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**Language Learning in Peer Interaction in
Online Video Games**
Bachelor's Diploma Thesis

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*I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently,
using only the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.*

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Author's signature

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Introduction	1
1 Learning in interaction and learnables.....	2
1.1 Learning in interaction.....	2
1.2 Learnables.....	3
1.3 Word search sequences.....	4
2 Minecraft and online interaction in games	5
2.1 Minecraft	6
2.2 Online Gaming	7
2.3 Online interaction	7
2.4 Review of research	8
3 Data and Method	9
3.1 Research Data	10
3.2 Conversation analysis (CA).....	11
3.3 CA procedure.....	12
4 Analysis	14
4.1 A learnable emerging from a verbal source.....	14
4.2 A learnable emerging from an in-game object	23
Discussion and Conclusion.....	28
Works Cited.....	32
Appendix	35
Abstract.....	36
Anotace	37

Introduction

Video games are a rapidly growing phenomenon in the pop culture. With the growth of internet and the development of other platforms like YouTube, Twitch or even Facebook gaming, video games and gaming communities have become more and more relevant. To be a gamer and a part of a gaming community, it is often mandatory to have at least minimum knowledge of a global language, which is generally believed to be the English language, since most of the games are developed in English. As a result, a lot of gamers claim that playing games have helped them improve their language skills. The claim is very common among gamers. This thesis elaborates this statement in that it aims to explore and describe the particular procedures that players use to learn English.

A video recording of two players interacting in a video game was selected and subjected to a detailed analysis. To support the claim, the aim of this thesis is to find out **how do players learn English in online interaction?**

The main body of the thesis is divided into two parts – theoretical and empirical. The first chapter focuses on outlining how learning is conceived in the work and introducing the phenomenon of learnables, describing how and from what sources they can emerge. For the final part of this chapter, word search sequences are defined.

The second chapter introduces what Minecraft is as a game. It is followed by a description of online games in general and explaining the tendency of players grouping up and collaborating in said games. The chapter then proceeds with defining online interaction and finishes with a review of research of already existing and relevant research to this work.

The third chapter gives an overview of the research data. It describes the video, the participants and why this particular video was chosen. It also briefly introduces the research method used for the analysis of this work which is Conversation Analysis (CA) and the process of conducting CA as well as the transcription process.

The fourth chapter is the empirical part of the thesis. It presents the five selected sequences and their detailed analysis. The chapter is divided into two parts depending on how a learnable emerges from an in-game interaction of the participants. The last part of the thesis sums up the findings and the conclusion is drawn based on the findings in the analysis.

1 Learning in interaction and learnables

This chapter deals with learning in interaction, then introduces the phenomenon of learnables, describing how and from which sources they can emerge. For the final part of this chapter, word search sequences are defined.

1.1 Learning in interaction

One way of defining learning is to understand it as a process in which a learner acquires a new understanding, knowledge, a skill, behaviour or values. As Majlesi and Broth point out, a concept that was previously unknown is only considered to be learnt only if the person shows evidence of learning by using the concept in new ways or situations (194). However, this thesis will be focused on a possibility of understanding or learning words in a specific situation, which is online interaction while playing a video game that may potentially lead to retaining learning effects. The extent of retaining newly gained information for future situations by the participants will not be the focus. It is important to note, that by taking an interest in how language learning can emerge during interactions while playing video games, this work deals with a concept that many other studies of language learning overlook and therefore there are not many articles that deal with learnables in online interaction. Considering this, what is done in the thesis applies more to microsocial focus (Saville-Troike and Barto 29). Specifically, it adheres to the tradition of conversational analysis, within which there are a number of perspectives on learning (Gardner). From the number of different perspectives, the concept of learnables, which are developed mainly by Ali Reza Majlesi et al., are selected.

According to Majlesi and Broth, language learning studies show that the process of language learning in a social setting is initiated by its participants. In other words, objects of learning are oriented to and negotiated by learners in interactions (194). For instance, Majlesi and Broth state that in second language classrooms, learnables “do not form part of a teacher's pedagogical pre-planned agenda but rather emerge entirely in and through interaction in the classroom, beginning in learners' own initiatives” (194). Essential to this thesis is how learnables emerge in interaction in video games and how do the participants orient to learnables in such type of interaction.

1.2 Learnables

Majlesi and Broth, in their work identified in three different pedagogical situations three types of learnables: A learnable emerging from a verbal source, a learnable emerging from a material source and a learnable emerging from a gestural source showing that a learnable “can be anything from verbal to embodied actions referring to concrete or abstract things” (204). They also came up with a sequential organization of learning projects that tremendously helps with an identification of a learnable:

As an activity of any kind is being developed,

1. a participant may orient to one of the constituent parts of that activity or something in the concrete social setting and make it relevant as unknown by referring to and inquiring about it.
2. If one or several others respond to such a contribution, a side sequence is interactionally initiated. The main activity is temporarily halted, and the initiator of the side sequence is cast as an unknowing participant.
3. The initiator of the side sequence (or others) now has the opportunity to confirm the source of what is unknown. The unknown is thus accountably achieved as a mutually recognized learnable.

4. If this happens, some knowing participants may provide a resource for unknowing participant(s) to understand the learnable.
5. If the participants (including the initiator of the side sequence) treat the learnable as
 - a. Not understood, the sequence may be recycled from 4.
 - b. Understood, the sequence moves on to
6. The emergent learning project as a side sequence ends and the main project may be resumed. (Majlesi and Broth 205)

The sequential organization of learning projects is relevant to this work since all of the mentioned steps can be observed in chapter 4 during the analysis of collected data which also shows that learnables mostly emerge from spontaneous inquiries by participants during their interaction and are not pre-planned. Any learnable, be it from a verbal, material or gestural source, is conditional to the interaction and emerges within a communicative project. The focus of the project is immediately centred on the emergent learnable and like any other communicative projects it is often the result of a joint effort of two or more individuals. In other words, “Emergent learning projects can be occasioned in and through interactional collaboration” (Majlesi and Broth 205). Kunitz, in her study also states that through the collaborative sequences, the participants discover and act on emergent and student-selected learnables (64).

1.3 Word search sequences

While Majlesi and Broth situated their research into a pedagogical situations, Svennevig’s article deals with language learning sequences in a workplace environment which he referred to as “language learning in the wild” (68). He notes that in the workplace environment, participants tend to avoid pointing out mistakes and let them pass without correcting them (68). However in some cases, participants do orient to missing words as

learnables for future situations. For his study, Svennevig uses “word search sequences” (69) to show how participants in the workplace environment orient to a new lexical item as a learnable.

Word search sequences start by a speaker showing a problem in continuing or finishing their turn in a conversation. This is usually displayed by verbal prompts like pauses in speech, hesitation sounds (eh, ehm) or even by an explicit verbal indication of trouble (What is it?). There are also gestural prompts such as putting up a thinking face or grasping in the air however this work does not deal with these prompts since the data is situated in an online interaction where the participants cannot see each other (See section 3.1 – Research data for more details). According to Svennevig, word searches are resolved in two ways. Either the speaker finds the word they were looking for or by another participant’s proposed solution. The solution is either accepted, often by repeating the word and adding a change-of-state token or rejected. Therefore a collaborative word search sequence consists of three parts. First, the turn where the speaker shows problems finding a word and possibly even address the other participant asking for assistance. Second, the addressed participant offers a solution and third, the solution is either accepted or rejected by the original speaker (69). Similarly to learnables emerging in pedagogical situations in Majlesi and Broth’s article, work search sequences also interrupt the current activity in order to identify a new lexical item and then resume the main activity after the problem was identified and dealt with. Word search sequences can also be observed in this thesis in the data analysis in Chapter 4.

2 Minecraft and online interaction in games

This chapter introduces Minecraft as a game. It is followed by a description of online games in general. The chapter then proceeds with describing online interaction and finishes with a review of research that contains a brief overview of already existing research. First, more specific publications are presented and in the end general publications focused on online interaction are described

2.1 Minecraft

Minecraft is a sandbox¹ video game developed by Mojang Studios. It is one of the most popular and successful online games ever created. There are numerous webpages that claim this. For instance, two webpages rank Minecraft in second place best-selling games of all time, bested only by the game Tetris (Sirani; Yaden). Mojang's Studio head, Helen Chang claims that over two hundred million copies of Minecraft were sold and one hundred and twenty-six million people are playing every month as of May 2020. It is a three dimensional open world survival game consisting of cube blocks which players can gather for raw materials and then craft tools, weapon, armour out of them to get better materials or build structures with countless decorative blocks. What one can build only depends on one's creativity, imagination and knowledge of the game. The final product can be anything from a shed near a lake to a giant monument. (Bebbington and Vellino 7) For example a Minecraft player named PippenFTS is working on a project to recreate the planet Earth in Minecraft on a 1:1 scale which should be possible with some modifications to the game that are allowed and welcome by the developers. The main goal for players of Minecraft is to survive in the world, mainly during the night when monsters start appearing. They also have to manage their health and hunger. In the data I analyze in this work, they work together to survive, negotiating their next steps using an audio channel. This interaction is crucial for a smooth gameplay and coordination, and at the same time, as I will show in section 4, they can learn a foreign language (English in this case) in which they interact.

¹ A sandbox game is a video game that gives a player a great degree of freedom and creativity to complete the tasks to complete a goal, if there is any goal. Some sandbox games do not have a goal at all.

2.2 Online Gaming

Online games, also MMOs (Massive Multiplayer Online Games), are programs that allow players to interact mainly through the internet with a game environment in most cases for entertainment, fun, competition or for educational purposes. In recent years, online games have become increasingly popular all over the world. Nowadays, virtual spaces in games have become an everyday place for millions of players. As they spend time in the virtual world, players get involved with other players due to the nature of online games as well as social interactions (Bennerstedt and Ivarsson 203). Teaming up is one of the most common activities in MMO's. There are several reasons why players tend to team up during playing games. For instance, some tasks encourage and reward players for teaming up in order to defeat a much stronger opponent that requires a combined power of several characters with different skill sets (Gee 33). Another reason might be just for the sake of helping others. Some players are just looking to make friends with other players since playing in a group makes the gameplay much more entertaining.

2.3 Online interaction

There was a time where there were limited data for Conversation Analysis (CA) researchers in any form of online interaction. However, nowadays online interaction being a worldwide phenomenon since approximately three hundred and six billion emails are sent every day, around five hundred million tweets are published in a day and eight billion messages are exchanged per day on Facebook, CA analysts have the internet as a limitless and exponentially expanding source of data (Meredith 241).

The researchers of CA take interest in online interaction because the data collected in this environment “are made observable and accountable in naturally occurring courses of action” (Mlynář et al. 79). Online interaction can be seen as the essential form of naturally occurring data as it is less interfered with and more natural than recorded and transcribed

conversations. In other words, interaction in online environment allows the researcher to analyse the interactions that have been recorded with no intervention (Meredith 242).

Online interaction is very important for people because they develop and maintain relationships, ask for advice, do business meetings, they discuss various topics and much more. The point is, the huge diversity of interaction and contexts offers CA possibilities to extend the knowledge of human sociality. Analysing online interactions allow the understanding of how technology impacts people's lives and in pop culture society. This is also the aim of this thesis, in which I analyze the online interaction between two players of Minecraft.

2.4 Review of research

Meredith addresses in detail several key areas of CA such as: turn taking, sequence organization, repair, openings and embodied conduct. For instance, she describes the differences between turn taking, which is one of the core interests of CA, in online written interaction and spoken interaction. In the work, the analysis of each key area on CA happens with all the mentioned areas above. Her study of online interaction provided some indication of how CA findings about the organization of spoken interaction may be more widely applicable. Meredith also notes that it is essential that even though those who analyse online interaction should still work with the broader CA concepts during the analysis or else they risk reinventing the wheel. On the other hand, it is also important to not describe online interactions with CA concepts that do not correspond with them.

In another study, Halloran have studied how Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), which allows players to talk to each other at a distance, influence and shape gameplay. Two major types of activities were identified in his research: Coaching and learning, and coordination. He found out that communicating through VoIP developed new kinds of behaviour since it is much easier to instruct and teach novice players through VoIP than through written messages.

An article by Bebbington and Vellino discusses whether subjecting teenagers to playing Minecraft could improve their information literacy. They chose Minecraft because its game design induces players to seek out information about the game in order to be able to play it properly. They discovered that when the information needs are self-imposed, the players are highly motivated to find the new information and integrate it with existing information. As has been mentioned, Minecraft is an online game, so it allows multiple players to be present on one server or in one Minecraft world. This feature enables players to seek information collaboratively, share it and learn while playing the game. According to them, Minecraft provides an ideal information-seeking environment for players to develop themselves.

Bennersted and Ivarsson studied interaction in massively multiplayer online games. Their analysis is based on a screen-captured video of a player who played three different MMO's (The Lord of the Rings Online, World of Warcraft, and Age of Conan) who was mainly in group settings which required coordinated gameplay and role-playing situations. The study suggests that players distributed throughout the world came together and managed to coordinate their actions to accomplish a set of tasks. The players produced actions with regard to their local environment and learned how to work with and adapt to the system they were in.

The conclusion from the reviewed literature shows the importance of cooperation in games as well as the benefits of grouping up with players. The collaborative activities encouraged the players to communicate, learn and fix their different shortcomings in order to fit into the rules of online gaming. Also, teaching players is much easier through a voice channel than through the text channel.

3 Data and Method

This chapter deals with the research data and with the research method used for the purposes of this bachelor's thesis. The data is described first, followed by introduction of

Conversation Analysis (CA) and then it focuses on the procedure of CA and the transcription process.

3.1 Research Data

The analysis is based on a free public online YouTube video which is a recording of a screen capturing livestream on the website www.twitch.tv. The title of the video is “NymN and HAchubby plays Minecraft Episode 1 | with Chat” and was published by the channel Apollo Reacts on 5th August, 2019. There are two participants that interact in this video. Their online nicknames are NymN and HAchubby. NymN is an online gaming personality from Sweden who started streaming on twitch.tv in 2015 and became popular for his Minecraft and the Witcher live streams and also for his cooperation with Twitch-related music series called “Radio Kappa”. HAchubby is a Korean online content creator who began streaming on twitch.tv in 2018. She became popular thanks to her lovable personality and also because she started streaming on twitch in English while not knowing the language very well. She even has a video of her titled “A Korean girl who can't speak English started an English stream on Twitch” which brought a lot of popularity to her. The information about the two participants can be found freely on internet webpages. The information mentioned above comes from the webpage www.famousbirthdays.com or their social media accounts. The video was selected because in the interaction among a player that is proficient in the English language and a player that published a video titled “A Korean girl who can't speak English started an English stream on Twitch”, it is very likely that various aspects of language learning will arise during the cooperative gameplay.

The livestream was not recorded for my purposes, I simply encountered the data online and used it in my thesis. The purpose of the livestream is to entertain viewers and possibly to make money while entertaining people, similar to what television programs do, but in an online form of entertainment. The data is a naturally occurring interaction between two people while

playing a game since none of these two participants know that they are being analysed in a study. I do not personally know them and do not even regularly watch their content. Since the video recording is public, I did not have to ask the authors of the recording for consent to be used in the study.

The video shows the captured screens of the two participants as well as their viewer chat. The viewers react in the chat to what they see or hear from the participants in real time and sometimes the participants react to the chat, however my focus is solely on the in-game and verbal interaction of the two participants so the chat is not taken into account during the transcription or analysis. The two participants have a webcam available but they do not see each other while playing the game therefore this is not taken into consideration during the analysis as well. They just see a character of the other one in-game which is taken into account in the analysis. The participant's actions are transcribed in the form of selective commentary where it is crucial for the interpretation.

3.2 Conversation analysis (CA)

Conversation analysis is a research method that approaches everyday human social interaction and provides a detailed analysis of these interactions. According to Pomerantz and Fehr, "CA aims to explicate the methods or practices people employ to assemble the actions and activities of everyday life" (166). The method presumes that the context is closely connected to the actions and interactions between the participants. This presumption works both ways, as Pomerantz and Fehr state that the context is established by the performed actions or interactions and the actions or interactions are influenced by the context (167).

According to ten Have, the general impression in mid-1960s as well as nowadays is that ordinary conversation is chaotic and disorderly (3). Likewise, Pomerantz and Fehr also say that the humanities and social studies mostly "concluded that the details of everyday conduct were without order, nearly random and ungrammatical" which is not the case as the humanities and

social studies claim. The CA research shows that humans behave in “methodic and orderly ways” (166) and the main aim of CA “is to describe and explain how participants achieve the organization of social action step by step in real time” (Kasper and Wagner 173).

The researchers should focus on the studied phenomenon and describe the actions performed by the participants. Researchers should not include any personal opinions or interpretations and should be able to justify their interpretations by providing evidence from the transcript to keep the analysis as detailed and objective as possible.

3.3 CA procedure

The first step of the research process of CA is the data collection for analysis. The data that CA researchers use in their works are generally audio and video recordings. Only audio recordings can be used as well, however if the participants interact in face-to-face environment the audio and video version is preferred. The main advantage of this type of data is that one can replay them indefinitely. Audio and video recordings nowadays allow the analysts to study visible features in conversation such as referring to objects or seeing what the participants are reacting to. The possibility of seeing what the participants are doing and reacting to significantly improves the precision of the analysis and may also reveal some aspects of interaction that would be otherwise lost in just the audio recording. There are things that may have not been noticed but there are also various things that the recording may have not included (ten Have 6). For instance, if in an audio only recording one refers to something as “that”, the researcher might not know what the participant meant. By having the video included, additional observations could be done resulting in a more detailed transcript and analysis.

The next step, after having collected the data the researcher should transcribe the recording in as much detail as possible. This includes for example, pauses in the speech, change of intonation, unusual audible breathing or overlapping utterances. The researchers also have to create or choose an already existing system of transcription or use a combination of both. For

this work, a modification of the transcription system created by Gail Jefferson (2004) was used. The list of the used transcript conventions for this work is included in the Appendix. For CA, it is very important to note, that the recording is regarded to as the primary data. The transcript is only a convenient tool that analysts refer to while analysing the data (Hutchby 5).

There are many tools that help with transcribing, such as Transana or oTranscribe. For the transcription of my data, the online program oTranscribe was used which is available for free at www.otranscribe.com. The program allows the user to watch and listen to the video and transcribe at the same time, together with easily remembered and used keyboard shortcuts which makes the process of transcription significantly less time consuming. The transcript was created in several stages. During the first part of the transcription process, I tried to write down as much information as possible. Then, I played the video again and tried to find and correct any mistakes, adding any missing details.

Once the transcripts are finished, the following step is to go through the data and look for interesting sequences without having any research question in mind. This technique is called unmotivated looking which helped me with identifying recurring sequences and focusing on one aspect within the data that caught my interest. While I was going through the data and the transcript in this manner, I noticed that both players often initiated learning sequences during in-game interaction which became the main focus of the following analysis. After that, the next step is to analyse the data and select sequences that corresponded with the purpose of the study. The selected sequences should have clear boundaries to identify the openings and closings (Pomerantz and Fehr 173). After selecting the sequences, a detailed analysis of each of the sequences is the next step.

The main research question of this thesis is **how do players learn English in online interaction?** In order to provide an answer for this question, this thesis analyses sequences in which the players orient to a learnable during their gameplay. From the two hour long recording

consisting of 14,692 words which is roughly 67,000 characters, I have identified 17 sequences that dealt with orienting to a learnable while they were playing the video game. All of these sequences were analysed in detail during which I discovered that the participant H Achubby mostly learns the language by orienting to two types of learnables that were mentioned in chapter 1 throughout the data. Specifically, learnables emerging from a verbal object during in-game interaction and learnables emerging from interaction with an in-game object. Therefore, five sequences that best depict the findings were selected and presented in the work. The analysis is divided into two parts based on how one can orient to a learnable from different sources. The first part of the analysis consists of three examples that show how a learnable emerges from a verbal interaction between the two players and the second part has two examples that show a learnable emerging from an in-game object that was unknown to H Achubby.

4 Analysis

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the five examples.

4.1 A learnable emerging from a verbal source

Example 1 comes from a situation in which N and C were looking for food. C finds a tree and in order to get some wood, she starts hitting it which makes her to fall behind N who is still looking for food. There are two sequences in example 1. The first one is a clarification in the meaning of words “hitting” and “eating” (lines 1-9) and the second one is about the differences between the words “keep up” and “wake up” (lines 10-23). Example 1 shows how words are turned into a learnable.

Example 1

- 1 C I'm now (eating/hitting) tree.
- 2 N You're eating a tree?

3 C Yes.

4 N You mean hitting?

5 (..)

6 C What?

7 N You're eating a tr

8 (.) ((N turns around))

9 C °[Eating tree-]°

10 N [HEY keep up!] Keep up!

11 C <Kee-p U-p Kee-p [Up]>

12 N [Over] here

13 C <Kee-p up.> >(Keep up/K-pop)<?

14 (..)

15 N Yes

16 C Wake w-e-wa-e wa-wake up?

17 (.)

18 N No, keep up.

19 (..)

20 C [Ah keep]

21 N [Follow follow] follow fast.

22 C Ah, ohhhh, okay I don't know okay.

23 ((Follows him))

24 N We need, I, we need food.

In line 1, C says “I’m now (eating/hitting) tree” however her pronunciation of hitting with silent “h” combined with her Asian accent makes it sound like “eating”. The fact that at the moment they cannot see each other in the game or each other’s screen and that one cannot

eat trees makes it confusing for N and he tries to clarify what she said by repeating her sentence with rising intonation (line 2). C agrees (line 3) which leaves N further confused. N tries to offer a solution by saying an emphasized word “hitting” (line 4) that pairs up more frequently with wood. The pause between their turns indicates that C did not understand what he meant and follows with “what?” (line 6). N then repeats (line 7) the question he asked in line 2 but decides to stop halfway as he notices C is not following him. In line 9 C quietly repeats the phrase “eating tree” but N pays no attention to that anymore and ignores it as he drops the whole exchange and instead tells her to “Keep up” (line 10). C tries to imitate the phrase (line 11 and 13) said by N in previous line however she does it very slowly and she also adds syllables to the word that are not there (<Kee-p U-p Kee-p [Up]> <Kee-p up.>). N follows by agreeing (line 15) indicating that it is what he said however in line 16 C hesitantly says a word (Wake w-e-wa-e wa-wake up? - line 16) that she presumably knows that is similar to “keep up” suggesting that she does not know the meaning. N rejects the answer and repeats the word (line 18). After a brief pause C responds with a change-of-state token (Ah - line 20) and tries to repeat the word showing that she has identified it but at the same time N tries to explain the meaning of the word (line 21) “keep up”. C closes the sequence by saying “okay” after a long hesitation sound but she claims not to understand the word by following with “I don’t know” (line 22) however she follows him (line 23) in the game, suggesting she might have understood what “keep up” means.

In example 1, one learning sequence starts with the line 10 when N says the phrase “keep up”. C shows that she does not understand the phrase by repeating it a few times and also by adding non-existing syllables to the phrase thereby starting to orient to it as a learnable. N does not realize that she does not understand and just agrees with her (line 15). This leads to C saying a word that she probably knows and sounds (line 16) close to what N said which again marks the phrase as a learnable. At this point N realizes that she does not understand and explains the

meaning to her (line 21). C closes the sequence hesitantly (line 22) but she demonstrates understanding by following N and they proceed to another activity. The learning sequence emerged from an in-game situation where N says an unknown phrase to C and she turns it into learnable with her reactions to the phrase.

The second example follows roughly 30 seconds after the first one. N and C are navigating through the land and they are looking for food. Another learning sequence comes up when N once again uses a word C orients to as a new which is a similar situation to what happened in the first example however there are some differences in identifying the learnable.

Example 2

- 1 N I like playing with you because I actually look like a professional gamer.
- 2 (...)
- 3 C What?
- 4 (..)
- 5 N Nothing.
- 6 C You^re very cool now.
- 7 N Yes. (.) Indeed.
- 8 ((C laughs))
- 9 N Why [why laugh]?
- 10 C [Indie]? Indie what is this? ((laughs more))
- 11 N [What]?
- 12 C [I don't know] what is this. Indie?
- 13 N In indeed.
- 14 C Indeed?
- 15 N Ah yes. Very smart word.
- 16 C Ah? (.) [Okay.]

17 N [It means] eh absolutely, I agree.
 18 C A-gree?^ Okay.
 19 N Indeed, yes.
 20 C Okay.
 21 N Indeed I agree.
 22 C Very good, very cool NymN.
 23 N Thank you, thank you! We are gonna die.

In line 1, N jokingly says a phrase that praises him or possibly demeans C which is followed by a longer pause (line 2) which suggests that C is trying to comprehend what N just said. This is further confirmed by her reply “what?” in line 3, which can be interpreted as a signal that she does not understand. After a brief pause (line 4) N says “nothing” (line 5) not repeating what he just said since a lot of jokes that are repeated are not that funny anymore. One of the aspects that can be observed in their interaction is joking, which can entertain themselves or their audience as can be seen in line 1. As N jokes around frequently throughout the recording, this is a possible interpretation. C then compliments N which could also be a sarcastic mocking (line 6). He accepts the compliment with “Yes, indeed” (line 7) to which C starts laughing (line 8). The laugh confuses N because she might have not complimented him but have sarcastically remarked about his coolness which he did not understand. N asks her why she is laughing (line 9) because he is unsure and is trying to save face. At the same time C tries to repeat what she heard (line 10) twice and asks “what is this” while she laughs more suggesting that the word sounds funny to her and she is not making fun of him. N still confused and trying to understand why she is laughing asks “what?” (line 11). At the same time C proceeds to say that she does not know what it means and tries to pronounce it incorrectly as “indie” once again (line 12). Having realized that she does not understand the word N goes on clearing up the word for her. N says the word again (line 13)

and C repeats it (line 14), this time with a correct pronunciation, with a rising intonation which indicates that she is looking for an approval. N approves her pronunciation by saying “Ah yes” (line 15) and goes on to say that it is a very smart word to which C reacts with a change-of-state token (line 16) showing that she has learnt something new. After a brief pause, C then follows up with “Okay” (line 16) trying to end the sequence thinking they are done but at the same time N starts explaining the meaning of the word (line 17). C repeats the word “agree” (line 18) with a rising intonation that was used by N to explain the meaning of the word “indeed”. C then claims understanding by saying “okay” again (line 18). In line 19, N repeats the word “indeed” and C replies with “okay” (line 20) once again trying to end the sequence however N repeats the word with an explanation he used before. C then compliments N (line 22) which results in finally closing the sequence by N thanking her (line 23) and since they were still looking for food it is safe to assume that they shifted their focus back to finding food because N declares “We are gonna die” (line 23).

The learning sequence in example 2 starts with line 6 but the learnable, which is again a word that is not understood by C, appears at line 7. Similarly to example 1, C establishes the word as a learnable by incorrectly repeating the word however this time she directly shows that she does not understand the word by asking “what is this?” in lines 10 and 12. In example 1, she just repeated the word without asking and after saying a word similar to what she heard (keep up/wake up) only then N realized that she did not understand and began explaining. In example 2 by directly saying that she does not understand, they immediately started working on the correct form and pronunciation of the word and then N proceeds to explain the meaning to her. The order of learning which is first establishing the correct form and pronunciation and after then the meaning of the word can be seen in both example 1 and example 2. This time C claims understanding the word and tries to close the sequence twice (lines 18 and 20) but N repeats it two more times after C tries to end it possibly trying to make

her remember that the word and its meaning since he adds the explanation he used before to the words. C finally manages to close the sequence after complimenting N. The learning sequence comes from an in-game interaction, this time the learnable is established by C directly asking what the word means and not just repeating what she heard making it clear that she does not understand.

The third example follows right after the second example, only having around 10 seconds between the examples which means they are still looking for food. Both N and C are complaining about the biome they are in, however C uses a swear word to complain (line 4) and N as a reaction to the swearing establishes a hierarchy, lays ground rules about language. They both orient to a learnable by N recognizing that C does not understand a particular word and C reacting to the word at the same time.

Example 3

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | N | Huh? (..) [Is it snow] everywhere?! |
| 2 | C | [(xxxxxxxx)] Why^ just snow? |
| 3 | N | I don't know, explain. |
| 4 | C | What the fuck map? |
| 5 | N | Whow whow whow whow language! |
| 6 | C | Oh why? This is your /langyge/ |
| 7 | N | Yeah but I'm allowed to, you're not allowed to use words like that. |
| 8 | C | You learning you teaching me (.) bad word. |
| 9 | N | <Never ever.> |
| 10 | C | No. |
| 11 | | (...) |
| 12 | N | °Okay fine.° |

13 C Yeah.

14 N You can eh you can only use it when it is appropriate.

15 (...)

16 N [When it is the right-]

17 C [Apollo?]

18 N No, not apollo. (...) [When] it is the right time.

19 C [Right?] time?

20 N Correct, y-yes.

20 ((They find pumpkins in the game))

21 N >Wait are these pumpkins? Can we eat these? What is this?<

Example 3 starts with N complaining about snow (line 1) followed by C agreeing with N's frustration (line 2) since they have been looking for food and a habitable land for a while. Knowing that C is playing the game for the first time N uses a rhetorical statement in line 3. C also asks a rhetorical question (line 4) however in doing so she uses a swear word which is admonished by N (line 5) warning her about her "language" usage. C says that she does not understand what is wrong with what she said and defends herself that it is his language (line 6). N then goes on saying that he is allowed to use words like that and she is not (line 7). N establishes a hierarchy and lays ground rules since he is more proficient at the language as shown in the examples. C again tries to defend herself by saying "You learning you teaching me bad word" (line 8) in which she initiates a self-repair indicating that they talked about the difference between "learning" and "teaching" already and also further showing that he is teaching her the language. In line 9, N tries to jokingly get rid of the responsibility by slowly saying "Never ever" but C denies it (line 10) by disagreeing. After a relatively long pause N quietly admits that he really has taught her bad words (line 12) and C agrees (line 13). N then proceeds to tell C "You can eh you can only use it when it is appropriate" (line 14). After

another long pause N recognizes that C signals that she does not understand the word “appropriate” and begins explaining the meaning (line 16) while at the same time she repeats what she heard, which sounds like “Apollo?” (line 17). N stops explaining, rejects her question and finishes explaining the word (line 18). C then says both words used to explain the meaning with rising intonation (line 19). N agrees and the sequence is ended by another occurrence in-game which is finding pumpkins (line 20-21).

Example 3 is another example of a learning sequence started (line 14) by not understanding a word. However this time, the learnable is established by both of them at the same time after N correctly guesses that C does not understand as he gets no response to saying when she can use swear words. They both simultaneously start orienting to “appropriate” as a learnable when he starts explaining the word after the long pause and she as per usual tries to repeat what she heard. Similarly to examples 1 and 2, they first orientate to the form of the word and then the meaning however this time they do not agree on a correct form because N in parallel to that starts explaining the meaning of the word and they skip the form. C then claims understanding the explanation by repeating the words used to explain the learnable although she does so with a rising intonation. That may indicate that she is making sure that she heard correctly or that she does not understand completely. The sequence is ended by them finding pumpkins in game which shifted their attention from a learnable to a possible food source.

Prior to the learning sequence, N tried to establish some kind of hierarchy, putting him into an elevated position above her since he is teaching her the language. Telling her what she can or cannot say during their interactions shows that he is trying to regulate what language she uses. This admonishing behaviour is further seen when C says a swear word like “Shitstone” or a phrase like “What the hell” (The work does not analyse these swearing

sequences) but N himself swears quite often throughout the whole recording. This indicates that he is just trying to regulate C's swearing while he teaches her the language.

4.2 A learnable emerging from an in-game object

Previous examples (1, 2 and 3) were focused on verbal learnables during in-game interactions whereas this section focuses on how interaction with an object in the game can also produce a learnable. In example 4, N and C are underground, mining for materials when C comes across magma which flows out of a nearby wall. Not knowing what it is she asks and is exposed to a new word.

Example 4

- 1 ((They find Magma))
- 2 C Wow, what is (..) fire? .h
- 3 N It's [lava]
- 4 C [Wow]
- 5 N Lava.
- 6 (...)
- 7 C (Labar/Lover)?
- 8 N Lava, yeah.
- 9 C Lava?
- 10 N Yes.
- 11 (..)
- 12 C Euh, (.) I like lava
- 13 ((C moves closer to it))=
- 14 N =Stay away from it. It (.) hurts=
- 15 =((C backs up))

- 16 ((The skies thunder but C and N are underground, they just hear it))
 17 C Eh eh eh ((panics)) eh eh eh

In line 1, they encounter magma while being underground. C not knowing what the orange shining liquid flowing out of the wall is asks what it is (line 2) and after a pause suggesting that she is looking for a suitable word marks it as “fire”. N then corrects her and tells her that it is “lava” (line 3). C shows signs of fascination in line 4 by exclaiming “wow”. These signs can also be seen in line 2 when she first encounters the magma, she reacts with the word “wow” and also inhales at the end of her utterance. N repeats the word again (line 5) and after a relatively long pause, C incorrectly pronounces what she heard (line 7) with a heavy Asian accent to the word resulting in it sounding like “Labar” or “Lover”. In line 8 N repeats the word again correcting C’s pronunciation and positively encouraging her to repeat the word again with the word “yeah”. This time C repeats it with a correct form (line 9) and N approves that she got it right (line 10) by agreeing. In line 12, after a pause C reacts with a change-of-state token indicating she learnt something new again and even using the word she just learnt in a sentence which demonstrates understanding. Not knowing that lava is deadly, C further shows the signs of fascination again by saying she likes lava (line 12) and moving closer to it (line 13). N quickly reacts and tells her to not get too close (line 14) to it and then explains, with a brief pause suggesting that he was also looking for a suitable word, that “it hurts” (line 14). C again demonstrates that she understood what he meant and as she is backing up (line 15) lightning strikes and the skies thunder (line 16). C immediately starts to panic (line 17) shifting her focus away and ending the learning sequence.

In example 4, the learning sequence starts in line 1 when C comes across something that she has never seen before. Being in a dark, poorly lit cave, finding a source of light immediately caught her attention prompting her to ask a question about what it is. However in

this example the question is not about a word which she did not understand but about an in-game object which shows that once again C establishes a learnable by asking a direct question as seen in example 2. She refers to the lava as “fire” specifying to N what exactly she was asking about since fire in a broad sense can indicate lava. Again as can be seen in all previous examples they first establish the correct form of the word and after that they orient to the meaning of it. Although in this case he does not explicitly explain the word, he just says that it hurts. In this example C also successfully uses the word in a sentence, which is not seen in previous examples. After demonstrating that she understands by correctly saying the word, using the word in a sentence and knowing that it is dangerous once explained by N, the sequence ends when the game interferes with a thunder. Example 4 shows that a learnable and learning sequences can emerge not only from spoken language but also from an interaction with in-game objects.

Example 5 is another example of a learnable emerging from an interaction with an in-game object. In this example N and C are in their house while N makes a storage place. C is at first busy crafting some tools but after a second she notices a chest.

Example 5

- 1 ((N puts down first part of a chest. C is distracted by crafting tools))
- 2 N Okay I'm I'm making a chest (.) for us here. We can put (..) ehm (...)
- 3 ((N puts down second part of the chest))
- 4 N Our perverted fantasies in here if you want.
- 5 C Wow .h What is this NymN?
- 6 N It's a chest, you can store things.
- 7 C .h Wow
- 8 N Yeah, very cool huh? (.) °Wait°

9 ((C opens the chest which makes a sound))

10 C .h Oh my god

11 N Do you like what you see?

12 C Oh really, yeah.

13 N Yeah.

14 C Wow.

15 (5.1) ((C is storing things in the chest))

16 C Wow.

17 N Yeah, so you can store some things in here.

18 C Whoah, interesting, oh my god.

19 N \$Very very /intredasting/.\$

20 C Oh wow, I like this.

21 (...) ((C is closely inspecting the contents of the chest))

22 C Wow.

23 ((C finds a dangerous fish in the chest))

In this example, at the beginning N is creating a chest while being vocal about it (line 1-3). At the same time C is crafting some tools not paying much attention to N since she does not react to what he says and she even completely ignores his attempt at a joke (line 4) and only begins to react after she noticed that he put a chest on the ground excitedly asking what it is (line 5). N proceeds to identify the thing as a “chest” to C and immediately says what it is used for. C exclaims “wow” (line 7) again. Her reaction with an audible inhalation prior to it suggests that she is easily excited by new things which can be also seen in example 4. She exclaims in this manner in lines 5, 7, 10, 14, 16, 18, 20 and 22 which seems excessive. Nonetheless, N agrees with her (line 8) and asks a question to which he does not get answer from C because now she interacts with the chest (line 9) exclaiming once again showing

excitement or surprise (line 10). Hearing the sound of a chest being interacted with (line 9) and C's reaction N asks if she likes what she sees (line 11). C answers positively (line 12). N tries to end the sequence (line 13) but C vocally admires the chest again (line 14). After a long pause in which C for the first time tries to store some things in the chest (line 15) she reacts possibly with a change of state token (line 16) since she learnt that she can store something in it by demonstrating it. N states the purpose of the chest again (line 17) to which C reacts with three exclamations (line 18) expressing her enthusiasm. A word in C's reaction catches N's attention and in a funny voice N vocalizes an internet meme² (line 19). C ignores him and once again shows her infatuation with the chest (lines 20-22) still interacting with it. Finally her attention shifts when she encounters a dangerous fish that she ate before because N told her to as a joke.

In example 5, similarly to example 4, the learning sequence starts when C notices a chest in line 5. She did not react to the word, as can be seen at the start when N says it but rather to the object itself. C asks what it is directly turning it into another learnable. Example 5 shares a similarity with example 3 because they do not deal with the form of the word at all, instead N explains what one can do with the object right away. Perhaps, N does not come back to the form of the word because C shows no struggle or any difficulty with understanding it. She demonstrates that she understands by using the chest for what it was made for, she stored things in there. The sequence is closed by C who finds a dangerous fish that she ate before because N told her to as a joke.

² A meme is an image, video, piece of text etc., which is typically humorous in nature that is shared on the internet by the users.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to look into player's interaction in online games and to find out an answer for the research question: how do players learn English in online interaction?

When players play online games together and have to communicate, they have to interact verbally in the process, in which they use a foreign language in the case of Minecraft for example. If they do not know the language, they can visibly orient to various aspects of the language during the interaction that the concept of learnables defines. Utilizing CA, I have shown on the selected data how this occurs and that those learning processes can be observed.

According to Majlesi and Broth, in pedagogical situations, three types of learnables can be identified: a learnable emerging from a verbal source, a learnable emerging from a material source and a learnable emerging from a gestural source (204). From my data, the first two types of learnables appeared – a learnable from a verbal source and a learnable from a material source, although being in game, it is a material source nevertheless. The third type of a learnable by Majlesi and Broth did not appear in the data. It is perhaps because Minecraft allows very minimal gestural interactions. The only visible gestures in Minecraft is when a player is hitting something or crouching. Moreover, the participants did not see each other in real life, they just saw the avatar of the other player in the game so the participants did not have much possibilities to orient to gestures as learnables.

Meredith and Mlynář et al. state that online interaction can be regarded as the essential form of naturally occurring data as it is less interfered with and more natural than recorded conversations. The research data that were introduced in chapter 3 fit this description of essential form of naturally occurring interaction. For instance, data collected from classrooms during lessons might be influenced by the presence of the recording devices and the speakers might act in an unnatural way than they would otherwise. This is not the case with research data used in the thesis since the video, as stated in chapter 3, would be recorded regardless of my

research because the main purpose of it is to entertain the viewers. One might argue that in order to achieve the purpose of entertainment, the participants may act exaggeratedly. However both of the participants have been in the entertainment business as content creators for a while and are used to being recorded on camera, so it can be assumed that the interactions that they produce can be perceived as natural. Also, the video is a recording of a live stream that happened in real time. To really disclose this problematic, further observations of the participants would be needed. Chapter 3 also describes the research method used for this thesis, which is CA and the process of conducting CA as well as the transcription process.

The data analysis is presented in chapter 4. I transcribed a two hour long video recording, which is 14,692 words and roughly 67,000 characters. From the transcript, I have identified 17 learning sequences that dealt with orienting to a learnable while the participants were playing the video game. All of these sequences were analysed in detail during which I discovered that the participant HACHubby who is less experienced in English mostly learns the language by orienting to two types of learnables in the interaction. Specifically, learnables emerging from a verbal object during in-game interaction and learnables emerging from interaction with an in-game object. Five sequences that best depict the findings were selected and presented in the work. The analysis is divided into two parts based on how the two players oriented to a learnable from different sources. The first part of the analysis shows how a learnable emerges from a verbal interaction between the two players and the second part shows a learnable emerging from an in-game object that was unknown to HACHubby.

The first part of the data analysis shows a learnable emerging from a linguistic source. In the first example, a learnable emerges from a situation where C did not understand a command said by N and C orients to it as a learnable by repeating what she heard. In the second example, C encounters a word that she does not know the meaning of and orients to it as a learnable by displaying an explicit verbal indication of trouble. The third example is a little

different since the orientation to a learnable is started by both of the participants at the same time and not just by the less experienced in the language. The examples indicate that it was common for a learning sequence to be initiated by the less knowledgeable, as can be seen in the works of both Majlesi and Svennevig.

The second part of the data analysis presents learnables emerging from an in-game object. The in-game object concept of a learnable is very similar to Majlesi's learnable emerging from a material source. In example 4, C encounters flowing lava in a cave and once again, by displaying an explicit verbal indication of trouble, she orients to it as a source of learnable. The lava becomes an object of a shared attention between the participants and C's prompt leads to establishing a correct linguistic form of the word and then vague explanation of what lava does. The example also indicates that it was common for C to start a learning sequence utilising a word search sequences introduced by Svennevig (69) as can be seen in example 4 in line 2 by her directly asking "Wow, what is (..) fire? .h". The pause suggests that she is looking for a suitable word to describe lava.

Example 5 shows a situation where N makes a chest and C not knowing what it is asks. Again a verbal prompt indicating difficulty is used. The examples 4 and 5 are similar to each other since the learnable emerged from an in-game object. Very much like in examples 1 and 2, the learning sequence was initiated by C. In example 1 C repeats the word she did not understand which was "keep up" and when she does not get a satisfactory response, she says a similar sounding word that she knew "wake up". In examples 2, 4 and 5 she explicitly asks a question about an unknown word or object and therefore she starts a learning sequence by orienting to the unknown word or object as a learnable. In example 3, the sequence is started by both of them at the same time. In all presented examples, a verbal prompt was displayed by C which resulted in starting the learning sequences while their main activity was temporarily interrupted while they were orienting to the learnable. In examples 1, 2 and 4, they first

established the correct linguistic form of the word and then went on explaining it. In examples 3 and 5, the meaning of the word was explained and the form was skipped. In each example, there was an in-game situation which provided a possibility for the participants to orient to something as a learnable. Majlesi and Broth (2005) call these sequences as emergent learning projects which were introduced in chapter 1.

This thesis contributes to the studies of language learning in video games by showing that during in-game online interactions learning sequences might be initiated by the participants, resulting in a temporary termination of the ongoing in-game activity. The activity of learning and teaching becomes the focus and the learnable is either resolved or interrupted by an occurrence in the game. It also shows that learning a language is a collaborative achievement and in order for it to be effective, it requires the effort from both participants.

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Appendix

(Transcription conventions)

N	Nymn
C	HAchubby
(word)	dubious word
<u>word</u>	stress
[]	overlap of utterances
((laughs))	commentary
°word°	a word pronounced more softly
<word>	a word pronounced slower
>word<	a word pronounced faster
(xxx)	an unidentified word, length of the notation depends on the length of the expression as interpreted by the transcriber
/langyge/	pronunciation
Eh, euh	hesitation sounds
(.)	micro pause
(..)	relatively short pause
(...)	relatively long pause
=	immediate response between utterances
.	falling intonation
?	rising intonation
^	louder voice
.h	audible inhalation

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis focuses on how players interact when playing an online game. Specifically, this thesis seeks an answer on how players learn English language while playing video games. The theoretical part deals with learnables as a concept that is utilized for analysing the learning sequences, Minecraft as a game and online interaction in games along with an overview of relevant research. Chapter 3 provides a brief description of the obtained data and conversation analysis. A two hour long video was selected and transcribed. The transcript is roughly 14,700 words long and the data was analysed in detail utilising conversation analysis. The aim of thesis is to find out how do players learn English in online interaction? In the following chapter the outcomes of the analysis are presented. Analysis has shown that during the in-game interaction, the player with less experience in English often initiated a learning sequence upon encountering an unknown word or object.

Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá interakcí hráčů v anglickém jazyce při hraní online hry, a na to, jak se hráči učí angličtinu při hraní videoher. Teoretická část práce se věnuje jevu „learnable“, Minecraftu a online interakci při hraní společně s přehledem relevantních studií. Kapitola 3 stručně představí data a konverzační analýzu. Dvouhodinové video bylo vybráno a přepsáno. Transkript čítá zhruba 14,700 slov a data byla podrobně analyzována pomocí konverzační analýzy. Cílem práce je zjistit, jak se hráči učí angličtinu v online interakci. Analýza ukázala, že během herní interakce, méně zkušená hráčka často iniciovala sekvenci učení se, když narazila na slovo nebo předmět, který nezná.