

<b>Title:</b>	Effects of Single-Player Video Games on Incidental Vocabulary Learning
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## Abstract

With the rise of technology, vocabulary learning not only can be conducted in classrooms, but also can be assimilated into our daily lives. In conjunction with the pandemic COVID-19, online learning and gaming have become a new trend as more people stay at home and use their electronic devices more frequently. The chance of learning vocabulary incidentally increases. Many scholars have tried to study whether incidental vocabulary learning occurs in digital gameplay. Yet, most of the studies are based on multiplayer online games. There is a lack of attention paid to incidental vocabulary learning from single-player video games which do not require communication as much as the games above. The relationship between single-player games and incidental vocabulary learning is still in its infancy, so it is worthwhile to investigate so and hence fill in this research gap.

This paper explores how single-player video games influence one's incidental vocabulary learning through the case study of *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* (BOTW). Eight local undergraduates were split into experimental and control groups, where the experimental group played the game for four hours and the video gameplays were recorded. Participants were asked to complete a pre-test and a post-test in both groups. 26 target words were picked from the game and the tests were conducted in the form of Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS). It was found that single-player video games improved one's receptive vocabulary knowledge to a marginal extent. Word frequency and context in video games did not have an impact on vocabulary acquisition due to its high cognitive demand. "Need" and "search" of Involvement Load Hypothesis had the most prominent effect on so, and pictures facilitated players to form the pathway between the semantic meanings and pictorial information.

## Reflection

As a(n) (introverted) gamer and an English major, I thought it would be impossible to combine my two favourite things into a formal research project at first. However, this capstone project has fulfilled my wishes miraculously. Not only have I known more about the relationship between language acquisition and our daily entertainment, but also have discovered how single-player games can be adjusted so that we can achieve learning through playing, especially by ourselves only. This capstone project undoubtedly is one of my greatest achievements I made in my 4-year undergraduate study, and it certainly encourages me to pursue further studies on L2 acquisition and applied linguistics in general.

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