

A Duoethography of Gamers as Second Language Learners and Teachers: Translating,  
Polylinguaging, and Translanguaging

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## **Abstract**

There is an expanding body of literature regarding gaming and English language teaching, but there is an area that remains unexplored: The discussions of the life experiences of gamers who are teachers and how gaming has shaped their views on pedagogy and teaching. This monograph, the result of a duoethnographic experience between a professional (Julián) and a hardcore (Walter) gamer, illustrates how the authors' life experiences as gamers are influencing their present and future teaching. The duoethnography featured here will narrate learning experiences, introducing three moments that all gamers who are second language users experience in *translating*, *polylinguaging*, and *translanguaging*. This monograph is also a call for teacher educators and researchers to pay more attention to the living experiences in video games as part of the teacher education process.

There are already several articles and books that explain the relation between gaming and learning a second language, all of which argue that video games and their relation with second language learning is a relevant and fertile field (Black & Reich, 2012; Cogburn & Silcox, 2009; Charsky, 2010; Gallagher, Wessels, & Ntelioglu, 2013; Gee, 2003; Hawisher & Selfe, 2007; Pauschenwein, Goldgruber, & Sfirri, 2013). Nonetheless, a small part of this corpus tackles the topic based on online community interactions and even a smaller part of them is performed by gamers. Most studies on learning a second language through video games are conducted by gaming community “aliens” (i.e. researchers with little gaming background themselves). This has consequently left out some nuances that are important when it comes to understanding how gamers learn a second language when participating in gaming communities or playing alone.

This study becomes relevant for the researchers are also preservice language teachers, this particular combination allows them to go deeper on the processes of acknowledgment of their own acquiring and learning a Second Language through video games. Additionally, it allows to keep track of the learning stages from language learners until language users and language teachers. In the same vein, there is a vast unexplored field regards this topic, specially the E-sports and a wide range of genres played by the authors.

**Why a duoethnography about learning languages through video games?** One of the main issues related to the study of videogames and its relationship with Second Language Acquisition is that, due to logistics, analyzing a lifelong case or a conducting a longitudinal study is really difficult. For instance, many of the articles and revised literature acknowledge that a short term study could reflect part of the Second Language learning/acquisition process, but it falls short on completely understanding or even depicting the Second Language acquisition/learning for it is a lifelong learning process (Pirainen–Mars, & Tainio,

2009; Chen, & Yang, 2011; Chen & Yang ,2012; Foley & Thompson, 2003). It is important to mention that crafting a research of this type implies a methodological challenge since defining which data will be collected and how it will be collected implies to have a wide understanding of the lifelong experiences analyzed. We had a glimpse of the data we were going to collect, so designig it was more plausible. In this vein, studying Second Language acquisition through video games requires to follow the different stages and moments that a gamer live through its life. This is one of the advantages of a duoethnography on gamers as second language users. Taking into account that this is a narrative method of the researchers personal experiences, keeping track of the aforementioned moments and stages is more plausible.

**Why a duoethnography of gamers as preservice teachers?** Digitality has changed the way we see the world and even more, the way we relate with it (Aguilera & Pandya, 2018). In the case of gaming, it is important to acknowledge that teachers who also are gamers have shaped their teaching styles based on their gaming experiences (W Castaño & Londoño-Mazo, 2019; Gaviria, Mazo, & Sánchez, 2019; Hernandez & Ramírez, 2016; Mora, Gee, Hernandez, S Castaño, Orrego, & Ramírez, 2020; Sánchez & Mazo, 2019). Through this study, we aim to examine our experiences during our teaching practices and identify which elements from video games and Second Language Acquisition through video games we have introduced into our classes. This will nourish the existing literature related to the use of video games in class and gamification. Furthermore, by reflecting on our own pedagogic practices we pretend to bring into discussion the elements, tools and knowledge that a teacher should have in order to gamify its classes. Finally, by comparing both teaching practices, we will take into consideration which of these elements help to innovate in the 21st century classroom.

**Purpose and research question.** The following study, using duoethnographic methods, analyzed the influence of gaming experiences of two gamers, that are also preservice teachers, in their second language acquisition and teaching practices. This study also analyzed the gaming experiences of two gamers who are also preservice teachers, through a gamer foci, a preservice teacher foci, a novice researcher foci and described which elements teachers should have in order to properly gamify their classes. We also related the concepts coined and tackled in the Literacies in Second Languages Project Student Research Lab with our teaching experiences. To achieve these purposes, this study proposed the following research question: *To what extent have the gaming experiences of two gamers who are also preservice teachers influenced their second language acquisition processes and their teaching practices?*

## **Methodology**

**Qualitative inquiry as our paradigm.** Our study approaches to the topic from a qualitative perspective. That allowed us to tackle the phenomenon in an interpretive and deductive way (Mayan, 2009). Taking into account that we are studying the experiences that two gamers have had through their lives, a paradigm that allow us to make sense of the participant's narratives becomes relevant (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer, 2012; Mayan, 2009).

Additionally, qualitative research fits to our study for it does not only strive for narrating everyday situation, but to understand and explain them through existing or emerging concepts. At the same time, qualitative research could be a platform for the creation of new concepts. Qualitative research is also characterized for the use of flexible research designs, field-based data (Yin, 2011). The flexibility of the data does not mean it is

not trustworthy, but it means that different perspectives of the same phenomena can be used in order to depict a wider idea of it (Castaño, 2018; Yin, 2011).

Trustworthiness is built through methodical design and data collection and by adhering to evidence (Yin, 2011). For instance, researchers' rapport, cultural and academic backgrounds, personalities, rapport, time in the field, and empathy or approach to the object of study was considered during the entire study, this, with the objective of taking into account the Rashomon Effect (Castaño, 2018) and implications that it has for the study.

**Duoethnography as our method.** Duoethnography (Forber-Pratt & Mora, 2018; Kramer & Mangiardi, 2012; Mora & Golovátina-Mora, 2017; Norris & Sawyer, 2012) is a collaborative research method in which researchers engage in a dialogical process to re-conceptualize and re-story their own narratives, but in development on a topic. The concept of duoethnography is relevant for our study since it allows us to establish common places and notions in our second language learning process through video games while leaving each of the writers determine their explicit and differentiated narrative.

Because duoethnography does not strive to impose conclusions on readers (Kramer & Mangiardi, 2012), "it leaves the dialogue open to the reader's own experiences" (Norris and Sawyer, 2012, p. 22). In other words, duoethnographers portray their realities so the reader could make its own conclusions. To do so, duoethnography pretends to present narrative spaces in which the reader identifies and introduces its background to produce new concepts and narratives. As stated by Norris & Sawyer (2012) "Because no one meaning remains dominant, readers are released from the hegemonic expectation of aligning with a protagonist", this research method does not pretend to propose a closed conclusion, but a catalyzer of new dialogues between the reader, the text and researchers. That is to say, when

a lector finishes reading a duoethnography, it is not expected to adopt other's resolutions; on the contrary, it is intended to revisit its experience in order to make its own conclusions.

In addition to this, duoethnography shares some characteristics with the Rashomon Effect (Castaño, 2018) for both disrupts metanarratives. In comparison with other research methods, which objective is to explain social phenomena, duoethnography aims to recognize the multiple realities that permeate different perceptions of the same phenomenon.

Through this research, we engaged two perspectives from gamers as second language users (Gaviria, 2018) in dialogue: A professional gamer -Julian Londoño- and a Hardcore gamer -Walter Castaño-. In such dialogue, we want to express and re-interpret our own experiences on playing video games and how this led us to learn English. Furthermore, we would like to state our thoughts on the different strategies (Linguistic and semiotic) that we use to achieve victory, communicate with English online communities and the game itself (gamer response theory?). Finally we pretend to describe the process of creating our own identity as gamers and how being preservice teachers changed the way we see the English learning process using video games.

**Research design.** The design of this research was crafted from the very beginning of the dialogues. We defined that we were going to talk about the games we played, how did they got us closer or engaged in English acquisition and how this was reflected in our teaching practices. For this purpose, we divided the conversations by topics, for instance, games' genres, our advantages and disadvantages regarding acquiring a Second Language through video games and video games related to our teaching practices.

However, through the first dialogues we realized that it was necessary to restructure the way we were tackling the conversations and narrations. Initially, we decided that each meeting would have a leitmotiv, then, we will start talking about the topic and record the

conversations. Nonetheless, we noticed that the thoughts and experiences that we were expressing lacked order and focus. Sometimes, we found ourselves talking about a different topic than the initial matter of the conversation.

Before designing a study, researchers have some intuitions about the data they will find. Some of the data is, even, distinguished from the very first identification of the analyzed phenomenon. However, in the case of duoethnography, since data is our own experiences, we had stronger intuitions of the information that we would find. It does not mean that duoethnographers are fully conscious of the data, as we stated before, data has to be approached methodologically, but our memories and experiences could be foreseen, at least, in a general way. Moreover, in many cases, re-storing our experiences meant to re-discover elements that we have omitted, maybe because we have approached to them from a different perspective or the rapport was oriented to other factors. Hence, we decided to use the same topics used during the first conversations, but we defined categories that could help us to organize our discourses.

Furthermore, we concluded that it was necessary to split the conversations in two moments: The first was writing a text about the topic we were tackling and reading each other's text. The second moment was addressed to meet and talk about the texts, contrasting experiences, bringing questions and taking notes about the elements that we considered relevant in the narrations.

**Data analysis.** Codifying and categorizing the data during its collection and further analysis granted us more control of the data we were studying. Although categorizing was a process relatively simple, codifying the data, so that it could fit with the purpose of this study, required a meta-analysis which did not modify the nature or information expressed in the data, but could reflect what we were looking for (Saldaña, 2016). In other words, we

knew what we were going to say, however, we need to organize our experiences before writing them.

*Coding and categorizing our narrations.* We divided our narratives about our gaming experiences in three stages. We pretended to organize them into more manageable information. We took into consideration some of the concepts tackled during our research experience in the Student Research Lab Literacies in a Second Language Project (LSLP). In this vein, the narrations were divided in:

- **Translating Stage:** In this stage we portrayed our first approaches to video games. Based on our initial conversations, we realized that we had an early approach to video games. The ages in which we had our first gaming experiences was, on average, 5 years old. We narrated how this gaming experiences were and how we used different strategies to overcome our linguistic gaps that hindered our performance in video games. This stage is named translating because most of our relation to English and video games was single words translation-based since we had few or no knowledge of English grammar structures.
- **Polylinguaging Stage:** While we were on school acquiring some knowledge of English grammar structures and growing our vocabulary, we were also playing video games. Being able to produce messages in English and having more control over our linguistic abilities (Chiquito & Rojas, 2014) meant a change in the way we related to gaming spaces. At the same time, Spanish and languages remained one of our principal ways to communicate. On the other hand, code switching still happened but in a reduced span. In this stage we focused on our years in school and the gaming experiences we had meanwhile. Additionally, we addressed to understand to which extent gaming was an advantage or an obstacle in our English learning processes.

- **Translanguaging Stage:** Translanguaging is the integration of two or more languages in a specific context. The use of features from different languages and integrating them with semiotic repertoires (Cardenas, 2019) allow gamers to relate with other gamers or the game itself. Through this stage, we describe how having a higher performance in English modified the way we related to videogames. Additionally, we mentioned the acknowledgments of gaming principles and second language acquisition processes that overlapped in our teaching practices. Ultimately, we depicted the experiences that we shared throughout different academic presentations and lectures.

***Coding and categorizing the data collection and data analysis.*** In order to know which elements needed to be tackled during our writing exercises and data analysis, we established three foci. Each foci would orientate the narrations and also define the perspective from which the reports were going to be analyzed. The foci were defined taking into account three transversal elements on this study:

- **Gamer Focus:** The perspective of a gamer is really important when it comes to understand how, why and when games lead a person to acquire a Second Language. Moreover, gamers as second language learners (Gaviria, 2018) do not necessarily play a game to learn a second language, but most of the times use a second language as a tool to succeed in video games (Hernández & Castaño, 2015). In this sense, understanding gamer's perspective on video games and second language acquisition through video games is a cornerstone in our study because it brings into discussion topics such as motivation, identity (Uribe, 2015; Ramírez & Gaviria, 2017), and lore (Londoño, 2019).

- Preservice teacher Focus: Teaching practices are a space in which preservice teachers learn to articulate their pedagogic knowledge with the actual teaching exercise (Hollins, 2015). According to Grossman et al, the preservice teacher engages in three actions during its teaching practices: Decomposition, which refers to the isolation of different aspects of the teaching practice to examine them. Representation, that is related to the way elements of teaching are conceived in terms of form, function or approach and approximations or interactions within the teaching practice that the preservice teacher considers meaningful (as cited in Hollins, 2015). Through decomposition and approximation we intended to recognize which of these actions are engaged in our teaching practices and relate them with the times we considered that gaming principles and gamification were useful in our teaching practices.
- Novice Researcher Focus: During our work with the Student Research Lab Literacies in a Second Language Project (LSLP), we have reflected on how gamers relate to video games and second languages (Hernández & Castaño, 2015). Through this foci we targeted the communicative strategies that we use in gaming spaces. Furthermore, we established relations between the theories studied in our degree, our gaming experiences and second language acquisition.

After coding and categorizing our data, we wrote down our gaming experiences based on the stages and foci of the research. We defined that we would write our experiences in a monthly span. After writing each stage, we met three times and shared our thoughts about the readings. Simultaneously, we wrote the first drafts of the common places or relevant contrasts in our experiences. In some cases, while doing other activities, we started talking about the research and eventually came up with conclusions about the data found, these

conversations were not recorded for the conversations emerged from informal contexts, but we wrote down the ideas and thoughts shared during these dialogues. This situation will be considered as one element for reflection regarding duoethnographic method and will be developed in the conclusions section.

### **Our Duoethnographic Accounts**

**WALTER First.** When I was about 4 or five years my parents bought our first computer, all I can remember from that time was the operative system, Windows 98 and its particular starting sound, for me, that particular combination of notes only meant one thing: Playing time. Although some people refer to my generation (1993) as native digital I was not only allowed to handle the computer by myself until I was 10 or 11 years old. So, what meant “playing time to me”? Well, it meant that I would sit in my father's legs and we would play *Descent* together. Basically, I was the gunner of the team. My father used the movement and most of the action keys while I oversaw pressing this long key, which he told me was called “space”. I never wondered why it was called this way, I just assumed that “space” meant only one thing to me: Firing the ship weapons against these aliens who were trying to kill us. The game was particularly appealing to me, the idea of being in an alien planet shooting other ships, while looking for keys or stronger weapons was striking. While I was playing, I started relating images to certain actions: I learned that each shoot that we took was going to be reflected in the ship`s shield status, that the missiles where shown on the right corner of the HUD or even more, I learned to recognize each weapon, not by its name, but by its graphic representation in the HUD. I also realized that some weapons were stronger than others. I learned that the blue orbs that we picked up improved our shield since

each time we obtained one of these our shield got bigger. Furthermore, now that I am writing this and look some images of the game, I realize that there were many components of the HUD that I completely ignored by that time, mainly, because I ignored all the words present in the HUD since that language (English) was something totally alien for me.



Figure 1. Descent 2 HUD. [Screenshot] Retrieved from: <https://lparchive.org/Descent-II/Update%2057/>

Time passed by and I was always in charge of “shooting”, even in games with no weapons like “Apes Odyssey” in which I was designated to press the “offensive” keys that I cannot remember by now. However, I learned that pressing keys meant *action* and that *action* could vary depending on the keys and games.

I would use this notion of “pressing = action” later, with my first approaches to playing consoles: Polystation and Play Station. It all started after a Christmas evening, I got the news that one neighbor got a Polystation as a Christmas present, about five children from the block rang at his door the next day, early in the morning, ready to see the famous console, that years later I learned that was the older brother, and with lower quality, of the Play Station. The only problem we had was that all the games were in English, a language that any of us had any knowledge, but that did not stop us from playing.

First, we started by pressing all the buttons in the control in order to understand which key was related to what action, apparently, all my friends had the “pressing = action” notion too. Once we realized that the right down button meant *action* (the console was so fake that it did not have marks on the buttons), we moved our attention to the options that we had on the screen, the menu, which almost always consisted on two or three option: Start or play, options and exit. By heuristic methods we associated the word *play or start*, to, effectively, playing the game. We later applied the same logic to all the Polystation games. Little by little all the children in the block got a Polystation or a Playstation but me. However we faced another challenge, one of my neighbors got his cartridges in Chinese; we have no clue of what these new characters meant, nonetheless, we applied our previous knowledge and conclude that, since “start-play” was the first options in the menu for our English cartridges, it had to be same for the Chinese games, and it was, so we were able to play in three different languages back in that time, without being aware of the magnitude of such thing.

I remember that I used to play *Contra* and *Mario* in Polystation while *Crash* and platform games were mostly my favorite in Playstation. Not having my own console was not a problem for playing, but I learned a few things about power going to play to my friends` homes. As I was not the owner of the console I had always have to wait for the owner to play as Mario (the first on turn to play the game) and then, play as Luigi, who, in our childish opinion, did not jump high enough and whose powers were not as effective as Mario`s. This is a common opinion among the people that lived the same thing. Dichotomy Mario and Luigi had been widely tackled in internet, mostly in non-academic expressions as memes. I will share some of them with you:



Figure 2. Identity, power relations in Mario Bros. [Screenshot] Retrieved from:

[https://www.reddit.com/r/funny/comments/qgo4r/luigi\\_logic/](https://www.reddit.com/r/funny/comments/qgo4r/luigi_logic/)

In this vein, you had to get used that the character you would use was related to these *power relations*, and it did not only happen with Mario, I can reminisce on living the same with games such as Metal slug, Soccer games and others.

Furthermore, I did not pay attention to the games which contained lore. This, due to two factors. The first one was the fact that I did not have time to do so. I did not have my own console and usually I played in other people's consoles or rented one in special rooms that we called *maquinitas*, with the money that my parents gave me back in that time I was able to pay for maximum an hour. That meant that if wanted to finish a game, I had to skip intro videos, dialogues and just focus on playing. The other factor was that I had little or no idea of English, hence I did not want to waste time watching something I would not understand. As a result, I had difficulties to pass certain levels for I lacked the required information to complete an objective.

How did I finish these levels? I used two strategies: The first one was trial and error. The second was using the multimedia resources that the game itself provided me. For instance, if I did not know what to do, I followed the arrows in the game's screen or looked for a bright object which are usually the ones you have to interact with. Even though I did not pay attention to the lore, I could grasp some of it through the semiotic elements present in the game, an example of this was Metal Slug. I knew that I was fighting an enemy army because all the enemies had the same uniform, furthermore, they had a distinctive logo which ultimately became an isotype through all the versions of the game.

This logic remained the same for about 5 years, in which I started learning English at school. However, my English was still basic and I could only recognize isolated words. I

learned a few more words by relating the images and sounds in the game with the words that the game presented me.

**JULIAN First.** My first contact with videogames was in my neighborhood, I had seven years old, there were the arcade machines, which we called “Maquinitas.” My friends were very good at it, but I never learned how to play well. The game in the *maquinitas*, mostly consisted in fights, and the player had to control the movements of the avatar or PJ with bottoms and a joystick. I played there just few times, because I had to pay to play and my mother didn’t let me to do it. But I saw my friends playing a lot of times and I tried to learn how to play just seeing them, even I pay attention to the vocabulary on the screen: Credits and press start were the most common words in those videogames (that I remember). Even for many years I thought that the meaning of credits was coin.



Figure 3. Video arcade. Retrieved from

<https://www.elcolombiano.com/tecnologia/maquinas-de-videojuegos-arcade-en-colombia-FX6624412>

Then, my father bought me a play station 1. I became a kind of “addict” to play Mario Bros. 3 and football. The commands to play it were easy to understand (see the image) and it was curious that the instructions were in English (Select, start) I learned the meaning of those words because I knew what happen when I pressed it.



*Figure 4. First English Words. Retrieved from [https://www.taringa.net/+offtopic/la-historia-de-la-playstation-1\\_v11v1](https://www.taringa.net/+offtopic/la-historia-de-la-playstation-1_v11v1)*

My play station was broken. Consequently, for some years I hadn't contact with any videogames, until I move to another neighborhood. In this new context I realize that most of children played a videogame called Crossfire in a PC, I spend one year of my life hovering to my mom to buy me one, and finally, she bought me a PC. Crossfire is a first-person shooter, and it consist in killing everyone, everywhere. Also, Crossfire is in English, in fact most people who played that video game in 2010 were from North America and Europe, so, I had to adapt myself to those environments, using a different language.



Figure 5. Crossfire West Menu. [Screenshot] Retrieved from

<https://crossfire.z8games.com/download.html>

To learn how to play, I had to do a videogame tutorial in English. Immediately I started to make relations with commands, sounds, actions and activities received by the game. Since that moment I realize that if I want to be a pro, I had to learn a lot of commands in English to be able to interact with the game.



Figure 6. Crossfire Tutorial. [Screenshot] Retrieved from

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qKQxq109hc>

At the beginning, the relation with others players was difficult, because I didn't know anything about English, but passing the days, I began to learn some keywords and commands to interact with them, and I started to progress in the game because I got some friends (English Friends) and they tried to help me all the time.

I consider that during those days I was an addict to play Crossfire, but I wasn't conscious that while I was playing, I was learning a lot of words in English and my motivation to have an interaction with others was my energy to learn new words even sentences in English to have a good communication with them.

**WALTER Second.** As I mentioned before, my approach and rapport with videogames was mostly the same until I was 10 or 11 years old. At that age, two things changed: I was allowed to play on my own and I started learning English at school. These two facts represented new challenges to me.

Since I was able to play without my father's supervision or help, I had to play, understand and succeed on my own. Playing rapidly became a challenge that I had to

overcome. I not only had to shoot then, I had to move, jump, crouch and even more understand what I was supposed to do in the game. The story of the game became a vital part of my playing experience, understanding *lore* quickly became a fundamental part of my gaming sessions and spare time. The only problem was that many of the games I played remained to be in English and my English was still basic. The English I knew was all summed up in a few words, maybe the understanding of present tenses, but nothing more.

Again, I relied on images and sounds to understand what I was supposed to do in the games. Nonetheless, I felt better because I could recognize in my games some of the words that I have learned in my English classes. Furthermore, I started learning new words while I was playing. For instance, I learned the word *round* while I was playing Medal of Honor Underground. As you picked ammunitions, you would see *pistol rounds* on the screen and immediately the ammunition amount in my HUD raised.

I will elaborate a little bit more about this. I deduced that *rounds* was a noun related to ammunition, bullets or shells. I did not related the word with its specific translation in Spanish for I could only deduce its meaning based on the game experience, It is important to mention that in this stage, when I learned vocabulary through games, I did not learn the Spanish counterparts for the English words. I just assumed that these words meant the same Spanish words for the facts, objects and ideas that I was experiencing in the game, but with no complete accuracy in their translation. I guess this is the reason why, for many second language user infant gamers, *play* and *start* mean *jugar*. They do not make a difference between *play=jugar* and *start=iniciar*.

Based on my experience in school, I acknowledged that there were words that were similarly written and pronounced in English and Spanish (cognates). I was also aware that

the Spanish for the weapon that my character was using in the games was a *pistola*. Hence, I used both ideas to overcome my unawareness of the word *round*, thus concluding that:

1. Since my character was using a *Pistola*, *pistol* was the English for *Pistola*
2. Since the number and the image related to the shoots I had left in my HUD increased when this sign appeared, it had to be related to the number of *balas* I had.
3. Since I have already acknowledged the first half of the sign *pistol*, I inferred the other half *rounds* should mean *balas*.

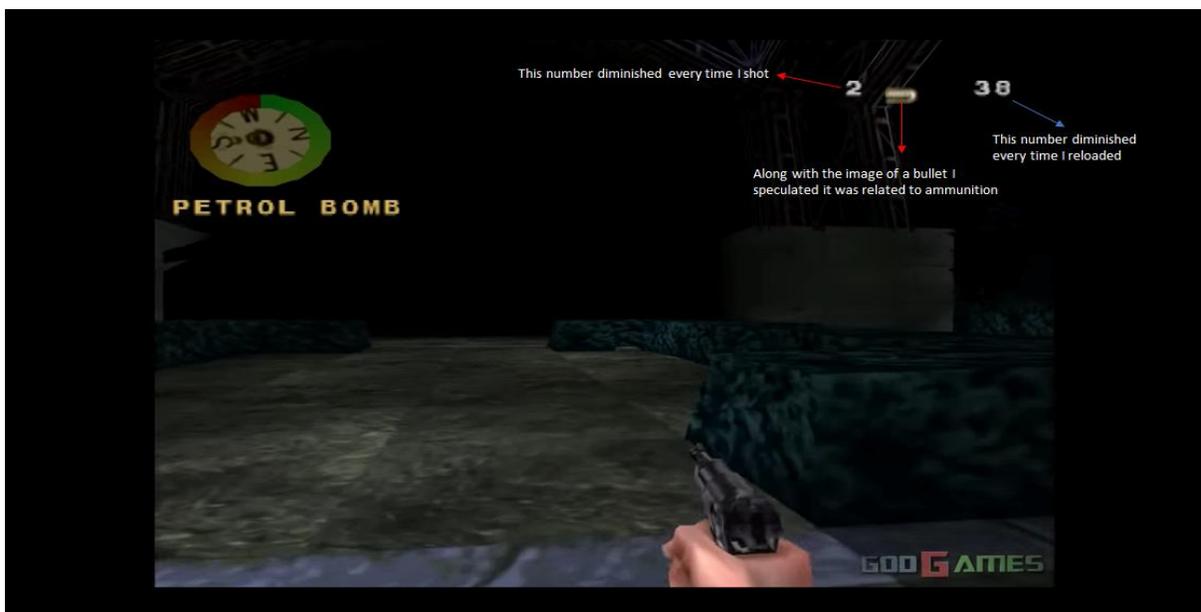


Figure 7. Some elements from the HUD MOH Underground. [Screenshot] Retrieved from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=go-2e6iA2Jo>



Figure 8. Some elements from the HUD MOH Underground. [Screenshot] Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=go-2e6iA2Jo>

These three steps repeated in several occasions, although there were times in which false cognates and different misconceptions of the words presented in the game contrasted with the things that I was learning at school.

Also, at this stage, I started to build my identity as a gamer. Second World War themed games quickly became my favorites. A series of factors shaped my like for this games: My grandfather gave my family two books about Second World War, I started to watch movies about this topic and finally, a friend got a Medal of Honor games package which contained about three issues of this series, all themed in the Second World War. From that moment forth, this topic and specially games based on this event are one of my favorites. I currently have 6 Second World War themed games installed in my PC, and I have played around ten to fifteen games about this topic.

Furthermore, this moment defined the way I related to the videogames and other gamers. This, because having connection to internet was not a priority in my house, so I basically went through this stage without playing online. In this vein, I played video games campaigns and I got used to rely on the games story and lore rather than the possibility of interaction with other gamers. Additionally, interaction in other gaming spaces was not possible, but I could relate the things that I watched in movies, documentaries and other media with the events that I experienced in the games, especially for the Second World War themed games.

**JULIAN Second.** At this stage, with the help of my foreign friends, I started to say and write English words. It was a kind of mandatory for me to started to communicate with the foreign teams in a proper way, because I begin to be interested in competitions. The competitions in Crossfire is about one team vs another, each team is composed by 5 people and they have to “kill” the enemy team to win one round, the team which win 10 rounds, will be the winner.

Every weekend the game was doing tournaments, so, I started to participate in all of them. Sometimes, teams were created randomly, whereby, I had to play with people from Brazil, Europe, North América and Latin América. We used the Voice Channel called Team Speak and we interact through it. It was absolutely necessary to speak and understand English, that situation increase my motivation to learn English and I learned a lot of English vocabulary. because we have to talk all the time in order to say strategies, enemy position and even to help our partners.

It is curious that when a team were composed, at list with 1 North American player, we use English to communicate each other. For example: If the team were composed by 2

people from Brazil, 2 people from Latin América and 1 person from North America, we will speak in English because it is considered as the main language.

In this stage, I had very clear a lot of commands in the game, for example: “Enemy located” “rush a” “rush b” “plant the c4” “enemy at the right and left” “Stay together” “let’s attack site A or B” “I’m going to use Sniper or Rifle”. Those commands were the common commands used by all players into the competitive circumstances, whereby I used it perfectly.

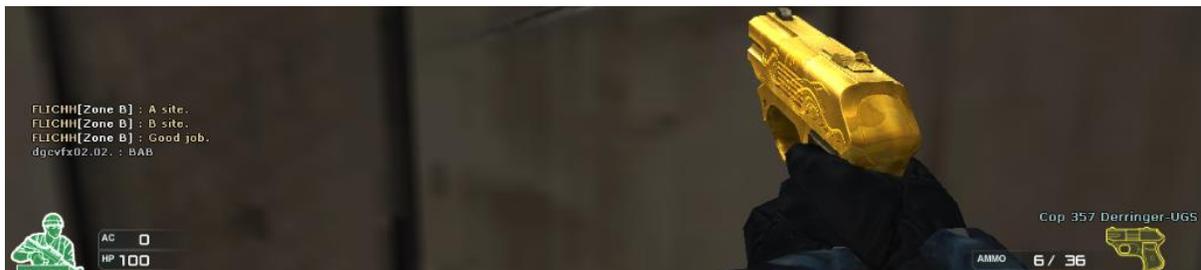


Figure 9. Crossfire Commands. [Screenshot] Retrieved from

<https://crossfire.z8games.com/download.html>



Figure 10. Crossfire Commands. [Screenshot] Retrieved from

<https://crossfire.z8games.com/download.html>

**JULIAN Third.** My expertise in Crossfire had increased markedly, due to my compromise with the game and my intentions of being one of the best. Crossfire began to conduct tournaments monthly, I participated in all of them and won, but I was getting bored of the same thing, but at one point I took out the ideal tournament, a tournament that gave a lot of money, in addition to an international trip to compete against the best Players from different countries. That tournament opened my doors to another world. I began to practice more than before, now, I had a clear goal and purpose: to be the world champion.

During these years, I had started my major as an undergraduate student in English and Spanish, so my efficiency in the English language had increased too much. For this stage, the language was very essential, since the contacts in the English language increased; I became captain of my team for two reasons: I was very good player and I gave good “calls” (instructions) and besides that, I understood English. Communication should be with the Moderators of the game (Mods) and the Game Masters of the game (GM), who were the tournament organizers and our main bosses. In most cases it should be in English. Fortunately, in 2015 I had the opportunity to participate in my first international tournament, in Brazil (CFS Invitational Brazil) in which I interacted with players from different countries: Brazil, United States, and China. This was a step forward in the process of language interaction since it had gone from online interaction to personal interaction (face to face). It was a new challenge for me and even training for my next international tournament the same year in China, but this time there were many more countries: Russia, Indonesia, Japan, China, United States, The Philippines, Germany, and Vietnam. Best of all, the language of connection and interaction we all had in common was English. For the next few years I continued training with my team, being the best in Latin America four years in a row and in 2016 we were ranked as the third best team in the world. In 2017 I was already in the

middle of my career and later in 2018 I was invited to join LSLP, in which all the knowledge about video games I had was useful to continue the research on video games. Later on, I started to think in the idea of gamification in which I can apply all the knowledge acquire by the research lab and videogames into my future classroom.

## **Coda**

Our two experiences as gamers, even if different at first, provided the basis for deeper reflections in our transition into teaching (Sánchez, 2019). In this sense, doing duoethnographic research let us analyze, compare, contrast and reflect on our experiences as gamers, pre-service teachers and researchers. Consequently, we can affirm that our experience playing videogames allowed us to achieve certain English level in order to achieve winning and just play the videogame according with our interests.

As we learned, there is a contrast between Julian's experiences and Walter's experiences in the sense of the practice of the four communicative skills playing videogames. On the one hand, Walter developed the ability to read and listen because he interacted directly with the game, where writing and speaking were not required skills, something common in offline videogames. Julian, on the other hand, developed the ability to write and speak because his interactions were with other players from different countries and in his case the communication with those players was essential to achieve winning in the game, which happens often in online videogames, as Peterson (2010) explained, "In game play, learners are exposed to the TL in an authentic communication context that provides valuable practice in the four skills." Our future teaching experiences must take this into account as we work with our students, many of whom will probably share our backgrounds and will need

help using their gaming potential to learn languages (Mora, Gee, Hernandez, S Castaño, Orrego, & Ramírez, 2020).

In our conversations, the idea of gamification (Burke, 2014; McGonigal, 2011), as the possibility for teachers to bring characteristics, ideas and methodologies of videogames into a classroom, also surfaced. Based on our experiences as gamers as teachers, gamification cannot be just letting the students play. The teacher must be aware of the principal characteristics of a video game such as roles, spaces, missions, objectives, then, the teacher would have enough instruments and knowledge to gamify his class. Nowadays, the population of students who are gamers is increasing and at present “There are more than 2.5 billion video gamers from all over the world” (The European Mobile Game Market, 2017). Teachers should take advantage of it, instead of fighting against it.

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