

**Gaming and Learning: Young Adults' Perceptions of Video Games as an English  
Language Learning Tool**

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in

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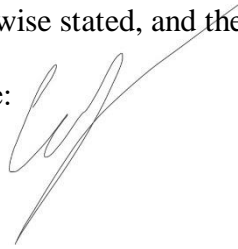


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## Ethical Approval



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Dear **Dastan Seitpakov**:

This letter now confirms that your research project titled **Gaming and Learning: Young adults' perceptions of video games as a language learning tool** has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University. You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely,

*Bridget Goodman*

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With love and tears at 6 AM

Dastan

## Abstract

### **Gaming and Learning: Young Adults' Perceptions of Video Games as a Language Learning Tool**

Video games have already become essential to everyday life, and millions worldwide play various video games. Globally, there are approximately 3.09 billion active video game players (Howarth, 2024). Many people encounter language exposure by playing various video games in a foreign language with others and alone. The purpose of this study is to examine young adults' experiences of learning the English language through video games. To grasp the experiences and perceptions of the participants, this study employed Gee's (2007) principles of Good Games for Good Learning, adapting them to capture linguistic aspects of video game processes and learning outcomes. This qualitative case study had 6 participants gathered from different parts of the world, united under one gaming community for gamers named Discord. The data obtained through semi-structured interviews revealed a positive perception of video games as a source for learning English. This study paid attention to the language choice of the participants and, through the participants' narratives, identified the potential benefits of games in learning aspects of reading, listening, speaking, and vocabulary. In addition, the findings suggest that communication processes that occur during gameplay have positive and negative effects on the learning process. Thus, this study identifies the possible limitations and advantages of video games as an English language learning tool. The study findings carry implications for the field of video games and language learning, pointing out this study's limitations and future research directions.

**Keywords:** video games, English language learning, young adults, experiences, perceptions, language choice

## Андатпа

### Ойындар және Оқыту: Жастардың Видео Ойындарды Тіл Үйрену Құралы ретінде Қабылдауы

Видео ойындар қазірдің өзінде күнделікті өмірдің ажырамас бөлігіне айналды және бүкіл әлем бойынша миллиондаған адамдар әртүрлі бейне ойындарды ойнайды. Дүние жүзінде белсенді видео ойындарды ойнайтын шамамен 3,09 миллиард адам бар (Howarth, 2024). Көптеген адамдар шет тілінде әртүрлі бейне ойындарды басқалармен және жалғыз ойнау арқылы тілдік әсерге тап болады. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты - видео ойындар арқылы жастардың ағылшын тілін үйрену тәжірибесін зерттеу.

Қатысушылардың тәжірибесі мен қабылдауын түсіну үшін бұл зерттеу Gee-дің (2007 ж.) Жақсы Оқуға Арналған Жақсы Ойындар принциптерін қолданды, оларды ойын процестері мен оқу нәтижелерінің лингвистикалық аспектілерін түсіруге бейімделді. Бұл жағдайлық зерттеуге Әлемнің түкпір-түкпірінен Discord деп аталатын ойыншыларға арналған бір ойын қауымдастығына біріктірілген 6 қатысушы жиналды. Жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбаттар арқылы алынған мәліметтер бейне ойындарды ағылшын тілін үйренудің қайнар көзі ретінде оң қабылдағанын көрсетті. Бұл зерттеу қатысушылардың тіл таңдауына назар аударды және қатысушылардың әңгімелері арқылы ойындардың оқу, тыңдау, сөйлеу және сөздік аспектілерін үйренудегі әлеуетті артықшылықтарын анықтады. Сонымен қатар, нәтижелер геймплей кезінде орын алатын қарым-қатынас процестерінің оқу процесіне оң және теріс әсер ететінін көрсетеді. Осылайша, бұл зерттеу ағылшын тілін оқыту құралы ретінде бейне ойындардың мүмкін болатын шектеулері мен артықшылықтарын анықтайды. Зерттеу нәтижелері осы зерттеудің шектеулері мен болашақ зерттеу бағыттарын көрсете отырып, бейне ойындар мен тіл үйрену саласына әсер етеді.

**Түйін сөздер:** бейне ойындар, ағылшын тілін үйрену, жас ересектер, тәжірибе, түйсіну,  
тіл таңдау

## Аннотация

### **Игры и обучение: восприятие видеоигр молодыми людьми как инструмента изучения языка**

Видеоигры уже стали неотъемлемой частью повседневной жизни, и миллионы людей по всему миру играют в различные видеоигры. В мире насчитывается около 3,09 миллиарда активных игроков в видеоигры (Howarth, 2024). Многие люди сталкиваются с языковыми трудностями, играя в различные видеоигры на иностранном языке с другими людьми или в одиночку. Цель данного исследования - изучить опыт молодых людей в изучении английского языка с помощью видеоигр. Чтобы понять опыт и восприятие участников, в этом исследовании использовались принципы Gee (2007) "Хорошие игры для хорошего обучения", адаптированные для учета лингвистических аспектов процессов видеоигр и результатов обучения. В этом качественном тематическом исследовании приняли участие 6 человек из разных уголков мира, объединенных в одно игровое сообщество для геймеров под названием Discord. Данные, полученные в ходе полуструктурированных интервью, показали положительное восприятие видеоигр как источника для изучения английского языка. В этом исследовании было уделено внимание выбору языка участниками и на основе рассказов участников были выявлены потенциальные преимущества игр в изучении таких аспектов, как чтение, аудирование, разговорная речь и словарный запас. Кроме того, полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что коммуникационные процессы, происходящие во время игры, оказывают положительное и отрицательное влияние на процесс обучения. Таким образом, данное исследование выявляет возможные ограничения и преимущества видеоигр как средства изучения английского языка. Результаты исследования имеют отношение к области видеоигр и изучения

языков, указывая на ограничения этого исследования и будущие направления исследований.

***Ключевые слова:*** видеоигры, изучение английского языка, молодые люди, опыт, восприятие, выбор языка

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background Information

The video game industry has become a juggernaut in global entertainment, with a projected value of \$268.8 billion by 2025 (Statista, 2023). This growth coincides with a surge in informal learning, where knowledge is acquired outside of formal education (Callanan et al., 2011). Yanev (2023) reports that over 3 billion people actively play games worldwide, with a significant portion being children and young adults (ESA, 2023). In the US alone, 75% of children under 18 and 65% of adults play games for at least an hour weekly (ESA, 2023). Interestingly, the ESA also found that 88% of gamers expand their social circles globally through gaming.

This combination of massive user engagement and rich storytelling makes video games a compelling tool for language learning. Games offer immersive audio-visual experiences that can enhance vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and reading skills. Broadly, video games can be categorized into two groups: serious games – educational games designed specifically for developing certain skills, and (2) commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) – games primarily intended for entertainment.

Given the significant time young people dedicate to video games, educators see an opportunity to transform this entertainment into an informal learning tool for language development. Research supports this potential, with studies demonstrating video games' effectiveness in improving listening skills (Anderson et al., 2008; Chen & Yang, 2013), vocabulary acquisition (Ashraf et al., 2014; Bakar & Nosratirad, 2013; Chen & Yang, 2013; Ryu, 2013), and motivation for language learning (Chik, 2012; Gee, 2005; Lai & Chen, 2021;

Yang et al., 2020). These findings support the view of scholars like Chik (2014), Gee (2005), and Knight et al. (2019) who see video games as a valuable tool for informal language learning.

### **Problem Statement**

Many young people in Kazakhstan and internationally spend most of their free time playing video games. While playing, they may be exposed to a foreign language and have online communication and vocabulary learning opportunities. Therefore, young adults can expand their linguistic repertoire and gain new relationships with native speakers of foreign languages. However, there is no scholarly evidence for using games for language learning. Previous research has mainly focused on ‘serious games’ created for educational purposes. Less is known about the effectiveness of using COTS games for language maintenance. There is a lack of research on the perceived benefits of video games for language learning and particular language aspects such as listening, speaking, and vocabulary development. Therefore, it is crucial to understand what COTS video game features promote language learning and the perceived benefits and effectiveness of video gaming in English language learning.

### **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

This qualitative study aims to investigate the perceptions and experiences of young adults using video games to learn the English language. The study also aims to explore the perceived benefits and effectiveness of using video games for language learning and English language maintenance and to identify the perceived impact of video games on young adults’ language development in listening, vocabulary, speaking, and reading.

The study aims to address the following research questions:

RQ1: Why do young adults choose to play games in the English language?

RQ2: What are the perceived benefits of using video games for language learning?

- a) What English language skills are developed by playing video games?
- b) What processes of video game play support English language learning?

RQ3: What are the perceived limitations of using video games for language learning?

### **Significance of the Study**

This research study may be critical in several ways. It has the potential to increase understanding of the nature of video games, its impact on language learning in Kazakhstan and internationally, and its benefits and drawbacks. This study could also lead to more effective use of informal language learning tools for learning purposes. The findings of this study could also inform educators and other stakeholders about the effectiveness of using video games for language learning. Furthermore, it can enable practitioners in educational institutions to increase their awareness of how learners use video games outside the classroom. The study's findings may also be helpful for the participants as they might provide information about their past experiences using video games as a form of entertainment and develop language skills and knowledge. The findings of this study might be helpful for various populations since video games have become a dominant part of society. Finally, this research may be informative for researchers who conduct research in informal learning tools as the study could provide evidence on how gaming can assist in language learning.

### **Outline of the Study**

This thesis consists of the following chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings, Discussion and Conclusion. The Introduction Chapter has presented the background of the study, its purpose, the statement of the problem, the research questions, and its significance. Chapter Two reviews the literature relevant to the study and explains the theoretical framework used in this study. Chapter Three presents detailed information about the research

methodology that guided the study, outlining its design, sampling strategy, data collection, and analysis procedures. Chapter Four delves into the main research findings of the study. Chapter Five discusses the main findings in relation to the previous research done on this topic. The last chapter concludes main research findings, addresses the limitations of the current study, and provides future directions for the research and recommendations to the stakeholders.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed background information about video games, the significance of this study, the problem statement, the study purpose, and the research questions. This chapter reviews the relevant literature on learning a language through video games. It consists of six sections. First, it introduces the definitions of the main concepts: gaming, informal learning. Next, it discusses a brief history of video games development and how it came to the current state. Then past research on COTS video games is presented. The impact of video games on language learning and concepts of motivation are presented afterwards. The chapter concludes by presenting Gee's (2007) framework that is used for describing games for learning. However, I reconsidered the interpretation of the framework and constructed a conceptual framework based on the principles to suit this study's aims which is intended to capture language learning outcomes and experiences. Thus, three components were chosen to analyze the data.

### **Definitions of the Main Concepts**

#### ***Informal Learning***

Informal learning is a broad and complex phenomenon that is defined in many ways. Ainsworth and Eaton (2010) characterized informal learning as "This type of learning is never organized. Rather than being guided by a rigid curriculum, it is often thought of as experiential learning" (p. 13). A later study by Scolari and Espinosa (2019) defined six Informal Learning Strategy (ILS) modalities: learning by doing, problem-solving, imitating, playing, evaluating, and teaching.

Acquiring language through informal learning occurs within a social setting where individuals engage in meaningful activities and access various tools and resources (Callanan et

al., 2011). For example, the authors stated that children are interested in learning language informally as they actively seek out names for objects and imitate language sounds. In other words, the first language is not purposefully taught to young children in a didactic manner. A socially collaborative setting is used for language learning; plenty of resources and meaningful activities support the process.

In contrast to the informal learning of children's first language, Christianson and Deshaies (2020) suggest that adults can compensate for less effective second language processes by integrating different sources of information during informal language learning more effectively than children. Adults studying a second language in casual settings possess significant cognitive abilities that can be effectively utilized in language acquisition tasks. These abilities include effective multimodal processing, explicit learning techniques, a developed working memory capacity, metalinguistic awareness that expands with exposure to additional languages, and a proficient command of at least one language. The authors assert that despite these advantages, adult language learners typically do not acquire their second language as quickly or proficiently as children.

### ***Video Games***

Esposito (2005) defines video games as “a game that we play thanks to an audio-visual apparatus, and that can be based on a story” (p. 2). Many video games have been launched in the digital games industry throughout the years, and these games may be played on a range of devices, including gaming consoles, laptops, desktop computers, tablets, and mobile phones. According to Sykes and Reinhardt (2013), video games are voluntary activities in which participants agree to adhere to rules to achieve a goal or experience a range of outcomes. Games can be internally satisfying and demand effort.

This study used a combination of definitions to understand the complexity of video game elements. Depending on the genre, video games may include rules and objectives and visual and aural elements that support the game's storylines and narratives.

## **The Development of Video Games**

Video games have progressed considerably since their introduction in the 1950s. The gaming industry has witnessed an impactful change over 70 years, attracting the worldwide attention of millions of people as it moved from basic arcade games to the immersive experience of virtual reality (McDriguez, 2023). Technological breakthroughs, innovation, creativity, and a passionate gaming community have fueled this development. The gaming industry has also undergone several stages, from its earliest versions of arcade video games to several platforms allowing users to play them.

### ***Before the Introduction of 3D***

The earliest video games, though simple, laid the groundwork for interactive entertainment. In 1958, William Higinbotham's "Tennis for Two" became a pioneer, displaying a basic tennis match on an oscilloscope (Ivory, 2015). A few years later came Steve Russell's "Spacewar!" (1962), a two-player space combat game. The 1970s saw the rise of arcade games, offering simple yet addictive experiences. Classic titles like Pac-Man, Pong, and Space Invaders became iconic representatives of this era.

### ***The Rise of 3D and Beyond***

The introduction of 3D graphics in the late 1980s and early 1990s revolutionized video games. Home consoles like the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), Sega Genesis, and Atari 2600 brought arcade experiences home. These platforms birthed legendary characters and franchises like Mario, Zelda, and Sonic the Hedgehog (Wikipedia contributors, 2023b).

PCs emerged as a powerful competitor in the 1990s (Wolf, 2012). With superior graphics, more complex gameplay, and diverse genres, PC games like "Doom," "Quake," and "Civilization" pushed the boundaries of the medium. Fierce competition between console manufacturers like Sony's PlayStation, Nintendo's systems, and Microsoft's Xbox defined the 1990s and 2000s. Each generation boasted improvements in connectivity, performance, and graphics. Titles like Super Mario 64, The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, Grand Theft Auto III, and Halo stand out from this era.

The 2000s ushered in a new era with mobile gaming on smartphones. Simple and accessible, mobile games exploded in popularity. Games like Angry Birds, Candy Crush Saga, and Pokémon GO showcased the potential of mobile gaming as a major entertainment platform.

Today, the video game industry boasts incredible diversity, encompassing various genres, platforms, and business models. Indie titles like "Celeste" and "Hollow Knight" offer unique experiences and fresh ideas, while AAA blockbusters like "Red Dead Redemption 2" and "God of War" push the boundaries of storytelling and graphic fidelity. Video games also expanded their boundaries thanks to the internet opportunities especially with genres like MMORPG, FPS (First-Person Shooter) games. The most prominent representatives of FPS genre are Overwatch, Team Fortress 2, Destiny 2, Valorant, CS GO (Counter Strike Global Offensive), and Call of Duty series (Wood, 2016; Yaden & Givens, 2024). Emerging technologies like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) promise to further transform how we interact with video games, and one of the AAA (a big-budget games from well-known publishers) video games in VR is counted to be Half-Life Alyx (Steinberg, 2007; Skarredghost, 2020).

The gaming business is also undergoing rapid change. The global video games market size of \$333 billion projected for 2023 indicates the tremendous growth and potential of the

industry (Statista, 2023). It is reported that the mobile gaming sector has the most significant revenue, with \$173 billion, among other sectors in the market. Therefore, the gaming industry impacts people, considering the share the gaming industry holds in today's economy. The gaming industry has grown into an immersive and progressive form of entertainment, replacing traditional television, which was considered the most popular form of entertainment.

### **Types of Games**

Serious and commercial games are both types of video games that serve different purposes. Serious games are designed to provide more than just entertainment (Bonnechère, 2017; Bruns, 2019; Hanes & Stone, 2017). They can be used for educational, rehabilitative, or training purposes. These games often contain cultural heritage, historical information, or specific content tailored to a particular pathology or group of patients.

Serious games go beyond mere entertainment in several ways. They allow learners to experience situations that are impossible in the real world for safety, cost, and time (Susi et al., 2007). They are described as mental contests, played with a computer by specific rules, that use entertainment to further government or corporate training, education, health, public policy, and strategic communication objectives. Serious games have positive impacts on the players' development of several different skills. They are used in various markets such as military, government, education, corporate, and healthcare. In the healthcare sector, serious games have diverse applications and stakeholders, including hospitals, clinics, private practice physicians, therapists, personal trainers, government, corporations, and individual consumers.

Video games not designed for educational purposes are COTS games. These games are readily accessible in the market as they were initially intended for entertainment. COTS games can be obtained without charge or purchase, and one can access them through different platforms

such as consoles, personal computers (PCs), smartphones, and various mobile devices. Notable examples of COTS games include *The Sims*, *Civilization*, and *Portal*, which have successfully earned recognition due to their remarkable potential for education beyond their popularity in non-academic domains (Becker, 2017; Engerman et al., 2017; Pallavicini et al., 2021).

Digital spaces known as Synthetic Immersive Environments (SIEs) employ the interactive gameplay dynamics of massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) to realize predetermined educational goals in simulated scenarios (Sykes, 2014). SIEs effectively integrate elements from social virtual worlds and objective-oriented gaming frameworks to tackle learning outcomes (Sykes, 2012).

Commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) games and synthetic immersive environments (SIEs) are the primary avenues for introducing video games into the exploration of a second language in the field of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) (Cornillie et al., 2012). Online games, for instance, offer a dynamic environment with voice and text chats, fostering interaction among players in the target language and providing them with a platform to practice various discourses and strategies (Zhang et al., 2017).

While significant research has been conducted on serious games, which are widely recognized as educational tools for knowledge and skill acquisition, there remains a pressing need for more extensive studies on commercialized games, often perceived as entertainment, in the context of language learning.

### **Past Research on COTS Games**

This section analyzes past research done on the benefits of COTS. The incorporation of the use of Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) games in the K-12 classrooms has drawn an attention in the recent past. This interest could also be attributed to another interest due to the

ability of games to capture students' attention and facilitate their learning. This paper aims at reviewing the extent of current literature on COTS games and their acceptability from teachers' point of view, advantages as mentioned by the veterans and possibility of incorporation of such games as a curriculum component.

Becker and Jacobsen (2005) conducted a study in Canada regarding COTS games and teachers' attitudes and their possibilities in K-12 classrooms. The findings revealed that 37% of teachers played video games approximately 5 hours per week. Moreover, 70% of participants used simulations, drills, practice, and games in class activities. However, teachers reported that the lack of time for integration into the curriculum, support for adequate supervision, and access to technology capable of running games were significant barriers.

Ritzhaupt and Gunter (2010) examined COTS games from participants in educational settings. They found that COTS games are beneficial for developing motor and cognitive skills, acquiring knowledge, and increasing memory capacity and creativity. Additionally, participants reported that COTS games encourage solving complex problems, boosting self-esteem and self-confidence, and transferring knowledge to real-world situations.

Spring (2014) states that some COTS games are suitable for teaching subjects such as history in formal classrooms. The author points out several games (Assassin's Creed franchise, Civilization, Crusader Kings II, LA Noire) that represent a deep narrative from a historical perspective.

Rusk and Ståhl (2022) found that callout competence in the multilingual game environment involves skills that can be transferred to educational settings, emphasizing collaborative and multilingual competencies. They identified four components of callout competence: giving information, precision, temporality, and alignment. Participants employed

callouts as a multilingual and collaborative practice in their in-game interactions, focusing on providing accurate and timely information about opponents' locations.

### **The Impact of Video Games on Learners' Language Development**

It is essential to consider that gamers do not always play games in their native language since games do not support all languages. Skoric et al. (2009) stated that English-language video games need players to effectively comprehend the language used in the gaming narrative to interact with the gaming environment; people who spend more time playing computer games on weekdays may have a more vital command of the English language. Chen and Yang (2013) found that Taiwanese learners of English believed they had to think in the target language to understand the video game's conversational language. Moreover, the study participants reported enjoyment and motivation during the experiment. Similarly, Chik (2014) believes that learning a second language (L2) through games could be possible if a gamer uses an L2 game and applies learning strategies. A later study by Ebrahimzadeh and Alavi (2017) states that video games often require players to communicate and collaborate with others. Communication allows students to practice their language skills in a real-world context, which can help them develop fluency and confidence in using the language.

Several studies point out that the continuous occurrence of unknown words throughout the gameplay can help learners memorize new vocabulary (Bakar & Nosratirad, 2013; Ryu, 2013). According to Ryu's (2013) research, language acquisition through gaming includes picking up new phrases or words while playing games and practicing sentences or discourse through conversations with peers who are native speakers or more fluent online. A later study by Ashraf et al. (2014) discovered that games could be an effective alternative to vocabulary learning. An earlier study showed that there was also a wide variety of opinions on *The Sims'*

potential as a language-learning tool. However, participants agreed that they learned new words and phrases and that simulation games, in general, could help with language learning (Ranalli, 2008).

## **Motivation**

Over the last few decades, language learning scholars have become increasingly interested in motivation. Dörnyei (2000) defines motivation as the choices we make and the effort we invest in specific activities. This aligns with the perspectives of motivation as an action driven by a goal (language learning) that triggers and sustains efforts in achieving that goal (Ortega, 2009; Pintrich & Schunk, 1995). According to an earlier definition by Gardner (1985), L2 motivation is the desire or effort to learn a language that is gauged by “how much the person puts forth to do so and how much pleasure they experience from doing so.” To maintain motivation throughout the ups and downs of the learning process, learners need to develop specific skills and strategies to stay on track (Ushioda, 2008). Ushioda (2008, p. 15) also suggests that the development of autonomy is facilitated by motivation and “a social environment that supports learners’ sense of autonomy and intrinsic motivation to pursue optimal challenges through the zone of proximal development.”

### ***Types of Motivation***

Ryan and Deci (2000a) split motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic categories. Often referred to as doing something for its reason, intrinsic motivation involves seeking enjoyment, curiosity, challenges, or personal growth. In contrast, extrinsic motivation suggests that a person behaves to fulfill an external objective, like graduating from college, landing a job, making an impression on a teacher, or staying out of punishment. Self-determination theory, one of the

three main foundations of motivational psychology, is the source of those motivational categories.

These two motivational categories are comparable to those found in Gardner's (1968) earlier study, which separated motivation into instrumental and integrative categories.

"Instrumental motivation" describes the drive to acquire a language to meet academic standards or land a better job. Conversely, integrative motivation describes assimilating into the society or culture of the target language (Gardner, 1968 p. 143). It implies that some people learn better when assimilating into society, others may achieve if they are driven by incentives other than learning, and others may gain from combining the two. Put another way, learners can be productive if they are driven to finish coursework, exams, and other academic tasks and are interested in integrating into the community and its customs.

### ***Games and Motivation***

Several scholars found that various video game design aspects, namely clear objectives and tasks, feedback, and challenges, foster intrinsic motivation (Bowman, 1982; Provenzo, 1991; Rieber, 1996; Malone, 1981, as cited in Dickey, 2007, p. 256). In addition, Dickey (2007) notes that Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPG) allow customizing the abilities, traits, and overall appearance of playable characters within the game. The decisions the player makes impact the character's progression in the game. In those types of games, players constantly continue developing their in-game characters and feel a sense of attachment to their characters. Dickey (2007), therefore, argues that character development in games fosters intrinsic motivation.

Commercial digital video games have been found to significantly boost students' motivation to learn languages (Ebrahimzadeh & Alavi, 2017). Students are more interested in the

learning process and more engaged when they are allowed to play or watch these activities. A game-mediated language learning environment was discovered to be a cozy and soothing place for learners. Their increased sense of freedom allowed them to interact with classmates and take pleasure in the learning process in a way that they could not have in a typical classroom.

Given that games can boost motivation, Goodwin-Jones (2014) supports incorporating games into language acquisition. Informal gameplay that is inspired by academics can vary. For instance, a player or learner is undoubtedly engaging in an informal gaming environment if, motivated to advance his language skills, he asks a teacher for suggestions on games to play in the target language and decides to do so himself (Knight et al., 2020).

Chik (2012) suggested that language choice indicates the motivation behind the learner to play in a particular language. The participants with gaming experience claim that three areas (in-game texts, online gaming platforms, and discussion forums) can potentially develop the English language. Despite the vulgar environment often occurring in games, participants perceived it as a cultural aspect. They rapidly acquired swear words to argue with other gamers and highlighted that this is an aspect of communicative competence.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Gee (2007), in his book *Good Games and Good Learning*, defined 16 principles of critical, robust Game-Based Learning in video games. These principles are based on previous research (Gee, 2003, 2004, 2005), and explain aspects of video games through the learning lens. Therefore, three principles describe skills that can be acquired through video games, contrasting them with school settings where specific skills lack explanation or experience.

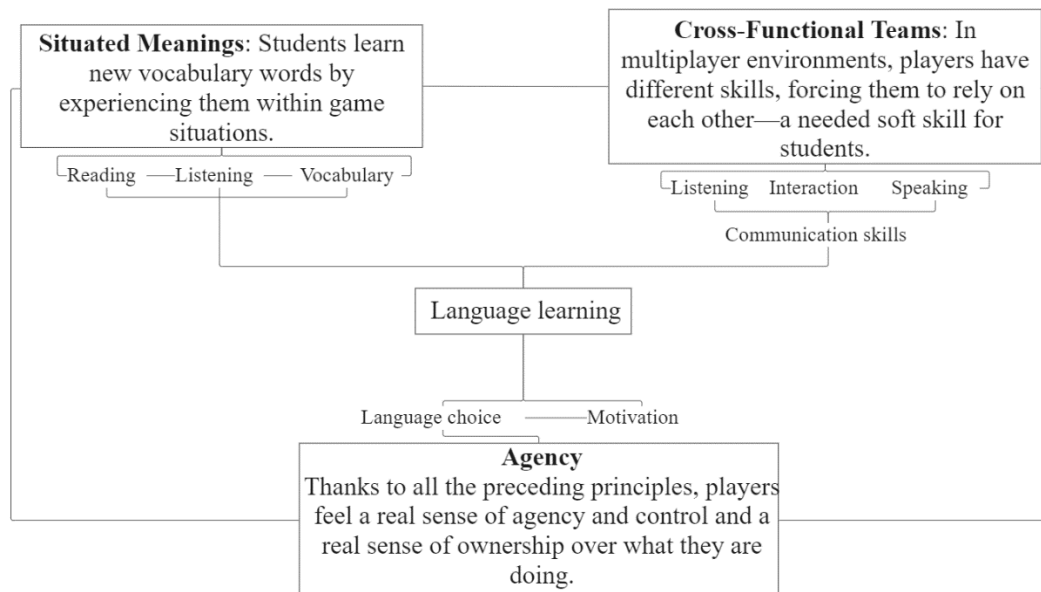
- 1) Situated meanings refer to a vocabulary that occurs in specific contexts and has situational meaning. In video games, words are transformed from static

definitions into dynamic concepts, connecting them to the actions, images, and dialogues players encounter.

- 2) Cross-functional teams refer to multiplayer settings that necessitate collaboration, as players with diverse skill sets must work together. This fosters a crucial soft skill for students: the ability to rely on and complement the strengths of others to achieve a common goal.
- 3) Agency refers to players feeling a strong sense of agency and control as if they are in charge of their actions and the outcomes they achieve. This fosters a sense of ownership over their journey within the game world.

Those principles were adopted and blended with concepts of language learning to create a conceptual frame for understanding language learning through video game manuals, stories, other players around games, and audio-textual narratives (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1** *Conceptual Framework*



The principles were interpreted in the researcher's understanding of the gaming environment, and the following interpretation will be used to analyze the data:

- 1) **Situated meanings**—Since video games provide visual, audio, and textual representations, vocabulary acquired within the game is easy to memorize and use afterward. Players can hear, see, and read words that appear in the game and learn them by association with certain visual appearances or sounds that can mean certain things to them. Therefore, games potentially help people improve their listening and vocabulary skills.
- 2) **Cross-Functional Teams**—Online video gaming (Massive Multiplayer Games) has become one of the most popular genres worldwide. Thus, playing online provides opportunities to meet and interact with other gamers and cooperate with them via games. These situations create conditions for speaking, writing, listening to teammates, and interacting with them by planning strategies, chitchatting, guiding, giving feedback, and arguing with each other. Depending on the video game genre, gamers must cooperate and understand each other well to reach game objectives like winning against opponents and completing missions. Therefore, online gaming creates a scenario where gamers practice their speaking, writing, and listening skills and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills by reaching agreement and planning strategies.
- 3) **Agency**—Games with high agency don't force players down a specific path. They offer various options for approaching challenges, solving puzzles, or interacting with the environment. Players feel empowered to make their own choices and experiment with different strategies. However, before entering the game, players must tune multiple settings, such as graphics quality, subtitles, game difficulty, voice, and text language they will play with. Thus, the selected language also

affects their experience of playing games. Lipponen and Kumpulainen (2011) define agency as “the capacity to initiate purposeful action that implies will, autonomy, freedom, and choice” (p. 1). This broader definition highlights how pre-game choices, such as language selection, contribute to a player’s sense of agency. While many games offer players the ability to adjust settings like graphics quality or difficulty level, the choice of language can significantly impact the gameplay experience.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter critically reviewed and summarized the literature on informal learning, video games, motivation, and language development. The literature explained key stages of video game development and demonstrated some representatives of a various genres of games. The main takeaway from the literature is that there is a great interest in MMORPG genre of video games, yet there was a lack of literature found on other type of genres like FPS. Still, the literature highlighted the advantages of COTS video games in relation to language development comprising the development of various linguistic skills. Moreover, it reviewed the concepts of language motivation and how games encourage gamers to learn languages. Then, it presented Gee’s (2006) theoretical framework for game-based learning. The conceptual framework considers four principles that help understand the nature of video gaming. The next chapter presents the methodology that guided the current study.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The previous chapter reviewed and analyzed the existing literature on serious and commercial-off-the-shelf video games, the history of video games, and the theoretical framework. The methodology chapter presents the methodological underpinnings of the current research, research design, sampling, and research site, as well as a description of data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis approach, and ethical considerations of the study. The study aimed to explore young adults' perceived benefits and effectiveness of using video games for English language learning and maintenance. Therefore, the study intends to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Why do young adults choose to play games in the English language?

RQ2: What are the perceived benefits of using video games for language learning?

1) What English language skills are developed by playing video games?

2) What processes of video game play support English language learning?

RQ3: What are the perceived limitations of using video games for language learning?

Thus, the third chapter explains the methodology used for the research questions and the rationale behind each methodological component separately. At the end of the chapter, the conclusion and final thoughts on methodology are drawn.

#### **Research Design**

This section describes the research design that will be used in this study. The qualitative research design has been chosen because it is the best way to explore and understand the experiences and perceptions of young adults towards video games as a language learning tool. Qualitative research involves collecting non-numerical data, such as words, to understand the studied phenomenon. In other words, this approach uses the participants' own words to describe

their experiences and understandings (Bui, 2013; Creswell, 2014). It is different from quantitative research, which typically uses numerical data. Qualitative research can help to gain a deeper understanding of the context from the participants' perspectives, allowing them to share their thoughts and feelings in their own words (Bui, 2013). The central phenomenon of this research is informal language learning through video games of young adults on social media, which is popular among gaming communities. Since the research also seeks the experiences of young adults in an online gaming environment, qualitative research is suitable for understanding the complexity and richness of social behavior (Holliday, 2015).

Interviews are considered suitable tools for this research design. Creswell (2014) argues that by asking open-ended questions, researchers can encourage participants to share their stories and insights in a way that would not be possible with other research methods. Open-ended questions will assist the participants in sharing their experiences and perceptions about video games and language learning with the researcher's control during the interview.

### **Sampling Strategy**

This research's target population was young adults with experience in video games and gaming activities. The sampling strategy for recruiting participants was purposeful, referred to as "the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait" (Creswell, 2014, p. 229). Following this principle, one primary criterion for sampling was one year of experience playing video games, especially in English, to get deeper insights from the participants. The second primary criterion was the age of the participants, who were set to be above 18 years old. Sussman and Arnett (2014) argue that young adulthood is a transitional state between adolescence and adulthood, which occurs between 18 and 25 years. According to the Entertainment Software Association (ESA, 2023), the average gamer is 32 years old. Thus, the

maximum age for this study was 32. The reason for selecting young people for this research is that they have more experience and exposure in playing video games and can express their perspectives freely. The target number of participants for this project was six. Guest et al. (2006) argue that the saturation point is reached after interviewing 12 participants with enough data to answer their research question. However, Guest et al. (2006) started to see some essential elements of common themes after interviewing 6 participants. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the 6 participants who were recruited for this study.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Data of the Participants*

| <b>Nicknames</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Preferred language in games</b> | <b>Ethnicity</b> |
|------------------|------------|---------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Crabretti        | 32         | male          | Russian/English                    | Ukrainian        |
| Kiani            | 30         | female        | Russian/English                    | Russian          |
| Harliona         | 32         | female        | Russian/English                    | Russian          |
| Eripvi           | 27         | female        | Russian/English                    | Ukrainian        |
| Markov_Ka        | 22         | female        | Russian/English                    | Russian          |
| Mqdix            | 20         | male          | Kazakh/Russian/English             | Kazakh           |

### **Research Site**

It is difficult to precisely identify this research's physical or geographical location; the nature of gaming seems borderless due to easy access and opportunities thanks to the internet. Therefore, this study was conducted on the social media platform "Discord." In Discord, users have the ability to communicate with voice calls, text messaging, media, and files in private chats or as part of communities called "servers" (Wikipedia contributors, 2023b). Gamers

primarily use it. Therefore, I chose this platform as a research site. The research participants were selected from a particular Discord server and have different socio-geographic backgrounds.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

The interview was used to collect data for this study. I conducted one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and probes to gather detailed participant information. Open-ended questions assisted the participants in sharing their experiences and perceptions about video games and language learning with my control during the interview. The interview questions include participants' gaming habits, language preferences, perceptions of English language, video games' advantages and disadvantages regarding language learning, and processes happening inside game world (see Appendix B). Cohen et al. (2007) argue that interviews are a versatile tool for collecting data because they allow researchers to collect information through multiple sensory channels, such as verbal, nonverbal, spoken, and heard. According to Wilson (2014), combining structured questions with unstructured exploration allows for flexibility in gathering information.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The data collection period lasted between the 10th of December 2023, and the 10th of February 2024. First, I contacted the gatekeeper of the server on the social platform "Discord." After obtaining permission from the gatekeeper to conduct a study, I posted an announcement in a general chat with the server, providing all relevant information to potential participants (see Appendix C). In the announcement, I provided a personal email and other information so the participants could contact me for further discussion and arrange an interview date and time. The participants were informed that this study is voluntary-based, and they could leave the project at any stage. Due to the time zone or schedule differences, participants could choose a convenient

time to participate in the interview. I asked participants to select a language for the interview to provide rich data in a suitable language. The interview language was either Russian, Kazakh, or English. Each interview took about 30 minutes. The interviews were recorded on an audio recorder on a particular application on a laptop or smartphone and stored in cloud storage, with other devices locked with individual passwords known only to me.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

This study employed the six-phase thematic analysis (TA) framework Braun and Clarke (2006) developed to analyze the data. As defined by the authors (Clarke & Braun, 2016), this approach involves systematically identifying, analyzing, and interpreting recurring patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data. One of the critical strengths of thematic analysis (TA) is its remarkable flexibility. Researchers can adapt the approach to the specific needs of their study, allowing for a rich, in-depth, and nuanced data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). Recognizing its relative ease of use for researchers new to qualitative methods, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis (TA) was chosen for this study. TA focuses on uncovering recurring patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data, essentially acting as a tool to identify and understand common threads in how a topic is discussed (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). This approach doesn't require extensive knowledge of complex qualitative theories, making it more accessible (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following this framework, the data was analyzed through the following six phases:

The first step in thematic analysis involves thoroughly familiarizing yourself with the data. Braun et al. (2016) call this “critical engagement.” I used Sonix AI software to transcribe all the interviews in this research (see Appendix D). This saved me valuable time that could have been better spent analyzing the rich information participants shared.

Researchers engage in inductive coding after immersing themselves in the data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This process involves identifying recurring patterns directly from the participants' responses rather than imposing pre-existing theoretical frameworks. Here, I read the data closely and analytically, attaching codes (labels) to segments that address the research questions. This requires a thorough and repeated review of each data point to uncover potentially relevant themes and information.

The next step involves grouping the codes I identified earlier into broader themes. These themes represent recurring patterns and important meanings within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2016). To do this, I closely examined the coded data, looking for places where codes seemed connected or shared similar characteristics. This analysis revealed five key themes. I color coded and grouped them in the form of table. Those color codes served me as a marker for each participant and saved a lot of time while analyzing participants' quotes. Thus, each time when I needed to analyze the quote, I knew specifically whom the quote belonged to.

The next step involves a critical review of the themes identified earlier. Braun & Clarke (2012) refer to this as "quality checking" (p. 8). I examined the themes in this stage to ensure they captured the most important and relevant points related to the research questions guiding this study.

In this phase, the focus shifts towards solidifying the identified themes and assigning them descriptive labels. The labels used should align with the theme I am constructing when presenting the research results. To achieve this, each theme was meticulously examined, with particular attention paid to its core focus, internal coherence, and direct connection to this study's two guiding research questions.

The final step of thematic analysis involved creating an influential analytic report that captured the essence of the research findings. This report aimed to weave a precise, critical, and engaging narrative that resonated with the study's core focus and theoretical foundation.

The following table illustrates examples of TA development from data in this study:

**Table 2**  
*Coding sample*

| <b>Interview transcripts<br/>(what participants say)</b>  | <b>Initial codes</b>                                  | <b>Themes based on<br/>codes</b> | <b>Main themes</b>  |
|---|---|----------------------------------|---|
| “I had trouble understanding people who were not native speakers... That had accents. So I could not understand some accents. It was really hard for me to say what they wanted from me. And I was like asking them again and again. It was not polite, and I knew about that.” | Challenges in understanding other players' accents    | Listening and Speaking skills    | Development of listening skills with diverse speakers       |
| “Despite the opportunities to learn new vocabulary and practice reading, it could not help me speak freely. In addition, if a game has a much more complex vocabulary unfamiliar to me, I spend more time translating each unknown word rather than playing the game.”          | No enjoyment from the games due to complex vocabulary | Complex vocabulary               | Limitations of video games on language learning development |

The data analysis process revealed three key themes that capture young adults' experiences: their language choices, the perceived benefits they encountered, and the limitations they faced.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Several scholars emphasized the importance of engaging in ethical practices at every stage of the research process (Bui, 2014; Creswell, 2014). I ensured the study was conducted ethically by addressing all ethical issues according to NU GSE ethical norms, such as providing the participants' safety and confidentiality. The participants were informed that the interview may contain sensitive questions and they had the right to skip them or withdraw from the current study. It may involve asking participants sensitive questions or exposing them to stressful situations. Since some participants might have faced negative experiences with gaming and language use, recalling those experiences could cause some psychological distress, such as anxiety or sadness. Considering the information above, I explained to participants the risks, purposes, and benefits they received during the study (see Appendix E). Moreover, information on privacy and complete confidentiality were presented before the interviews. Besides, I informed the participants that they could stop participating in this research at any stage.

Participants were assured that their personal information would be kept confidential. However, there is always a tiny risk that confidentiality could be breached accidentally. Therefore, I ensured the data would not be leaked and secured meticulously.

Due to the specific nature of "Discord," creating a profile does not require disclosing personal information since they create profiles using their nicknames. Moreover, I removed or renamed participants' names if their nicknames were identical to their real names.

I stored data in limited-access spaces like cloud storage, laptops, and personal phones protected with passwords and fingerprint identification. Moreover, the data was locked inside those storages in a separate folder protected with an additional password for security purposes. The data will be destroyed in all saved devices by the end of the research project.

## **Positionality**

Before I present the findings of this study, and as part of self-reflectivity, I would like to acknowledge that I am a Central Asian male, originally from the Eastern part of Kazakhstan, whose bias and perspective are based on my own experience. I am a gamer myself, with more than ten years of experience, who wanted to step aside and find answers if my experience of learning the English language through video games is shared across the contexts of the CIS. This research is inspired by my nephew, whose language skills I noticed improved while observing him playing video games with others in my hometown. I am aware that my positionality influences this research to some extent; my participants helped me to find the answers to my questions.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter describes the study's methods, including the research site, design, sampling method, data collection tool, and ethical considerations. This study adopted a qualitative approach and used semi-structured interviews to collect data. Six participants were recruited for this study. The participants' rights were protected throughout the research, and ethics approval was obtained from the NUGSE Research Committee to ensure this.

## Chapter 4: Findings

This qualitative study intended to explore young adults' perceptions and experiences of English language learning through video games. Six individual semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain data that answered the research questions. This chapter aims to present the study findings resulting from the received data. The research findings are organized thematically, each supported by excerpts from participant interviews and researcher notes. The following research questions guide the analysis of the findings:

RQ1: Why do young adults choose to play games in the English language?

RQ2: What are the perceived benefits of using video games for language learning?

What English language skills are developed by playing video games?

What processes of video game play support English language learning?

RQ3: What are the perceived limitations of using video games for language learning?

### **Language Choice in Video Games**

The study's findings indicate that player experience and learning outcomes were significantly influenced by several critical factors related to language choice. These factors included intrinsic motivations to enhance English language proficiency, a desire to engage with the game in its original language for deeper contextual immersion, and perceived difficulties associated with translated versions.

#### ***Playing in the Original Language***

The majority of the participants (n=4) chose to play English games in the original language, which appears in the games through voice lines and texts. Markov\_Ka considers that frequent changes to word formations during video game localization can compromise the dialogue's essence, particularly when adapting to languages like Russian with distinct

grammatical structures. This can result in, for example, a loss of cultural nuances or humor in the translated text. Another participant expressed similar thoughts through a metaphor:

It is like reading a book in the original. Even if you try to translate, translation is not always the best way to understand things. Sometimes, you see, the original text does not mean the same things translated into the Russian language (Eripvi, December 6, 2023).

Here, Eripvi illustrates that translation and localization from one language to another sometimes leads to the loss of the original meaning of words or phrases. To understand the contextual nuances of the game, players have to play in the original language of the game design, which is usually English.

However, some of the participants also said that there are plenty of games that are localized into other languages efficiently. Kiani, for instance, showed that she prefers Russian dubbing and game language over English when it comes to storytelling games since she finds it hard to understand specific vocabulary and feels “no enjoyment” playing the game in English. Crabretti often does comparative analyses of the different language versions of the game, in most cases favoring the Russian version, which he finds more enjoyable to play simply because he understands Russian better.

**Immersing in the Game Contexts.** Study participants provided much insight into this topic when asked about their choice of using the English language in games. Half of the participants stated that they chose to play games in English to immerse themselves in the specific context. What is meant here is that some games are based on real locations, for instance, the USA, and narrate stories inside these contexts. Coincidentally, Eripvi and Crabretti referred to the Red Dead Redemption 2 game, where Eripvi’s comment evidently explains that some game

developers do not dub their products in various languages for several reasons. Therefore, gamers are sometimes forced to play with suggested options of subtitles and dubbing:

...For example, Red Dead Redemption 2 is a game made by Rockstar Games. This game is not localized into other languages. I mean, the voices are not localized. You just have the subtitles. The game is about the Wild West. There is no such thing in CIS as the Wild West. And if you do not know the culture or history or just do not understand the cultural background of the game, you will not understand it even if you play in localization. So I try to play it in English, maybe immerse in the culture to understand what is happening.

Mqdix expressed the same idea but provided an alternative example of a game context that can affect the perception of the game:

GTA V's dialogues and texts have many jokes and wordplay because the game is based on a fictional state in the USA. You cannot translate the jokes and wordplay because they lose their sense, so you must play it in English.

Mqdix showed that translation cannot capture the gist of some aspects of the language, like humor, which varies depending on the context.

To sum up, this study revealed a preference among participants for playing video games in the original English language, often citing concerns about the accuracy and completeness of cultural representation in localized versions. This preference suggests potential limitations in existing localization practices, particularly regarding the ability to effectively capture and convey nuanced cultural aspects within the context of a specific game. Participants highlighted the importance of understanding the whole narrative and thematic depth intended by developers, arguing that certain types of games, particularly those heavily reliant on cultural references and

humor, may not be well-suited for localization without significant adaptation or risk losing their intended meaning and impact.

### *Learning a Language*

Regarding another reason for playing in the original language, half of the participants (n=3) reported playing in English to develop their language skills. Besides the difficulties with localization, some preferred to play in English to grab some vocabulary through game stories, quests, and audio-textual subtitles:

...This is purely my own initiative because my English is not at the highest level, but I can sometimes play a game to find a new word or idiom I have not heard before; it is also helpful to learn the language (Markov\_Ka, December 16, 2023).

Markov\_Ka clearly expressed that the lack of accuracy in translation forced her to play in English, as was shown earlier, but at the same time, she found playing games beneficial for her language repertoire. She additionally provided an amusing story she experienced while playing a game called *Saints Row: The Third*:

In this game, some of the text was in Russian, and some was suddenly in English. Accordingly, at that time, I did not understand English much, and I often had to translate texts into English to understand what I should do. For example, there was the task's name, but the object itself was in English, and accordingly, I had to translate it. The words there were relatively simple, but they helped me in the future; for example, now, it helps me navigate similar video games.

This excerpt illustrates Markov\_Ka's utilization of prior gaming experience to navigate challenges within a new game environment. Specifically, she references her past playthrough of *Saints Row: The Third* as a source of knowledge and skill transfer, effectively allowing her to

approach similar tasks in new games. This case interestingly shows how Markov\_Ka benefited from the predicament of gaming localization by adapting to new conditions driven by her interest in the game; she gained learning strategies by translating unfamiliar words.

Mqdix, like Markov\_Ka, reported that playing *Minecraft* in his childhood helped him grasp a versatile vocabulary range. *Minecraft* is a sandbox game in which players can discover and extract raw materials, craft tools, and items, and build structures, earthworks, and machines (Wikipedia contributors, 2024). Mqdix explains how this game helped him with English class in the following extract:

We passed an English test in sixth grade, and my recent experience playing Minecraft unexpectedly helped me translate words from Russian to English. The game emphasized resource assets, and terms like ‘feather,’ ‘leather,’ ‘dirt,’ and ‘sand’ were essential for gameplay, so their meanings were marked in my mind.

Overall, the study revealed diverse motivations for language choice in games, with many participants opting for English due to factors like developing English, better understanding of the context, and personal preference. If summarized, two participants chose to play in Russian, and most participants found it beneficial to play games in English. Kiani and Crabretti prefer to play in Russian, depending on the complexity of the language used in the game and the quality of the production, respectively. The majority (n=4) prefer to play in English since they find it helpful in developing language skills, a sense of immersion in the game, and the impossibility of localizing contextual and cultural aspects in games.

## **Benefits of Video Games on the English Language Development**

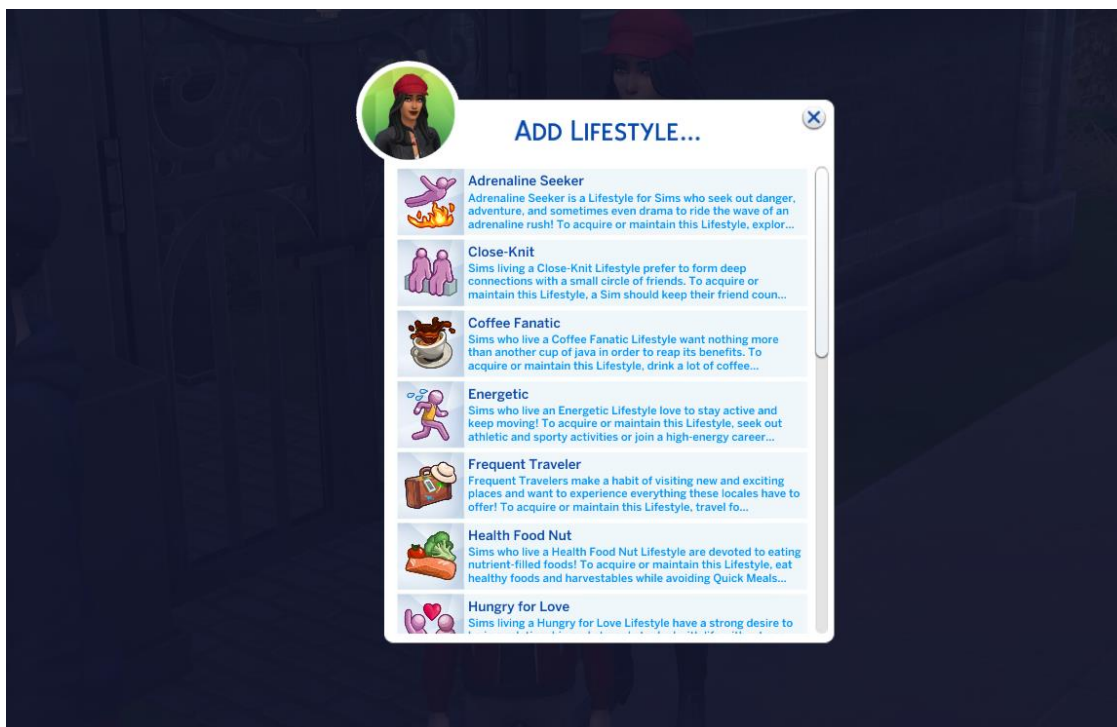
### ***Reading and Vocabulary Development Through Games***

This section investigates the reported influence of gaming on young adults' reading skills and vocabulary development. Contemporary games frequently employ diverse textual elements, such as quest instructions, in-game lore notes, and detailed manuals. These immerse players within the narrative and give them essential clues to achieve in-game objectives and overcome challenges.

When the participants were asked about the impact of games on their reading skills and vocabulary, many expressed positive effects on language development.

In the interview, Kiani signified the impact of gaming on vocabulary development by citing *World of Warcraft*. She elaborated on the diverse narrative elements within the game, such as “mini-stories, quests, cutscenes, and even movies,” which, according to her, “expanded my vocabulary in a broader range since there are many words that are used in literature.” Notably, Kiani emphasized the repeated exposure to this vocabulary throughout the game, highlighting her ability to “understand them without looking at the dictionary after two months of exposure,” suggesting a process of incidental learning and acquiring new words. Harliona supported this view by sharing her experiences in simulation games (generally designed to simulate real-world activities). In her interview, Harliona demonstrated the vocabulary acquisition potential of game manuals and texts, providing *The Sims 4* as a specific example. She learned almost 80% of her vocabulary from the games, emphasizing that to understand the game objectives, “you are forced to read a lot.” This suggests a potential link between game mechanics and casual vocabulary learning, which could be seen in the following screenshot provided by Harliona:

**Figure 2**  
*The Sims 4 in-game screenshot*



*Note.* Sims 4 character lifestyle selection menu

In the provided screenshot, players can choose lifestyles for their characters, noting that Sims 4 is a simulation game (life simulation); characters stick to certain lifestyles in order to get bonuses or inner objectives that the players direct. These lifestyles are traits that affect the way Sims behaves. Choosing a lifestyle gives your Sims specific desires and whims, temporary goals they will try to achieve. For example, a Sim with the “Adrenaline Seeker” lifestyle might have a whim to go on a hike, while a Sim with the “Coffee Fanatic” lifestyle might have a whim to drink some espresso. Lifestyles can also influence the way Sims interacts with objects in the game. For example, a Sim with the “Health Food Nut” lifestyle might get a mood boost from eating a salad. Thus, based only on this screenshot, we can see that players encounter various words and phrases that are unlikely to be seen in school textbooks.

Eripvi, however, presented a counterpoint, expressing skepticism regarding the effectiveness of in-game reading for vocabulary acquisition. She argued that the texts encountered in games did not significantly contribute to her acquisition of new words or phrases. It is noteworthy to consider the potential influence of her educational background (foreign languages) in shaping this perspective. Nevertheless, she acknowledged the potential benefit of specific in-game vocabulary, noting the *Grand Theft Auto* series as an example where she encountered everyday English language and idioms that proved helpful.

### ***Listening and Speaking Skills Development Through Games***

Listening and speaking skills are vital parts of a language that could be practiced and developed in real life and through virtual media. Contemporary video games usually include cutscenes, a narrative device that delivers short cinematic sequences and serves as a short break from the gameplay. Apart from the breaks, cutscenes provide deeper narratives, dramatic moments, character development, and context that drive a deeper understanding of the game story. Moreover, contemporary gamers worldwide can communicate through voice and text chats, making it possible to exchange information, talk about casual topics, and discuss gaming activities in the game directly.

**Development of Listening Skills with Diverse Speakers.** Most participants (n=4) emphasized the positive impact of online gaming on their listening skills, mainly through exposure to diverse players' accents. Harliona, Markov\_Ka, and Eripvi initially experienced comprehension challenges but reported improved ability to identify and understand these accents over time. Harliona shared her initial struggles with comprehending diverse non-native accents in online games:

I had trouble understanding people who were not native speakers... That had accents. So I could not understand some accents. It was really hard for me to say what they wanted from me. And I was like asking them again and again. It was not polite, and I knew about that.

This experience highlights the potential challenges of intercultural communication within online gaming environments, particularly for individuals encountering unfamiliar accents. However, Harliona herself was motivated to distinguish those unfamiliar accents through YouTube videos and guides to understand her team members' speech. Therefore, it could be summarized that her desire to have a better experience in online games forced her to go beyond and learn different accents.

Eripvi highlighted the potential of video games to enhance listening skills in a naturalistic setting. Unlike traditional language learning materials, which often present contrived dialogues (e.g., textbooks), video games offer a more authentic environment reflecting real-world communication. Eripvi explicitly mentions the presence of "very true-to-life situations" where people may scream, talk loudly, or speak rapidly, mirroring the challenges of everyday listening comprehension. This exposure to diverse speech patterns, Eripvi argues, contributes significantly to developing strong listening skills.

On the other hand, Kiani and Mqdix drew on the experience of repetitive voice lines that occurred in games, which helped them enhance their listening skills: "I started to understand more complex sentences, especially when they are repeated over and over again, after a while I could understand them without subtitles."

Two participants (n=2) highlighted the contribution of supplementary gaming activities, specifically YouTube guides and explanations, to their listening skill development. Both

Markov\_Ka and Harliona described their intrinsic curiosity driving them beyond the immediate game content, leading them to explore various *YouTube* videos (e.g. let's plays, game guides, vloggers) and *Reddit* forums. This engagement provided an additional avenue for practicing listening skills, fostering their understanding of complex gaming concepts and strategies.

**Communication with Other Players in Online Games.** This findings section reviews young adults' perspectives regarding online video games and their impact on communication skills. Online video games include an opportunity to chat with peers through audio-textual chats where people can freely communicate with each other. Therefore, those games usually demand collaborative and communicative work with the team to achieve in-game objectives. The teamwork before, during, and after the game session implies that players have to stay in touch with each other, which can stimulate speaking and listening skills.

Several participants reported that communication during online video games is essential to completing the objective. Harliona illustrated this with the following parallel: "If you are not communicating with people around you in the multiplayer game, it is weird. It is like attending a cooking masterclass and just standing there not cooking." Markov\_Ka also supports Harliona's view noting that in her experience she had to constantly talking with the teammates in order to win in FPS game *Overwatch*. Additionally, she mentioned that MMORPG games usually demands communication with other players to complete "raids." "Raid" is a term used to describe a mission in MMORPGs games where players principally gather to defeat game bosses.

Eripvi's narrative, on the other hand, highlights her initial self-consciousness about her perceived Russian accent and how online gaming facilitated accent reduction. Her quote further suggests a broader impact on language fluency and confidence: "Games helped me reduce my Russian accent, maybe. And just the whole process of speaking became easier for me."

Both Crabretti and Harliona reported the importance of knowing the specific vocabulary and game language in English helps to communicate with other teammates who are native speakers: “In FPS (First Person Shooter) games there are some particular map regions and they have names, and if they are translated to you in Russian, you cannot communicate with your English-speaking teammates because you do not know how to call it in English.” Here, Harliona expresses that knowing the names of the maps helps to achieve the objectives of an FPS game where people play against each other. Therefore, to provide information about opponents’ locations to their teammates, gamers must know the exact names of a map region.

Harliona expressed that she consciously chose to play and talk in English to exchange information about the game in English, even though all the teammates were Russian speaking. This could also be seen in her comments about her overall experience with her Russian-speaking friends:

I play with my friends as well, like I do on Discord. And we use English. We do our in-game communication in English a lot because it is shorter and more familiar to us. We consciously decided to talk in English to exchange information about the game in English, even though we all are Russian speaking. We mix languages like when prepping something like a strategy before the round. Even though we speak Russian, we use English to refer to region names and some other terms. Sometimes, we employ “one” as the one shot (a term used to describe an opponent with low health points in video games). So, we are just calling “оh” (he in the Russian language) one, not he is one. However, we mix two languages in the two-word sentence (Harliona).

This excerpt exemplifies the participant’s use of translanguaging, drawing upon multiple languages within a single interaction, to enhance communication efficiency with teammates.

Recognizing the high demands of fast-paced First-Person Shooter (FPS) games, where concentration and reaction time are crucial, she strategically employs her native language and English for concise commands, facilitating rapid communication within her team.

**Feedback.** The analysis of player communication within online game environments reveals the presence of informal feedback mechanisms surrounding language use. Half of the participants reported experiencing feedback on their language mistakes during gameplay. This feedback primarily originated from teammates within voice chat, taking two distinct forms:

**Corrective Feedback:** Peers directly addressed the mistakes, requesting reformulation or repetition of the message. While this approach could be helpful for language learning, it could be perceived as intrusive and anxiety-inducing for non-native speakers.

**Negative Feedback:** Sometimes, teammates use derisive language, such as “your English is broken,” to highlight the errors. This form of feedback is counterproductive and can create a hostile environment, discouraging players from engaging in communication altogether.

These findings highlight the complex dynamics of online gaming interactions and the potential for language anxiety to arise.

Crabretti experienced cases where natives or more proficient speakers pointed out the mistakes differently. It can be seen in the following extract:

If a sentence is worded incorrectly, they, first of all, react with humor. Well, to varying degrees because people have different moods. They can react aggressively by saying, “Go learn some English, you have written some crap,” but some of them can correct your sentence by pointing out your mistakes.

From Crabretti's extract, it can be said that people react differently to grammatical and pronunciation errors, and their feedback could be perceived negatively (harsh comments) or educationally (correcting mistakes).

Markov\_Ka's experience contrasts with the previously discussed harmful feedback mechanisms. She reported receiving positive reinforcement from her peers regarding her English language use, explicit compliments on her progress, and encouragement to continue learning. This feedback was a motivational factor, fostering increased confidence and a stronger desire to further develop her English language skills.

In contrast, Kiani exhibited high awareness during the interview. She said, "When I was interrupted or asked to explain myself differently, I did so and realized that the first construction variant was no good. I had to rearrange the sentences differently." This quote demonstrates Kiani's ability to monitor and regulate her communication in real time, adapting her responses based on feedback.

In conclusion, online games provide a unique environment for incidental language learning, with teammates offering corrective and negative feedback during gameplay. While constructive feedback can be beneficial, negative comments can create anxiety and discourage players. The type of feedback significantly impacts players' experiences, as shown by contrasting examples like Markov\_Ka's positive reinforcement and Crabretti's observation of harsh criticism.

### **Participants' Learning Processes**

Many participants expressed positive emotions when asked about their overall feelings about language learning through video games. Several participants reported that video games could serve as additional learning opportunities to practice the English language. In the following

extract, Kiani compared her experience attending language courses, both offline and online, with video game practices:

Online and offline language courses are almost identical in terms of explaining the content, and I am always bored by them. However, when it comes to video games, I know for sure that this content will be interesting to me, and since I like the game, of course, the English language accompanying it will not annoy me much.

Here, Kiani suggests that the inherent enjoyment derived from video games can be a powerful motivator for language acquisition, even if language learning is not the primary objective. Eripvi and Markov\_Ka, aligning with Kiani's statements, provided further insight into the benefits of video games for language learning through concrete examples. They drew a parallel between traditional classroom activities, such as dialogue creation, and real-time interactions within online games. This comparison highlighted gaming communication's dynamic and immersive nature, which necessitates rapid response and adaptation, mirroring real-world conversation demands.

Harliona's narrative presents a compelling example of how individual learning styles influence language acquisition pathways. She identifies with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), highlighting the limitations of traditional, classroom-based methodologies for her learning process in the following extract:

Personally, I think there is so much more enjoyable and engaging way to learn English because recently, I realized that I have ADHD. So, the usual learning methods are not for me, as you can say like that. And video games really help me with this engagement with my brain because my brain cannot focus on the boring stuff like sitting in the classroom or on the course.

Here, she emphasizes video games' engaging and enjoyable nature, suggesting their effectiveness in capturing her attention and fostering sustained engagement. Harliona's experience highlights the potential of personalized learning strategies based on individual needs and preferences. By utilizing engaging and interactive environments like video games, learners with ADHD or other learning styles may find alternative pathways to language acquisition that are both effective and enjoyable.

Many found video games to be a fun and motivating supplement to traditional learning methods. Kiani highlighted the enjoyment factor of games, which can make language practice less tedious. Eripvi and Markov\_Ka emphasized the dynamic nature of communication in online games, which mirrors real-world conversations. For learners like Harliona with ADHD, traditional methods proved less effective, while video games provided a more engaging and stimulating learning environment.

### **Limitations of Video Games on English Language Development**

This findings section reviews possible limitations of learning English through video games pointed out by young adults. Some participants (n=2) shared that they found no drawbacks in playing video games regarding language learning.

Crabretti, on the other hand, raised a critical point regarding the potential limitations of video games for vocabulary acquisition. He identified the restricted nature of in-game vocabulary as a crucial drawback, highlighting that players are primarily exposed to predetermined terms within specific themes and plotlines. While varying depending on the game, limited vocabulary range creates an inherent barrier to expanding beyond the established linguistic boundaries. Harliona mirrored these views in her interview while emphasizing the

context of online gaming. She asserts that team communication within this domain often centers around gameplay, leading to the acquisition of specialized and limited vocabulary.

Kiani leveraged video games as a tool for English language acquisition but acknowledged their limitations in facilitating spoken fluency and efficient vocabulary acquisition:

Despite the opportunities to learn new vocabulary and practice reading, it could not help me speak freely. In addition, if a game has a much more complex vocabulary unfamiliar to me, I spend more time translating each unknown word rather than playing the game.

Kiani points out that video games could not facilitate spoken language development despite offering vocabulary exposure and reading practice. Furthermore, encountering complex and unfamiliar vocabulary within the context of a game can significantly hinder the enjoyment of the gameplay itself, as the learner becomes focused on deciphering individual words rather than immersing themselves in the overall experience.

In conclusion, while some young adults found video games advantageous for language learning with no perceived drawbacks, others highlighted limitations. The restricted vocabulary inherent to specific game themes and online communication was identified as a critical concern. Additionally, spoken fluency development and efficient vocabulary acquisition were areas where video games fell short. Kiani's experience exemplifies these limitations, emphasizing the challenge of balancing vocabulary acquisition with enjoying gameplay.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter illustrates the key findings related to the young adults' perspectives towards video games as an English language tool. The results indicated that most participants positively perceived learning English through video games. Participants had different reasons for selecting the original English language in games – preserving cultural nuances, being in-game contexts,

and improving language skills. This research investigated how these elements improved students' reading skills, enhancing vocabulary development. The participants noted incidentally gaining new words and phrases through repetitive exposure, showing how gaming can help spontaneously and interestingly enrich the players' vocabulary. Likewise, other participants indicated that online gaming helped them refine their listening and speaking abilities because they began understanding diverse accents. Most participants in online gaming preferred informal communication styles but admitted to understanding specialized language nuances and gaming terms essential for teamwork. Language learning within online gaming environments had different feedback mechanisms, whereby some cases have shown how such corrective responses facilitated better language acquisition while negative ones caused much anxiety in speaking.

Moreover, peer feedback helped language learners keep practicing and improving their English proficiency. However, despite these advantages, learners also identified several limitations associated with using video games to develop fluency in spoken language or expand vocabulary due to its limited range. The next chapter will discuss the findings in relation to the previous research on the topic.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The previous chapter presented the findings of this study gathered through semi-structured interviews with six participants from different parts of the CIS regarding their experiences of learning the English language through video games. This chapter intends to discuss significant aspects of the findings and their interpretation, drawing connections to the established body of theoretical and empirical research on this topic. Aligned with the study's purpose of exploring young adults' perspectives and experiences using video games for English language learning, this chapter returns to the research questions and sub-questions that guided this investigation:

RQ1: Why do young adults choose to play games in the English language?

RQ2: What are the perceived benefits of using video games for language learning?

What English language skills are developed by playing video games?

What processes of video game play support English language learning?

RQ3: What are the perceived limitations of using video games for language learning?

### **RQ1: Why do young adults choose to play games in the English language?**

The first question in this study sought to determine participants' language choices in relation to video games. The findings indicated two main reasons the participants chose to play video games in English: playing games in the original language and learning a language. Additionally, some participants revealed a dynamic approach to language selection, with participants reporting a shift in preference based on the complexity or genre of the game.

#### ***Playing in the Original Language to Immerse Themselves into a Specific Context***

The primary motivation for playing games in English stemmed from a desire for an authentic experience. Participants noticed discrepancies between the original text and localized

versions. This led them to prioritize English to grasp the game's core meaning and the challenges and enjoyment the developers intended. This aligns with the concept of intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000a), which emphasizes seeking enjoyment, challenges, and curiosity in language learning.

Players' conscious selection of English highlights their agency in shaping their gaming experience (Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011). Despite having their native language as an option, they preferred English voice and text. This choice reflects a negotiation between their desire for optimal gameplay (experiencing the content as intended) and the potential for incidental language learning.

Choosing English exposed players to new vocabulary, grammar, and idioms. This could lead to incidental language learning, even if it was not the primary goal. As Ashlaf et al. (2014) suggest, gamers can learn new phrases through the game's drive to win. This aligns with Chik's (2012) claim that selecting the game's language reflects a player's initial openness and desire to improve their gameplay. This motivation fuels their interest in understanding in-game text, even in a foreign language. As a result, players can unintentionally acquire new language elements if they find them engaging within the game.

Three out of the four participants who opted for English gameplay expressed a strong desire to immerse themselves in the cultural context of the games. They felt that playing in English enhanced their understanding and enjoyment of the game's cultural aspects. This aligns with integrative motivation, which emphasizes the learner's desire to integrate into the target language society (Lambert & Gardner, 1972). This motivation was further exemplified by Harliona and Markov\_Ka's reported use of English-language content sources like YouTube and Reddit related to their games. Seeking external knowledge in English, such as walkthrough

guides, instructional videos, and Let's Plays (recordings of other players' gameplay), further highlights this desire to participate and connect with primarily English-speaking gaming communities. It is important to note that the level of language exposure can vary depending on the video game itself. Console games with rich narratives offer opportunities for reading and listening comprehension, while online gaming modes facilitate interaction with other players, necessitating communication in English (Chik, 2013). This underlines the importance of selecting games that can maximize language learning potential.

Analyzing these participants' reports shows how their language selection and game interpretations are driven by a combination of intrinsic and integrative motivations, reflecting their personal preferences for a richer gaming experience. Despite differences in motives, participants show that they consciously chose to play video games in English. Thus, their language choice could be argued to be their sense of control over the process, leading to specific outcomes they face. Subsequently, their challenges and opportunities through video games can be stated as their agency in selecting in-game text and audio languages.

## **RQ2: What are the perceived benefits of using video games for language learning?**

### ***What English Language Skills are Developed by Playing Video Games?***

This sub question investigated how video games develop language skills. The findings suggest various options for practicing linguistic skills, including speaking and listening to other players in online games, reading, and vocabulary.

**Reading and Vocabulary.** Video games increasingly incorporate text-based elements, requiring players to read frequently. This includes encountering documents, notes, diaries, subtitles, and game manuals. The participants acknowledge this, reporting that "they must read a lot" to progress within the game. This continuous exposure to textual information, encompassing

game quests, in-game dialogue options, and background lore, presents a potential avenue for vocabulary development. This aligns with research suggesting that encountering words within the context of gameplay can facilitate memorization (Bakar & Nosratirad, 2013; Ryu, 2013). This aligns with Harliona's observations regarding her vocabulary acquisition through video games, where she admits the positive impact of *The Sims* on her vocabulary expansion. This experience resonates with Ashraf et al.'s (2014) work exploring *The Sims* franchise as a potential tool for language learning. The authors investigated using various video games, including *The Sims*, to enhance English vocabulary learning. Their findings suggest that these games fostered an enjoyable learning environment, motivating participants to engage with new vocabulary. In Harliona's case, continuous exposure to the game affected her vocabulary development by encountering new words and puzzling them into contexts the game provides.

Similar to Harliona's experience, another participant, Mqdix, reported a perceived benefit of *Minecraft* on vocabulary development. He attributed his success on school tests to his prior exposure to vocabulary encountered within the game itself. This evidence aligns with Sudarmaji & Yusuf's (2021) research findings, which suggest a positive impact of *Minecraft* on vocabulary mastery. This phenomenon can be explained through the lens of Gee's (2007) principles of Good Games for Good Learning. Gee asserts that games create contexts where meaning is constructed through textual and visual elements. Players actively associate these situated meanings with the imagery and experiences within the game world. In Mqdix's case, encountering vocabulary in the engaging context of *Minecraft* likely facilitated the formation of strong associations between the words and the game itself. Through situated learning within *Minecraft*, Mqdix developed strong associations between the vocabulary and the game world. These connections likely

transferred to the different contexts of school tests, enabling him to use the learned vocabulary effectively.

**Listening and Speaking.** The current study's findings suggest that video games provide an opportunity for practicing listening and speaking skills. Most participants complimented online video games, highlighting the importance of listening and communicating with other players to achieve in-game objectives, which helped them to train their listening and speaking abilities. Peterson (2010) highlights the double-edged nature of interaction with native speakers for language learners. While such encounters can present challenges due to potential communication breakdowns, they also offer valuable opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning (Ebrahimzadeh & Alavi, 2017). This can be seen in Kiani's narrative, in which she experiences challenges in expressing herself to other players. Recognizing that her communication caused unusual reactions from other players, she attempted to rephrase her messages using more superficial structures. This act shows how Kiani's incorrect sentence formulation impacts her learning outcomes, where she consciously understands her mistakes and tries to step forward to prevent unsuccessful communication with teammates.

Building on the research of Rusk and Ståhl (2022), who identified effective communication as a crucial skill in gaming, the study delves deeper into the multifaceted nature of this competency. Their work highlights the importance of "callout competence," defined as the ability to deliver precise and timely verbal instructions (Taylor, 2011, as cited in Rusk & Ståhl, 2022). These callouts function as in-game toponyms, acting as shorthand for specific locations, often mirroring real-world counterparts (e.g., "B site" on a map mirroring a physical location). Rusk and Ståhl (2022) emphasize that effective communication requires players to

understand the standard definitions and the contextual meanings associated with callouts within a particular game.

The present study findings support the understanding of multilingual communication practices. The case of Harliona and her friends demonstrates how players can develop a “naturalistic” way of using multiple languages (e.g., Russian and English) for in-game communication. This includes seamlessly mixing languages for essential functions like issuing quick commands, delivering callouts, and sharing crucial information. This highlights the growing importance of integrating collaborative and multilingual practices within broader linguistic competence for effective communication in online gaming environments.

Peterson (2010) suggests that gameplay offers learners exposure to the target language (TL) within an authentic communicative environment, fostering practice in all four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Network communication tools within games further enhance this experience by providing frequent opportunities for real-time interaction that necessitates the active use and reuse of the TL. Building on Peterson’s (2010) emphasis on online player communication, Eripvi further argues for video games’ inherent authenticity. She highlights the presence of “true-to-life situations” and emphasizes the “authentic language” provided through in-game subtitles and dialogues. Thus, due to the rapid development of video game quality, players and games give enough space to practice speaking and listening skills. The present study’s findings confirm these views of games.

### ***What Processes of Video Game Play Support English Language Learning?***

This subsection is intended to meticulously analyze the relations between players in online video games. Most participants mentioned that online games, such as *Overwatch*, help them communicate with other players during the game matches by exchanging information,

giving callouts, and casually talking. Therefore, two types of communication occur during online games: objective intended and casual communication.

**Objective Intended Communication.** The participants of this study stressed the importance of communication between teammates in video games. They emphasized how information exchange can contribute to the outcome of game matches in FPS (First-Person Shooter) games. This finding aligns with Rusk and Ståhl's (2020) findings, which suggest that communication efficiency is one of the fundamental principles in FPS games. Players prioritize the verbal communication channel, highlighting callouts' perceived value and centrality within the gameplay experience. As Rusk and Ståhl (2022) note, callouts in FPS games typically refer to map locations, aiding teammates in identifying enemy positions. The main objective of FPS games is to win over opposing teams, which can be achieved via proper communication and instant callouts. The current study's findings support this view, noting that language discrepancies can hinder communication within video games. Harliona's observations highlight significant variations in map location terminology, confirming Crabretti's statement that players using different game languages might struggle to communicate due to differences in the names of the game terminology. This study highlights another obstacle that can prevent gamers from being as effective in the gaming environment. This result is consistent with the findings of Rusk and Ståhl's research (2022), which argues that for players to be regarded as proficient by their peers while communicating outside of their assigned team, they must possess communicative competency, as demonstrated by their knowledge of gaming language. It also aligns with Gee's (2007) principle of Cross-Functional Teams, which again prioritizes coherent teamwork and soft power to achieve desirable outcomes. Consequently, Harliona's decision to play these communication-centric video games in English becomes logical. By opting for English, Harliona

bypasses language barriers, facilitating faster information exchange than playing the same games using Russian callouts. This decision may guarantee that Harliona invests everything to win in video games and contributes valuable information to her peers.

**Feedback.** The study findings show participants experienced negative and corrective feedback while playing online games. According to the participants, negative feedback consists of jokes and mocking, signaling that their utterances are incorrect and need to be reformulated. In contrast, corrective feedback is based on rational and constructive spelling, pronunciation, and grammar explanations. As mentioned in the literature review, communication with native speakers in video games fosters an environment conducive to second language (L2) acquisition. This is because players receive corrective feedback during communication, which draws their attention to specific areas needing improvement in their spoken language (Peterson, 2010). A previously unidentified aspect of this literature review is the potential for negative feedback arising in response to incorrect linguistic output. This phenomenon may simply arise from the inherent limitations of online video game environments. Unlike formal learning settings, other players lack the pedagogical expertise to guide and motivate new language learners to correct their errors.

When encountering unclear or incorrect utterances, other players, lacking formal pedagogical training, may resort to harsh methods to respond to the learner's mistakes. This might involve modifying their gameplay actions or employing alternative phrasings within the game itself. The learner's response to this informal feedback can be either discouraging or encouraging, depending on their interpretation of the message. Video game environments prioritize rapid communication for strategic purposes. This inherent characteristic can lead to harsh peer comments regarding the learner's low English proficiency or clarity. While such

feedback might be perceived as rational by players focused on winning matches or completing objectives, it can increase frustration or anxiety in learners with limited language skills. Thus, those who ignore such comments may feel more relaxed in the use of the language, while others may feel nervous, avoid communication, or even quit games that involve team play.

**Learning Process.** The study findings revealed that participants enjoyed their English language learning experience through video games, noting that this way of learning is more enjoyable in comparison to traditional language learning methods. The enjoyment of participants lies in the fact that they are learning vocabulary and practicing linguistic skills in topics that are interesting to them. The participants' sense of enjoyment may be caused by the absence of control, where their actions and choices are the outcomes, they get through the game. This study aligns with previous research highlighting the autonomy inherent in video game language learning environments (Bakar & Nosratirad, 2013; Chik, 2013). Participants in both studies reported enjoying the freedom and control over their learning experience. This includes the absence of teacher-directed instruction and the flexibility to explore the language at their own pace, fostering a sense of independence. Bakar and Nosratirad (2013) point out that when there is no pressure from teachers, especially adult learners, they can learn independently. As Chik (2013) suggests, gamers can control when, where, and what they learn, potentially mitigating feelings of the frustration associated with traditional, structured learning environments. Yet, the current study participants find video games more as a supplemental activity than a replacement for conventional learning, suggesting that video games provide enough space to practice linguistic skills through games and with other gamers.

This finding was unexpected and suggests that Harliona's unique condition (ADHD) highlights a potential benefit of video game-based language learning for individuals with

attention difficulties. While not explicitly mentioned, Harliona's reported struggles in traditional classroom settings suggest that such environments structured, and potentially less engaging nature may have hindered their language acquisition. Conversely, video games provided a dynamic and interactive learning environment that aligns better with Harliona's learning style, facilitating vocabulary acquisition and language comprehension in a more stimulating manner.

### **RQ3: What are the perceived limitations of using video games for language learning?**

Based on young adult participants' experiences, this study identified both positive and negative aspects of video game language learning. While some participants saw no drawbacks, others highlighted limitations in vocabulary acquisition and spoken fluency development.

The participants' experiences highlight the potential tension between vocabulary acquisition and gameplay enjoyment, limited vocabulary range, and speaking fluency. Spending excessive time translating unfamiliar words can disrupt the flow and pleasure of the gaming experience. This phenomenon can be further understood by drawing parallels to second language acquisition. If the game content and language are overly complex, grasping new vocabulary and contextualizing them within specific game scenarios becomes a significant challenge. This aligns with Krashen's (1977) input hypothesis, which suggests that language acquisition thrives when learners are exposed to input slightly beyond their current level ( $i+1$ ). However, interpreting meaning through guessing and context hints becomes considerably more complicated when game language is far beyond the gamer's knowledge ( $i+10$ ). Consequently, situated meaning that is specific to the game context becomes relatively more difficult to understand than general vocabulary. Thus, players are forced not only to translate unfamiliar words through dictionaries and translators but also to guess which meaning suits the game context.

Kiani's experience highlights a crucial disconnect between vocabulary comprehension and spoken fluency development in video game language learning. While video games can expose players to new vocabulary and enhance reading skills, they may not adequately address the anxieties associated with spoken language production. This phenomenon aligns with research on foreign language anxiety (FLA), which suggests that learners might possess the grammatical knowledge and vocabulary to understand a language yet still experience apprehension when speaking it (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). The pressure of real-time conversation, unfamiliar accents, and the fear of making mistakes can all contribute to this anxiety, hindering spoken fluency despite potential vocabulary knowledge gained through video games.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter provided detailed information on significant findings in relation to the existing literature, research questions, and conceptual framework. The results suggest a compelling interplay between motivation, language development, and inherent features of the video game environment. The desire for an authentic gaming experience emerged as a key motivator. Participants prioritized the English language to grasp the game's core meaning and the challenges intended by the developers. Therefore, players' conscious selection of English highlights their agency in shaping their gaming experience. Moreover, despite having their native language as an option, they preferred English voice and text. This reflects a negotiation between their desire for optimal gameplay. The language helps gamers to achieve desirable goals in online video games by communicating with peers and exchanging information within the game. Communication in online games can be a crucial factor in achieving objectives. Thus, proper communication with a team may stimulate language learners to use language in order to reach agreement with each other. Choosing English as a primary game language exposes players to

new vocabulary, grammar, and idioms, potentially leading to incidental language learning, even if it was not the primary goal. Games create contexts where meaning is constructed through textual and visual elements (Gee, 2007). Thus, players actively associate these “situated meanings” with the imagery and experiences within the game world that help them learn vocabulary faster. However, these situated meanings can be perceived as a limitation, stopping learners from acquiring vocabulary effortlessly and turning gameplay into a tedious translation of unfamiliar words. The following chapter wraps up the study’s key findings, discusses its limitations in the research design, and proposes areas for future research.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

This study was designed to explore young adults' perspectives towards video games as an English language learning tool. The research was underpinned by a qualitative case study, which aimed to investigate video games' perceived benefits and limitations as an alternative to formal education. The study involved six young adults from different parts of CIS who participated in semi-structured individual interviews, providing rich and diverse insights.

This chapter consists of three parts that will draw upon the main conclusions of this study. First, it presents the major findings of the study. Following this, the study's limitations in relation to the methodological approach will be discussed. The last part provides the implications and recommendations to stakeholders, namely, gamers, parents, teachers, and scholars interested in further inquiry.

### **Main Findings of the Study**

In this research, the first research question that was investigated was: Why do young adults choose to play games in the English language? The results show that intrinsic and integrative motivation were significant drivers for choosing English as a game language. The results indicate that the participants chose English as their primary language to better integrate into the gaming community and have more pleasing gaming experiences. Participants argued that localization of video games may omit or misinterpret the initial meaning of the game plot, dialogues, and in-game documents due to language differences. Apart from this, several participants who found localized versions of the game inconvenient additionally stated that their initiative was to play in English and learn a language. Thus, by choosing English in games, participants could understand the implied meanings of the game developers and have incidental language learning through picking up new words and phrases. Finally, the results show that the

participants chose English to communicate better with other players since many referred to FPS and online games as their most played games. In FPS and online games, communication with other peers in a team plays a significant role in reaching game objectives. However, some participants expressed their dual preference in language selection based on their game type. Thus, based on in-game language complexity, participants prefer to play in their native language.

The second research question was intended to identify the benefits of developing linguistic skills through video games noticed by the participants. The results corroborate those participants gained knowledge in various aspects (vocabulary, listening, speaking, and reading). For instance, most participants reported learning new vocabulary through encountering unknown words during the gameplay. One could use the vocabulary in offline contexts, like in an English language test. Moreover, other participants noted that “they are forced to read a lot” to understand some aspects of the game and, through time, could identify the meanings of the words without looking at the dictionary. The study showed that gamers who played with others improved their listening and speaking skills. The main conclusion that can be drawn is that video games can be a strong tool for learning to listen in a natural way because they involve real-life situations and authentic language. In addition, these findings provide more information about how the participants encountered challenges in understanding other players’ accents. The findings suggest that participants could develop speaking skills through interaction with other players in online games. More specifically, they referred to FPS games as one of the ways to have speaking practice. These findings correlate with earlier research; however, the literature suggests that MMORPG games like World of Warcraft were beneficial for speaking and listening. The current study showed that FPS games can be as effective as MMORPGs if gamers integrate themselves into the teamwork environment and are open to communication.

The current findings clearly support the relevance of communication with others. Importantly, the results provide evidence that gamers' initial objective was to win the game or to complete missions, yet to achieve that, they were forced to communicate through voice and text chats. The present study confirms previous findings and contributes additional evidence that suggests communication is a crucial process to acquiring the English language through other players and developing skills. Thus, players accidentally learn new words from their peers and build communication and negotiation skills. This study has demonstrated, for the first time, that feedback from peers might be constructive and negative, meaning that other players may comment negatively on incorrect utterances and grammatical structures. This result casts a new light on understanding how learners perceive negative feedback in gaming environments and how to self-correct.

Despite the negative feedback, participants in this study overwhelmingly reported positive experiences, finding the process of gaming and language learning enjoyable. This not only underscores the potential of video games as a tool for English language acquisition but also instills a sense of hope and optimism in the potential of this approach. Several participants noted acquiring learning strategies and vocabulary expansion through encountering unfamiliar words. Additionally, some participants highlighted their pre-existing learning difficulties that hindered traditional methods, emphasizing the value of video games in providing an engaging alternative for English language acquisition.

Nevertheless, some also pointed out the drawbacks of video games as an English language learning tool. While some did not see any disadvantages, others talked about how the gaming experience turned out to be a simple dictionary search, which did not bring enjoyment and fun. Some claimed that video games, despite their benefits to listening and reading

development, could not help them speak fluently. Thus, diverse-level speakers may have differences in language acquisition through the game since the language in games can be complex and contain many unknown words. It may discourage some learners from continuing the game in a specific language or even quitting it altogether. The main conclusion that can be drawn is that playing video games in English may be beneficial for those whose level of English has a sustainable foundation. In their nature, commercial video games are not designed to be educational; on the contrary, they are mainly used for entertainment. Yet, some found their benefits as an informal learning tool that helps them to learn new vocabulary and practice the language without language instructors.

### **Limitations**

The current study has several noteworthy limitations. Firstly, the sample size of six young adults restricts the generalizability of the findings to the broader gaming population. Secondly, the existing research on commercial video games for language learning may not be fully comprehensive, potentially impacting the depth of understanding of the topic. Thirdly, limitations exist within the data collection process. My inexperience in selecting appropriate instruments may have hindered my ability to explore the topic thoroughly. Fourthly, inherent subjectivity is present as a qualitative study focused on experiences and perspectives. Finally, my own video game knowledge and experience could have introduced bias during data selection, potentially favoring information that aligns with the main argument.

### **Recommendations**

The study offers insights applicable to various stakeholders. Parents can leverage these findings to understand the potential benefits of video games in controlled settings. Games can provide enjoyment and serve as tools for language acquisition and communication skill

development. This knowledge can help dispel negative stereotypes associated with video games, allowing parents to encourage appropriate gaming habits that promote fun and learning.

Given the popularity of video games among young people, educators can utilize this study to explore the integration of games into the classroom. Teachers can create engaging and motivating learning environments by identifying suitable games and developing strategies for curriculum incorporation. For example, games like *Jackbox* or *Gartic Phone* could enhance student attention and foster interest in learning English.

For gamers hesitant to play in English, this study provides valuable information about the experiences of their peers. By selecting English as their primary language setting, gamers can actively develop their language skills and potentially create personalized learning styles. Additionally, gamers already practicing English through video games can compare their experiences with the participants and identify areas for further language development.

### **Future Researcher Directions**

The current study offers several avenues for future research. Firstly, employing pre- and post-tests in an empirical study with a larger sample of young adults could quantify language acquisition through gameplay. This would allow researchers to identify patterns and explain why some gamers succeed in language learning through video games compared to others. Additionally, investigating a wider variety of game genres could reveal which genres are most effective for language acquisition. Secondly, future research could explore the experiences of different age groups. Examining teenage children, for example, could provide valuable insights into language learning through video games during a critical developmental period. Thirdly, the present study focused on English language acquisition. Investigating the impact of other languages on gamers would broaden our understanding of how video games can facilitate

language learning in general. This could reveal potential differences in the learning process for various languages. Finally, the participants' statement about developing learning strategies in virtual environments suggests a need for further research in this area. Exploring how these strategies differ from traditional methods employed in language learning could provide valuable insights for educators and game developers.

### **Final Reflection**

Before conducting this research, I was unaware that many linguistic processes and concepts lie in video games. By stepping out of my gamer self and investigating this topic as a researcher, I fell in love with video games and the interactions happening there once again. I had inner joy writing this thesis despite the ups and downs and times when I felt blank. This research helped me to look at video games from a completely different angle, one that I had never been aware of before. I gained a lot of insights thanks to the participants, and some of them even influenced me to try new games I had never played before.

This topic is very special to me since it directly reflects my learning experience and the journey that I have gone through. The initial goal of this research was to prove that long hours spent in front of a computer, playing games, and finding long-distance fellow gamers who became my closest friends paid off. First, I wanted to prove to myself that my experience is not a particular case, and many have similar experiences that I can relate to. I also wanted to prove it to my dear mother, who was skeptical about games and saw them as useless time killers. I clearly remember when my mother berated me for spending more time on video games rather than spending time outside with other kids or doing homework. I cannot judge her for caring and desiring me to become knowledgeable. Yet, one of the reasons why I am who I am is that I am

interested in video games, their plots, stories, and the communities around them (I may sound fanatic or obsessed, but it is a part of my identity).

As a future parent, I want to rid my children of the stigma my parents have and let them choose what they wish to do since choice is what makes games beneficial. As a future researcher and teacher, I want to find a way for students to use their beloved games in a classroom and have fun while learning a language. I hope my little dream will come true one day.

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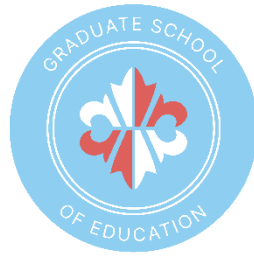
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## Appendices



### **Thesis Title: Gaming and Learning: Young Adults' Perceptions of Video Games as an English Language Learning Tool**

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#### **Appendix A Declaration of the Use of Generative AI**

I hereby declare that I have read and understood NUGSE's policy concerning appropriate use of AI and composed this work independently (please check one):

- with the use of artificial intelligence tools, or  
 without the use of artificial intelligence tools.

---

(If you have used AI tools as defined in the GSE policy document, please complete the rest of this form.)

During the preparation of this thesis/examination, I used Quilbot, Grammarly, Typeset, SonixAI, and Gemini to paraphrase, correct grammar, find literature, transcribe recordings, and proofread texts<sup>1</sup>.

I also declare that I

- am aware of the capabilities and limitations of AI tool(s),  
 have verified that the content generated by AI systems and adopted by me is factually correct,  
 am aware that as the author of this thesis I bear full responsibility for the statements and assertions made in it,  
 have submitted complete and accurate information about my use of AI tools in this work, and  
 acknowledge that there may be disciplinary consequences if I have not followed NUGSE's guidelines regarding AI appropriate use.

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of REASON: brainstorm ideas / find or select sources on a topic / paraphrase / structure and organize the written text / edit the text for clarity and grammar / ask for tips to improve coherence / cite and reference sources

Name: Dastan Seitpakov

Date: 30.05.24

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, cursive letters that appear to be 'D. S.' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

## **Appendix B Interview Protocol**

### **Gaming and Learning: Young Adults' Perceptions of Video Games as an English Language Learning Tool**

**Interviewer:** Dastan Seitpakov

**Interviewee:** Participant 1

**Duration of the interview:** 30 – 40 minutes

My name is Dastan Seitpakov, I will facilitate this individual semi-structured interview.

This project seeks young adults' perspectives and experiences about English language learning through video games. As a researcher, I will value your insights, experiences, and perspectives. I want to know your stance towards video games and how your experience in gaming developed your language skills.

#### **Participant involvement**

You will be requested to provide your signature on a consent form granting permission for the audio recording of the interview. The interview will be approximately 30 minutes in duration.

The participant was chosen based on the exclusion criteria: 1) have at least one year of experience in video games; 2) be over the age of 18.

#### **Anonymity and Confidential**

The confidentiality of the information obtained will be strictly maintained, and participation in the study is entirely voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any point if any discomfort arises. Following the interview, respondents' answers will not be disclosed to anyone, and the researcher will analyze the data collected, with coding measures employed to protect the confidentiality of the data.

### Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me something about your background?
  - a. What is your educational background?
  - b. What is your professional background?
2. How long have you been playing video games?
  - a. What was the first game that you played?
3. What are your favorite game genres?
  - a. Do you have a specific example of a game you like most?
4. Where do you usually play video games?
5. How much time do you spend on video games?
6. In what language do you usually play video games?
  - a. Why do you choose to play video games in that language?
7. What do you think are the benefits of using games for English language learning?
  - a. How do you think video games have affected your language skills?
    - i. Can you give me some specific examples of how video games helped you learn English?
  - b. How do you think video games have affected your speaking and listening skills?
  - c. How do you think video games have affected your reading and vocabulary?
8. Do games provide you an opportunity to learn the English language?
  - a. How do you think video games compare to other language learning methods, such as traditional classroom instruction or online language learning courses?
9. What types of games do you usually play online?
10. How often do you communicate with other players in online games?
  - a. What form of conversation do you have with others?
11. Do players help you to practice your English?

12. Did you have negative experiences with players?
13. Do you think that interacting with other players is important?
14. How does playing and interacting in English with other game players help you learn English?
  - a. What are some specific examples of how playing and interacting in English with other game players has helped you improve your English skills?
15. What challenges have you faced in playing and interacting in English with other game players?
  - a. How did you overcome those challenges?
16. What do you think are the limitations of using games for English language learning?

That was the last question. Thank you for taking the time to interview me. I believe that your data will definitely help me in my research!

## **Сұхбат Хаттама**

### **Ойындар және Оқыту: Жастардың Видео Ойындарды Тіл Үйрену Құралы ретінде Қабылдауы**

**Сұхбат беруші:** Дастан Сейтпаков

**Сұхбат алушы:** Қатысушы 1

**Сұхбат ұзақтығы:** 30 – 40 минут

Менің атым Дастан Сейтпаков, мен бұл жеке жартылай құрылымды сұхбатты жеңілдетемін. Бұл жоба жастардың бейне ойындар арқылы ағылшын тілін үйренуге қатысты көзқарастары мен тәжірибелерін іздейді. Зерттеуші ретінде мен сіздің түсініктеріңізді, тәжірибелеріңізді және көзқарастарыңызды бағалаймын. Мен сіздің бейне ойындарға деген көзқарасыңызды және сіздің ойын тәжірибеңіз сіздің тілдік дағдыларыңызды қалай дамытқанын білгім келеді.

#### **Қатысушыларды тарту**

Сізден сұхбаттың аудиожазбасын жүргізуге рұқсат беретін келісім бланкісіне өз қолыңызды қою сұралады. Сұхбаттың ұзақтығы шамамен 30 минутты құрайды.

Қатысушы алып тастау критерийлері бойынша таңдалды: 1) бейне ойындарда кемінде бір жыл тәжірибесі бар; 2) 18 жастан асқан болу.

#### **Анонимділік және Құпиялылық**

Алынған ақпараттың құпиялылығы қатаң сақталады және зерттеуге қатысу толығымен ерікті болып табылады, егер қандай да бір ыңғайсыздық туындаса, кез келген уақытта бас тарту мүмкіндігі бар. Сұхбаттан кейін респонденттердің жауаптары ешкімге жария етілмейді және зерттеуші деректердің құпиялылығын қорғау үшін кодтау шараларын қолдана отырып, жиналған деректерді талдайды.

### Сұхбат Сұрақтары

1. Маған өткеніңіз туралы бірдеңе айта аласыз ба?
  - a. Сіздің біліміңіз қандай?
  - b. Сіздің кәсіби біліміңіз қандай?
2. Сіз қанша уақыттан бері бейне ойындар ойнап жүрсіз?
  - a. Сіз ойнаған алғашқы ойын Қандай болды?
3. Сіздің сүйікті ойын жанрларыңыз қандай?
  - a. Сізге ең ұнайтын ойынның нақты мысалы бар ма?
4. Сіз әдетте бейне ойындарды қай жерде ойнайсыз?
5. Видео ойындарға қанша уақыт жұмсайсыз?
6. Сіз әдетте видео ойындарды қай тілде ойнайсыз?
  - a. Неліктен сіз осы тілде бейне ойындар ойнауды таңдайсыз?
7. Ағылшын тілін үйрену үшін ойындарды пайдаланудың қандай пайдасы бар деп ойлайсыз?
  - a. Сіздің ойыңызша, видео ойындар сіздің тілдік дағдыларыңызға қалай әсер етті?
    - i. Видео ойындардың ағылшын тілін үйренуге қалай көмектескені туралы нақты мысалдар келтіре аласыз ба?
  - b. Сіздің ойыңызша, видео ойындар сіздің сөйлеу және тыңдау дағдыларыңызға қалай әсер етті?
  - c. Видео ойындар сіздің оқуыңызға және сөздік қорыңызға қалай әсер етті деп ойлайсыз?
8. Ойындар сізге ағылшын тілін үйренуге мүмкіндік бере ме?

- a. Сіздің ойыңызша, видео ойындар дәстүрлі аудиториялық оқыту немесе онлайн тіл үйрену курстары сияқты тіл үйренудің басқа әдістерімен қалай салыстырылады?
9. Сіз әдетте онлайн режимінде қандай ойын түрлерін ойнайсыз?
10. Онлайн ойындарда басқа ойыншылармен қаншалықты жиі сөйлесесіз?
  - a. Сіз басқа адамдармен қандай формада сөйлесесіз?
11. Ойыншылар сізге ағылшын тілін үйренуге көмектесе ме?
12. Сізде ойыншылармен жағымсыз тәжірибе болды ма?
13. Басқа ойыншылармен қарым-қатынас жасау маңызды деп ойлайсыз ба?
14. Ағылшын тілінде басқа ойыншылармен ойнау және қарым-қатынас жасау ағылшын тілін үйренуге қалай көмектеседі?
  - a. Ағылшын тілінде ойнау және басқа ойыншылармен қарым-қатынас жасау сіздің ағылшын тілін меңгеруіңізді жақсартуға қалай көмектескенінің нақты мысалдары қандай?
15. Ағылшын тілінде басқа ойыншылармен ойнау және қарым-қатынас жасау кезінде қандай қиындықтарға тап болдыңыз?
  - a. Сіз бұл қиындықтарды қалай жеңдіңіз?
16. Ағылшын тілін үйрену үшін ойындарды пайдаланудың қандай шектеулері бар деп ойлайсыз?

Бұл соңғы сұрақ болды. Менімен сұхбаттасуға уақыт бөлгеніңіз үшін рахмет. Сіздің деректеріңіз менің зерттеулерімде міндетті түрде көмектеседі деп сенемін!

## **Протокол Интервью**

### **Игры и обучение: Восприятие молодыми взрослыми видеоигр как инструмента изучения английского языка**

**Интервьюер:** Дастан Сейтпаков

**Интервьюируемый:** Участник 1

**Продолжительность интервью:** 30 - 40 минут

Меня зовут Дастан Сейтпаков, я буду проводить это индивидуальное полуструктурированное интервью. В рамках этого проекта мы хотим узнать мнение и опыт молодых людей об изучении английского языка с помощью видеоигр. Как исследователь, я ценю ваше понимание, опыт и взгляды. Я хочу знать, как вы относитесь к видеоиграм и как ваш игровой опыт развил ваши языковые навыки.

#### **Вовлеченность участника**

Вам будет предложено поставить свою подпись под формой согласия, дающей разрешение на аудиозапись интервью. Интервью будет длиться около 30 минут.

Участник был выбран на основе критериев исключения: 1) иметь опыт работы в видеоиграх не менее одного года; 2) быть старше 18 лет.

#### **Анонимность и конфиденциальность**

Конфиденциальность полученной информации будет строго соблюдаться, а участие в исследовании является полностью добровольным, с возможностью отказаться от него в любой момент, если возникнет дискомфорт. После проведения интервью ответы респондентов не будут разглашаться никому, а исследователь

проанализирует собранные данные, при этом для защиты конфиденциальности данных будут применены меры кодирования.

### **Вопросы Интервью**

1. Можете ли вы рассказать мне что-нибудь о своей биографии?
  - a. Какое у вас образование?
  - b. Каков ваш профессиональный опыт?
2. Как давно вы играете в видеоигры?
  - a. Какая была первая игра, в которую вы играли?
3. Какие жанры игр вам нравятся больше всего?
  - a. Есть ли у вас конкретный пример игры, которая вам больше всего нравится?
4. Где вы обычно играете в видеоигры?
5. Сколько времени вы тратите на видеоигры?
6. На каком языке вы обычно играете в видеоигры?
  - a. Почему вы предпочитаете играть в видеоигры на этом языке?
7. Как вы думаете, какие преимущества дает использование игр для изучения английского языка?
  - a. Как, по вашему мнению, видеоигры повлияли на ваши языковые навыки?
    - i. Можете ли вы привести конкретные примеры того, как видеоигры помогли вам в изучении английского языка?
  - b. Как, по-вашему, видеоигры повлияли на ваши навыки говорения и аудирования?
  - c. Как, по вашему мнению, видеоигры повлияли на ваше чтение и словарный запас?
8. Дают ли вам игры возможность изучать английский язык?

- a. Как вы думаете, чем видеоигры отличаются от других методов изучения языка, таких как традиционное обучение в классе или онлайн-курсы?
9. В какие игры вы обычно играете онлайн?
10. Как часто вы общаетесь с другими игроками в онлайн-играх?
  - a. В какой форме вы общаетесь с другими игроками?
11. Помогают ли вам игроки практиковать английский язык?
12. Был ли у вас негативный опыт общения с игроками?
13. Считаете ли вы, что общение с другими игроками очень важно?
14. Как игра и общение на английском языке с другими игроками помогает вам изучать английский язык?
  - a. Назовите конкретные примеры того, как игра и общение на английском языке с другими игроками помогли вам улучшить свои знания английского языка?
15. С какими трудностями вы столкнулись, играя и общаясь на английском языке с другими игроками?
  - a. Как вы преодолели эти трудности?
16. Какие, по вашему мнению, существуют ограничения в использовании игр для изучения английского языка?

Это был последний вопрос. Спасибо, что нашли время взять у меня интервью. Я верю, что ваши данные обязательно помогут мне в моем исследовании!

## **Appendix C Announcement on the Server**

### **Gaming and Learning: Young Adults' Perceptions of Video Games as an English Language Learning Tool**

@everyone Hello! My name is Dastan Seitpakov, I am a researcher and a second-year student from Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education.

The reason for writing this announcement is that I am seeking participants for my research, which is intended to investigate the perceptions and experiences of young adults using video games to learn the English language. The participation format is face-to-face online interviews, which will take around 30 minutes. The interviews will be audio/video taped, yet you can request the interview without audio and videotaping. The interview will be transcribed, and personal data will be replaced by nicknames and/or disguised.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose to stop participating at any stage of the research, and your data will not be used against your will. The interview will take place at a time and format that is convenient for you. Your participation will be kept confidential to the extent possible. The data will be used for scholarly research purposes and conference presentations.

Please let me know if you need detailed information about this research, procedures, and your rights as a research participant. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. If you agree to participate in my research, write to my direct messages, and I will provide you with more information about the study, the research team, and the details about the interview.

I look forward to your participation in this research!

## Серверде хабарландыру

### Ойындар және Оқыту: Жастардың Видео Ойындарды Тіл Үйрену Құралы ретінде Қабылдауы

@everyone Сәлеметсіз бе! Менің атым Дастан Сейтпақов, мен Назарбаев Университетінің жоғары білім беру мектебінің екінші курс студентімін.

Бұл хабарландыруды жазудың себебі-мен зерттеу үшін қатысушыларды іздеймін, оның мақсаты ағылшын тілін үйрену үшін бейне ойындарды қолданатын жастардың қабылдауы мен тәжірибесін зерттеу болып табылады. Қатысу форматы-бетпе-бет онлайн сұхбат, ол шамамен 30 минутты алады. Сұхбат аудио және бейне таспаға жазылады, бірақ сіз аудио және бейне жазбаларсыз сұхбат жүргізуді сұрай аласыз. Сұхбат кодталады және жеке деректер бүркеншік аттармен ауыстырылады және/немесе жасырылады. Бұл зерттеуге қатысу ерікті болып табылады. Сіз зерттеудің кез келген кезеңінде қатысудан бас тарта аласыз және сіздің деректеріңіз сіздің еркіңізге қарсы пайдаланылмайды. Сұхбат Сізге ыңғайлы уақытта және ыңғайлы форматта өткізіледі. Сіздің қатысуыңыз мүмкіндігінше құпия болады. Алынған мәліметтер ғылыми зерттеулер мен конференциялардағы презентациялар үшін пайдаланылады.

Осы зерттеуге қатысушы ретінде осы зерттеу, процедуралар және Сіздің құқықтарыңыз туралы толық ақпарат қажет болса, маған хабарлаңыз. Егер сізде сұрақтар туындаса, маған хабарласыңыз. Егер сіз менің зерттеуіме қатысуға келіссеңіз, маған жеке хабарламалар жіберіңіз, Мен сізге зерттеу, зерттеу тобы және сұхбат жүргізу туралы толығырақ ақпарат беремін.

Мен сіздің осы зерттеуге қатысуыңызды асыға күтемін!

## **Анонс на сервере**

### **Игры и обучение: восприятие видеоигр молодыми людьми как инструмента изучения языка**

@everyone Здравствуйте! Меня зовут Дастан Сейтпаков, я научный сотрудник и студент второго курса Высшей школы образования Назарбаев Университета.

Причина написания данного объявления заключается в том, что я ищу участников для своего исследования, целью которого является изучение восприятия и опыта молодых людей, использующих видеоигры для изучения английского языка. Формат участия - очное онлайн-интервью, которое займет около 30 минут. Интервью будет записываться на аудио- и видеопленку, однако вы можете попросить провести интервью без аудио- и видеозаписи. Интервью будет расшифровано, а личные данные будут заменены на псевдонимы и/или замаскированы. Участие в данном исследовании является добровольным. Вы можете отказаться от участия на любом этапе исследования, и ваши данные не будут использованы против вашей воли. Интервью будет проводиться в удобное для Вас время и в удобном формате. Ваше участие будет максимально конфиденциальным. Полученные данные будут использованы для научных исследований и презентаций на конференциях.

Пожалуйста, сообщите мне, если Вам необходима подробная информация о данном исследовании, процедурах и Ваших правах как участника данного исследования. Если у Вас возникнут какие-либо вопросы, не стесняйтесь обращаться ко мне. Если Вы согласитесь принять участие в моем исследовании, напишите мне в личные сообщения, я предоставлю Вам более подробную

информацию об исследовании, исследовательской группе и деталях проведения интервью.

Я с нетерпением жду Вашего участия в этом исследовании!

## **Appendix D Sample of Transcription**

### **Gaming and Learning: Young Adults' Perceptions of Video Games as an English Language Learning Tool**

**Interviewer:** Dastan Seitpakov

**Interviewee:** Eripvi

**Duration of the interview:** 30 – 40 minutes

**The purpose of the study** aims to investigate the perceptions and experiences of young adults using video games to learn the English language. The study also aims to explore the perceived benefits and effectiveness of using computer games for language learning and English language maintenance and to identify the perceived impact of computer games on young adults' language development in listening, vocabulary, speaking, and reading.

**Researcher:** Can you tell me a little bit about your background?

**Eripvi:** Hello. I'm currently working as an English language teacher in state school in the Russian Federation. I've been working for four years now as a state school teacher. And I've been studying English for almost 20 years now. Studying English through the games, through the TV series, through the connection with people from in other countries and of course studying at the university and school.

**Researcher:** What's your educational background?

**Eripvi:** I have a bachelor's degree in pedagogics. And my actual degree is, like being a teacher of English and German language.

**Researcher:** How long have you been playing video games?

**Eripvi:** Or let me think? I'd say I've been playing video games, for almost 20 years, same as studying English cuz I started playing games when I was a little child.

**Researcher:** In what language do you usually play video games?

**Eripvi:** Now I played only in English. Just because I want to develop my listening skills. And I want to maybe fulfill my vocabulary. But I used to play in Russian because some of the games do really have a great Russian localization. But if the game was made not by Russians, or Russian speaking, developers, it's better to play in the original language. For example, you can't play Rockstar Games, because they're not localized. I mean, the voices are not localized. You just have the subtitles. What's the pleasure reading subtitles during the game? I don't get it. I know English. I think well enough to play the game without the subtitles just to understand the whole situation.

**Researcher:** You mentioned the reasons why you chose to play in English yet. So do you have any other reasons why you chose to play only in English language?

**Eripvi:** I think those that I mentioned before I talk two reasons. The first one is I want to develop my English skills. And the second one is just for me, it's better to play in the original. It's like reading a book in the original. Even if you try to translate or maybe. translation is not always the best way to understand things. Sometimes see in Russian language, we don't have the same things mentioned. For example, if you try to play Red Dead Redemption, the second, and it's the game about wild west. There is no such thing in Russia as wild west. And if you don't know the culture, if you don't know the historical moment. If you just don't understand the cultural background of the game, you won't understand it in even if you play in Russian. So I try to maybe study, immerse to study the culture to understand what's going on. playing in the original language, I think helps me a lot.

**Researcher:** In your opinion, are there any benefits of using games for English language learning?

**Eripvi:** Yeah, obviously they are, there are, cause it's not always for learning English, just through the game, game can connect you with some people. I had lots of examples. of connecting with Now I can call them friends from different countries. People who don't even speak English that good that well as I do. And games are connecting. So you can practice your English, not just through the game, but through the people. Those who you meet through the game. I think there are only benefits. There are no disadvantages. So besides learning English and learning the culture of English speaking country, there is a benefit to learn how to speak to people playing these games with you.

**Researcher:** Okay, and in your opinion, are there any limitations can or can you think of about any drawbacks or limitations of using English for language learning, specifically for language?

**Eripvi:** I can't even imagine one. Really, I think there are no limitations at all.

**Researcher:** What do you think video games, compared to other let's say language learning methods, such as traditional classroom instruction? Or let's say online language learning courses? How do they vary?

**Eripvi:** Learning English through the games is all about practical side of learning English. Because the way when you are in the classroom is now I'm just speaking as a teacher. When you're in the classroom, your task as a student is to learn English. First of all, to learn the grammar, and to learn the vocabulary. And after that, you have a chance, depending on the teacher, and on the circumstances, you have a chance to use those grammar structures that you've learned, those lexical units that you've learned, trying to model the conversation, maybe the dialogue, or trying to compose some sentences, or just drilling some exercises using some grammar structures. But when you're playing video games, it's like watching a movie. It's some kind of entertaining. Because studying is not

always an entertaining and not for everyone. And being a good teacher is always about to involve students, make him happy making, wanting to learn the language. But video games are the reason people learn languages freely and easily because they want to understand what's happening. And I think learning through the games, through entertainment, varies, from learning in the classroom, just because it's more entertaining, in my opinion. If I had a chance to teach English to my students through the Games. I mean, through the classical video games, like you play on PC, I'd be happy. But I have no chance to do that at school. And I try to use some simple games like, connect the words make a puzzle. And I see you when children because I teach only children. When children are playing games, they learn lexical units better than if they just look at the book and try to say, Aha, it's a bear. Aha, it's a lion on. So it's kind of more entertaining. It's just the best reason to use video games.

**Researcher:** Do you think video games have affected your speaking and listening skills?

**Eripvi:** As I told you, lots of games connect people to each other. And I'd say the first person, a foreign person, I spoke to an English was the guy I met in online game. So I went to after studying the university, I went to Ireland to practice my English there. It was the first time I saw a real person and talk to like, in real life in English. But if you speak about listening, it helped me a lot. Because developers try to make games authentic. They don't make games like the English exercises, students books, like "Open your books and listen to the dialogue" No. So you have very true to life situations. When people are screaming, talking too loud, or talking too fast. So it helped me a lot with my listening skills. And as I told you, games connected me with lots of people. And I had, obviously I had to speak to them. So I wouldn't say my speaking skills are the perfect ones, or the best ones. But it gave me kind of strength maybe. I believed in myself, when I started speaking to someone whose first language isn't English, same as me. And they were not from Russia. They were from, for example, from Sweden, or from France, I understood that my English is pretty

fine. I mean, those people were speaking to me in a good way. I'm not trying to insult anyone. They were speaking, they were speaking almost perfect English. And I understood that my accent is okay. Their accent is okay. It's okay to know more than one language. And it helped me a lot. I'd say it has a huge impact on my speaking and listening as well.

**Researcher:** Did video games affect your reading and vocabulary skills?

**Eripvi:** Ah, I don't think it's affected. The games affected my reading skills that much, because I read a lot during studying at the university. So if you count like in percentage, maybe like 20% I studied English, reading English, reading English, just through the video games. Some may be phrases, cool phrases, because I used to use subtitles to understand what are they saying? What are we trying to mean? And maybe like 80% through my own studying. But if you ask about writing our vocabulary, you asked about my vocabulary? Yeah, it helped me a lot because the games are in different genres. So I know how to say various words, which are not usable in everyday life. Say, in English, for example, some name of the potions, or maybe you name of the skills that some of the characters use. But even though those words are not usable in everyday life, games that are let me say like true to life, such as GTA, maybe they gave me an opportunity to learn everyday English, which people use on an everyday basis. Like, what's up? Hello? How's it going? I didn't get it from my university or school. I didn't get it from the students books. I got it from just the games. So I'd say you my vocabulary is full of words from the video games.

## Appendix E Informed Consent Form

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Gaming and Learning: Young adults' perceptions of video games as a language learning tool

**DESCRIPTION:** You are invited to participate in a **research study** on perceptions and experiences of young adults using video games to learn the English language. You will be asked to participate in an interview. During the interview the researcher will record video/audio to collect your data. After the interview, the recordings will be safely stored in devices with limited access known only for the researcher. By the end of this research project, collected data will be destroyed from all the devices.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** Your participation will take approximately 30 minutes.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** The risks associated with this study are no more than minimal. However, this topic may raise some sensitive issues for you connected with gaming activity (toxic activity in chats, unsuccessful experience). There are no direct benefits which may reasonably be expected to result from this study. Yet, you will have an opportunity to self-reflect about the impact of video games on your English language learning. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your employment or grades at university.

**PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS:** If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your **participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate.** You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION:

**Questions:** If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work: Associate Professor Bridget A. Goodman, [bridget.goodman@nu.edu.kz](mailto:bridget.goodman@nu.edu.kz), +7(702) 181-02-64

**Independent Contact:** If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee at ([email address TBC](#)).

Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;

- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## АҚПАРАТТАНДЫРЫЛҒАН КЕЛІСІМ НЫСАНЫ

Ойындар және оқыту: жастардың бейне ойындарды тіл үйрену құралы ретінде қабылдауы

**СИПАТТАМА:** ағылшын тілін үйрену үшін бейне ойындарды қолданатын жастардың қабылдауы мен тәжірибесін зерттейтін зерттеуге қатысуға шақырамыз. Сізден сұхбатқа қатысу сұралады, оның барысында сұхбат беруші бірнеше қосымша сұрақтар қояды. Сұхбат барысында зерттеуші сіздің деректеріңізді жинау үшін бейне және аудио жазбалар жүргізеді. Сұхбаттан кейін жазбалар тек зерттеушіге белгілі шектеулі құрылғыларда қауіпсіз сақталады. Зерттеу жобасының соңында жиналған деректер барлық құрылғылардан жойылады.

**УАҚЫТ ШЫҒЫНДАРЫ:** сіздің қатысуыңыз шамамен 30 минутты алады

Тәуекелдер мен артықшылықтар: осы зерттеуге байланысты тәуекелдер ең аздан аспайды. Алайда, бұл тақырып ойын әрекеттеріне байланысты кейбір сезімтал сұрақтарды тудыруы мүмкін (чаттардағы улы белсенділік, сәтсіз тәжірибе). Бұл зерттеуден ақылға қонымды түрде күтуге болатын пайда тікелей болжанбайды. Дегенмен, сізде бейне ойындардың ағылшын тілін үйренуге әсерін өз бетіңізше талдау мүмкіндігі болады. Осы зерттеуге қатысу немесе қатыспау туралы шешіміңіз сіздің жұмысқа орналасуыңызға немесе университеттегі үлгеріміңізге әсер етпейді.

**ҚАТЫСУШЫ ҚҰҚЫҚТАРЫ:** егер сіз осы нысанды оқып, осы жобаға қатысуға шешім қабылдасаңыз, сіздің қатысуыңыз ерікті екенін және сіздің келісіміңізді қайтарып алуға немесе кез келген уақытта айыппұлсыз немесе басқа жағдайда алуға құқығыңыз бар жеңілдіктерді жоғалтпай қатысуды тоқтатуға құқығыңыз бар екенін түсініңіз. Балама-қатысудан бас тарту. Сіз нақты сұрақтарға жауап беруден бас

тартуға құқығыңыз бар. Бұл зерттеудің нәтижелері ғылыми немесе кәсіби кездесулерде ұсынылуы немесе ғылыми журналдарда жариялануы мүмкін.

### **БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТЫ:**

**Сұрақтар:** егер сізде осы зерттеу, оның процедуралары, тәуекелдері мен артықшылықтары туралы сұрақтарыңыз, алаңдаушылықтарыңыз немесе шағымдарыңыз болса, осы студенттік жұмыс бойынша магистрлік диссертация жетекшісіне хабарласыңыз:

Қауымдастырылған Профессор Бриджит Гудман, [bridget.goodman@nu.edu.kz](mailto:bridget.goodman@nu.edu.kz), +7 (702) 181-02-64

**Тәуелсіз байланыс:** Егер сіз осы зерттеудің қалай жүргізілетініне қанағаттанбасаңыз немесе зерттеуге немесе қатысушы ретіндегі құқықтарыңызға қатысты қандай да бір алаңдаушылық, шағымдар немесе жалпы сұрақтарыңыз болса, *nu* зерттеу комитетіне хабарласыңыз (ТВС электрондық пошта мекенжайы).

Егер сіз осы зерттеуге қатысуға келіссеңіз, осы Келісім формасына қол қойыңыз.

- Мен ұсынылған ақпаратпен мұқият таныстым;
- Маған Зерттеудің мақсаты мен процедуралары туралы толық ақпарат берілді;
- Мен жиналған деректердің қалай пайдаланылатынын және кез келген құпия ақпарат тек зерттеушілерге көрінетінін және басқа ешкімге ашылмайтынын түсінемін;
- Мен себебін түсіндірместен кез келген уақытта зерттеуге қатысудан бас тарта алатынымды түсінемін;
- Жоғарыда айтылғандардың барлығын толық біле отырып, мен осы зерттеуге қатысуға өз еркіммен келісемін.

Қолы: \_\_\_\_\_

Күні: \_\_\_\_\_

## ФОРМА ИНФОРМИРОВАННОГО СОГЛАСИЯ

Игры и обучение: Восприятие молодыми людьми видеоигр как средства изучения языка

**ОПИСАНИЕ:** Приглашаем Вас принять участие в исследовании, посвященном восприятию и опыту молодых людей, использующих видеоигры для изучения английского языка. Вам будет предложено принять участие в интервью, в ходе которого интервьюер задаст несколько дополнительных вопросов. Во время интервью исследователь будет вести видео- и аудиозапись для сбора ваших данных. После интервью записи будут надежно сохранены на устройствах с ограниченным доступом, известным только исследователю. К концу исследовательского проекта собранные данные будут уничтожены со всех устройств.

**ВРЕМЕННЫЕ ЗАТРАТЫ:** Ваше участие займет примерно 30 минут

**РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА:** Риски, связанные с данным исследованием, не более чем минимальны. Однако данная тема может вызвать некоторые чувствительные вопросы, связанные с игровой деятельностью (токсичная активность в чатах, неудачный опыт). Польза, которую можно обоснованно ожидать от данного исследования, напрямую не предполагается. Тем не менее, у вас будет возможность самостоятельно проанализировать влияние видеоигр на изучение английского языка. Ваше решение об участии или неучастии в данном исследовании не повлияет на вашу занятость или успеваемость в университете.

**ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКА:** Если вы прочитали эту форму и решили принять участие в данном проекте, пожалуйста, поймите, что ваше участие является добровольным и вы имеете право отозвать свое согласие или прекратить участие в любое время без штрафов или потери льгот, на которые вы имеете право в противном случае. Альтернативой является отказ от участия. Вы имеете право отказаться отвечать на конкретные вопросы. Результаты данного исследования могут быть представлены на научных или профессиональных встречах или опубликованы в научных журналах.

### КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:

**Вопросы:** Если у вас есть вопросы, опасения или жалобы по поводу данного исследования, его процедур, рисков и преимуществ, обратитесь к руководителю магистерской диссертации по данной студенческой работе:

Ассоциированный Профессор Бриджит Гудман, [bridget.goodman@nu.edu.kz](mailto:bridget.goodman@nu.edu.kz), +7(702) 181-02-64

**Независимый контакт:** Если Вы не удовлетворены тем, как проводится данное исследование, или у Вас есть какие-либо опасения, жалобы или общие вопросы относительно исследования или Ваших прав как участника, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с Исследовательским комитетом NUGSE по адресу (адрес электронной почты TBC).

Пожалуйста, подпишите эту форму согласия, если Вы согласны принять участие в данном исследовании.

- Я внимательно ознакомился с представленной информацией;

- Мне была предоставлена полная информация о цели и процедурах исследования;
- Я понимаю, как будут использоваться собранные данные, и что любая конфиденциальная информация будет видна только исследователям и не будет раскрыта никому другому;
- Я понимаю, что могу отказаться от участия в исследовании в любое время без объяснения причин;
- Полностью осознавая все вышесказанное, я по собственной воле соглашаюсь на участие в данном исследовании.

Подпись: \_\_\_\_\_

Дата: \_\_\_\_\_