compile a complete list of every videogame term ever created, which would be an unachievable feat, the focus will be on a selected few terms and through them, an understanding of how videogame terminology is formed and used will try to be achieved and exemplified. Additional information from some of the most popular English corpora (such as COCA and iWeb) will be provided to try and put into perspective which terms could be recognized as mostly videogame terms. An

important and inseparable part of these terms will be the context they can and do appear in, which will provide a better understanding of not only the terms but also videogame language in general.

1 THEORETICAL PART

1.1 Videogame Industry

1.1.1 Overview

Videogaming, both as a form of entertainment and industry, is a relatively new concept, especially when measured against other comparable media such as movies and books with which they share many similarities. Its birth came about in the 1940s and 1950s with the emergence of modern home computers (Dillon 2011, 5). Ever since then, it has grown immensely and has become a globally widespread form of entertainment and an industrial giant providing both products and services. The number of participants in online videogaming now numbers over 2.5 billion people (Narula 2021) and due to the nature of the medium, influences both our culture and language.

Due to the size of the industry, videogames and media related to it can now be encountered in various forms, especially digital. There are gaming websites, journals, magazines, books, movies, shops, videos, livestreams, and other media channels. Videogame design and other forms of digital studies are starting to emerge as subjects taught at universities all over the world.

To illustrate its economic impact, gaming has generated revenue of over \$145 billion in the year 2019, compared to the movie industry which generated \$42 billion, and the music industry generating \$20 billion (Wijman 2021). As a result, the industry creates numerous jobs such as videogame developing, graphic designing and writing, producing, programming, marketing, publishing, testing, and translating. Historically and presently, the rapid advancements in the computational power of hardware resulted in games as a product becoming more and more complex, time-consuming to develop, and more expensive to fund. For example, one of the biggest recently published games, *Cyberpunk 2077*, is estimated to have cost over \$300 million in development and marketing (Osser 2021). Many people consider games works of art comparable to books and movies.

Due to the popularity of videogames, the impact they have on an individual has been the subject of numerous studies, especially in recent years. Some papers link videogames to reduced social skills and increased aggression, while others claim the opposite. It has also been argued that videogames can have educational benefits and can increase the individual's cognitive, communicative, and decision-making skills (Griffiths 2002).

1.1.2 Brief History of Videogaming

Due to the dependance of videogames on its medium, computers (which is a relatively young invention) the first “videogames” emerged in the 1950s and were mostly laboratory and university projects. The word itself, videogame, which is a compound of two nouns, *video*, and *game*, is described in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as the following: “an electronic game in which players control images on a video screen” and was not used up until the 1970s when computers and videogames emerged as a commercial product (Smith 2015). The first mentions come from newspaper articles and newspaper ads. The first part of the compound, *video*, is not that much younger and was first used in 1937, literally meaning “that which is displayed on a (television) screen “. The second noun, *game*, is a much older word dating back to c. 1200 meaning joy, fun; game, amusement (<http://etymonline.com/>). Some of the most famous games of this period include Pong, Zork, and Flight Simulator.

Videogames as a widespread form of entertainment became reality in the 1970s due to the increased availability and affordability of home computers. What followed this boom was the 1983 crash when Atari (one of the biggest game publishers at the time) started going through financial hardship. Consequently, the whole industry experienced a period of decline as well as a negative outlook on gaming from the general population. It was not up until 1986 that the videogaming industry started slowly growing again when console manufacturers like Sony and Nintendo entered the market and marked the period of “videogame renaissance” (Dillion 2011, 70-73). Some of the best-selling games of the period include Mario Bros, The Legend of Zelda and Metroid by Nintendo (franchises that are immensely popular to this day), Pole Position by Atari, and Final Fantasy by Square.

Ever since then, videogames have become more elaborate, and the industry has grown consistently year by year. Availability and affordability of not only computers but also other electronic devices have made the barrier of entry to gaming almost non-existent. Due to the emergence of the World Wide Web and its evolution to Web 2.0, online games have become a possibility, where people can interact with one another. The technology allows players to interact in various ways - verbally, nonverbally, through emoticons, animations, chats, video feeds, and audiovisual inputs. Even virtual reality headsets are starting to gain in popularity and have become reality as they enter the market. Naturally, the language the players communicate through changes in accordance with the medium and is tailored to fit the user's needs. The top videogame publishers are, as of the year 2021, Tencent, Sony Interactive Entertainment, Microsoft, and Activision Blizzard and all of them develop and publish online videogames of which communication is a big part.

1.2 Online Communication

1.2.1 Videogames and their media

Due to the nature of the medium that videogames are, it is important to establish boundaries in which the language occurs. Because this thesis deals not only with the kind of language used by players in videogames themselves but also in the media surrounding them, the possibilities and restrictions of computer-mediated communication have to be highlighted. Most communication surrounding the topic of videogames happens in an online environment. Communication that happens in online videogames themselves, between the players, shares many fundamental qualities yet differs in some ways. One of the most notable examples includes drastically increased economy of language.

What has to be mentioned is the difficulty of dealing with any kind of analysis of material that is purely online, internet-based. The ever-growing number of participants on countless web pages makes it impossible to draw any conclusions set in stone. The best researcher can hope for is capturing what kind of language a specific online “group” uses at

a specific point in time. Due to the nature of online media (constantly evolving and finding new ways to communicate) any conclusions drawn now might not hold in as soon as few years. As an example, when the whole World Wide Web shifted from its earlier iteration dubbed Web 1.0 to its successor, Web 2.0, the general focus of webpages shifted from only providing a specific function with no real possibilities of interaction to being more user-involved with ways to promote cooperation, collaboration, social interaction and collective brainstorming (Murugesan 2007, 34-41). The structures by which websites are built have changed completely. Examples of Web 2.0 websites include now widely known sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Even these sites have evolved over the years handing more possibilities and functions to the hands of their users. The core concept of Twitter, for example, in its beginnings was to simply share a personal status of what is happening in one's life, nowadays it is a platform used for sharing world news, trends and a highly valued platform many companies use to reach their customers (Crystal 2011, 11).

When it comes to the users of “gaming” language, it has to be defined who they are. As illustrated before, gaming has become a worldwide form of entertainment and happens in an online environment, thus the speakers are not confined by borders, education, nationality, their native language, or age and come from various sociocultural backgrounds. However, several barriers of entry certainly exist (mostly of the economic manner) for an individual to be able to communicate on the topic of videogames. They need to own the necessary hardware to participate in online communication, internet access, and for the purpose of this thesis, interest in the topic of videogames. By definition, “gaming” language cannot be categorized as a sociolect nor idiolect but is something akin to jargon, defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “the technical terminology or characteristic idiom of a special activity or group” such as sports jargon (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>). Hudson (2014, 4) defines jargon as writing or speech that contains technical words not commonly intelligible which applies to all online videogames (abbreviations such as KS, DC, and GG meaning Kill Steal, Disconnect and Good Game and expressions such as smurfing or cheesing, which are only a few among countless others, would most likely not be understood by many and are a common occurrence in online environments).

To present an overview of the videogame demography, Astrid Ensslin (a researcher at the forefront of videogame linguistics) cites the 2010 ESA (Entertainment Software Association) statistics (Ensslin 2012, 1-2) and provides a concise overview of the US videogame demographic. A newer ESA results from the year 2020 cite the following data (ESA 2020):

- 214 million Americans play video games (out of the estimated population of 320 million).
- 75% of American households have at least one player.
- 65% of players play online with others.
- The average age is in the 35-44 range.
- 79% of players play videogames for the purpose of relaxation.
- 59% of all players are male and 41% female.

When it comes to the levels of discourse upon which the videogame industry operates, Astrid Ensslin categorizes five of them: (1) language the videogame players themselves use outside of games, (2) language players use in the games themselves, (3) language used by industry representatives such as developers and producers, (4) language about games used by journalist and other media figures and (5) language used in manuals, advertisements and other complementary texts (Ensslin 2012, 9-10).

1.2.2 Online language changes

The first notable difference between traditional communication and online – or CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication) – one lies in how it is mediated. Crystal (2011, 20-32) dubs the internet a mixed medium, where most communication happens either through writing or speech, not unlike traditional methods. Many scholars and CMC researchers now

agree that the linguistic practices online blur the lines between speaking and writing, which were traditionally considered fundamentally different modes (Squires 2010, 457).

Where the crux of the differences lies, is how the possibilities and limitations of the internet, technology, and videogame chats (and other forms of game communication) shape the language transmitted through it. Crystal (2011, 33-34) goes further to categorize the chief differences of online language, which provide a valuable overview:

- Vocabulary
- Orthography
- Grammar
- Pragmatics
- Style

Since this thesis deals mainly with lexicology and terminology in the discourse of videogames, emphasis will be put on these elements of language outlined by Crystal. Due to the sheer number of “speakers” using CMC (and videogames by extension) it has become a breeding ground for new lexis. When it comes to videogames, each one has its own set of lexical terms which the players are familiar with and communicate through. Some similarities can be shared between games of the same genre (e.g. games of the RPG, MMORPG, FPS genre, etc.) yet the lexis always changes in relation to the game. As a brief example, the biggest MMORPG videogame, World of Warcraft contains exclusive tokens such as *dungs* (meaning dungeons, a five-player instance) or *locks* (meaning Warlock, a character archetype the player can choose). There are numerous examples of words with high lexical specificity that would not be understood by the average English language user.

When it comes to orthography and grammar of videogame communication the matter becomes quite complex. Since there is no motivation of following the standard rules of English writing, coupled with the fact that videogame messages often are very information-packed and pragmatic, orthographic features such as capitalization, word breaks, punctuation, and emphasis are often used for different purposes or not utilized at all. Capitalization of the whole word is often used to highlight its importance; punctuation is

omitted to speed up the process of typing and words are often misspelled. Repetition of a certain letter can mean its phonetic elongation (e.g. yaaaay) and letters can be replaced by numbers (e.g. LOL). These phenomena are known as *netspeak* and *chatspeak* (Squires 2010, 455). In-game chat communication is not unlike instant messaging and chatting on social media with which they share many similarities.

Stylistic features of videogame communication depend mainly on either the game or the medium it is being transmitted through. For example, some videogames put a character limit on the length of a message and allow for accompanying emoticons or other stylistic devices such as the division of a text into paragraphs. As a further example of in-game communication, *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*, one of the most played First-Person Shooters of all time, allows for a message to have 126 characters. In games such as CS:GO, a real-time, fast-paced competitive game against other players, where the speed of relaying a message is of the utmost importance, such limitation never becomes a problem. It also heavily incentivizes players to use the in-game voice chat. Other games, which put a higher emphasis on social interaction and friendly communication, such as *World of Warcraft*, allow for longer messages up to 255 characters and do not utilize voice chat.

When talking about out-of-game communication, to provide an example, platforms such as Twitter limit one “tweet” to 280 characters (a number that has been over the years increased from 140) promoting short, to-the-point messages, while sites of discussion such as videogame fora and blogs often do not limit the number of characters, promoting longer, more thought-out messages and discussions.

1.2.3 Multimodality

To understand how videogame communication works (and online communication to a lesser degree) it is necessary to highlight the importance of multimodality. Not only does the written language change, but due to the medium the communication is transmitted through, it often combines with multiple other semiotic resources, i.e. modes to create a singular message. Videogame communication is inherently highly multimodal in nature. Multimodality, now a widely known concept in the academic sphere, made its way into the

spotlight sometime in the 1990s and the subsequent publications such as *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication* by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen published in 2001 (Bezemer, Jewitt and O'Halloran 2016, 1-2) and more modern ones, such as *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis* by Carey Jewitt first published in 2009, now serve as concise guidelines for scholars interested in multimodality.

To expand, multimodality, dissected by Jewitt (2009, 3) into three key points, attempts to capture the following:

- A message is a result of several semiotic resources (or modes) combining; each one has its limitations and possibilities.
- The resulting combination of said modes is called a **multimodal whole**.
- To understand the intended meaning of a message, all modes have to be considered and understood.

What these modes are, depends on the medium. When it comes to videogames, in-game communication can combine audiovisual modes such as images, icons, markers, sounds, emotes, animations (and countless others) with plain text to create said multimodal whole. As in most games, the player is in control of a “character” or a “player avatar” which creates a whole new dimension of possibilities as they can express themselves through animated commands (e.g. in many MMORPG games upon typing /laugh or /lol the avatar emulates a laugh animation accompanied by laughing sound, as do commands such as /cry, /wave, etc.). To ease, speed up and support their usage these commands are usually short (few characters at most). Chat messages are often also accompanied by clickable hyperlinks (that might open a part of the menu, highlighting an in-game item, in-game guide, etc.) and colors.

To demonstrate the importance of multimodality, the following screenshot from the in-game chat of the MMORPG game *World of Warcraft* is described:



Figure 1, In-game chat (*World of Warcraft*, 12th November 2020)

Disregarding the linguistic occurrences of the text itself spoken by several players, which the text is full of, the emphasis is going to be put on strictly the accompanying semiotic resources. The first observable notable distinction is the text color. The text being green is the indication that the conversation is being transmitted to the *guild channel* (as well as the letter [G] in brackets) and thus to the players' close group. Different colors indicate where the message is/was sent with pink representing a *whisper* i.e., a private conversation of two people, white a proximity-based message only players positionally close to you can see, and orange/beige indicating a dedicated channel to either trading, talking, or recruiting each other for the means of cooperation. The names of the players are also accompanied by a color depending on the player class archetype they play, e.g. light green indicates the class hunter, purple warlock, dark blue a shaman, etc. (which cannot be seen due to the necessity of blurring out names). The text in yellow represents an announcement (in the form of a clickable hyperlink – leading to additional information) which announces that an “achievement” has been completed by a guild member (Such announcements are often followed by congratulations from other members of the guild, in shortened forms such as “gz” “gratz” and “congrats”). As the *guild channel* is an archived form of chatting, the timestamps in brackets [15:15] help with tracing back older conversations. All the

information about a completely mundane, everyday bit of a conversation can be deduced based solely on the accompanying multimodal cues.

Even though the approach of this thesis is not inherently multimodal but linguistic, to simply omit multimodality and focus solely on the written and spoken text would be, at times, to disregard a part of the message and meaning.

1.3 Terminology

As the boundaries of videogame discourse have been established as well as the nature of the media through which most communication happens (and its kinds) it is now of great importance to delve into the theoretical background of the linguistic subdisciplines that are the focus of this thesis.

Firstly (and most importantly) the theoretical framework of terminology will be presented as it will be the focus of the practical part of this thesis. Because videogames and the media surround it are so numerous these days, the discussion and communication that takes place has vastly increased and in turn means, that a need for a new range of words and terms had emerged to capture exactly what the communicators require to express their virtual experience. Communication taking place between video game players is thus filled with new terms and lexemes with many of them being unrecognizable to those unfamiliar with specific videogames. In a way, it is like a sport and similar kinds of jargon.

Cabré outlines in her book *Terminology* (1999) the need for terminology as a linguistic discipline and its origins, which are both of great importance in understanding a specific segment of a language. Terminology as a scientific discipline emerged in the 1930s. Before that, terminology existed purely as a convention to name specific scientific concepts, specifically in chemistry, botany, and zoology. Thus it can be established that the forefathers of terminology were scientists and later engineers and technicians (and other groups of people requiring the need for a structure in their naming conventions). She also establishes several motivations behind the rapid development of terminology in recent years which apply to the terminology of videogames as well. The rapid development in science and technology created

new concepts and thus, the need to name them. As the technology always changes, so does the vocabulary it is associated with and in turn, any research made is often applicable only to the timeframe it was conducted in. As we live in the information age, information is of the utmost importance and language is how most of it will be relayed. It has also led to the advancement of storing said information (e.g., various databases and corpora) which presents new possibilities (Cabr  1999, 1-4).

1.3.1 Defining Terminology

To establish and describe what Terminology as a linguistic subdiscipline is, it must be understood that among the most prevalent researchers and linguists no unified consensus has been reached as to what exactly terminology is and what it entails. Different linguists see a slightly different meaning behind the discipline, yet several vital points of terminology can be established.

Sager and Azeh tried to determine what terminology is by following a logically constructed pattern. They state that etymologically speaking, terminology is of polysemous nature, meaning that it is a word with several senses and none of them equal precisely “to the analysis of the traditional meaning of its constituent elements” (Sager 1990, 3). The etymological meaning of the word equals to the study of terms which would not make it too dissimilar to lexicology which is the study of lexical items. Sager later looks at the historical meaning of terminology and its inception lies in the reference to technical vocabulary.

Historically, the first usage of ‘terminology’ is recorded as referring to a technical vocabulary, i.e. a collection of terms, which has a certain coherence by the fact that the terms belong to a single subject area. (1990, 3)

Since the topic of similarity of terminology as a discipline to lexicology has been raised, Cabr  comments the following:

The aim of terminographers is to assign names to concepts; i.e. they move from the concept to the term (an onomasiological process). By contrast, lexicographers start with the word—the dictionary entry—and characterize it functionally and semantically; i.e., they move from the word to the concept, precisely in the opposite direction (a semasiological process) (1999, 7-8).

Since both approaches are relevant to the analysis conducted in this thesis, both terminological and lexicographical approaches will be utilized. The concept behind chosen videogame terms as well as their lexical form will be analyzed. Cabré also states that the difference of terminology to other similar disciplines lies in its willingness to address social and pragmatic needs tied to language. It tries to optimize communication between specific subgroups of people through compiling and analyzing said subject fields which can be later further used as a resource (1999, 10).

To conclude, for the purpose of this analysis, these things have been established regarding what terminology is:

- It is a study of terms that are coherently related
- Terminology studies not only the term itself but also the concept behind it
- The purpose of terminology is to compile data about specific subsets of language
- Terminology, often not being granted full independent status as a discipline, is inherently tied to lexicology and by extension, lexicography.

1.4 Lexical and morphological devices

Since the practical part of the thesis will be dealing with the analysis of the individual terms and it has been established what terminology is and what it entails, what remains is to elaborate upon the theoretical lexicological background due to its interconnectedness to terminology. This chapter will also include the morphological word-formation processes behind individual terms.

When thinking about what kind of lexis one might encounter while dealing with texts and other kinds of corpora material of videogame topic, one would assume a lot of technical

computer vocabulary would be found. Whilst that is true, videogame terms are indeed filled with technical lexis, it is also full of terms specific to individual genres or videogame titles. One can encounter specialized terms and names of characters, stories, opponents, enemies, allies, adventures, missions, spells, fictional worlds, and locations, etc. Outside of videogames themselves, one often encounters talks about videogame engines, development, graphics, designers, developers, art, and its artists. Ensslin and Balteiro, researchers of videogame discourse, came to the same conclusion in their recent book *Approaches to Videogame Discourse* (2019, 14). Thus, it can be said with confidence, that videogame discourse is rich in unconventional and topic-specific lexis.

It should also be noted that players constantly come up with new terms carrying specific meaning to capture their experience or to relay the message they need and thus (often unknowingly) creating new words, i.e. employing lexicalization. To become a part of a certain game community it is often imperative to learn these lexical items and other linguistic practices to be able to communicate with others efficiently and without any sort of misunderstandings. When it comes to the formation of such lexemes, it is important that morphology and the word-formation processes are explored.

Morphology, which is by definition the investigation of words, their internal structures, and how they are formed through the study of *morphemes*, described as the smallest linguistic pieces with grammatical functions (Aronoff 2012, 3), is a crucial part of the process that stands behind the creation of new lexis and terms. It is important to establish what kinds of morphemes exist and how they combine to create words.

1.4.1 Types of morphemes

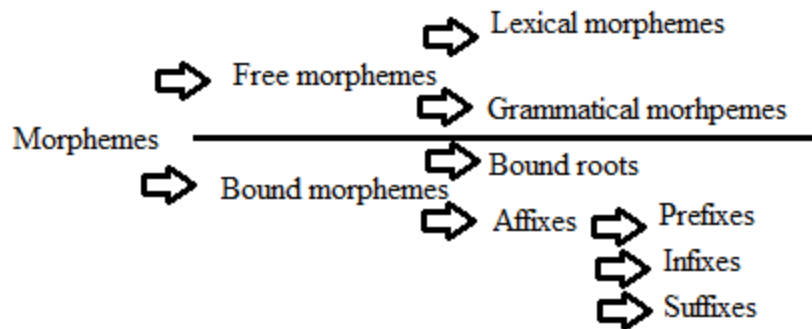


Figure 2, Types of Morphemes

While *free morphemes* (also sometimes called independent) can occur alone as words (e.g. *video, game, player*) *bound morphemes* cannot occur on their own. They can only attach to other morphemes and denote a distinct meaning (e.g. *-er* in *player*, *-s* in *spells*). Such structures are called polymorphemic. Often multiple bound morphemes combine with one free morpheme to create a complex lexeme (e.g. *un-* and *-able* in *unplayable*).

Free morphemes can be further divided into *lexical* and *grammatical* morphemes. *Lexical* morphemes have specific independent meanings often referring to a thing, quality state, or action. Most often these morphemes manifest themselves as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs (e.g. *dungeon, clear, mythic, swiftly*, etc.). They represent the content words of a language and grow in number as more morphemes are formed. *Grammatical* morphemes (also sometimes called function morphemes), as their name suggests, do not carry meaning on their own but capture and show grammatical relationships between individual words and sentences. These morphemes usually manifest themselves in the form of prepositions, articles, pronouns, and auxiliary verbs (e.g. *him, her, can, them*, etc.)

When it comes to *bound* morphemes, they can be further subdivided into *bound roots* and *affixes*. As explained before, bound morphemes cannot occur on their own and thus

always appear in conjunction with a free morpheme. *Bound roots* are morphemes, that only appear in combination with other bound morphemes. Together the combination creates a new content word (e.g. *-circul* in *circulate*). *Affixes* also attach to free morphemes, usually to alter their grammatical function. They can be further subdivided into prefixes, infixes, and suffixes depending on their position in the word. Prefixes are affixes added to the beginning of a word (e.g. *un-* in *unplayable*, *pre-* in *precast*, etc.), infixes are inserted into the middle of a word (e.g. *-bloody-* in *abso-bloody-lutely*) and English language, in general, does not contain very many of them. Suffixes attach to ends of words (e.g. *-ed* in *played*, *-s* in *farms*, etc.) (Zapata 2021, 1-3).

1.4.2 Word-formation processes

As has been established, the focus of the analytical part will be on the analysis of videogame terms and not only that, but also the mental concepts behind the terms. To fully understand the meaning of a word it is obligatory to explore its origin and how it was formed and for that, it is necessary to establish the theory of morphological word-formation processes. Since the classification of morphemes has been presented in the previous subchapter, the processes of them combining to forms new lexis will be listed and examined now.

Since words are composed of smaller units (morphemes) there are many ways in which they can combine, and each process is remarkably different. Generally, in the English language, when it comes to word formation, the first differentiation of said word-formation processes is between **inflection** and **derivation**. To explain the difference between the two, one must ask a question as to what is considered a ‘new’ word. Looking at the two following exemplary words in italics:

- (1) He is *playing* FFXIV.
- (2) All *mates* are crybabies.

The words *playing* and *mates* are undeniably composed of more than one morpheme. In particular, the word *playing* is composed of one free morpheme *play* and one bound morpheme *-ing* signifying a continuous tense. The word *mates* is composed of one free morpheme *mate* and one bound morpheme *-s* signifying plural. However, these words would not be considered in any way new as they were derived from the words *play* and *mate* and are not considered new lexemes. On the other hand, affix such as *re-* when joined with *play* would create the word *replay* which would be considered a new lexeme as it has a completely different meaning. Thus, the first basis for division is made based on whether the resulting word is a fully-fledged lexeme or only a form expressing grammatical features (Plag 2018, 18). Plag words it followingly:

[...] On the basis of this criterion (i.e. lexeme formation), a distinction has traditionally been made between **inflection** (i.e. conjugation and declension in traditional grammar) as part of the grammar on the one hand, and **derivation** and compounding as part of word-formation (or rather: lexeme formation)[...] (2018, 18)

Further practical examples are provided of both derivation and inflection for clarification:

Derivation	Inflection
<i>in</i> visible	bot <i>s</i>
camp <i>er</i>	craft <i>ing</i>
<i>im</i> balanced	boost <i>ed</i>
<i>un</i> playable	cheat <i>ing</i>
break <i>able</i>	loot <i>ed</i>

Table 1, Derivation and Inflection

Since the distinction between derivation and inflection has been clarified, now the individual word-formation processes will be named, highlighted, and analyzed.

1.4.2.1 Affixation

Affixation, as has been explained before, is the process of adding one or more affixes to a root. However, it is not always clear whether something is a bound or a free morpheme and sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between a root and an affix (Plag 2018, 90). To provide an example with the following sentence:

(a) Echo is doing fine *damage-wise* this pull.

Damage-wise, contextually meaning ‘regarding the damage inflicted to the target’, is composed of two morphemes, *damage* and *wise*. Both morphemes can stand on their own with *damage* meaning (according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary) “loss or harm” and *wise* meaning “characterized by wisdom; marked by deep understanding, keen discernment, and a capacity for sound judgment.” This tells us that regular free morphemes such as ‘wise’, when combined with others, can have a completely different meaning. Thus, it can be concluded that a morpheme can occur both as an affix and a free morpheme.

There are many ways to classify affixes, with the most prominent one being in relation to their position to the base. Thus, affixes are most often divided into *prefixes*, *suffixes*, and *infixes*. Affixes can be further subdivided according to the syntactic category of their base words and by the affixes’ semantic properties. However, as many affixes can express a whole range of meanings, it is often not clear into which category which affixes should be placed (Plag 2018, 108). To list some of the most common English affixes:

Suffixes	
Nominal	-age, -al, -ance, -ant, -ence, -ent, -cy, -dom, -ful, -ing, -ism, -ship
Verbal	-ate, -en, -ify, -ize
Adjectival	-able, -al, -ful, -ic, -ing, -ive
Adverbial	-ly, -wise

(Plag 2018, 109-124)

Table 2, Suffixes

Prefixes	
Quantifying	uni-, bi-, multi-, poly-, semi-, omni-, micro-, hyper-
Locative	circum-, counter-, epi-, inter-, intra-, retro-, trans-
Temporal	ante-, pre-, fore-, post-, neo-
Negative	a-, de-, dis-, in-, non-, un-
+ other, non-categorizable	mal-, mis-, pseudo-, co-, vice-,

(Plag 2018, 109-124)

Table 3, Prefixes

When it comes to infixation in the English language, it is an extremely rare and restricted phenomenon. It often occurs by inserting expletives into the middle of a word to form an emotionally strong expression (Plag 2018, 127). To list some examples:

- (a) You are *abso-freaking-lutely* right.
- (b) That is *fan-fucking-tastic* mate.

1.4.2.2 Conversion

Conversion, sometimes also called zero-derivation, is a process of word-formation that shares similarities with affixation as it creates new words from already existing ones. However, when a new word is created, the form of the word remains the same and often is achieved by simply changing the word class. There are several types of conversion depending on the word-class shift (Plag 2018, 135):

- (1) noun to verb
- (2) verb to noun
- (3) adjective to verb
- (4) adjective to noun

Conversion is a frequent occurrence in the English language and the videogame medium is no different. You can find numerous examples of conversion to suit the need for description of events and actions reflecting what is happening in the videogame to capture the need of the communicators. To list some examples of ordinary words converting to change not only the word form but often also their meaning:

Noun to verb	
blast	to blast
rush	to rush
headshot	to headshot

Verb to noun	
to buff	a buff
to cheese	a cheese
to smurf	a smurf

Adjective to verb	
main (character)	to main
multiplayer (game)	to multiplayer
travel (backpack)	to travel

Adjective to noun	
meta (class)	a meta
platform (level)	a platform
vanilla (game)	a vanilla

Tables 4-7, Conversion

For example, regarding the word conversion of the noun *cheese*, which is described in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as ‘a food consisting of the coagulated, compressed, and usually ripened curd of milk separated from the whey’ can be used as a verb *to cheese*. In the videogame context, it would be understood as something along the lines of ‘to beat someone else or a part of the game through unconventional, borderline shady or underhand tactics’ and is generally frowned upon by other players.

‘I mean that guy completely cheesed his way to victory, what a boring way to win. He should be disqualified if you ask me.’

Cheese can also, in this case, convert to an adjective and be used as a collocation to describe the abovementioned tactics, e.g., *cheese tactic* or *cheese strategy*.

1.4.2.3 Compounding

Loosely speaking, compounding is the process of combining two or more words to create a new word. It is also considered one of the most productive word-formation processes in English. Aronoff (2012, 47) defines compounding as the following:

[...] compounding is a special type of derivation, since it involves the creation of one lexeme from two or more other lexemes [...]

Plag (2018, 170) also recognizes compounds as the combination of “two or more elements, with elements being words.” Both definitions recognize that compounds can be created from more than two words and therefore sometimes, identifying them is where the problem arises. Aronoff (2012, 39) further comments the following:

[...] orthography cannot always be relied upon as a diagnostic. Deer tick is also a compound, but it is generally written as two words [...]

Thus, determining if a multi-word structure is a compound, cannot be determined purely from its orthographic form. Looking at the word *videogame* which is undoubtedly a compound consisting of two words *video* and *game*, it can also appear as *video game* or *video-game* and none of these forms would be considered incorrect. Thus, most compounds are usually dissected into **modifier-head structures**. The head is considered the most important unit of the lexical structure, while the other added words are the modifiers. In the English language, the head of the compound always occurs on the right side of the structure, a phenomenon called the right-hand rule (Plag 2018, 173-174). Aronoff further categorizes compounds into endocentric and exocentric with endocentric compounds having a head and exocentric not having a clear head (2012, 114). The following are examples of how videogame-related compounds may look:

- (a) main tank
- (b) glass canon
- (c) killsteal
- (d) itemlevel
- (e) endgame
- (f) cutscene
- (g) smurf account
- (h) massively multiplayer online role-playing game

As can be seen, some of the compounds are easily recognizable and their meaning can be deduced from the words combined, while others cannot. Literal compounds such as *killsteal* loosely mean ‘to score a finishing blow on an enemy that another player put more effort into and without their consent, for the purpose of earning the reward, thus stealing it’. While others, such as *smurf account*, cannot be deduced purely from the words combining. *Smurf* (also frequently used as the verb *smurfing* and *to smurf*) in the videogame context loosely means the following: “a highly-skilled player creates a secondary account as a disguise to play against less proficient opponents” (Paez 2021), usually to beat them easily and is usually frowned upon just like abovementioned *cheese*.

1.4.2.4 Abbreviations and acronyms

When it comes to abbreviations and acronyms and videogame discourse, it is perhaps one of the most, if not the most, interesting and content-rich among the word-formation processes. As will be discussed in the subsequent chapter, abbreviations, acronyms, and reductions lead to the creation of a considerable amount of gaming-specific lexis. Because language is the single best way to relay information, it often transforms to suit the need of its communicators and as has been established before, videogame players often require relaying information quickly and as condensed as possible to make typing it on a keyboard efficient. Thus, enormous numbers of abbreviations, acronyms, and clippings are born. Often, it goes so far that the language becomes unintelligible even to the players themselves unless one is extremely familiar with the gaming jargon of said game.

Abbreviation, described by Plag (2018, 160) as the “amalgamation of different parts of different words” is the term that describes the general process of shortening or contracting a word or phrase (e.g. *res* for resurrection, *pro* for professional). Acronyms are a more specific type of abbreviations and Aronoff (2012, 120) defines them followingly:

Acronyms are formed by taking the initial letters of a string of words and combining them to form a new one.

By his definition, acronyms are the result of losing lexical material, not adding it like the process of affixation does (which in general is true for abbreviating, not just acronyms). For example, the title of the game *World of Warcraft* is usually referred to only as *WoW*, which is an abbreviation of a multi-word term and the same goes for many videogames e.g. *League of Legends* is referred to as *LoL*, *Path of Exile* as *PoE*, etc. Acronyms can also be often further differentiated into **initialisms** which are pronounced letter by letter and not as a singular word (e.g. FBI). **Clipping** should also be mentioned, which is the process where only a part of a word is kept, and the rest is omitted (e.g. *ad* in advertisement, *strat* in strategy, etc.). The following table lists several examples found in the videogame discourse:

Clippings	Initialisms	Acronyms
pro - professional	FF - forfeit	MOBA – multiplayer online battle arena
aggro - aggravation	PvP – player versus player	OOM – out of mana
dung - dungeon	PvE – player versus environment	PUG – pick-up group
ammo - ammunition	TP - teleport	LAN- local area network
lock- warlock	CBA – cannot be arsed	HOAG – herald of agony
hunt- hunter	DPS – damage per second	DoT- damage over time

Table 8, Abbreviations

As can be seen, the lexical specificity of individual abbreviations varies from word to word. While clippings such as *pro* might be more understandable to most, more specific ones such as *lock* and *hunt* might be less obvious as they are mostly specific to the *Warcraft* franchise. On the other hand, initialism and acronyms might be less intuitive if not outright unrecognizable to those unfamiliar with videogame linguistic practices. They also vary in specificity. Words such as *PVP*, *PVE*, and *DPS* are shared among many videogame genres and videogames themselves and ones such as *HOAG* are specific to a singular videogame (in this case the action role-playing game *Path of Exile*).

To demonstrate the extremes abbreviating can reach in videogames the following is a screenshot from the MMORPG *Final Fantasy XIV* published by Square Enix.



Figure 3, *FFXIV* Abbreviations

Regarding the screen capture of **Figure 3**, it is safe to assume that people unfamiliar with the videogame would be confused even by the accompanying multimodal aspects of the screenshot (e.g. what do the icons mean, implications of the interactive highlighted buttons such as Join Party, the purple “face” icon, etc.) which would be naturally understood by most of the players. When it comes to the text itself, however, which was typed out by the “leader” of the party to overcome a boss “encounter” designed to be beaten through the cooperation of eight different players, even many of the players themselves would be confused, unless they already are familiar with the strategy and design of said “encounter”. In essence, because the text box is limited in characters a message can contain, players must resort to the extreme economy of language. Now to the text itself:

(Even DPS Flex) D.Frost(ccw)/LR: T=N H=E DPS 1/2=W DPS 3/4=S; KB Mir:
W.Grp=Green E.Grp=Red; D.Song: T/H Match 1234 DPS ccw

With the abbreviations written out it would be the following:

(Even Damage Per Second Flex) Diamond Frost (counterclockwise)/Light's Rampant: Tanks North, Healers East, DPS 1/2 = West DPS 3/4 = South Knockback Mirror West group = Green East Group = red; Dragonsong: Tanks and Heals Match, 1234 DPS counterclockwise

While still confusing without proper context, it explains the strategy the leader is trying to employ and other players familiar with the encounter would understand even through all the clippings, abbreviations, acronyms, and highly specific lexemes. It should be noted that a game can contain dozens of similar encounters all with its own specific lexis. Abbreviations will be further explored and exemplified in the practical part.

2 PRACTICAL PART

2.1 Introduction to the practical part

The lexicon used for the following analysis has been designed from various online videogame websites, fora, discussions, other research, and publications mixed with my own experience, notes and screen captures as well as the input of other videogame players. These open class language items will then be analyzed in detail with regards to what has been established in the first, theoretical part. They will be looked at from the lexicological and terminological standpoint, their etymology will be explored as well as the word-formation processes behind the creation of such items. Accompanying data necessary to explore the concept behind a term will be a mixture of information stemming from various dictionaries (e.g. Merriam-Webster, Oxford, Cambridge as well as online dictionaries dealing with internet slang due to the nature of lexis that will be explored) as well as various biggest contemporary English corpora (mainly COCA and iWeb) and from the context provided. As a part of the terms, the phenomena such as economy of language, abbreviating, and compounding will be elaborated upon in greater detail and many more examples will be provided and explored.

What has to be kept in mind is that these words used in the context of videogames often have more general meanings used in everyday English, thus the data from corpora have to be examined carefully to separate the information associated with videogames from general use. Furthermore, the usage of some of these words is so niche, that the data from corpora outright cannot be used (e.g. the methodology upon which corpuses such as COCA are built; some of the terms and abbreviations that will be discussed do not have enough appearances in these corpora and therefore they will not be accompanied by such data).

Each videogame term will include necessary context to explain it, how it is used in full sentences, how the word class can shift and how it collocates with other words.

It also has to be noted that to capture and create a glossary of every videogame term ever used would be certainly impossible due to the sheer number of new lexical items that exist and are created with each passing day. Instead, the aim will be to contextualize and

familiarize some of the most widely used videogame terms of now and through them explore the concepts and logic behind the formation of such lexical items. Therefore, the research leans more onto the qualitative side rather than quantitative. The individual terms will be placed into their respective categories, starting with the preliminary exploration of the word *videogame*. From there, a conclusion will be drawn that will summarize the findings and peculiarities of videogame terms and language.

2.2 Videogames and their genres

To start, the word *videogame* will be explored as well as the naming convention of the categories (i.e., genres) that videogames are usually divided into. Into which category a videogame is placed usually depends on the gameplay characteristics and mechanics (e.g., camera style, story, and medium) as well as the setting the game takes place in. In particular, the genres of *role-playing*, *shooter*, and *strategy* games will be delved into in detail (as from these a considerable number of sub-genres branch out) while other notable genres will be listed and the naming convention behind them pointed out.

2.2.1 Videogame

Videogame (noun)	
Definition	an electronic game in which players control images on a video screen. (https://www.merriam-webster.com)
Translation	“videohra”

Origin	a compound of two nouns, <i>video</i> (c. 1935) and <i>game</i> (c. 1200), <i>videogame</i> as a word only appeared in the 1970s (Smith 2015) (https://www.etymonline.com)
Usage in context	<p>(a) <i>Playing videogames is not unlike watching the TV or reading a book. A time spent enjoyed is time spent well.</i></p> <p>(b) <i>Unfortunately, that videogame did not sell well so we might not get a sequel.</i></p>

Section	ALL	BLOG	WEB	TV/M	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD
Frequency	553	163	113	17	34	28	151	17	30
Words (M)	993	128.6	124.3	128.1	126.1	118.3	126.1	121.7	119.8
Per MIL	0.56	1.27	0.91	0.13	0.27	0.24	1.20	0.14	0.25

Section	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-19
Frequency	28	24	39	79	56	51
Words (M)	139.1	147.8	146.6	144.9	145.3	144.7
Per MIL	0.20	0.16	0.27	0.55	0.39	0.35

Table 9-10, Stylistic and time tendency of *videogame*

As the word *videogame* (also encountered in forms such as *video game* and *video-game*) has become a regular part of the general language, the above data from COCA can be cited without any issues. As has been mentioned before, the word *videogame* originated in the 1970s from newspaper articles and ads and the concept of videogames emerged in the 1950s as laboratory projects and university experiments. The word itself, from a morphological perspective, is a compound consisting of two elements, *video*, and *game*. With the subsequent spread of computers into households, videogames became more and more popular. Looking at the time tendency in **Table 10** the use of the word has increased as well. As can be seen, videogames are used in all kinds of discourse formats, be it blogs, webs, news, reviews, or magazines. In particular, the word *videogame* often appears in the context of reviews, which can be argued is due to the nature of the medium that is not unlike TV shows and movies. There is a need to quantify the quality of media of similar character which reviews fulfill to indicate if a videogame, movie, book, or TV show is worth one's time. COHA also dates first mentions of *videogame* to the 1980s with 0.07 appearances per million words and afterward the frequency of the word usage rises to 0.32 by the 2000s.

Regarding the context in which the word *videogame* is used, it does not require much explanation unlike some of the following subsequent words will. As it is a part of the general language and a compound, no English speaker would have problems understanding its meaning. As a noun, it represents the concept of an electronic game but can also appear in the form of an adjective (e.g., *videogame industry*) and a verb (e.g., *to videogame*). The top collocates of the word *videogame* included in COCA are the following: (1) industry (2) playing, play (3) franchise (4) makers (5) ratings (6) online all of which are standard grammar structures and not surprising in any way.

2.2.2 Role-playing game / RPG

Role-playing game (adjective+ noun) / RPG (noun)	
Definition	<p>a game, often an online or computer game, in which players pretend to be imaginary characters who take part in adventures, especially in situations from fantasy literature.</p> <p>(https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com)</p>
Translation	“hra na hrdiny”, rolová hra
Origin	<p>RPG as an initialism of <i>role-playing game</i>; 1979</p> <p><i>role-play</i>, a combination of the noun <i>role</i> and verb <i>play</i>; 1961</p> <p>(https://www.etymonline.com)</p>
Usage in context	<p>(a) <i>Disco Elysium is just one of 20 expertly reviewed PC role-playing games. If you've ever wanted to slay dragons, save the universe, or fulfill an ancient prophecy, this is the place to start.</i> (Wilson 2021)</p> <p>(b) <i>Sony released a video featuring fourteen minutes of gameplay of action RPG Horizon Forbidden West. It features looks at new creatures, combat abilities, and traversal methods.</i> (Tekaia 2021)</p>

Section	ALL	BLOG	WEB	TV/M	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD
Frequency	962	122	124	113	32	41	213	94	223
Words (M)	993	128.6	124.3	128.1	126.1	118.3	126.1	121.7	119.8
Per MIL	0.97	0.95	1.00	0.88	0.25	0.35	1.69	0.77	1.86

Section	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-19
Frequency	132	114	118	115	124	113
Words (M)	139.1	147.8	146.6	144.9	145.3	144.7
Per MIL	0.95	0.77	0.81	0.79	0.85	0.78

Table 11-12, Stylistic and time tendency of *role-playing*

Role-playing game or in its abbreviated form *RPG* is an interesting compound and videogame genre that gave birth to numerous other subgenres, which also makes it hard to define exactly what an *RPG* is. Firstly, the word itself, *role-playing game* consists of several parts. As it is a compound it can be dissected into the modifier-head structure. The head naturally being the rightmost part, in this case, the noun *game*, is being modified by the adjective *role-playing*. The adjective *role-playing* itself can be dissected into the noun *role* and verb *playing*, which makes the shift of the word class of the whole word interesting as the abbreviated form *RPG* is considered a noun. Various definitions usually describe what *RPGs* are differently, yet they do share several similar points. In *RPGs* the player usually (1) has the ability to improve his character/avatar by increasing his power through levels and/or items (2) the game has a combat system that gives the player choices of skills, spells and other powers (3) has an expansive storyline and a rich world upon which the game is built (4) the ability to influence the storyline/agency over what happens (5) and has several archetypes from which the player can choose (e.g. rogue, paladin, warrior, druid, etc.) ("What Is A Role-Playing Game (RPG)?" 2021).

As to the origins of the word, *RPGs* appeared in the 1970s in the form of fantasy wargames and tabletop games. In 1974 the first commercially available tabletop *RPG*

appeared, called *Dungeons & Dragons*, published by Gygax (*Dungeons & Dragons*, or *D&D* in short, still publish tabletops, modules, and boardgames to this day and license many videogame publishers such as Larian Studios to develop videogames in their established story settings, e.g. the title *Baldur's Gate 3*). In those games, the players usually assumed the “role” of a character and thus, *role-played* them. With the advances of home computing of the 1990s *RPGs* started assuming the electronic form of videogames. First titles such as *The Elder Scrolls*, *Dragonstomper*, *Ultima*, and *Wizardry* were created and published. As the years went by the popularity of *RPGs* grew and so did the number of subgenres, which had to be named to help players/customers choose what they want. This process is usually done by expanding the compound by another modifier which distinguishes a type of *RPG* from others. As such, these modifiers are some of the most common collocates of *RPG*. To list some of the most popular ones of today and widely recognized, with a short explanation and their usage in context pulled from various videogame discussion fora:

(1) ARPG

ARPG, an abbreviated form of *action role-playing game*. While regular *RPGs* usually focus on a party of heroes, the world, setting, and the narrative, ARPGs put focus on a singular character and the action aspects of a videogame such as combat and platforming.

*‘I like mindless **action** combined with **RPG** elements like skill trees. I like improving my builds and the endorphins released when finding unique drops.’*

(2) MMORPG

MMORPG, an abbreviated form of *massively multiplayer online role-playing game*. Again, the modifier works similarly as in ARPG, the focus of the game is on playing with many other players online, thus it is named *massive multiplayer online RPG*.

*‘I like the socialization aspect of **MMORPGs**. I don't necessarily want group content all the time, but I like seeing other people in the same world I'm in.’*

(3) TRPG

TRPG, an abbreviated form of *tactical role-playing game*. The *tactical* modifier in this case refers to the gameplay mechanics incorporated into the RPG-style games. They usually manifest in the form of turn-based combat, isometric movement grid and come at the cost of exploration and narrative.

*‘Final Fantasy Tactics is my favorite **tactical RPG**, and I think one of the main things that appealed to me was just the multitude of ways you could win a fight, if you play properly.’*

(4) JRPG

JRPG, an abbreviated form of *Japanese role-playing game*. Defining a JRPG is a tricky task as the definition is not set in stone. Semantically (and what most would expect by the name), it should be RPG games made in Japan, yet the matter is not that simple. For example, the videogame RPG series *Dark Souls* is developed by the Japanese company *FromSoftware*, yet its style and story setting are a mixture of medieval Europe and high fantasy and is branded and categorized as an ARPG and not JRPG. The Japanese adverbial, in this case, signifies several distinctive features that differ from other RPGs, in particular the aesthetics which differ by not always being realistic looking (e.g. 8-bit, cartoony, or anime style graphics), game mechanics, and the narrative, with the main player character usually not being customizable but set. JRPG as a genre might combine with other modifiers e.g. *Tactical JRPG*, *Action JRPG*, etc.

*‘I like action RPGs. I like turn-based RPGs. I like systems in the middle like FFXII, FFVIIR, and Xenoblade. It all depends on my mood. I think the healthiest thing for the **JRPG** genre is to have all kinds of systems.’*

(5) WRPg

WRPG, an abbreviated form of *western role-playing game*. There is also no unified consensus on what the modifier *western* entails as the mechanics and styles of videogames have grown vast over the years. The term WRPg usually does not explain the place of origin of a game but the aesthetics (which usually go for a realistic and gritty look), game mechanics, and the story and setting, which are usually rooted in western history, culture, and fantasy. While WRPg can combine with other subgenres (e.g. *action WRPg*, *tactical WRPg*) similarly to JRPGs, one would not encounter the modifier structure *Japanese Western RPG* or *Western Japanese RPG* as those two lie in direct opposition to each other.

*It's difficult to fully emphasize how immersive and impressive The Witcher 2 is. With their second game, CD Projekt has become the new champion of the **Western RPG** genre, blending a complex yet compelling story featuring truly impactful role-playing choices with a near-perfectly executed world.*

(6) CRPG

CRPG, abbreviated form of *computer role-playing game*. To define the nature of the adjectival modifier *computer*, one has to look at the history of RPGs in general. As has been mentioned, many of them originated from earlier pen-and-paper adventures and tabletops and CRPG is the genre used for their digital adaptations. They usually put focus heavily on storytelling and setting, the player does not control a singular character but a party of adventurers, and the combat usually functions as an adaptation of the original pen-and-paper rules. In a way, the *computer* modifier is a misnomer as CRPGs are not exclusive to only computers but also gaming consoles, phones, and other viable platforms.

*'Yes, this game has food management, which is a must in any truly old-school **cRPG**. Every action we take -- be it exploring, resting, or searching walls for secret doors - - eats up some food, so given my thorough approach to exploration we'll be running out of food pretty quickly.'*

(7) Sandbox RPG

Apart from adding another letter to the abbreviated form RPG, they can also be accompanied by an adjective that denotes either a gameplay, story, or setting element that forms a backbone and focus of the game. The modifier *Sandbox* describes a type of RPG, where freedom of creativity is crucial and where minimal rules and goals exist. It is a metaphor for a literal sandbox, where the player is given tools and the limit is creativity and physical properties of sand (in the case of videogames the possibilities offered to the player by the videogame itself).

*‘Rimworld is an amazing **sandbox** game that is part squad-based **RPG** part base building. No storyline. Brutal survivability difficulty. Everything is crafted and craftable. Stories kind of just happen on their own on its crazy how deep they can get.’*

(8) Open-World RPG

Similarly, to the adjective *sandbox*, the modifier *open world* or *open-world* denotes a fundamental part of a structure of a videogame. As sandbox promotes player creativity and freedom, *open-world* denotes a game where exploration and immersion are combined with RPG elements to create an immersive digital world. The non-abbreviated modifiers are usually used more freely, and multiple adjectives can combine to describe several features of an RPG (e.g. *story-driven*, *open-world ARPG*, etc.). As has been mentioned before, they exist primarily to categorize videogames and make it easier for players to choose what they are looking for.

*‘Kingdom Come: Deliverance is a story-driven, **open-world RPG** that immerses players in an epic adventure in the Holy Roman Empire. Set to avenge the death of the heroes’ parents, players take over the role of Henry, son of the local blacksmith.’*

2.2.3 Shooter

Shooter (noun)	
Definition	<p>“Shooters are videogames that focus on the actions of an avatar engaging in combat with a weapon against both code-driven NPC enemies or other avatars controlled by other players. Usually, this weapon is a firearm or some other long-range weapon“</p> <p>(“What Does Shooter Game Mean?” 2021)</p>
Translation	“střílečka”
Origin	<p>Old English <i>sceotere</i> "one who shoots," agent noun from shoot (v.);</p> <p>As a type of gun; 1812</p> <p>(https://www.etymonline.com)</p>
Usage in context	<p>(a) <i>First-person shooters are often more immersive gaming experiences, as the game you play unfolds from your perspective. (PCMag 2021)</i></p> <p>(b) <i>Overwatch did something different, revitalizing the team-based shooter genre by infusing it with Blizzard’s excellent world building, a diverse range of heroes with many backgrounds and ethnicities, and a colorful aesthetic that enticed a large spectrum of players. (Hume 2021)</i></p>

Including the stylistic and time tendency data from COCA would be more misleading than helpful due to the nature of the word. Merriam-Webster defines *shooter* as a noun followingly: one that shoots; something that is used in shooting; and a shot of hard liquor. The definitions are similar in Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries and none of them cite *shooter* as a videogame genre. The most often encountered collocations and clusters also fit the criteria of grammatical structures typical for earlier cited dictionary definitions. Thus, it can be concluded that *shooter* as a videogame genre with all its context is not yet a term readily understood and used in the general English language.

As to the word itself, *shooter*, earlier defined as a videogame genre that focuses on the combat of an avatar through the usage of firearms and other long-range weapons, is a noun transformed from the verb *to shoot*. Its structure used to name a videogame genre is not too dissimilar to the earlier *role-playing game*, as both describe the primary action the player is performing while playing the game; in the former case *shooting* (either avatars of other players or computer-controlled entities) and in the latter role-playing. As to the etymology of the word, it originates from the Old English word *scoetere* (“the one who shoots”) and the verb form *to shoot*, in Old English *scoetan* (to hurl missiles, cast; strike, hit, push; run, rush; send forth swiftly; wound with missiles) describing the act of shooting dates to the 1530s (<https://www.etymonline.com>). When examining the word entry in the iWeb corpus (a corpus containing texts from over 22 million English-speaking webpages, thus being more of a reflection of online communication) the number one noun collocate to *shooter* is *game*, number five is *multiplayer* (even though in the case of the structure *multiplayer shooter*, it would be considered an adjective) and number nine is *genre*. The number one adjective collocating with *shooter* is *first-person*, number three is *third-person*, number four *competitive*, and number five *tactical*. All of the aforementioned are collocations related to videogames thus it can be deduced that, at least in the medium of online communication and webpages, the term *shooter* denoting a videogame genre is widely known, accepted, and used.

Similarly to RPGs, the term *shooter* can be modified in numerous ways, and the rules surrounding it remain mostly similar. Since *shooter* is the result of affixation transforming

the verb *shoot* into the noun *shooter* by adding the suffix -er, it is most often modified by accompanying adjectival modifiers denoting either a gameplay or style element. It is usually done to distinguish one style of *shooter* from another and again, to make it easier for potential players to help them choose the type of game they are looking for. The commonly used and encountered modifiers will be listed and explored, together with their usage in context, similarly to the modifiers of RPGs. Most often, the primary division is the following:

(1) FPS

FPS, an abbreviated form of *first-person shooter*. As suggested by the adjectival collocations presented in the iWeb data, the most likely modifiers encountered are *first-person* and *third-person*. The modifier itself is a compound of two words, *first* and *person*. It refers to the primary graphical perspective the player has while controlling the avatar. It tries to immerse the player by giving him the point of view as if he were himself the character he controls and puts him into a three-dimensional world. The structure itself is most often encountered in its abbreviated form *FPS*. When it comes to the context of techspeak and videogames, the abbreviation can be also used for the expression *frames per second* which denotes how “smoothly” the medium appears on a screen (i.e., how many frames a video screen can render per second) and as a result, oftentimes conversations discuss ‘FPS in FPS games’ (*frames per second in first-person games*).

*‘Dusk is an indie **first-person shooter** that looks like it was pulled straight out of 1998. It is the perfect mashup of games like Quake, DOOM, and Blood.’*

(2) TPS

TPS, an abbreviated form of *third-person shooter*. Similarly to the structure *FPS*, it denotes the camera and point-of-view style a videogame chooses to employ as its primary element. In the case of *TPS*, the character is visible by the player and the perspective is a fixed distance behind and slightly above the player character. As with the terms JRPG and WRPG, the initialisms FPS and TPS lie in direct opposition of each other, and a game cannot

be both at the same time. Therefore, structures such as *third-person first-person shooter*, *first-person third-person shooter*, *third-person FPS*, or *first-person TPS* do not exist as they would be semantically and pragmatically incorrect.

*‘The Division 2 has some of the best and most satisfying **third-person shooting** and cover mechanics in any game I have played. However, do not go into it expecting a campaign or story. The gameplay loop involves shooting enemies in graphically beautiful locations, picking up loot, equipping the best possible gear, rinse and repeat.’*

As has been demonstrated, the modifiers *first/third person* are the most often used ones. If there is a videogame of the *shooter* genre it is most likely going to belong into either of those subgenres. Both structures can also be accompanied by additional modifiers for further classification. An FPS/TPS can be combined with *competitive*, *multiplayer*, *single-player*, *tactical*, *top-down*, *casual*, *fast-paced*, *realistic*, *futuristic*, *open-world*, *sandbox*, *immersive* as well as numerous others that usually further denote a gameplay mechanic, style, or a direction the developers want the game to go. *Shooters* also often combine with other videogame genres (such as the *role-playing* mechanics of RPGs) to form compounds such as *looter-shooter* (in which the player collects items – *loot* – to make himself stronger).

2.2.4 Strategy

Strategy (noun)	
Definition	“A strategy game or strategic game is a game in which the players' uncoerced, and often autonomous decision-making skills have a high significance in determining the outcome. Almost all strategy games

	<p>require internal decision tree style thinking, and typically very high situational awareness.”</p> <p>("What Does Strategy Game Mean?" 2021)</p>
Translation	<p>“strategie”, “strategická hra”</p>
Origin	<p>"Art of a general," from French <i>stratégie</i> (18c.) and directly from Greek <i>strategia</i> "office or command of a general," from <i>strategos</i> "general, commander of an army,"; 1810</p> <p>(https://www.etymonline.com)</p>
Usage in context	<p>(a) <i>Strategy games typically task you with managing all battle aspects, such as harvesting energy sources and building bases or troops. The StarCraft games are excellent examples.</i> (PCMAG 2021)</p> <p>(b) <i>You would find plenty of debate about which modern Civilization game was better, Civ 5 or Civ 6, but with the release of Gathering Storm expansion this sixth entry of the series is finally able to stand proud as a great strategy game worthy of note.</i> (PCgamesN 2021)</p>

Once again, including the COCA time and stylistic tendency data would be more misleading than helpful due to the broad meaning the word *strategy* has in the general English language. Merriam-Webster dictionary lists the following definition of the word strategy: “a

careful plan or a method; stratagem,” usually to achieve a goal. The definitions in other well-known dictionaries (Oxford and Cambridge) are similar. None of them, again, list *strategy* as a videogame genre but the definitions they provide embody the idea behind strategy games. The core concept is to engage the players through decision-making of various nature (either military, resource, policy, or any kind of management) and force them to adapt and employ “plans and stratagems towards a goal”.

In the medium of online communication (illustrated by data from the corpus iWeb), the most numerous collocates, unlike the word *shooter*, are not of videogame nature. The top five noun collocates include *marketing*, *management*, *development*, *investment*, and *growth* while the top adjectival collocates include *effective*, *content*, *digital*, *successful*, and *overall*. These cannot be described as belonging to the discourse of videogames. The only collocates typical for videogames are listed as number seventeen, *real-time*, and twenty-seventh *turn-based*.

As to the etymology of *strategy* and origins of *strategy games*, the word *strategy*, an adjective that can also be used as a noun, originates from the French word *stratégie* and the Greek *strategia* meaning “office or command of a general” (<https://www.etymonline.com>). The term itself is derived indirectly from the Classic and Byzantine, c. 330 A.D. (“The Origin Of Strategy“ 2021). The origin of the word is therefore directly tied to the discourse of military and war. As to *strategy games* themselves, they originate from board games, which can be dated as far back as five thousand years with games such as Senet or Patolli (Mancini 2016). Even chess, one of the oldest, most popular, modern competitive strategy games, dates back to sixteenth century (CHESS.com 2021). Strategy videogames are thus just a natural development of the genre that came about with the invention of computers and their subsequent spread into our homes.

Similarly to the previous genres, *strategy* videogames get divided into subgenres that capture the core concepts of the game. Among the most popular are:

(1) RTS

RTS, abbreviated form of *real-time strategy*. The adjectival modifier *real-time* in this case takes on the descriptive form of the flow of the videogame and implies that the game

happens in *real-time*, therefore with no pauses or interruptions of any kind. It emphasizes a higher pace of the game and immediate reactions of the player. Commonly used vocabulary appearing in *RTS* games include abbreviations such as *APM* (*actions per minute*), describing how many actions a player can do per minute which is a considerable factor of their skill level at the game.

*‘Try the new Age of Empires 2 Definitive Edition, I have not played it, but it is the most recently released and probably the most famous **RTS**. Total Annihilation, Command and Conquer (various titles) and Supreme Commander: Forged Alliance all still have active playing communities. ‘*

(2) TBS

TBS, abbreviated form of *turn-based strategy*. As the adjectival modifier *turn-based* implies, in such games the players take turns to usually perform a limited set of actions. As such, the modifier *turn-based* again lies in direct opposition to *real-time*, therefore a game cannot be both at the same time. Structures such as *turn-based RTS*, *turn-based real-time strategy*, *real-time TBS*, and *real-time turn-based strategy* are pragmatically and semantically incorrect. *Turn-based strategies* are comparable to standard non-video game games, such as chess, checkers, and many other board games. *TBS* can and often does combine with other subgenres of videogames as it is often used to describe solely the combat system a game chooses to utilize and therefore, structures such as *turn-based RPG* are not atypical.

*‘I have not played too much of it just yet, but Octopath Traveler is a pretty sweet **turn-based** strategy game. I kind of skipped it on the Switch but ended up buying it during a Steam sale.’*

In the case of *RTS* and *TBS* the *strategy* part can be replaced by *tactics* creating structures such as *real-time tactics* (*RTT*) and *turn-based tactics* (*TBT*). When *strategy* is replaced by *tactics* it implies that the game puts less emphasis on resource management and greater importance on an individual unit (or a group of units) and smaller-scale conflicts

and/or skirmishes. As in the general English language, the word *strategy* implies long-term goals and plans on a bigger scale and wider time frame. On the other hand, the word *tactic* usually implies focus on smaller steps, how to achieve them, and a tighter time frame. Therefore, these words are a direct reflection of the mechanics of the game (i.e., scale, time, and size).

(3) MOBA

MOBA, an abbreviated form of *multiplayer online battle arena*. While neither the abbreviation nor the full written name contains the term *strategy*, MOBAs are considered their subgenre. To break down the abbreviation, the leftmost modifier *multiplayer* implies that the game includes several players (usually between five and ten) therefore *multi* and *player*. *Online* implies that the players connect using the internet, *battle* implies the concept and idea of the game; fighting, combat, and lastly *arena*, described in Merriam-Webster dictionary as “an area in a Roman amphitheater for gladiatorial combats” implies a closed space where the *multiple* players playing *online*, *battle* each other or together. They are considered a *strategy* because each player controlling a singular character can choose to focus on different objectives on the map, can customize their character differently, and has to work with other teammates to employ a strategy to win.

‘MOBAs are harder to learn than any other game unless you have somebody teaching you, and even then, it is overwhelming. Last-hitting is weird and not especially intuitive. Each character often has different damage values and attack animations, so last hitting changes dramatically from hero to hero.’

2.2.5 Other noteworthy genres

In the previous sub-chapters, the most notable genres have been explored in greater detail, predominantly because together they account for a considerable share of the videogame industry, and from them, numerous additional sub-genres have emerged, and their

number continues to grow as the industry gets more and more creative. However, it is important to at least capture a list of other, arguably less numerous and represented videogame genres, yet important nonetheless to establish a pattern of their naming conventions and semantics behind their terminology. Afterward, the analysis will shift from what could be described as the “discourse about videogames” to the discourse of communication “in games themselves” (in the form of videogame terms).

First, let us start with a rough list of the other notable genres:

1. Adventure games
2. Arcade games
3. Card games
4. Fighting games
5. Horror games
6. Incremental games
7. Metroidvania games
8. Party games
9. Platformer games
10. Puzzle games
11. Racing games
12. Roguelike games
13. Simulation games
14. Sports games
15. Stealth games
16. Survival games

As can be seen at first glance, all these structures, presented as they are generally referred to, are compounds and therefore obey the right-hand rule of the English language. The head (being the rightmost word) is always *game* or *games*. The modifiers, all of them being adjectives in the full structure (as well as some of the most popular collocates of the word *game*), describe either a **(a) core concept of the game**, **(b) the primary action the player will be performing in the game** or **(c) any kind of indicator that will tell the player**

(and potential buyer of videogame products) **what to expect**. This has already been hinted at in all the subgenres of RPGs, strategies, and shooters that have been examined and the pattern solidified itself upon examining the list of the sixteen less notable genres. When omitting the head *games*, we end up with either a verb, noun, or adjective describing one of the aforementioned points. The specificity and comprehensibility of genres and subgenres also vary. Genres such as *racing games*, *sports games*, *card games*, *puzzle games*, and *fighting games* are self-explanatory and immediately understandable to users of the general English language, while others, such as *incremental games* and *arcade games*, can have a different meaning than the initial connotation these lexemes might evoke. To understand some genres such as *Metroidvania games* and *roguelike games* the reader would need to have a certain amount of knowledge about videogame history as these terms are derived directly from games that were the first representatives of these respective genres (*Metroidvania* is a linguistic blend of two original videogame series of similar style published in 1986, *Metroid* and *Castlevania* and *roguelike* is used to denote games embracing the core concepts of the 1980 game *Rogue*, which are procedurally generated dungeons, permanent death of the player character and grid-based movement).

2.3 Videogame terms

As the previous chapters of the practical part dealt with the word videogame and their respective genres and naming conventions, which could be described as the discourse “about videogames” the focus will now shift to the discourse of videogames themselves. Lexemes and terms that frequently see use will be presented, dissected and explored similarly to the genres. As written in the introduction to the practical part, these terms will be examined from the terminological and lexical standpoint, their etymology will be explored (whenever possible) as well as the word-formation processes behind the creation of such items. The terms chosen are not typical for just a singular genre but rather diversified.

2.3.1 Aggro

Aggro (noun)	
Definition	<p>“The abbreviation AGGRO is used in general speech and particularly in gaming circles with the meaning "Aggravation, Aggression, Trouble". AGGRO is now more commonly used in gaming circles, to refer attacks on a player by hostile NPCs (Non-Player Characters).”</p> <p>("AGGRO What Does AGGRO Mean?" 2021)</p>
Translation	“agrese,” “agro”
Origin	<p>originally British underworld and juvenile delinquent slang; 1969 short for aggravation in a colloquial sense "trouble or disturbance provoked by aggressive behavior or harassment"; 1939</p> <p>(https://www.etymonline.com)</p>
Usage in context	<p>(a) Aggressive decks are the most straightforward in <i>Hearthstone</i>, they want to kill the opponent as fast as possible. Aggro decks play a low mana curve with plenty of cheap, efficient minions to flood the board and pressure the opponent. (Fanorootbeer 2021)</p> <p>(b) Holding aggro is done by (usually) one person (the tank) who uses his abilities to make the enemy attack</p>

	<p><i>him and no one else. For hunters and warlocks, the pet usually operates as a tank in solo play. ("Aggro" 2021)</i></p>
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What the term *aggro* describes in the discourse of videogames depends on the videogame genre it is used in. It is a clipping derived from the English slang word *aggravation* originating from the 1930s. In the RPG genre *aggro* describes the condition of a particular *mob* (e.g., non-player-controlled character) and who he chooses to attack. Therefore, if a mob is “aggroed” by player one it will attack him. Usually, *aggro* is a gameplay mechanic that forces several players or characters to work together through communication and teamplay to force all the mobs to *aggro* onto a specific, selected player – the one dubbed *tank* of the group. As has been elaborated upon, one of the core concepts of RPG games is the player’s agency over how he chooses to customize his character and one of the most basic concepts is the concept of a *tank* – a character designed to take a beating and protect the rest of his party (alongside *tanks*, other character archetypes of RPGs include *healers* who are meant to mend the wounds of their party members and *damage dealers* whose primary job is to inflict damage to opponents).

In the context of other genres, such as card videogames or shooters, *aggro* is much closer to its dictionary definition. Merriam-Webster defines *aggro* as the following: “deliberately aggressive, provoking, or violent behavior,” which is true for those genres. Here, the term *aggro* refers to the playstyle the player is adapting and employing, being *aggressive* or *aggro* as a tactical choice to outplay an opponent. The most common collocates to *aggro* are (according to the iWeb corpus) *deck*, *mob*, *tank*, *control*, *generated*, and *player* which are all related to videogame discourse. *Aggro deck* is related to card videogames, meaning that a player constructs a deck of cards fitting the aggressive archetype to

overwhelm opponents, *mob*, *tank*, *generated* and *control* are all related to the aforementioned RPG meaning, and *player* could be related to all three, shooters, card games and RPGs. In the aggro table, the exemplar (a) is related to its meaning in card games and in (b), RPGs.

Aggro, a clipping of *aggravation*, when referred to as a noun, means a “resource” that the *tank* and the rest of the party manage, or aggression in general. As an adjective, it takes on the form of a descriptive modifier, signifying aggressiveness as a style or manner.

2.3.2 Buff

Buff (noun)	
Definition	<p>“A BUFF is an effect placed on a character that enhances their statistics or characteristics. BUFFs may be applied through gameplay, may be bought, or may be applied by game developers.”</p> <p>(“BUFF What Does BUFF Mean?” 2021)</p>
Translation	<p>“buff,” “baf”</p>
Origin	<p>kind of thick, soft leather, <i>buffe</i> leather "leather made of buffalo hide"; 1570s</p> <p>"well-built, hunky" (of physically fit persons) from buff (v.) "to polish, make attractive"; 1980s</p> <p>(https://www.etymonline.com)</p>

Usage in context	<p>(a) <i>Bufs are a powerful ally when going into a Raid, but they require a lot of coordination and patience, amongst members of multiple guilds, allowing a Faction to work together and stack as many bufs as possible. ("Classic Wow World Buff and Consumables Guide" 2021)</i></p> <p>(b) <i>Despite Valve's series of small bufs throughout 6.88 they still don't seem to have got it exactly right. There remains little reason to pick Visage over the plethora of other supports who are far more able in the early to mid-game. (Ring 2021)</i></p>
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The term *buff* primarily has two meanings depending on the context. In essence, it means an effect that improves a videogame character in any way. Where the contextual distinction appears is when talking either about a “**short-term**” *buff*, which is usually achieved through gameplay mechanic such as casting a *spell*, drinking a *potion*, or using a *scroll* among others, or a “**long-term**” *buff* which is used as a term when developers of a game themselves improve a character, item, weapon or any part of the game in any kind of way to make it stronger, usually for *balancing* purposes. What is interesting is that those two meanings are both called a *buff*, yet each meaning has a distinct, different antonym. When talking about a “short-term” *buff*, the direct antonym would be achieved through the process of affixation, particularly the prefix *de-*: *debuff* (an effect, again be it a spell, potion, scroll, or something similar, that has a temporal negative effect on a character). The antonym that stands in opposition to a “long-term” *buff* is called *nerf* (an act of developers to reduce the power of a particular character, item, weapon, or any part of the game in any way, again usually for the purpose of game *balance*).

As to the term *balance*, particularly *game balance*, it should be explained as it is interconnected with *buff*. *Game balance* in essence means the state of the game from a “fairness” perspective and a videogame (or a part of it, such as a character or a mechanic) can either be *balanced* or *unbalanced/imbalanced* (*balanced* implying that the game is “fair” and no part of it is too powerful or too weak whereas *unbalanced/imbalanced* implies that something is too strong or too weak). The concept is similar to its dictionary definition of stability exemplified by a scale, either the weight is distributed evenly (in the case of videogames the scales usually represent relative “power”) or unevenly and one side of the vertical axis will be above the other. When applied to videogames the concept gets a lot more complicated as many more variables enter the equation and thus, phrases such as “*This character/game is unbalancable*” are not uncommon. Therefore, *balance* is usually achieved by *buffing* and *nerfing* mechanics that disrupt it. The term *imbalanced* often appears in its clipped form, *imba*.

As to the etymology of the term *buff*, it is unclear how it came to be used in the videogame context. It can be argued that the core concept, which in essence is “improvement”, can be compared to the dictionary definition of “well-built” originating from the 1980s which describes a distantly similar idea. Merriam-Webster dictionary also cites the following definition of *buff*: “a device having a soft absorbent surface (as of cloth) by which polishing material is applied,” which again, alludes to an improvement of something.

Buff typically appears as a noun but can also be used as a verb *to buff someone or something* or an adjective, *a buffed character/spell*. The most numerous collocates appearing in the iWeb corpora include *history*, *damage*, *speed*, *attack*, *weapon*, *blue*, *red*, *huge*, *temporary*, *grant*, *cast*, and *stack*. While *history buff* is the number one collocate and unrelated to videogame context, all following collocates are of videogame nature. Some are more general such as *damage buff* and *speed buff* (which by the given definition would mean effect improving a character’s damage and speed) and shared across many games and genres, while others are particular to a singular videogame, in this case, *League of Legends* e.g., *blue buff* and *red buff*. The collocations such as *damage buff* could be understood by anyone through deduction, yet the implications of clusters such as *blue buff* (which increase the characters’ *mana* regeneration) are far more specific.

2.3.3 Camping

Camping (verb) / Camper (noun)	
Definition	<p>“A term used most frequently in first-person shooter video games, "camping" refers to the act of hiding or otherwise remaining in a hidden, obscured, or safe location in order to ambush an enemy or objective, or to avoid harm”</p> <p>("Urban Dictionary: Camping" 2021)</p>
Translation	“kempování”, “kempr”, “camper”
Origin	<p>"place where an army lodges temporarily," from French <i>camp</i>, in this sense from Italian <i>campo</i>, from Latin <i>campus</i> "open field, level space," especially "open space for military exercise"; 1520</p> <p>(https://www.etymonline.com)</p>
Usage in context	<p>(a) <i>Everyone hates campers. They sit in the corner and add nothing to the team, they wait around corners and succeed only in ruining everyone's fun. It's a no skill tactic that only poor players employ, right?</i> (Holman 2021)</p> <p>(b) <i>The mention of the word “camping” might bring to mind memories of peaceful summer days by a lake</i></p>

	<i>with friends and family for many, but it's enough to make most gamers see red. (Paez 2021)</i>
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The term *camping* is described in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as the following: a “place usually away from urban areas where tents or simple buildings (such as cabins) are erected for shelter or for temporary residence (as for laborers, prisoners, or vacationers).” It captures the same idea in the videogame discourse. Similarly, to the word *aggro*, *camping* is a strategy a player can choose to employ in order to outplay his opponent. The term refers to an act of a player who hides for an extended period of time in an obstructed, often strategically superior position, to shoot others and score points that way. *Camping* is a term most likely to appear in games of the shooter genre and it is where the term usage also originates from.

The word *camping*, in its broadest sense, originates from the French *camp* and Latin *campus* and was coined in the 1520s. Similarly to the word strategy and tactics, its history is tied to military discourse as it was originally used to describe an “open space for military exercise.” In Old English *camp* meant “contest, battle, fight, war” (<https://www.etymonline.com>). In the videogame discourse, its origin lies in the beginnings of online, multiplayer shooter games such as *Doom* and *Quake*, which was c. 1993 (Paez 2021). There it was first used to describe the tactic of sitting in an often strategically superior spot instead of the usual tactic, which was to run around the videogame arena (i.e., map) and shoot others. The term is used in the same way to this day.

Camping most commonly appears either as a verb or a noun. In its verb form, it describes the act of employing said strategy while the noun, *camper*, describes the person employing the strategy.

*‘That son of a bitch has been **camping** in that spot all game, I’ll take him out.’*
*‘Yeah, this guy is a known **camper**, I bet he will be at the same spot again.’*

The most common collocates of the word *camping* in the iWeb corpus do not relate to videogames. The most frequently appearing are *trip*, *area*, *tent*, *fishing*, *gear*, *spot*, *outdoor*, *wild*, and *overnight*. In the videogame context the word *camping* would collocate with mostly the same words such as *spot* (e.g., the place one camps in) and *area*. However, in videogames, the word *camping* and *camper* carry negative connotations as the tactic is widely frowned upon by most players and considered “cowardly” and “unfun”. It often appears along with expletives and curses. The antonym to *camping* is *rushing*, which describes the opposite tactic where the player chooses to play as aggressively as possible and run after others instead of hiding.

2.3.4 Cheese

Cheese (noun)	
Definition	“to win (a battle round) by using a strategy that requires minimal skill and knowledge or that exploits a glitch or flaw in game design” ("Definition Of Cheese Dictionary.Com" 2021)
Translation	“cheese”, bez překladu

Origin	<p>curd of milk coagulated, separated from the whey, pressed and used as food, Old English <i>cyse</i>, from West Germanic <i>kasjus</i>; Unknown year; earliest references c. 14th century</p> <p>As a photographer's word to make subjects hold a smile; 1930</p> <p>"stop (what one is doing), run off," thieves' slang; 1812</p> <p>"the proper thing" (slang), from Urdu <i>chiz</i> "a thing," from Persian <i>chiz</i>, from Old Persian <i>ciš-ciy</i> meaning "something," picked up by British in India; 1818</p> <p>(https://www.etymonline.com)</p>
Usage in context	<p>(a) <i>However, there's one cheese that makes dealing with this supremely difficult fight rather easy. If you have Link stay to the left side of the screen and duck in the corner, the AI for Dark Link bugs out and doesn't know what else to do but repeatedly charge at you. From there, you can simply stab him until he dies.</i> (Galbreath 2021)</p> <p>(b) <i>I cheese whenever possible. Tactics? Strategy? No thanks. I'd rather hide behind a pillar and take potshots for half an hour than do things the "right way".</i> (Gray 2021)</p>

The term *cheese* or *cheesing* in essence means to win against someone else or overcome a part of the game through unconventional and shady methods ranging from exploiting an opponent's inexperience to glitching or abusing a flaw in the game's design. In

turn, similarly to *camping*, it embodies something unconventional, often unsportsmanlike (in the case of online multiplayer videogames), and therefore is frowned upon by a large number of videogame players. In turn, the word *cheese* carries a certain amount of negative connotations and often appears alongside expletives.

As to the general meaning of the word, *cheese* has numerous uses in the general English language. The Merriam-Webster dictionary lists the following: “a food consisting of the coagulated, compressed, and usually ripened curd of milk separated from the whey,” “something resembling cheese in shape or consistency” and “something cheap or shabby: cheesy material.” The third definition is probably the closest to its meaning in the medium of videogames: a *cheese strategy* would be a strategy that is cheap and shabby. *Cheese* can also appear as a verb, meaning “to put an end to something” in addition to its many slang uses.

The origin of the word *cheese* is disputed. Its noun form denoting a type of food made from milk originates from several words: Old English *cyse*, West Germanic *kasjus*, Latin *caseus*, and even has relations to Czech *kysati* (meaning “to turn sour”) and Sanskrit *kvathati*. Earliest mentions date back to 14th century. The adjectival form *cheesy*, meaning “cheap, inferior,” dates back to 1896 as a slang employed by American students (<https://www.etymonline.com>). As to the origin of *cheese* in the context of videogames, its earliest uses date back to the 1980s and 1990s where it was coined in the context of fighting games. Paez (2020) cites the following:

*‘One of the earliest online uses of the word was posted on virtual bulletin board Usenet in 1992. Richard John Rauser defined the term after another user asked why fans would call SF2’s M. Bison **cheesy**.’*

Even though the history of the term is rooted in fighting games, nowadays it is a universally employed and understood word, no matter the genre of the game.

When looking at the collocates that most often appear with the word *cheese* on iWeb, it becomes evident that its use in videogame context is still extremely niche and hardly a part of the general language. The top collocates being *cream*, *goat*, *meat*, *cottage*, *milk*, *grilled*, *parmesan*, *blue*, *shredded*, *fresh*, *melt*, *eat*, *sprinkle*, *top* and *soft* are all not in any way related

to the discussed meaning but rather cheese as a type of food. *Cheese* most often appears as a noun, adjective, or verb. In the exemplar (a) included in the *cheese* table, it is used as a noun whereas in (b) as a verb. The abovementioned citation of Paez includes an example of its use as an adjective.

2.3.5 Cooldown

Cooldown (noun)	
Definition	<p>“A cooldown refers to the amount of time a user must wait before repeating a recently completed action. Cooldowns are often used in video games for balancing purposes. Cooldowns help ensure that players cannot spam the same action repeatedly, which would be unfair to other players, and difficult to transmit over the Internet.”</p> <p>(“What Is Cooldown?” 2021)</p>
Translation	“cooldown”, bez překladu
Origin	<p>a compound consisting of two parts: cool and down</p> <p>Cool</p> <p>Old English <i>col</i> "not warm" (but usually not as severe as cold), "moderately cold, neither warm nor very cold," also, figuratively, of persons, "unperturbed, undemonstrative, not excited or heated by passions"; 14th century</p> <p>Slang use of cool for "fashionable"; 1933</p> <p>(https://www.etymonline.com)</p>

	<p>Down</p> <p>"in a descending direction, from a higher to a lower place, degree, or condition," late Old English shortened form of Old English <i>ofdune</i> "downwards"; 14th century</p> <p>Verb form, meaning "cause to go down"; 1560s</p> <p>(https://www.etymonline.com)</p>
Usage in context	<p>(a) <i>Cooldown reduction, a fundamental stat since basically the start of League of Legends, is going away with the start of Preseason 11. In its place is a new stat, Ability Haste, which similarly reduces the cooldown of your champion abilities. (Tyler 2021)</i></p> <p>(b) <i>The patch added several abilities to the global cooldown, frequently referred to as the GCD. But since then, the World of Warcraft community has been up in arms about how slow the game feels since the update went live. (Gillian 2021)</i></p>

The term *cooldown* has a vast use in the context of videogames. Merriam-Webster provides the following definition: "the act or an instance of allowing physiological activity to return to normal gradually after strenuous exercise by engaging in less strenuous exercise" which indicates a period of time where waiting is involved, or something takes a downturn. In videogame media, it refers to the amount of time a player has to wait in between actions which usually directly ties to the flow of the game. However, that is not the only use the term *cooldown* has. In many games, mainly of the RPG and strategy genres (particularly MOBAs), it is often used to brand very powerful skills and abilities that take a long time to recharge.

*‘Yeah, hunter has some of the most effective two-minute **cooldowns**, namely Trueshot and Wild Spirits, that is why it is popular.’*

In such cases, *cooldown* is used as a noun. It can also be used as an adjective, for example, to denote the best opportunity for players to use such powerful abilities.

*‘Because the boss takes extra damage at the beginning of the fight it is best to line up all of your abilities into this **cooldown window**.’*

It can also be used as a verb to indicate the action of waiting for said abilities to be used again. As to the etymology of the word, not much is to be said. The compound, consisting of two parts: *cool* and *down* directly correlates to the concept that is being described. The *cool* part, originating from the Old English *col*, in the context of videogames refers to the process of recharging or recuperating before an action can be taken again. The *down* part, originally meaning “in descending direction; to a lower place”, signifies that the time is going down and games usually have fixed timers for abilities (that can be either reduced or increased).

The most numerous collocates in the iWeb corpus are the following: *second, reduction, ability, skill, damage, minute, spell, long, low, short, global, reduce* and *reset*, which are all typical for videogame discourse. It can be therefore assumed that *cooldown* is not a commonly used term in the general English language (which for example *cheese* was), whereas, in the context of videogames, it is.

Cooldown is most often encountered in its abbreviated form, *CD*. Such is the case for many multi-word expressions and compounds that see frequent use in in-game communication. They get stripped down to the utmost minimum to make communication as quick as possible and convenient to type on a keyboard. The amount of such abbreviations appearing in videogames is astonishing and some most common examples should be listed to exemplify the economy of language.

AD	<i>attack damage</i>
AFK	<i>away from keyboard</i>
AoE	<i>area of effect</i>
AP	<i>ability power</i>
BM	<i>bad manners, beast master</i>
BR	<i>battle royale, battle resurrection</i>
BRB	<i>be right back</i>
CC	<i>crowd control</i>
CD	<i>cooldown</i>
DC	<i>disconnect</i>
DoT	<i>damage over time</i>
DPS	<i>damage per second</i>
F2P	<i>free to play</i>
FF	<i>forfeit, friendly-fire</i>
FFA	<i>free for all</i>
FOV	<i>field of view</i>
FTW	<i>for the win</i>
GG	<i>good game</i>
GTG	<i>got to go</i>
HoT	<i>heal over time</i>
HP	<i>health points</i>
HPS	<i>health per second</i>
INC	<i>incoming</i>
IRL	<i>in real-life</i>
KDA	<i>kill/death ratio</i>
L2P	<i>learn to play</i>
LFG	<i>looking for group</i>
LFM	<i>looking for more</i>
LVL	<i>level</i>

MMR	<i>matchmaking rating</i>
MP	<i>mana points, multiplayer</i>
NPC	<i>non-player character</i>
OP	<i>overpowered</i>
P2W	<i>pay to win</i>
PUG	<i>pick up group</i>
PVE	<i>player versus environment</i>
PvEvP	<i>player versus environment versus player</i>
PVP	<i>player versus player</i>
PvPvE	<i>player versus player versus environment</i>
QTE	<i>quick-time event</i>
RL	<i>raid leader</i>
TP	<i>teleport</i>
TTK	<i>time-to-kill</i>
WTB	<i>want to buy</i>
WTS	<i>want to sell</i>
WTT	<i>want to trade</i>
ZDPS	<i>zero damage per second</i>

Table 13, Common abbreviations

The economy of language employed in the provided examples is undeniable. Instead of typing full sentences such as: ‘*Even though this game is mainly player versus player you often encounter non-player characters, therefore I would rather brand it player versus player versus environment,*’ become much shorter: ‘*Even though this game is mainly PVP you often encounter NPCs, therefore I would rather brand it PVPVE.*’ Or in-game communication, where timing is often of utmost importance: ‘*Yo they have no mana, you should teleport and area of effect crowd control them*’ becomes ‘*Yo they have no MP, you should TP and AOE CC them*’ which saves the players a lot of time. The trend continues even when talking about

games, such as their genres as has been shown. Many of them do get shrunk down to their abbreviated form such as RPGs and their subgenres, FPS, TPS games, etc.

2.3.6 Glass Cannon

Glass cannon (adjective + noun)	
Definition	„Refers to a person, weapon, or vehicle which has a high output, but a low defense, life, durability, etc. “ (<i>"Urban Dictionary: Glass Cannon"</i> 2021)
Translation	“glass cannon”, bez překladu
Origin	<p>A compound consisting of two parts: glass and cannon</p> <p>Glass from Old English <i>glæs</i> "glass; a glass vessel," Proto-Germanic <i>glasam</i>, from the root <i>ghel-</i> meaning "to shine," with derivatives denoting bright colors or materials"; 13th century (https://www.etymonline.com)</p> <p>Cannon "artillery piece, mounted gun for throwing projectiles by force of gunpowder," from Anglo-French <i>canon</i>; c. 1400 (https://www.etymonline.com)</p>

Usage in context	<p>(a) <i>While this build is insanely strong for map clearing and can wipe out entire screens very quickly, you are a glass cannon with the potential for being the one shot. Not meant for those who want to boss kill, as you need to maintain flask charges.</i> (Brechler 2021)</p> <p>(b) <i>One of these classes is the Demon Hunter, which was last seen in 2012's Diablo 3. The theme of the Demon Hunter in Diablo Immortal will be much the same as in the previous title: The agile, ranged class combines dual-crossbows, traps, and shadow magic into a glass-cannon demon-slaying machine.</i> (Higgs 2021)</p>
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The compound *glass cannon*, consisting of an adjectival modifier *glass* and a noun *cannon*, is a niche term typical for videogame genres that allow for any kind of customization of a character or a party, as it is a descriptive phrase denoting how a specific character is built by a player (similar to the idea of a *tank* mentioned earlier) only this time, the character focuses solely on offensive capabilities strictly at the cost of defensive ones. Therefore, it is more likely to appear in the context of genres and games such as RPG, as one of their core concepts is character customization. It would be hard to guess whether the meaning could be deduced solely from the two words. Glass is usually used to evoke connotations of either transparency or fragility, and cannon of weaponry and firepower, and together they capture the idea behind the term very well in a metaphorical way i.e., *fragile firepower* or *weapon* (*weapon* referring to the character itself with *fragile* acting as a description). Outside of the videogame context, the term *glass cannon* is used in other kinds of games such as card games like *Magic: The Gathering* and board games, where the player gets a similar chance to customize his playstyle.

Interestingly, the term *glass cannon* is never abbreviated to *GC* even though it could easily be, just like many other videogame compounds are, e.g., *cooldown* to *CD*, *disconnect* to *DC*, *teleport* to *TP*, etc. The direct antonym to *glass cannon* would be *meat shield* which denotes the opposite of a strictly offensively build character – strictly defensive character.

The most frequent collocates in the iWeb are the following: *build*, *full*, *bit*, *tank*, *damage*, *character*, *wizard*, *definition*, and *damage*. Most of them are videogame-related and combine with *glass cannon* in different ways. It can take on the form of a noun (*full glass-cannon*) or an adjective (*glass-cannon build*).

2.3.7 Mana

Mana (noun)	
Definition	<p>MANA means Unit of Magical Power in an online gaming context. Used most often in the context of fantasy RPG (Role Playing Game), MANA (sometimes called MP) is a common term for a unit of magical power.</p> <p>("MANA What Does MANA Mean In Gaming?" 2021)</p>
Translation	“mana” bez překladu
Origin	<p>"power, authority, supernatural power," from Maori; 1843</p> <p>Old English borrowing from Late Latin <i>manna</i>, Greek <i>manna</i>, referring to “the substance miraculously supplied to the Children of Israel during their wandering in the Wilderness” in Exodus.</p>

	<p>Hebrew <i>mān</i>, referring to the “substance exuded by the tamarisk tree“ or “a gift.”</p> <p>meaning "spiritual nourishment"; 14th century</p> <p>(https://www.etymonline.com)</p>
Usage in context	<p>(a) <i>Spellcasters rely on mana. In World of Warcraft, mana is a magical energy possessed by druids, mages, paladins, priests, shamans, and warlocks, which is measured in points. Different spells cost different amounts of points. Much of the game mechanic revolves around managing and using mana wisely. (Golub 2014)</i></p> <p>(b) <i>League lead gameplay designer Mark “Scruffy” Yetter discussed the small update today. The mana components on a few items, like Sheen, are being removed to “open them up to new users.” To compensate, a number of champions who previously used those items will have their mana pools tweaked. (Stavropoulos 2020)</i></p>

The term *mana* is defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary followingly: “the power of the elemental forces of nature, embodied in an object or a person”. While the definition is similar in the context of videogames, it is not the same. When talking about *mana* in videogames, it is usually referred to and thought of as a resource that allows the player to cast *spells* or perform other feats. It is similar to the concept of *health points*, the resource

can either go up or down and when reaching zero it usually incurs a negative penalty (i.e., inability to cast spells).

The word *mana* had a rich etymological history before being adopted by the gaming jargon. *Mana*, originating from Maori and Polynesia, meaning “power, authority and supernatural” was adopted by English in 1843 (<https://www.etymonline.com>). Codrington, who published *The Melanesians* in 1891, commented the following, as Golub (2014) points out:

*„It is a power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural; but it shews itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses... All Melanesian religion consists, in fact, in getting this **Mana** for one’s self, or getting it used for one’s benefit.“* (1891, 118-119)

The original concept of the word implies that mana equals supernatural power, and the point was to harness it. The videogame concept of *mana* is also closely tied to the Hebrew word *mān*, and Late Latin and Greek *manna*. Both words tie to the biblical event of Exodus, where the Children of Israel are supplied a miraculous substance that nourished them, referred to as *manna*. In Hebrew, the word also extended its meaning to “a gift” and later on, “spiritual nourishment” (<https://www.etymonline.com>).

Examining the iWeb corpus, *mana* most often collocates with *cost*, *regen*, *health*, *costs*, *pool*, *damage*, *regeneration*, and *card*, which are all collocations typical for videogame discourse. As mana is a resource, you can either *regenerate mana*, *pool mana* or have *mana pool* and *mana regeneration*. The use of the word is rather flexible and is typically found in the discourse of RPG games. You can also cause *mana damage* and have *mana cost/s*. Typically it will be used as either a noun or an adjective. *Mana* as such is often also encountered together with *point* (mana, as a resource, can therefore be measured in *points*) and abbreviated to *MP* (just like *health*, which is measured in points as well, abbreviated *HP*).

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to contextualize, highlight and analyze the most frequently used terminology in videogames and the videogaming industry in general. The theoretical part presented the videogame discourse, its brief history, who the communicators are, how it combines with multimodality, and what computer-mediated communication is. It also presents the necessary linguistic theory of terminology, lexicology, and morphology upon which the second, theoretical, part is built. The theoretical part itself includes examples from the discourse of videogames as a slow introduction to the practical part. Concepts such as word-formation processes, the economy of language, and abbreviation were presented as well as the conclusion that videogame discourse is comparable to jargon.

The second, practical, part of the thesis dealt with some of the most common and key terms appearing in the discourse of videogames. The analysis was of qualitative nature, focused on selected terms and through them attempted to contextualize their usage and videogame language as a whole. The focus was on the etymology of the terms, word formation, translation equivalents in the Czech language, collocates, and most importantly, the context they can appear in.

The first half of the practical part was dedicated to the naming conventions in the videogame industry, while the second one to terms used in videogames themselves. It started with the analysis of the word videogame as well as the main videogame genres and subgenres. Upon examining them a few conclusions can be drawn. As videogames are a widespread and dominant commercial product, their naming is mostly motivated by convention and understandability. The terms that are used to name them denote either (a) core concept of the game (e.g., *open-world games* focus on openness, freedom and exploration) (b) the primary action the player will be performing in the game (e.g., in *shooter games* the players are expected to shoot) or (c) any kind of indicator that will tell the player what to expect (e.g., *metroidvania game* indicates that the game is built upon the concept of the original franchises *Metroid* and *Castlevania*). How readily understandable the term naming the genre or subgenre is, depends on the specificity. Broad genres such as *role-playing games* and *shooter games* could be understood by the general English language speakers, while their subgenres

such as *JRPG*, *WRPG*, *FPS*, and *TPS* would not. This phenomenon appears throughout the whole thesis. Any time the scope of the language or terms narrowed, so did their deducibility. Terms naming general concepts used in several genres and games, such as *cooldown*, are inferable, while more specific ones, such as *glass cannon* or *cheese* are not.

Through the terms presented in this analysis, a conclusion concerning the economy of language can be drawn as well. Due to the nature of the medium being digital and needing to be transmitted using a keyboard and often being limited in characters, as well as the fact that the speed of communication is often of utmost importance in videogames, the terms explored and presented tended to be clipped, abbreviated, shortened or in any kind of way be linguistically reduced. Examples can be found in all categories analyzed; genres, subgenres, in-game communication, and gaming terms.

To conclude, as the videogame industry and popularity grows, so does its influence on the language we speak. Because language is a very nuanced, complex tool and an extraordinarily flexible one, it changes in accordance with its variables. This thesis attempted to capture at least some of them. It also must be kept in mind that because the videogame lexis changes so rapidly, any research made can only hope to capture what the language looks like at a given point in time. New videogames, media, and technological advancements present new ways to communicate, and no one can say with certainty what the language spoken will sound and look like in the following decades.

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ABBREVIATIONS

e.g.	exempli gratia, “for example”
i.e.	id est, „that is“
etc.	et cetera, „and other similar things“
COCA	Corpus Of Contemporary American English
+ videogame abbreviations, explained in the thesis itself	

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