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**“Tell your own story’: A genre analysis of the
about-this-game section on the gaming platform *Steam*”**

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Abstract

Although technical advancements and the accessibility of computers led to the growing popularity of video games and platforms such as *Steam*, where video games are marketed, linguistic research on the advertising context on these platforms is lacking. One of the genres within this online publishing context of video games is the *about-this-game section*.

Thus, this thesis examines the *about-this-game section* on the gaming platform *Steam* from a genre analysis perspective. It investigates the move structure of forty (40) *about-this-game sections*, the lexico-grammatical components based on a corpus consisting of 149 sample texts, as well as the multimodal aspect of the data. Whereas the move and multimodal analysis is manually conducted, the corpus analysis with regard to lexico-grammatical features is executed with the help of the software *SketchEngine*.

The findings indicate that a prototypical *about-this-game section* has a threefold purpose of persuading, promoting, and informing and consists of six moves realized by various steps. It focuses on evaluation and description, with the former being achieved by the use of positively connotated adjectives and emotive active verbs. In addition, the majority of the *about-this-game sections* contain visualizing aspects, which contribute to the persuasive tone of the text. Hence, this study adds to the research on online genres and multimodality and provides an informative framework for producers of promotional texts. Moreover, it might also prove beneficial in an ESP context by demonstrating promotional strategies, which can help students improve their arguments.

Keywords: genre analysis, video games, move structure, purpose, multimodality

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List of abbreviations

ESP	English for Specific Purposes
SFL.....	Systemic Functional Linguistics
CD-ROM	Compact Disc Read-Only Memory
GIF.....	Graphics Interchange Format
U.S.	United States of America
EnTenTen21.....	English Web 2021 Corpus
XML	Extensible Markup Language
DLC.....	Downloadable Content
EA.....	Electronic Arts

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1. Introduction

With the invention of computers and the internet, video games became accessible to the broad public and gained immense popularity. Besides the novelty of being an interactive art form (Mendes, Cunha & Mendes 2022), and their “problem-solving, rule-driven, competitive, and reward-based” (Peake & Reynolds 2020: 3) character, the advertising factor can be seen as another part of the success of video games. Due to the growing video game market, developers and publishers of video games devise marketing strategies to advertise their games in order to withstand the competition.

The context in which these games are published, thus, incorporates a wide range of different genres. One of these genres is the blurb, a short descriptive, yet promotional text, which is considered a subgenre of advertisements (Gea-Valor 2005: 42). Whereas these blurbs were printed on the back of the CD-ROM cover in the past, technical advancements have led to the adaptation of blurbs for online advertising environments. These environments refer to online gaming platforms, where video game players all over the world can meet to either play alone, together in teams or even competitively in tournaments, despite their geographical distance. One of these gaming platforms is *Steam*, which was generated by *Valve*, a developing company of video games (Steam 2023).

On *Steam*, the back-cover blurb of CD-ROMS was adapted and transformed into the *about-this-game section*. Just like blurbs, the *about-this-game section* on *Steam* offers the potential buyer of a video game information on the content of the game by simultaneously deploying strategies to promote the game to convince the customer to purchase it. Whereas book blurbs have already been investigated as a genre by researchers such as Bhatia (2004), Gea-Valor (2005), and Kathpalia (2021), no research could be found on video game blurbs. This could be due to the assumption that all blurbs are structured in the same manner. However, several researchers claim that adapted genres differ from their offline counterparts (Caballero 2008: 21), hence, highlighting the importance of a further examination of the *about-this-game section*. For this reason, a corpus-based genre analysis of the *about-this-game section* on *Steam* will be conducted to investigate whether (1) the findings on (book) blurbs coincide with the ones of the *about-this-game section* or (2) the transformation of the blurb to an online format induced changes, which would make the *about-this-game section* a genre itself that differs from the genre of blurbs.

In order to answer these points, the *about-this-game section* will be analyzed according to Swales' (1990) and Bhatia's (2002) genre analysis framework to reveal the purpose(s), the typical move structure of the section, as well as rhetorical strategies used to realize the moves. To be more precise, forty (40) sample texts will be manually tagged to investigate the purpose and the move structure of the genre to see whether the *about-this-game section* can be regarded as a structured or rather varied genre. Furthermore, the linguistic features will be analyzed with the help of *SketchEngine*, which is an online tool for analyzing corpus-based texts. To complete the analysis, a shortened multimodal analysis of the introductory page of video games, based on the ideas by Bateman (2008), will be conducted to include the online aspect of the *about-this-game section*.

The present thesis is structured into two parts: the review of the background theory and literature in the first part of the thesis and the practical analysis including a discussion in the second part. The theory part will start with a description of genre by tracing its history based on the three main linguistic schools English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and New Rhetoric Genre Studies, as well as an introduction of the framework for genre analysis and multimodality. This is followed by an overview of the research conducted on blurbs and a summary of the language of advertising in Chapter 3. The design of this study, including research questions, data, and methodology, will be outlined in Chapter 4 and introduces the actual analysis of the data in Chapter 5. The findings of the analysis will then be discussed in Chapter 6. To sum up, Chapter 7 will conclude the main outcomes of the study.

2. Research on genre

In order to grasp the essence of this thesis and later establish the framework on which the analysis of the data is based, it is indispensable to first define the main underlying construct of this thesis, *genre*. Thus, this chapter deals with the question of why it is necessary to categorize texts into genres and aims to develop a working definition of genre. Furthermore, it outlines how the notion of the concept genre changed over time. This evolution of genre will be examined from different perspectives based on the argumentation of the three different research traditions of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), New Rhetoric, and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

The beginning of genre can be dated back to Aristotle. In an Aristotelian view, genre was seen as a way of categorizing literature (Fortanet, Palmer & Posteguillo 1999: 93). This view on genre continued throughout the 20th century and was based on mere similarity or resemblance, drawing upon the prototype theory by Rosch (1975) or family resemblances by Wittgenstein (1958) (Askehave & Swales 2001: 196). Even today, the use of genre as a classifying system is still prominent in literature and “has been extended to refer to more popular cultural forms [such as] soap opera, film noir, western, [or] thriller” (Flowerdew 2013: 138). However, in the field of linguistics, especially Educational Linguistics, genre was established during the 1980s as a way to improve language instruction (Hyon 1996: 694), which changed the view on genre in Applied Linguistics. Since the 1980s, the importance of genre shifted away from mere practicality towards a more socially influenced perception:

In a vast landscape of communicative choices and strategies, genres provide a shortcut by which people can identify and participate in social endeavors. Knowing a document's genre, and therefore its communicative utility, helps a person formulate a precise query, for instance, or recognize the relevance of a document that is presented as the result of processing that query. (Kwasnik & Crowston 2005: 80)

Thus, in Applied Linguistics, genre refers to instances of communication, which “are associated with particular settings” (Flowerdew 2013: 138).

However, even though the social aspect of genre has been generally accepted, the definition of genre varies depending on the linguistic school of thought: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), New Rhetoric Studies, and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Hyon 1996: 694-696). The main emphases, and thus, the different foci, of the three traditions in genre research can be broadly categorized into actions, register, and communicative purpose (Hyon 1996: 694-

696). The next chapters will describe these three schools in more detail to depict the change in the notion of genre in Applied Linguistics and develop an understanding of how genre is constructed today.

2.1 The English for Specific Purposes tradition

When we use language, we have certain implicit intentions behind every utterance and thus, a specific goal we want to achieve through communication. This is what genre scholars defined as communicative purpose. In English for Specific Purposes (ESP) research, which emerged “within the broader framework of discourse analysis for applied linguistic purposes” (Bhatia 1996: 46), this communicative purpose represents the main aspect of categorizing texts into specific genres. It also defines the membership of users of the genre, as the knowledge of the communicative purpose distinguishes members of a discourse community from non-members. This expands the definition of genre in the ESP research to also being context-specific and restricted to certain discourse communities.

Askehave and Ellerup Nielsen see the communicative purpose as “the rationale for the genre” (2005: 122) and explain “that the purpose of a genre [...] triggers a particular text structure and [...] [is] a host of conventionalised verbal and visual rhetorical strategies” (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 122). Hence, the use of a genre by members of the discourse community is influenced by the conventions of a genre (Bhatia 1993: 13), as each genre consists of specific linguistic and structural choices that implicitly reflect the purpose.

However, it has to be noted that the conventions of a genre can be applied differently for each text, making texts belonging to the same genre different in content and structure, yet still categorizable as one genre due to their communicative purpose (Asghar, Mahmood & Asghar 2015: 158). This means that some texts are considered prototypes of specific genres whereas others are more creative in their execution and thus, non-typical examples of the genre. Bhatia (1997: 191) also explains that there are no pure genres, but rather mixed and embedded genres. Both notions can be distinguished from each other by “the nature and extent of involvement of one genre within the other” (Bhatia 1997: 191). Whereas genre mixing implies that private intentions are mixed with the communicative purposes of a genre (Bhatia 1997: 187), genre embedding deals with the use of “a particular generic form [...] to give expression

to another conventionally distinct generic form” (Bhatia 1997: 191). In other words, two genres are combined to create a new one.

All of the above-outlined parts of the description of genre are based on researchers such as Flowerdew (1993), Bhatia (1993), and Swales (1990). The latter highly influenced the ESP tradition and summarizes genre as “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (Swales 1990: 58), thus, highlighting the importance of intentions when communicating.

2.2 The New Rhetoric tradition

The New Rhetoric line of argumentation emerged in North America and includes scholars such as Bazerman (1988), Freedman and Medway (1994), and Miller (1984), who shaped this genre tradition. An influential piece was the article *Genre as Social Action* by Miller, in which she highlights the importance of defining genre “not [based] on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish” (Miller 1984: 151). Thus, genre in the New Rhetoric tradition differs from the ESP tradition to the effect that the focus of genre is on social context rather than communicative purpose. Therefore, scholars of the New Rhetoric tradition investigate “the situational contexts in which genres occur[, which are related to] the actions texts perform within these situations” (Hyon 1996: 696).

Moreover, New Rhetoric scholars highlight the dynamic nature of genre, as “the inherent fluidity of the sociohistorical context to which genres respond” (Artemeva & Freedman 2001: 166) allowed for change. Even though the ESP tradition also acknowledges differences within a genre, it is seen as a distinguishing factor between proto- and non-prototypical texts, rather than subject to change. The aforementioned social contexts in the New Rhetoric argumentation are also the shaping factor of a genre’s texts, as a texts’ formality “derive[s] from and relate[s] to the writer’s social motive in responding to a recurrent social situation” (Freedman & Medway 1994: 3). Contrary to the ESP tradition, which argues that the communicative purpose defines a texts’ form and content, New Rhetoric scholars claim that “[p]ieces of writing are [...] not abstracted from their social context but, rather, seen as strategies for responding to particular social situations” (Paltridge 1997: 16).

However, there are also similarities between ESP and New Rhetoric regarding the context itself and discourse communities. Both traditions focus on revealing the properties and

structures of texts written and performed in a professional context, thus, aiming at investigating academic texts and their surroundings (Hyon 1996: 696). In terms of discourse communities, both traditions acknowledge that the basis for communication is a certain shared knowledge, or as Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995: ix) called it, *genre knowledge*. In Giltrow's (1994: 156) definition, genre knowledge is part of the two-leveled *background knowledge* and is characterized by "the knowledge of the genre's conventions" (Giltrow 1994: 156). The second level refers to *world knowledge*, which can be drawn upon when genre knowledge is not sufficient. This background knowledge is especially important to interpret situations where some information is deliberately missing and thus, only members of the discourse community can understand it (Giltrow 1994: 155).

2.3 The Systemic Functional Linguistics tradition

Represented by scholars such as Martin, Christie, and Rothery (1987) and Halliday (1978), the Systemic Functional Linguistic genre theory investigates "the relationship between language and its functions in social settings" (Hyon 1996: 696-697). Genre, in this case, is seen as "structural forms that are used in certain cultures and contexts to achieve various communicative purposes" (Kathpalia 2021: 3). Thus, genre in SFL constitutes a process that is a socially influenced and purposeful representation of culture (Martin, Christie & Rothery 1987: 47).

Similar to the New Rhetoric tradition, the social context defines how genres are expressed formally (Hyon 1996: 967). Halliday (1978) considers three factors as the main context-specific influence on the form of genres: *field*, *tenor*, and *mode*. These three factors influence the *register* of a genre, which is defined as the tone of a text (Hyon 1996: 697). *Field* is "the activity going on" (Hyon 1996: 697), *tenor* is defined as "the relationship between participants" (Hyon 1996: 697), and *mode* refers to "the channel of communication" (Hyon 1996: 697). Nevertheless, even though the determining factor for the form in the New Rhetoric and SFL tradition is the social context, the SFL tradition, with regards to its focus, exhibits more similarities to the ESP definition of genre, as both traditions highlight the form rather than the social context (Kathpalia 2021: 3). However, SFL differs from the other two traditions in terms of the contexts it investigates. The Australian tradition focuses more on non-professional writing, occurring in workplace contexts or school settings (Hyon 1996: 697).

2.4 Genre today

As the outlined notions of genre within the different traditions show, certain perspectives on genre differ to some extent and thus reinforce the complexity surrounding a uniform definition. Nevertheless, even though genre emerged independently within these traditions, all traditions agree that genre has to be seen as intertwined with and rooted in culture (Caballero 2008: 14). As Clearwater points out, “[t]exts cannot interact on their own; they come together only through cultural practices such as production and reception” (2011: 43). Therefore, this cultural aspect also refers to relations concerning “power, ideology, and exclusion and inclusion” (Devitt 2015: 48) as well as “concepts [such] as identity, affect, and cognition” (Devitt 2015: 48) and encompasses far more than only texts. Additionally, Bhatia (2004: 23) sees the main overlap of the different traditions in terms of “the emphasis on conventions that all the three manifestations of genre theory consider very central to any form of generic description”. Based on the historical development, it becomes apparent that besides the differences in the early stages of defining genre in the outlined schools of thought, it can be said that all three schools influenced the current notion of genre to some extent and moved towards each other in recent years (Caballero 2008).

Moreover, genre today cannot be described without acknowledging the influence of technology and consequently, the array of new possibilities. The research by the scholars outlined in the previous chapters concentrates on linear texts, which are “organized by the logic of writing” (Kress 2003: 19). With the invention of computers and access to the internet, however, the focus of organization shifted towards “the image and its logic” (Kress 2003: 19). In other words, the multimodality of texts influences the traditional linear reading path (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 125) and thus, poses challenges to genre and their analysis. These challenges will be discussed in Chapter 2.6.

2.5 Genre analysis

In order to examine a genre, scholars of each language school constructed individual frameworks for analyzing texts. These frameworks are known as *genre analysis* and were developed to uncover similarities as well as irregularities in the texts and their contexts (Hyon 1996: 697). In the 1960s, research on genre analysis started with a focus on “functional varieties or *registers* of a language” (Swales 1990: 2, original emphasis), aiming at describing

certain occurrences of forms within texts (Swales 1990: 2). However, with the shift of the focus of genre to the social aspect, genre analysis also shifted to include contextual factors (Bhatia 2017: 4). Bhatia (2017: 4) explains that these contextual factors refer to different aspects regarding a shared understanding, as the socially induced genre shift led to the perception that “communication is more than knowing the semantics and lexico-grammar” (Bhatia 2017: 4). Rather, the essence of genre is to find out “why members of a specific disciplinary community communicate the way they do” (Bhatia 1993: 14).

The most influential framework for genre analysis is the one by Swales (1990). He sees genres as formally composed of three main features that are intertwined: communicative purpose, move structure, and rhetorical strategies (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 122). Even though Swales’ approach has often been refined by other researchers, it still builds the basis of current genre analysis models (Bhatia 2002: 17).

One of these refinements is Bhatia’s (2002: 16) approach to genre analysis. It expands Swales’ framework to allow for a more in-depth knowledge of genres. Figure 1 illustrates the components of an applied genre analytical model in the sense of Bhatia. For him, genre analysis has to incorporate all three levels of discourse: “the textual perspective, the socio-cognitive perspective (the world of private intentions, i.e., exploitations of discourse by individual players), and the socio-critical perspective” (Bhatia 2022: 16).

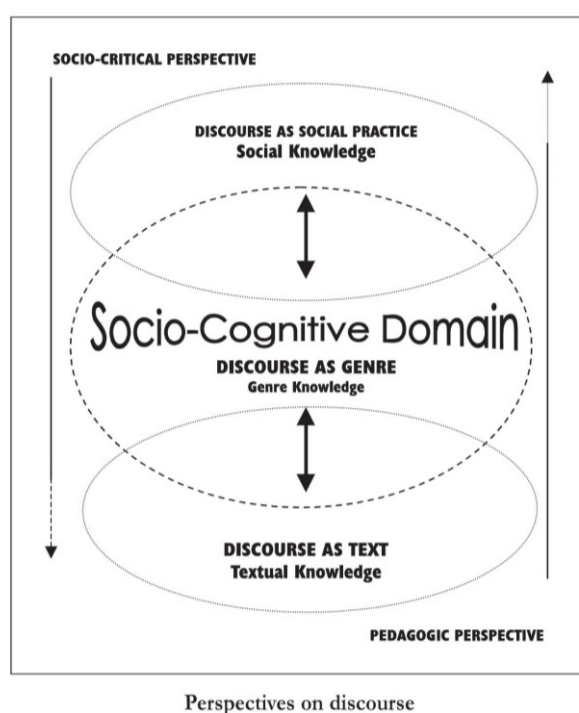


Figure 1: Bhatia's applied genre analytical model (Bhatia 2002: 16)

According to Bhatia (2002: 17), *discourse as text* deals with the formal analysis of a text's properties and draws on Swales' framework. It investigates how a text is written and structured, hence, focuses on its grammar, its lexis, its phonology, and its structural units, without acknowledging its context or use. The interpretation of the text by readers is included in *discourse as genre*. It "extends the analysis beyond the textual output to incorporate *Context* in a broader sense to account for not only the way text is constructed but also for the way it is likely to be interpreted, used and exploited in specific contexts" (Bhatia 2002: 17, original emphasis). The third level, *discourse as social practice*, investigates the aforementioned context in more detail. An analysis dealing with social knowledge focuses on contextual features, "such as the changing of identities of the participants, the social structures or professional relationships the genres are likely to maintain or change, the benefits or disadvantages such genres are likely to bring to a particular set of readers" (Bhatia 2002: 18).

Even though Bhatia expanded Swales' framework to include other aspects that influence the genre itself, the main focus of the analysis is on *discourse as text* (Bhatia 2002: 18). This incorporates Swales' features of communicative purpose, move structure, and rhetorical strategies. The following chapter introduces these aspects to establish the framework used for this thesis. In addition, the chapter also deals with *discourse as genre* to some extent by developing the notion of discourse community.

2.5.1 Discourse community

As a result of the focus-shift in genre studies, the context gained in importance when conducting a genre analysis. One of the main aspects of context is the discourse community, in which a certain genre is used, as genre only exists through cultural practices (Clearwater 2011: 43). According to Bhatia (1993: 15), a discourse community refers to a collective of people with specialist knowledge on the purpose and formality of a genre. Before the introduction of the term discourse community, researchers considered using the already existing term speech community as a possible expression (Swales 1990: 23). As defined in Swales' book, "a speech community is seen as being composed of those who share functional rules that determine the appropriacy of utterances" (1990: 23), which leads to the

categorization of English speakers as a speech community (Swales 1990: 23). However, this notion heavily relies on the birth status of people and to some degree on geographical location (Kathpalia 2021: 28). Furthermore, Swales explains that

separating the two concepts derives from the need to distinguish a *sociolinguistic* grouping from a *sociorhetorical* one. In a sociolinguistic speech community, the communicative needs of the *group*, such as socialization or group solidarity, tend to predominate in the development and maintenance of its discoursal characteristics. The primary determinants of linguistic behavior are social. However, in a sociorhetorical discourse community, the primary determinants of linguistic behavior are functional, since a discourse community consists of a group of people who link up in order to pursue objectives that are prior to those of socialization and solidarity, even if these latter should consequently occur. (Swales 1990: 24, original emphasis)

The objectives, in this case, refer to the communicative purpose. In other words, a speech community and a discourse community pursue different goals when communicating. To differentiate the two terms better, Swales (1990: 24-27) introduced six features that characterize a discourse community: implicitly or explicitly set public goals, the existence of intercommunication through different channels, the utilization of these channels by members to receive information or give feedback, the existence of genres belonging to this specific discourse community, the acquisition of genre-specific lexico-grammatical features, the existence of “a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise” (Swales 1990: 27). The discourse community of the *about-this-game* section on *Steam* will be analyzed in Chapter 5.1 in more detail.

2.5.2 Communicative purpose

Depending on the discourse community, the goal of communication varies. It has already been established that this goal is referred to as communicative purpose, also understood as “the rationale of the genre” (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 122), and is the most crucial factor for classifying texts as genre in the ESP tradition. Askehave and Ellerup Nielsen explain that “if we want to claim that the homepage constitutes a [‘]proper[‘] genre, we obviously need to look for a shared communicative purpose (or purposes) which the communicative events (in this case the homepages) are intended to fulfil” (2005: 122). This means that not all homepages necessarily form one genre. Different homepages could have different communicative purposes, and thus, could be considered separate genres (Askehave & Swales 2001: 198). Conversely, not all genres with similar communicative purposes are a genre

(Bhatia 1993: 13). Nevertheless, classifying texts based on the communicative purpose helps to “retain and maintain a ‘narrow’ concept of genre” (Askehave & Swales 2001: 198).

This already suggests a certain complexity surrounding the communicative purpose, as it is “more evasive, multiple, layered and complex than originally envisaged” (Askehave & Swales 2001: 197). Several researchers criticize the concept of the communicative purpose as the main feature of categorization (Askehave & Swales 2001: 195). An explanation for this critique has been given by Swales (1990: 46), who states that the communicative purpose is not only an implicit feature of texts (Swales 1990: 46) but also counts as a fundamental criterion for membership in a discourse community. Thus, researchers outside of the discourse community of a certain genre might be able to analyze a text’s properties but could fail to discern the communicative purpose (Bhatia 2006: 80). Therefore, researchers emphasize the need to incorporate contextual analysis, especially of the discourse community, in order to fully account for the communicative purpose, as investigating texts in isolation is often an insufficient method to identify the communicative purpose (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 122).

Even though the communicative purpose as the sole defining factor of genre has been criticized, the importance of the communicative purpose has never been disputed. For instance, if two genres are characterized by similar communicative purposes, the distinctive factors of these genres are their form and content, also referred to as move structure and rhetorical strategies. These features are, in turn, influenced by the communicative purpose of a genre, as the main goal of a text is to convey and thus, fulfill its communicative purpose through the use of linguistic strategies (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 122). However, over the last several years the lines of this connection have become rather blurry, as “there is [...] an increase in the number of promotional strategies in texts that are traditionally considered non-promotional” (Labrador et al. 2014: 40). Bhatia (1993: 15) explains this increase by referring to the limited number of linguistic resources a genre can draw upon. These “constraints are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s)” (Bhatia 1993: 15). Consequentially, genres can be used creatively within accepted boundaries, thus, making them non-static and subject to change (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 122).

2.5.3 Move structure

As established in the previous section, the communicative purpose influences the structure and content of the genre (Swales 1990). Conversely, this means that “the major linguistic reflection of communicative purpose is in the staging structure by which a text of a particular genre unfolds” (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 122). This staging structure is referred to as move structure or schematic structure. According to Swales, the move structure can be defined as “a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in [...] discourse” (2004: 228). Based on this definition, Alharbi explains more precisely that “texts are composed of distinct sections; each section is subdivided into moves, and each move can be broken down into multiple text fragments, known as steps, that together achieve the purpose of the move” (2023: 96). Therefore, the function of move structure in a text is the conventionalization of the genre and therein, the accomplishment of the goal of the text, the communicative purpose (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 122).

Research shows that not all texts of a genre are written in the exact same way, thus, variation in the move structure is inevitable. Therefore, researchers agree that certain moves are necessary to achieve the underlying goal of the genre, whereas others might not contribute to the fulfillment of the communicative purpose but facilitate communication (Henry & Roseberry 1998: 147). In genre research, this is referred to as the distinction between obligatory moves and optional moves. In theory, this division seems straightforward, however, in practice, there is no consensus on how often moves have to appear in texts of a genre to be considered an obligatory move. Whereas some researchers claim that obligatory moves have to occur in 100% of texts, others count 90% of occurrences in the genre as obligatory (Tessuto 2015; Hüttner 2010).

The 90% mark appears in Hüttner’s (2010: 205) classification and takes the variation aspect into account. Following her guidelines, obligatory moves occur in at least 90% of the sample texts, whereas moves that occur in 29% or less are considered optional moves. Furthermore, Hüttner (2010) divides the range from 30% to 89% of occurrences into ambiguous and core moves. Core moves, according to her, can be found in 50% to 89% of texts and are also a common feature of the genre. Ambiguous moves (30% to 49%) are not very typical for the genre and would need further inspection by expert members of the discourse community (Hüttner 2010: 205).

In a sense, moves are the overarching elements of a text, which are realized through smaller elements called steps. These steps are also referred to as rhetorical strategies. Askehave and Ellerup Nielsen explain that “[t]he move structure of a genre typically consists of several functionally distinct stages or steps” (2005: 122) and add that the implementation of the communicative purpose within a genre cannot be done in a single step. In contrast to the perception of a fixed move structure within the genre model, the realization of these steps as well as the number of these steps can vary (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 122). This is partly due to the controversy surrounding the basis of identification of moves within a genre. Whereas some researchers highlight the functionality of moves others rely on the layout or lexical and grammatical items to identify a move (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 122-123). In addition, researchers point out that “there is no one-to-one correlation between a particular move and the verbal and non-verbal strategies used to instantiate a move” (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 123). In other words, different texts of the same genre can use the same rhetorical strategies but realize them within different moves. But in most cases, individual texts of a genre “deploy identical or at least very similar rhetorical features” (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 123).

According to Askehave and Ellerup Nielsen (2005: 123), the focus of investigating rhetorical strategies within genre analysis is on revealing such recurring strategies in order to establish a *common repertoire*. This common repertoire then reflects “all the different possibilities which exist for saying practically the same thing (realizing the same move)” (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 123) and shows linguistic preferences of a genre. However, even though a common repertoire exists, variation is still possible. This is due to the different combinations of the various rhetorical strategies collected in this common repertoire, as the writers have the option to freely combine them as long as the communicative purpose is achieved (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 123).

2.5.4 Lexico-grammatical features

Whereas the rhetorical strategies operate on a broader, structural level, the lexico-grammatical features act on the word or phrase level. As the term already suggests, the lexico-grammatical aspect deals with the use of specific vocabulary and grammar in a genre (Flowerdew 2013: 141). For instance, instructions as a genre often use imperatives, a “parallel

grammatical structure [or] material process verbs (for example, *make a mess, clean up, use, wash, wet, dry*)” (Flowerdew 2013: 141, original emphasis). Even though there is a certain degree of conventionalization with regard to the use of lexico-grammatical features within a genre, creativity is still possible. Flowerdew makes this apparent by illustrating that imperatives in instructions can also be realized through “reduced conditionals (*[If] you make a mess, you [must] clean it up [...]*)” (Flowerdew 2013: 141, original emphasis).

Furthermore, lexico-grammatical features not only indicate which genre a text belongs to but also the degree of formality of a genre and the specialist knowledge of the writer. This is especially important for academic genres. Nation (2013) compiled a list of vocabulary, which he divided into high and low-frequency words, academic vocabulary, and technical vocabulary. High-frequency words are the 2,000 most frequently occurring words in texts across various genres, which include function words as well as content words and encompass over 80% of a text (Nation 2013: 18). This means that high-frequency words are encountered often in every genre and are thus, easy to acquire. “Low-frequency words[, however] are those beyond the most frequent 9,000 words of English” (Nation 2013: 28) and consist predominately of proper nouns. Technical words of a text, in Nation’s (2013) definition, are the specialized vocabulary of a genre in Swales’ view, namely words that “are reasonably common in [a certain] topic area but [...] not so common elsewhere” (Nation 2013: 19). Thus, it can be said that the technical vocabulary of a text can, to some extent, reflect a texts’ register and is an indicator of specialist knowledge of the genre. In contrast, academic words are used within genres of an academic context. Hence, they appear in a broad range of text types (Nation 2013: 19), and therefore, do not directly imply what type of genre a text belongs to, as there are various academic genres. Nevertheless, the use of academic vocabulary indicates a certain degree of formality, which is an integral part of academic writing (Nation 2013: 30). Therefore, it can also be considered an indicator of knowledge of academic genres.

2.6 Online genres and multimodality

The beginning of research on genre investigated so-called offline genres, meaning genres that were realized through a print medium. However, with the rising popularity of the internet, printed genres were adapted to fit the new digital medium, and new genres were introduced (Caballero 2008: 21). This led to the emergence of internet genres and the need to transform

genre analysis from the offline mode to the online mode (Xia 2020: 142). This transformation does not only lie in the emergence of new genres but also in the assumption made by several researchers that adapted genres differ from their offline counterparts (Caballero 2008: 21). Kathpalia points out that even though the communicative purpose might remain identical, a “change in medium may impact the rhetorical and linguistic realization of the genre” (2021: 14). This could be partly due to the new feature of online genres: functionality (Gea-Valor 2006: 38). According to Fortanet, Palmer and Posteguillo (1999: 98), this functionality refers to the use of hypertext and multiple different media forms, also referred to as multimodality, as well as the possibility to interact with the audience, hence, interactivity (Belcher 2023: 33). Shepherd and Watters (1998) tried to establish a definition of cybergenres to distinguish print from online genres. In their proposal, online genres can be defined as either extant or novel subgenres (Shepherd & Watters 1998: 98). Within this definition, extant subgenres are divided into replicated cybergenres, the most represented form characterized by a high level of reproduction, and variant cybergenres that “are based on existing genres but have evolved by exploiting the capabilities afforded by the new medium” (Shepherd & Watters 1998: 99). As for the novel cybergenres, they can be divided into emergent or spontaneous and can be seen as “dependent on the new medium” (Shepherd & Watters 1998: 99). An online genre is considered as emergent when the functionality aspect is exploited to a higher degree than in the variant cybergenres. If no similar genre exists offline, as is the case for “the home page, the hot list, and FAQ’s” (1998: 99), the online genre is defined as spontaneous. However, even though several researchers highlight the functionality aspect of digital genres, it has to be noted that a clear definition of online genres does not exist, due to “dynamism, variation, and pluralization – in form and function” (Belcher 2023: 39). This complexity is also reflected in the categorization outlined above, as the degree of utilizing the functionality aspect of the new medium is difficult to determine.

Hypertext came into existence through newly emerged online genres, such as the homepage, and is a unique characteristic of webgenres (Fortanet, Palmer & Posteguillo 1999: 97). It “present[s] information on the web [and] relate[s] web texts to each other; thus, enabling a non-linear transmission of information” (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 126). This non-linearity adds complexity to the analysis of online genres. A text is linear, and the reader follows this linearity while reading. However, “the hypertext system places certain constraints on the reading pattern, which result in a new kind of reading referred to as hyper-reading”

(Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 126). The complexity of hypertext reading is the loss of the linearity of texts, as the reader creates his or her reading path. Thus, the linearity of traditional texts is interrupted, and new texts are created through hyper-reading (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 126). In turn, these new texts also influence the purpose of the main genre, as embedded and (hyper)linked texts do not necessarily have the same purpose (Belcher 2023: 35). Based on the outlined definition of genre in this paper, this change of the communicative purpose would then also lead to a change in genre.

Besides hypertext, the aforementioned linear reading path of traditional genres is also influenced by multimodality. The term multimodality “refers to the genres that involve the use of multiple communicative modes” (Xia 2020: 146). In fact, researchers argue “that all genres are multimodal, as a genre is a higher-order phenomenon that imposes a structure of communication, which itself is inherently multimodal” (Xia 2020: 146). The modes a genre makes use of, can either be embodied, which includes speech, facial expressions, and gestures, or disembodied, concerning video, layout, or music (Norris 2004: 103). In other words, embodied modes have a short-term effect, whereas disembodied modes are characterized by a certain degree of permanence. Similarly, Ledin and Machin (2020: 16) talk about visible and invisible objects. Visible choices concentrate on “fonts, colours, the layout of the design, its shape and texture” (Ledin & Machin 2020: 16), whereas invisible refers to the interpretation of the visible, obvious choices and thus, the part of meaning-making.

Through the use of these multiple media forms, linear texts are interrupted, as the arrangement of text and graphics of the online page influence the normal reading mode (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 125). Moreover, a modal shift is induced, which is defined as the switching between listening, reading, or watching, according to which media form is used on the site (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 125). “What is more, the multi-mediality of web texts supplies the texts with a rich polysemous potential where the web user is ‘invited’ to participate actively in assigning meaning in the process of text consumption” (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 125). This active participation does not only refer to consumption but also to production. Web pages often include a comment function, where readers of the site are allowed to comment and communicate with each other. For the *Steam* homepage, the possibility to interact with the site is also possible through commenting or reviewing (see Chapter 5.2 for further details).

2.6.1 Multimodal genre analysis

The use of multimodality within genres led to the adjustment of existing genre analysis frameworks. Due to the scope of this thesis, only a selection of frameworks will be outlined in this chapter. For instance, Askehave and Ellerup Nielsen (2005) introduced a framework for homepages, which encompasses two modes: the reading mode and the navigating mode. These two modes are necessary to consider when dealing with texts that utilize hypertexts. Figure 2 illustrates the relation of the modes to the text and each other.

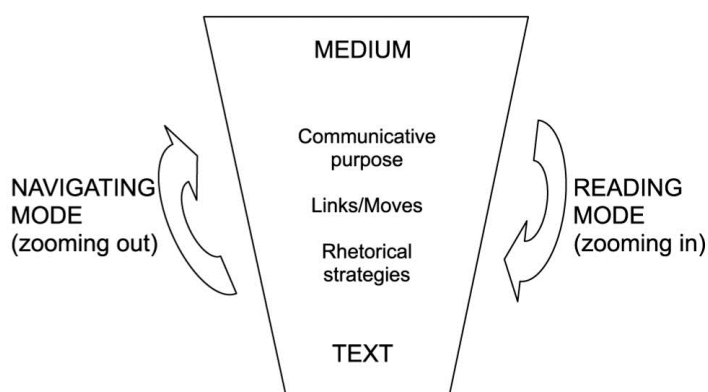


Figure 2: Genre analysis framework for online genres (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 127)

Figure 2 demonstrates that the reading mode concentrates on the text and its content, whereas the navigating mode focuses on the medium itself. Askehave and Ellerup Nielsen (2005: 127) see the reading mode as similar to the traditional reading process, where a text is being read sequentially. Thus, it can be said that for the investigation of the reading mode, Swales' genre analysis framework is suitable, as it resembles the reading of traditional texts offline. The navigating mode, however, refers to the aforementioned functionality and "allows the reader to navigate the site and actively construct his/her reading path through one or several sites" (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 127). In their proposed framework, Askehave and Ellerup Nielsen explain that links on websites represent functional units and therefore, can be regarded "as equivalent to 'moves' in printed texts" (2005: 133). Hence, links are treated in the same way as moves by investigating the rhetorical strategies utilized to realize the link (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 136-137). In addition, to acknowledge the different functions of hyperlinks, they are categorized into *generic* and *specific links*: links that help to navigate and represent the main topics on the site, and links that are used as an extension of the information in the text (Askehave & Ellerup Nielsen 2005: 133-134).

As online genres differ from printed texts, Askehave and Ellerup Nielsen “suggest that the analysis of web genres should be centered round the two modes” (2005: 127), as, according to their assumption, the medium itself “influence[s] both the purpose and the form of web-mediated genres” (2005: 128). However, other researchers disagree and point out that the purpose is still defined by the genre and not the medium (Yates et al. 1999: 100). Nevertheless, they recognize the role of the medium in web genres as having a potential influence on the structure of these genres (Yates & Orlikowski 1992: 310). Thus, the aspect of multimodality should be considered when analyzing web genres. Even though Askehave and Ellerup Nielsen’s framework (2005) shows how to deal with the use of hyperlinks, it neglects other multimodal aspects, such as the layout or the use of videos and pictures.

The layout aspect has been discussed in the GeM (Genre and Multimodality) framework, developed by Bateman (2008), who based it on Lemke (1999). The underlying assumption of the GeM framework is that the use of multimodality influences the layout of a page (Hiippala 2017: 277), and thus, “might [...] exercise constraints on selections within layout structures, on their typographical and spatial realization, and the transformation processes between layout structure and rhetorical organization” (Bateman 2014: 32). Due to its extent, a detailed description of the GeM framework will not be given. Nevertheless, it makes an important contribution to the area of genre and multimodality and thus, has to be mentioned.

As for the use of pictures or videos within a multimodal genre, research from advertising can help identify their purpose, impact, and meaning. Visual representation works on the level of association, which can be divided into denotation and connotation (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 32-33). The former refers to what is depicted, whereas the latter indicates the invisible part of the representation, hence, “what it might mean by association in some culture” (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 32-33). This indicates, that the same visual can have various meanings depending on the cultural background knowledge of the interpreter. Moreover, Marshall and Meachem (2010: 96) explain that visuals can either be used as part of information or persuasion. Within these categories, visuals can create a hierarchical effect, shock the reader, provide continuity through repetition, or replace or supplement text (Marshall & Meachem 2010: 98-104). These approaches represent only a selection of how visuals can be analyzed within a multimodal genre analysis. How the outlined approaches on genre analysis and the research on visual representation will be applied to this thesis, will be discussed in Chapter 4.3.

This concludes the section on the background information on genre and genre analysis. It has to be noted that the outlined research represents only part of the research on genre. Nevertheless, it describes the development of the current notion of genre in a condensed form. The next chapter will deal with the findings of already existing research on blurbs and the *about-this-game* section.

3. Blurbs

3.1 Defining blurbs

To this date and the best of my knowledge, scientific research on the *about-this-game* section has not been conducted. However, due to the similarities in function and considering the technological advancements over the last decades, it can be argued that the *about-this-game* section replaced the blurb of video games on CD-ROMS. Both, the blurb, and the *about-this-game* section provide the reader with an insight into the advertised game and employ strategies that are common in blurb writing (Kathpalia 2021: 47).

Bhatia (2004: 59-60) categorized blurbs as belonging to the genre colony of promotional genres, alongside advertisements, sales promotion, reference letters, job applications, and job advertisements. The three main genre colonies mentioned in Bhatia (2004: 57) are promotional genres, academic introductions, and reporting genres, which are all defined based on relation and similarity. Hence, a genre colony incorporates all related texts that fulfill a similar purpose but can differ in various other aspects such as lexico-grammatical strategies. Bhatia (2004: 62) additionally distinguishes between primary and secondary members of a colony. The definition of the status of the members is based on their communicative purpose. If their purpose is mainly promotional and their informative purpose is of secondary importance, they are seen as primary members (Bhatia 2004: 62). Thus, blurbs, as well as the above-mentioned genres, are primary members of the promotional genre colony. In the case of secondary members, such as annual reports, film reviews, travel brochures, or book reviews, their main communicative purpose is to inform or to give an opinion. Promotion is only of secondary importance, which makes these genres only peripheral members of the promotional genre colony (Bhatia 2004: 62). However, Bhatia adds “that many of these secondary members of the colony may be primary members of some other genre colony, as

in the case of annual company reports, which is a legitimate primary member of a colony of reporting genres” (2004: 62).

The term *blurb* originated in 1907 and was coined by an American humorist named Gelett Burgess, who defined it as “a flamboyant advertisement [characterized by] fulsome praise [and] abounding in agile adjectives and adverbs” (Burgess 1914: 7). The Cambridge Dictionary (2023) expands this notion of blurb by adding that it is “a short description of a book, film, etc., written by the people who have produced it, and intended to make people want to buy it or see it”. Based on these definitions and research in this area, blurbs, also called *puff pieces* (Connors 1982), exhibit the following characteristics:

- brief (Kathpalia 2021: 46; Cronin 2005: 19)
- positively connotated (Cronin 2005: 19)
- evaluative (Kathpalia 2021: 47)
- exaggerated (Cronin 2005: 19)
- advertising (Kathpalia 2021: 46)
- informing (Douglas 2001: 809)
- summarizing (Shafer 2019: 234)
- metaphorical (Clark 2006: 62)
- institutionalized (Cronin 2005: 23)

While the latter refers to the form and content of blurbs as well as their status of being a fixed element of book covers, metaphorical captures the use of metaphorical language in blurbs. Kathpalia (2021: 47) also points out that blurbs can be categorized as paratexts, due to their nature of informing the readers about the main text, without being part of it. In addition, they serve as a promotional element with the twofold function of persuading as well as informing (Shafer 2019: 234; Kathpalia 2021: 47) and are often the only text read by potential buyers of the product (Kathpalia 2021: 47).

3.2 Research on blurbs

Even though CD-ROMS of films and video games also have blurbs on the back of the cover, linguistic research on blurbs, especially in the area of genre analysis, predominantly concentrates on book blurbs. Dating back to the late 90s, researching book blurbs started to

become more prominent and mainly focused on the differences regarding cultural aspects and the genres of the books, the evaluative stance of book blurbs, as well as the move structure and the lexico-grammatical properties of these blurbs.

3.2.1 Cultural differences of blurbs

In 1997, Kathpalia investigated possible cultural differences in blurbs based on publishers and established a framework comprised of the six rhetorical moves “[h]eadlines, [j]ustifying the book, [a]ppraising the book, [e]stablishing credentials, [e]ndorsements, [t]argeting the market” (Kathpalia 1997: 417). Moreover, findings suggest that with regard to the move structure, there are no obvious differences between local (Singapore) and international publishers; however, how publishers tend to realize these moves linguistically does differ depending on the cultural context (Kathpalia 1997: 419). Whereas international blurbs vary their stylistic choices, local blurbs value grammatical correctness over creativity (Kathpalia 1997: 419). A similar study on English and Arabic linguistic book blurbs was conducted by Jasim (2016). She identified a five-move-scheme, including identifying the book’s title, description of book, promotion of book, introduction of author, and provision of details on publisher (Jasim 2016: 120), which was applied in both cultural contexts, and thus, coincides with the findings by Kathpalia (1997). As for the rhetorical structure of fiction blurbs in different cultural contexts, findings of a study by Önder (2013: 181) indicate slight differences between the online distributors Amazon (UK) and Okuoku TR (Türkiye) but overlaps in the four moves “complimenting the author, book description, book promotion and author’s background” (Önder 2013: 181). Even though differences were found, these results also confirm the findings by Kathpalia (1997) to the effect that cultural differences mainly become apparent in the realization of the different moves.

The cultural angle was further researched by Basturkmen in 2009. In her study, blurbs serve as a source of investigating the underlying norms and values a particular discourse community holds (Basturkmen 2009: 68). She identified a four-move-scheme for ELT course book blurbs (see Table 1) and compiled a keyword list of the most commonly used words in these blurbs. Based on these findings, she uncovered that English teachers in New Zealand valued practical solutions over theoretical input and prioritized listening skills over others (Basturkmen 2009: 79-80). Similar findings in an earlier study by Basturkmen (1999) strengthen these claims and hence, led Basturkmen to propose to see the communicative purpose of blurbs as not only

informing and persuasive but also as “appealing to values” (2009: 81). On a similar line of argumentation, Yang (2012: 68) observed how blurbs reflect the norms and values of the intended readers through the lens of evaluation in academic textbooks. Findings suggest that blurbs reflect the different prevalent theories of knowledge, which predominantly represent the latest knowledge in hard sciences, as well as values, such as human interaction, in soft sciences. Thus, the values and norms that a blurb reflects depend on the field of science (Yang 2012: 68).

3.2.2 Evaluative stance of blurbs

Another aspect that received attention in research is the evaluative component of blurbs. A comparative study by Cacchiani (2007: 5) revealed that book blurbs only contain positive evaluation, whereas book reviews also make use of negative evaluation. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Gesuato (2007: 86) it was found that nearly all blurbs (96%) of academic books contain at least one instance of evaluation, which is mostly realized within the move of description. Similarly, Jasim’s (2016: 121-122) findings show that the evaluative component was realized in all of the book blurbs in the corpus, as well as in sub-moves relating to the description of the book (Jasim 2016: 121-122). This underlying evaluative stance within the description move could also be found by Orna-Montesinos (2012: 133) and Jalilifar, Banari, and Shooshtari (2019: 11). The latter researchers explain this finding by stating that the objective component tries to establish blurbs as reliable sources of information, while the use of the subjective voice simultaneously aims at advertising the book (Jalilifar, Banari & Shooshtari 2019: 11). The findings by Ashgar, Mahmood, and Ashgar (2015) reinforce the importance of evaluation and description in book blurbs. In their study, they investigated the syntactic structure of romantic novel blurbs and received similar findings to Gesuato (2007), Orna-Montesinos (2012), and Jalilifar, Banari, and Shooshtari (2019). Their suggested move structure (see Table 1) contains description and evaluation as two of the main parts of romantic novel blurbs. Hence, all of these findings imply that nearly no instance of describing the content of the books in blurbs is merely descriptive, but also subliminally evaluative, which highlights the difficulty of separating description from evaluation, and simultaneously, the informational purpose from the promotional one.

Gesuato’s study additionally showed that evaluation “is conveyed mostly by means of adjectives” (2007: 95). Similar results have been found by Jasim (2016: 127), as their study

revealed that adjectives prevail in book blurbs and are especially used for evaluation. Jasim (2016: 126) identifies the use of such adjectives as mostly contributing to the positive voice of the blurb itself. This use of positively connotated adjectives for promotional purposes could also be found in a cross-cultural study on fiction blurbs conducted by Önder (2013: 187). However, Önder additionally highlights the aspect of context in her study. She states that “[s]ome words (“addictive”, “rare”, “warning”) do not always serve as markers of positive evaluation in other genres” (Önder 2013: 186) but do so in the genre of the blurb. Cacchiani (2007: 13) adds that adjectives are often mentioned in the superlative form, whereas adverbs often serve as a form of intensification. In Gea-Valor’s study (2005: 52), intensifying adverbs were also identified as a strategy of evaluation. However, certain findings by Gea-Valor (2005: 54) contradict the view that adverbs are solely used for the effect of intensification. In her data, instances show that in particular cases modal adverbs are deployed to weaken the claim. According to Gesuato, the reason for the different findings on evaluation could be due to the fact that “there is no agreement on what evaluation should be called (affect, appraisal, evaluation, modality, stance), on what textual phenomena it should include or on what linguistic forms it is conveyed through” (Gesuato 2007: 83). Hence, there are no clear boundaries, which could lead to different interpretations and thus, a wide range of different findings.

More in-depth analyses on evaluation have been conducted by Cacchiani (2007). She identified a four-move scheme, consisting of identification, establishing credentials, highlighting parts of the book, and appraising the book with quotations, which built the basis for a more detailed analysis of how evaluation can be realized differently within blurbs (Cacchiani 2007: 4-5). Her argumentation follows the idea that evaluation in book blurbs serves as the main promotional element, but promotion can also be achieved through other strategies such as narration, characterization, and description. All of the strategies focus on highlighting the interesting and attractive contents of the books and thus, position them as desirable objects (Cacchiani 2007: 6). Similarly, Shafer (2019: 235) established a guideline of blurb writing consisting of the “four C’s of blurb creation [which entail] citation, context, character, and convention”. Whereas the citation strategy refers to the utilization of quotes and reviews to strengthen the arguments used in the blurb, the context makes use of the cultural critique of or public discussion on the film, book, or video game (Shafer 2019: 236). By applying the context strategy, the blurb “exhibit[s] history and production style [of the

blurbed product] to give the reader a sense of the [products'] [...] energy" (Shafer 2019: 236). The strategy of character has a dual function, which resembles the contextual strategy. Either the blurb writer applies the tone of the book, film, or video game in their writing or employs real characters from the blurbed text in their blurb. As for the convention part, Shafer (2019: 237) illustrates that this strategy relies on the popularity of the blurbed product, as successful films, books, or video games do not necessarily need a summarizing or persuasive blurb, as their conventional success will lead to sales regardless of the blurb.

Further investigations on evaluation were done by Yang (2012) on the word level. In their paper, Yang found out that the book blurbs in their data underused modal verbs, which are normally a key characteristic of evaluative texts. As a possible explanation, they note that it could be due to hard sciences wanting to "construct an authoritative image for the academic textbook" (2012: 69). According to Yang (2012: 69), this establishing of authority also becomes apparent in the use of the personal pronoun *you*. Banari, Jalilifar, and Shooshtari (2019) reinforce the idea that the establishment of authority happens within the move of evaluation. They investigated how evaluation influences interpersonal relationships based on the appraisal framework by Martin and White (2005) in applied linguistics books. Their findings illustrate that blurbs "creat[e] compellingly persuasive claims about the book, leaving no space for other possible alternative positions [...] and ge[t] readers to confidently trust the proposition referenced by the blurb" (Banari, Jalilifar & Shooshtari 2019: 230).

3.2.3 Lexical properties of blurbs

Besides the findings on evaluation on the word-level, more research was conducted by Smoliana (2013: 43), who aimed at revealing the semantic structure of book blurbs. In her study, she divided the words into groups depending on their informative, emotive, or advertising components (Smoliana 2013: 51-52). Within these groups, various sub-groups emerged, which led to the argumentation "that language on the English book dust jackets is organized in a mental lexicon with particular semantic features that were demonstrated via semantic dimensions and semantic fields" (Smoliana 2013: 53). Furthermore, Gea-Valor (2005: 56) highlights the use of imperatives as a lexico-grammatical feature prominent in book blurbs that do not act commanding but rather inviting, such as the use of the personal pronoun *you*. Similarly, Bacic (2021: 124) could also observe that fiction blurbs tend to be more formulaic than linguistic blurbs, and thus, are more similar to spoken language than their

counterparts. Gea-Valor (2005: 55) suggests that this imitation of speech is also a goal of blurbs to establish closeness with the audience based on shared knowledge and can be achieved by using ellipsis as a strategy.

In 2006, Marčiulionienė investigated differences in fiction book blurbs over 75 years. The study showed an increase in the use of adjectives for promotional reasons, such as expressing novelty, expressing uniqueness, and expressing popularity, starting in the 1950s (Marčiulionienė 2006: 65-68). She adds that from the 1970s onwards, the use of such intensifying adjectives stabilized up to the early 2000s, indicating the importance of adjectival promotion in book blurbs. This change in the use of adjectives could also be observed by Gea-Valor and Inigo Ros (2009: 212) in their study on fiction book blurbs. Additionally, their (2009: 206) findings also show an increase in catchphrases, which often take the form of quotations by acclaimed authors and critics. However, a decrease could be observed in the use of the information on the author (Gea-Valor & Inigo Ros 2009: 210).

Scientific research dealing with a genre analysis on other blurbs, besides the ones on the back cover of books, is rare and could only be found for films. Schable (2015: 54) investigated blurbs on DVDs and found similar lexico-grammatical features to the research outlined above. The use of adjectives is also a prominent tool of persuasion on DVD blurbs and nouns are used to indicate the film genre of the movie (Schable 2015: 55). Thus, the language of blurbs tries to reflect the movies' tone in order to inform and prepare the reader of the content of the product. This aligns with Shafer's (2019: 236) blurb writing strategy character and seems to be of importance in DVD blurbs. Moreover, Schable (2015: 56) adds that DVD blurbs tend to mention their most popular actors and refer to the number of awards won by those actors to give their claims more value. In addition, the interviews conducted by Schable (2015: 58-59) showed the importance of blurbs for purchasing the DVD. More than 70% of the respondents ascribed the deciding role to the blurbs and stated that the writing quality of the blurb influences whether they consider buying the DVD or not.

3.2.4 Move structure of blurbs

Table 1: Summary of findings on move-schemes of book blurbs

KATHPALIA (1997: 420)	BASTURKMEN (2009: 74)	JASIM (2016: 120)	ÖNDER (2013: 181)	ASHGAR ET AL. (2015: 159)	CACCHIANI (2007: 4-5)	GEA-VALOR (2005: 48)	MARČIULIONIENĖ (2006: 62)
6 moves	4 moves	5 moves	4 moves (overlap)	6 moves	4 moves	3 moves	5 moves (overlap)
headlines	identifies the market niche	identifying the book's title	complimenting the author	description	identification	description	book information
justifying the book	identifies language teaching theory	describing the book	book description	about the author	establishing credentials	evaluation	author information
appraising the book	presents credentials	promoting the book	book promotion	evaluation	highlighting parts of the book	about the author	series information
establishing credentials	informs reader of other items in the package	introducing the book's author	authors' background	publisher's info	appraising the book (quotations)		publisher information
endorsements		providing the publishing house's address or website		message/theme of the novel			specialist opinion
targeting the market				expectation from the readers			

This table is a summary of the established move structures of blurbs. However, it is not intended to be exhaustive and only represents part of the research.

3.3 The about-this-game section

As mentioned in Chapter 3.1, no scientific research on the *about-this-game section* or video game blurbs could be found and thus, the research on book blurbs has been consulted to establish a framework for the analysis later. Nevertheless, with further research, grey literature on the *about-this-game section* on *Steam* could be found. The particular text in question was written by Henson (2022) and is a blog entry guide that focuses on the improvement of the *about-this-game section*. In this guide, the *about-this-game section* is defined as the text read by the customers after watching the trailer and is seen as the decisive factor in the decision-making process of the potential buyer (Henson 2022: section 1).

Moreover, the most important aspect to consider in the *about-this-game section* is the amount and type of information the writer wants to convey, which should be based on the target audience of the game. Regarding the structure, the *about-this-game section* should start with an informative rather than persuasive overview of the content of the game. After that, the key features of the game should be presented clearly before adding a *call to community*, which is another term for call for action. In this guide, it is also mentioned that the combination of text and pictures or even animated pictures (GIFs) is an effective persuasive tool for the *about-this-game section* but should be used to a minimal degree and only for purposeful conveyance of the content of the game (Henson 2022: section 4).

4. Research design

After establishing the main essence of genre and genre analysis and outlining the current state of research on blurbs, this section will deal with the methodological framework for this thesis. First, the aims of this thesis, the description of the data set, and the approach used to categorize the data will be introduced. Following this, a detailed framework for genre analysis will be presented. The methodological approach used for this thesis rests upon the frameworks introduced in Chapters 2.5 and 2.6.1 and represents a combination of several ideas. Based on the established framework, the data for this thesis will then be analyzed.

4.1 Research questions

As mentioned at the beginning, the main aim of this thesis is to investigate the *about-this-game section* on *Steam* as a genre. In order to do so, the discourse community, the communicative purpose, the move structure, the rhetorical strategies, as well as lexicogrammatical components will be uncovered to receive an in-depth view of the *about-this-game section*. For this purpose, the following four main questions will be answered:

- (RQ1) What purpose(s) does the *about-this-game section* on the gaming platform *Steam* try to achieve?
- (RQ2) What move structure is characteristic of the *about-this-game section* on the gaming platform *Steam*?
- (RQ3) What linguistic features are characteristic of the *about-this-game section* on the gaming platform *Steam*?
- (RQ4) How does the (potential) use of pictures influence the *about-this-game section* on the gaming platform *Steam*?

For research questions 2 and 3, sub-questions will be considered, to expose possible differences of the *about-this-game sections*. Within video game production, the *about-this-game section* is normally written by the publisher of video games, as the section is part of the description of video games and thus, also part of the marketing process (see Chapter 3 and subsequent chapters for more detail). However, it is assumed that higher-grossing publishers have more resources available than small companies and might be following a hidden, private agenda, which could lead to more creative use of the *about-this-game section* (Bhatia 1993: 15). Thus, the sub-questions this thesis wants to investigate are:

- (RQ2.1) What are the differences in the move structure between the different publishers of video games?
- (RQ3.1) What are the differences in the use of linguistic features between the different publishers of video games?

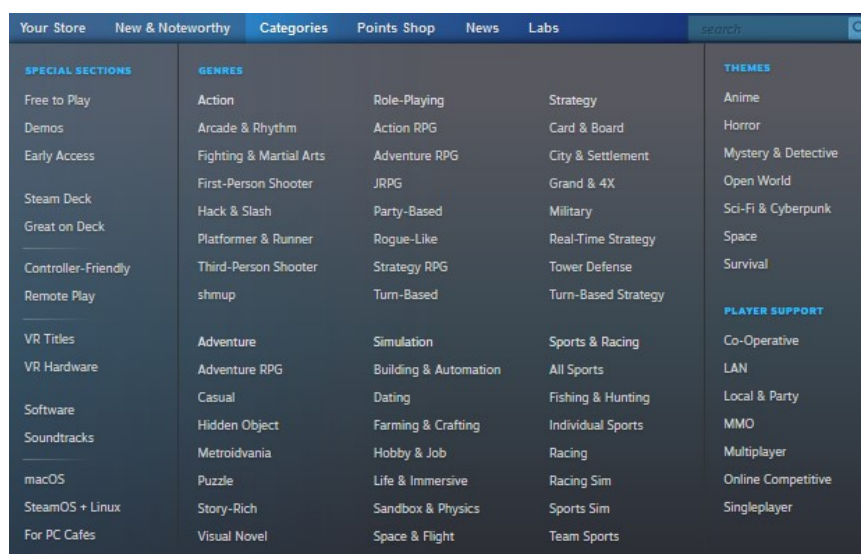
In order to answer research question three (RQ3) as well as its sub-question (RQ3.1), a main corpus and sub-corpora will be compiled and analyzed using a corpus linguistic software tool. Furthermore, a manual analysis will be conducted to investigate the move structure (RQ2, RQ2.1) and communicative purpose (RQ1). For research question four (RQ4), examples of *about-this-game sections* which include visual representation will be analyzed. More information on the sub-corpora and the main corpus will be provided in Chapter 4.3.

4.2 Data

The following section will present the data used for this thesis in detail. Whereas the first part deals with the categorization of video games, the second part attends to the description of the data. This not only ensures that the findings of this thesis are comprehensible and transparent, but also reflects the selection process of the data in general.

4.2.1 Categorization of video games

The categorization of video games is not straightforward. Whereas researchers, such as Wolf (2001: 117), established a categorization framework of 42 distinct video game genres, others based their approach on the four popular categories action, role-playing, simulation, and strategy (Apperley 2006: 8). These attempts of categorization rely on “the dominant characteristics of the interactive experience and the games’ goals and objectives as well as the nature of each game’s player-character and player controls” (Wolf 2001: 116), rather than on the narrative, theme, or character (Clearwater 2011: 29), which is often the case for film genres. Moreover, even though Wolf’s (2001) genre list might be extensive and accounts for overlaps, Clearwater points out that it is only applicable to “early arcade and computer games [...] that primarily offered a single type of gameplay and were mostly restricted to 2D graphical technology” (2011: 34). However, it should be seen as an important contribution of categorizing video games into genres, as “recogniz[ing] the medium’s historical nature and acknowledg[ing] its historicity, development, and significant evolution” (Clearwater 2011: 34) is important when considering a video games’ genre.



Your Store	New & Noteworthy	Categories	Points Shop	News	Labs	search
SPECIAL SECTIONS						
Free to Play		GENRES				
Demos		Action	Role-Playing	Strategy		THEMES
Early Access		Arcade & Rhythm	Action RPG	Card & Board		Anime
Steam Deck		Fighting & Martial Arts	Adventure RPG	City & Settlement		Horror
Great on Deck		First-Person Shooter	JRPG	Grand & 4X		Mystery & Detective
Controller-Friendly		Hack & Slash	Party-Based	Military		Open World
Remote Play		Platformer & Runner	Rogue-Like	Real-Time Strategy		Sci-Fi & Cyberpunk
		Third-Person Shooter	Strategy RPG	Tower Defense		Space
		shmup	Turn-Based	Turn-Based Strategy		Survival
VR Titles		Adventure	Simulation	Sports & Racing		PLAYER SUPPORT
VR Hardware		Adventure RPG	Building & Automation	All Sports		Co-Operative
Software		Casual	Dating	Fishing & Hunting		LAN
Soundtracks		Hidden Object	Farming & Crafting	Individual Sports		Local & Party
macOS		Metroidvania	Hobby & Job	Racing		MMO
SteamOS + Linux		Puzzle	Life & Immersive	Racing Sim		Multiplayer
For PC Cafés		Story-Rich	Sandbox & Physics	Sports Sim		Online Competitive
		Visual Novel	Space & Flight	Team Sports		Singleplayer

Figure 3: Steam's genre categorization of video games (Steam 2023 on August 17th, 2023)

On *Steam* itself, the video game platform where the data for this thesis is retrieved from, the four categories action, role-playing, simulation, and strategy, and in extension adventure and sports & racing, constitute the six main genres. However, as Figure 3 illustrates, there is an overlap between the individual genres, which oftentimes cover more than two genres. This reverberates well with Apperley's statement "to think of each individual game as belonging to several genres at once" (2006: 19). In the same line of argumentation, Clearwater states that

since genres are historically situated, they should be understood as cultural processes. Genres evolve, morph and transform, sometimes go dormant and may even enjoy renewed interest from audiences. They are affected by economic successes [...], are affected by economic or technological change, and are closely aligned with the public mood or even current events. Because a genre can sometimes undergo extensive development and evolution and because it exists alongside other genres, we might see considerable overlap. (Clearwater 2011: 41)

This aspect of change is one reason why a clear-cut genre categorization of video games is difficult to achieve. Moreover, within video games, the label of genres is reused for the storyline, such as romance or horror (Cășvean 2015: 62), making a categorization under a single genre impossible. Furthermore, the common genre labels, such as action or role-play, fail to provide a delimited definition (Clarke, Lee & Clark 2017: 450). Another reason for the difficult endeavor of establishing video game genres lies in the "attempt to identify works based on observable, objective characteristics" (Clarke, Lee & Clark 2017: 446). Even though efforts have been made, the categorization of video game genres still lacks a comprehensive framework.

Thus, a different approach was chosen for this thesis, which is based on a statistic of the most reviewed games of all time. Initially, selecting the data based on the most copies sold would have been a more suitable approach, as the number of sales can be partially linked to successful marketing, of which the *about-this-game* section is a part. However, a best-selling list of all time could not be found for the gaming platform *Steam*, as they only announce the annual best-seller (e.g. bestseller of 2021). Therefore, a list of the most-reviewed games on *Steam* was consulted to select the data for this thesis. The reason for this categorization approach is the implicit reflection of the number of sales in the reviews. To explain, *Steam* only allows buyers of the game to review. Thus, the total number of reviews usually correlates with the number of sales, which in turn reflects the number of players and the popularity of the game to some extent.

4.2.2 Data description

The data for this thesis is freely available on *Steam*, invocable on <https://store.steampowered.com/>, and deals with the *about-this-game* section of the 150 most reviewed games of all time on the gaming platform *Steam*. In order to guarantee transparency, a list of the most reviewed games of all time has been consulted (retrieved from <https://steam250.com/reviews>). This list is based on game statistics by *Steam* and ranks the games according to their total number of reviews. However, the list does not account for rating, thus, positive as well as negative reviews are included. In addition, the total number of reviews constantly changes, and the creators of the website update the list once a day. Thus, the list on the website will not fully coincide with Table 2 at a later point in time. Hence, Table 2 reflects the ranking and reviews of July 24th, 2023.

Furthermore, it has to be noted that free online games have an unfair advantage, as the review system of *Steam* does not apply to freely available video games. Therefore, it is assumed that the download rate for free games is higher-than-average, leading to more reviews. To guarantee transparency, the freely available video games are marked by * in Table 2.

Table 2: List of data of the most reviewed games of all time (retrieved from <https://steam250.com/reviews>, July 24th, 2023)

RANK	NAME	YEAR OF RELEASE	PUBLISHER	NO. OF REVIEWS	RATING
1	Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*	2012	Valve	7,373,397	89%
2	PUBG: Battlegrounds*	2017	Krafton, Inc.	2,199,514	57%
3	Dota 2*	2013	Valve	2,014,791	82%
4	Grand Theft Auto V	2015	Rockstar Games	1,604,469	86%
5	Terraria	2011	Re-Logic	1,162,901	98%
6	Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six® Siege	2015	Ubisoft	1,157,423	86%
7	Garry's Mod	2006	Valve	981,348	97%
8	Team Fortress 2*	2007	Valve	969,444	94%
9	Rust	2018	Facepunch Studios	947,148	87%
10	Left 4 Dead 2	2009	Valve	761,220	98%
11	The Witcher® 3: Wild Hunt	2015	CD Projekt Red	728,838	96%
12	Elden Ring	2022	FromSoftware Inc.	691,842	92%
13	Apex Legends™*	2020	Electronic Arts	686,188	81%
14	Dead by Daylight	2016	Behaviour Interactive Inc.	676,088	80%
15	Among Us	2018	Innersloth	665,306	92%
16	Euro Truck Simulator 2	2012	SCS Software	664,575	97%
17	ARK: Survival Evolved	2017	Studio Wildcard	646,484	83%
18	PAYDAY 2	2013	Starbreeze Publishing AB	630,676	89%

19	Cyberpunk 2077	2020	CD Projekt Red	625,482	78%
20	Stardew Valley	2016	ConcernedApe	585,137	98%
21	Phasmophobia	2020	Kinetic Games	572,257	97%
22	Destiny 2*	2019	Bungie	554,957	82%
23	Warframe*	2013	Digital Extremes	543,545	86%
24	War Thunder*	2013	Gaijin Distribution KFT	537,410	57%
25	Unturned*	2017	Smartly Dressed Games	518,123	92%
26	The Forest	2018	Endnight Games Ltd	487,323	95%
27	Red Dead Redemption 2	2019	Rockstar Games	429,762	90%
28	Valheim	2021	Coffee Stain Publishing	411,312	95%
29	Don't Starve Together	2016	Klei Entertainment	409,093	96%
30	Call of Duty®: Modern Warfare® II	2022	Activision	406,478	60%
31	Monster Hunter: World	2018	Capcom Co., Ltd.	386,856	86%
32	Dying Light	2015	Techland	386,632	95%
33	DARK SOULS™ III	2016	FromSoftware, Inc.	354,661	94%
34	DayZ	2018	Bohemia Interactive	352,450	74%
35	Portal 2	2011	Valve	351,710	99%
36	Paladins®*	2018	Hi-Rez Studios	338,009	85%
37	Brawlhalla*	2017	Ubisoft	330,134	83%
38	The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim**	2011	Bethesda Softworks	313,474	95%
39	Fallout 4	2015	Bethesda Softworks	312,693	82%
40	Hollow Knight	2017	Team Cherry	299,403	97%
41	Sea of Thieves 2023 Edition	2020	Xbox Game Studios	290,261	90%
42	Raft	2022	Axolot Games	276,984	94%
43	Borderlands 2	2012	2K	275,298	94%
44	Sid Meier's Civilization® VI	2016	2K	273,769	85%
45	No Man's Sky	2016	Hello Games	269,167	78%
46	7 Days to Die	2013	The Fun Pimps Entertainment LLC	268,572	88%
47	Bloons TD 6	2018	Ninja Kiwi	265,148	97%
48	The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim Special Edition**	2016	Bethesda Softworks	259,243	92%
49	New World	2021	Amazon Games	258,081	70%
50	Geometry Dash	2014	RobTop Games	248,853	93%
51	Arma 3	2013	Bohemian Interactive	248,712	90%
52	The Binding of Isaac: Rebirth	2014	Nicalis, Inc.	246,556	98%
53	Risk of Rain 2	2020	Gearbox Publishing	241,308	96%
54	Sekiro™: Shadows Die Twice – GOTY Edition	2019	Activision	239,175	95%
55	Hearts of Iron IV	2016	Paradox Interactive	238,996	92%

56	Subnautica	2018	Unknown Worlds Entertainment	238,419	97%
57	Cities: Skylines	2015	Paradox Interactive	237,383	93%
58	Hades	2020	Supergiant Games	230,083	99%
59	Deep Rock Galactic	2020	Coffee Stain Publishing	225,104	97%
60	Mount & Blade II: Bannerlord	2022	TaleWorlds Entertainment	224,880	88%
61	Tomb Raider	2013	Crystal Dynamics	223,895	96%
62	Counter-Strike	2000	Valve	221,840	98%
63	Tale of Immortal	2023	Lightning Games	218,547	51%
64	Project Zomboid	2013	The Indie Stone	215,174	94%
65	Hogwarts Legacy	2023	Warner Bros. Games	211,310	92%
66	Halo: The Master Chief Collection	2019	Xbox Game Studios	209,942	93%
67	Z1 Battle Royale*	2018	Daybreak Game Company	206,645	56%
68	Path of Exile*	2013	Grinding Gear Games	203,415	88%
69	Undertale	2015	Tobyfox	201,945	97%
70	Vampire Survivors	2022	Poncle	201,334	99%
71	Battlefield™ 2042	2021	Electronic Arts	200,483	37%
72	VRChat*	2017	VRChat Inc.	199,393	73%
73	People Playground	2019	Studio Minus	198,254	99%
74	Lost Ark*	2022	Amazon Games	194,064	72%
75	Sid Meier's Civilization V	2010	2K	192,910	96%
76	NARAKA: BLADEPOINT*	2021	NetEase Games Global	190,858	66%
77	Doki Doki Literature Club!*	2017	Team Salvato	189,328	97%
78	Forza Horizon 4	2021	Xbox Game Studios	188,874	89%
79	BeamNG.drive	2015	BeamNG	187,914	97%
80	Human: Fall Flat	2016	Curve Games	187,319	95%
81	Fallout: New Vegas	2010	Bethesda Softworks	182,240	96%
82	DOOM	2016	Bethesda Softworks	180,102	95%
83	DOOM Eternal	2020	Bethesda Softworks	175,537	91%
84	Call of Duty®: Black Ops III	2015	Activision	175,340	82%
85	Titanfall® 2	2016	Electronic Arts	173,548	95%
86	Hunt: Showdown	2019	Crytek	170,338	82%
87	Factorio	2020	Wube Software Ltd.	168,671	96%
88	Half-Life 2	2004	Valve	168,218	98%
89	SCP: Secret Laboratory*	2017	Northwood Studios	166,193	92%
90	Divinity: Original Sin 2 – Definitive Edition	2017	Larian Studios	165,303	96%
91	RimWorld	2018	Ludeon Studios	164,181	98%
92	Battlefield™ V	2018	Electronic Arts	163,088	71%
93	Starbound	2016	Chucklefish	161,259	93%
94	Life is Strange – Episode 1*	2015	Square Enix	161,218	96%
95	Halo Infinite*	2021	Xbox Game Studios	160,099	70%

96	Counter-Strike: Source	2004	Valve	156,676	96%
97	Mount & Blade: Warband	2010	TaleWorlds Entertainment	152,573	98%
98	Stellaris	2016	Paradox Interactive	151,653	88%
99	Muck*	2021	Dani	149,299	94%
100	Crab Game*	2021	Dani	147,328	92%
101	Squad	2020	Offworld Industries	141,242	86%
102	Cuphead	2017	Studio MDHR Entertainment Inc.	141,041	96%
103	Assassin's Creed® Odyssey	2018	Ubisoft	140,889	89%
104	Far Cry® 5	2018	Ubisoft	140,707	80%
105	Dying Light 2 Stay Human	2022	Techland	139,144	79%
106	theHunter: Call of the Wild™	2017	Expansive Worlds	137,749	88%
107	Sons of the Forest	2023	Newnight	137,671	83%
108	Resident Evil 2	2019	Capcom Co., Ltd.	136,999	97%
109	The Elder Scrolls® Online	2014	Bethesda Softworks	136,443	82%
110	Portal	2007	Valve	135,823	98%
111	Satisfactory	2020	Coffee Stain Publishing	135,776	97%
112	Dead Cells	2018	Motion Twin	135,625	97%
113	Slay the Spire	2019	Mega Crit Games	134,487	98%
114	BioShock Infinite	2013	2K	132,707	94%
115	FOR HONOR™	2017	Ubisoft	131,071	69%
116	American Truck Simulator	2016	SCS Software	131,049	97%
117	STAR WARS Jedi: Fallen Order™	2019	Electronic Arts	130,417	89%
118	Grand Theft Auto IV: The Complete Edition	2020	Rockstar Games	130,152	80%
119	World of Tanks Blitz*	2016	Wargaming Group Limited	130,076	80%
120	It Takes Two	2021	Electronic Arts	129,876	95%
121	Forza Horizon 5	2021	Xbox Game Studios	129,179	88%ag
122	Age of Empires II: Definitive Edition	2019	Xbox Game Studios	126,740	95%
123	Darkest Dungeon®	2016	Red Hook Studios	126,702	91%
124	EA SPORTS™ FIFA 23	2022	Electronic Arts	126,083	54%
125	Insurgency	2014	New World Interactive	124,644	92%
126	World of Warships*	2017	Wargaming Group Limited	123,283	80%
127	Stray	2022	Annapurna Interactive	121,379	97%
128	Space Engineers	2019	Keen Software House	121,189	88%
129	Battlefield™ 1	2016	Electronic Arts	120,912	86%
130	Borderlands 3	2020	2K	120,364	85%
131	Total War: WARHAMMER II	2017	SEGA	120,215	93%
132	Rise of the Tomb Raider™	2016	Crystal Dynamics	119,049	94%

133	NieR:Automata™	2017	Square Enix	118,938	86%
134	Robocraft*	2017	Freejam	118,414	73%
135	Europa Universalis IV	2013	Paradox Interactive	118,049	87%
136	Mirror 2: Project X	2022	Nijico	117,545	26%
137	Kerbal Space Program	2015	Private Division	116,021	95%
138	Killing Floor 2	2016	Tripwire Interactive	114,797	88%
139	Ori and the Will of the Wisps	2020	Xbox Game Studios	114,745	97%
140	Ready or Not	2021	VOID Interactive	113,169	91%
141	Helltaker*	2020	Vanripper	112,947	98%
142	Warhammer: Vermintide 2	2018	Fatshark	112,291	85%
143	Kingdom Come: Deliverance	2018	Warhorse Studios	111,940	83%
144	Just Cause™ 3	2015	Square Enix	111,143	83%
145	Insurgency: Sandstorm	2018	Focus Entertainment	110,690	85%
146	SMITE®*	2015	Hi-Rez Studios	110,646	80%
147	Stick Fight: The Game	2017	Landfall	110,279	94%
148	Splitgate*	2019	1047 Games	109,596	92%
149	Slime Rancher	2017	Monomi Park	109,144	98%
150	ASTRONEER	2016	System Era Softworks	109,035	92%

The most represented publishers in Table 2 are Valve (10 video games), Electronic Arts (8 video games), and Xbox Game Studios (7 video games). In the case of Valve, it has to be noted that the high number of games in the most reviewed list can to some extent be ascribed to the fact that *Steam* was developed by Valve. In addition, three out of the ten video games by Valve are freely available on *Steam*. Furthermore, the game *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, marked by **, is not accessible on *Steam* anymore, as the newer version, *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim Special Edition*, replaced the former. Therefore, this thesis includes 149 *about-this-game* sections on *Steam*.

4.3 Methodology

For this thesis, a combination of the methods outlined in Chapters 2.5 and 2.6.1 will be used to create a suitable approach for the data analysis. The main framework for the text analysis consists of a combination of Swales's (1990) and Bhatia's (2002) frameworks. As the lens of this study is of a linguistic nature, the focus will mainly be on *discourse as text*, based on Bhatia (2002). Within *discourse as text*, the communicative purpose, the move structure, the rhetorical strategies, and the lexico-grammatical aspect will be analyzed according to Swales

(1990). The communicative purpose, however, also affects *discourse as genre*. Thus, *discourse as genre* will be represented by the possible interpretations of the findings. Due to the limited scope and the applied linguistic angle of this thesis, *discourse as social practice* will only serve “as explanation for the analysis of textualisation of lexico-grammatical and discoursal resources” (Bhatia 2002: 18). For this reason, the gaming community will be investigated with regards to their motivations.

The multimodal aspect of the data and the website *Steam* amounts to the other part of the analysis and is first considered by visualizing the structure of *Steam* based on the ideas of the GeM framework by Bateman (2008). As the *about-this-game section* can be found on an online platform, the base layer approach helps to identify the multimodal functions and parts of *Steam*, which could have a possible influence on the reading path. Furthermore, it indicates what readers of the *about-this-game section* encounter before getting to the section itself. Even though the *about-this-game section* is considered a linear text, the multimodal aspect of *Steam* cannot be disregarded, as it influences the reader in several ways. For visual representations used within the *about-this-game section*, the analysis will be based on the approach by Marshall and Meachem (2010) and focuses on the influence of the visual representations on the text and its purpose.

4.3.1 Corpus-based genre analysis

To investigate the lexico-grammatical aspect of the *about-this-game section*, a corpus analytical approach is used. According to Egan and Dirdal “corpus-linguistic techniques have facilitated a systematic study of lexis, with respect to both meaning and grammatical patterning” (2017: 1). This systematic approach tends to be particularly useful for examining the context certain words occur in, as “meaning extends over larger sequences of text” (Egan & Dirdal 2017: 1). Furthermore, due to corpus linguistics it was confirmed that lexis is closely related to grammar (Egan & Dirdal 2017: 1), which is why it is called lexico-**grammatical** aspect in genre analysis.

With the video games listed in Table 2, a corpus has been compiled that contains all of the games’ *about-this-game sections* (149 texts and 92,766 words in total). This corpus presents the basis for the lexico-grammatical analysis (RQ3) that is conducted with the online program *SketchEngine*. Within this program, a keyword list is created, which reflects the typical

vocabulary of the *about-this-game* section. Furthermore, a comparison with a reference corpus (*Sketch Engine* uses English Web 2021) shows the use of technical vocabulary. Based on these lists, selected specialized vocabulary is explored in more detail. Moreover, with the help of *SketchEngine*, the grammatical aspect of the *about-this-game* section is analyzed based on collocations and typical phrases used in these sections.

For the move analysis (RQ2) and the investigation of the communicative purpose (RQ1), the first 40 games listed in Table 2 form a separate corpus. This corpus is significantly shorter than the corpus for the lexico-grammatical analysis, as the move analysis is done manually. First, the texts are divided into their individual moves, which means their “rhetorical unit[s] that perfor[m] a coherent communicative function in [...] discourse” (Swales 2004: 228). These moves receive a name according to their function in the text. The next step is the investigation of the rhetorical strategies used within these moves to unveil the different ways of realizing a single move. After investigating all the texts, a universally applicable move structure is compiled in consideration of Hüttner’s move categorization (see Table 3). Depending on their occurrences, the single moves will either be considered obligatory, core, ambiguous, or optional, as listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Categorization of moves based on the guidelines by Hüttner (2010: 205, adapted)

FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE	STATUS	MEANING FOR THIS THESIS
90% - 100%	obligatory	36 – 40 texts
50% - 89%	core	20 – 35 texts
30% - 49%	ambiguous	12 – 19 texts
0% - 29%	optional	18 – 0 texts

In addition, three sub-corpora have been compiled (RQ3.1), reflecting the most often represented publishers in this list (see Table 2 publisher). Each of the sub-corpora includes seven *about-this-game* section texts from the publishers Valve (1,363 words in the corpus), Electronic Arts (2,119 words in the corpus), and Xbox Game Studios (1,722 words in the corpus). These sub-corpora are investigated to answer the subquestions RQ3.1 and RQ2.1, and thus, aim at revealing possible differences of the *about-this-game* section, depending on the publisher. It is assumed that the publisher of video games is responsible for the *about-this-game* section and not the developers of these games, as the section is part of the publishing context. The analyses will be done in the same manner as the lexico-grammatical analysis (149 texts) and the move analysis (40 texts) of their respective main corpora.

However, in the case of the lexico-grammatical analysis, only the keyword list will be compiled for each sub-corpora.

Table 4: Video games included in the three publishers sub-corpora

ELECTRONIC ARTS (2,119 WORDS)	VALVE (1,363 WORDS)	XBOX GAME STUDIOS (1,722 WORDS)
Apex Legends™*	Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*	Sea of Thieves 2023 Edition
Battlefield™ 2042	Dota 2*	Halo: The Master Chief Collection
Titanfall® 2	Garry's Mod	Forza Horizon 4
Battlefield™ V	Team Fortress 2*	Halo Infinite*
STAR WARS Jedi: Fallen Order™	Half-Life 2	Forza Horizon 5
It Takes Two	Portal 2	Age of Empires II: Definitive Edition
EA SPORTS™ FIFA 23	Counter-Strike	Ori and the Will of the Wisps

Games marked by * are freely available on Steam

Table 4 describes the three sub-corpora further by listing the names of the seven games that each of the sub-corpora entails. Moreover, it shows that three out of the seven games in the Valve corpus and one game in the Electronic Arts as well as in the Xbox Game Studios corpus are freely available. In addition, it becomes apparent that every sub-corpora contains a different amount of words and at least two games from the same series. This prevalence of similar *about-this-game sections* within the sub-corpora, the different corpora lengths, and the availability factor might influence the results of the comparison between the sub-corpora. Thus, the results of the analysis of the sub-corpora have to be seen as context and study-specific.

5. Findings

The last part of this thesis deals with the analysis of the *about-this-game section* on *Steam*. Before answering the research questions, the community of *Steam* will be investigated to include contextual information for the genre analysis. Due to developments in genre studies, the social context of a genre is seen as an important factor in shaping the genre and thus, needs to receive more attention. After introducing the discourse community, the structure of

Steam will be outlined as part of the multimodal analysis to give an overview of the different media used on the website before investigating the *about-this-game section* itself. For this analysis, the move structure and the lexico-grammatical aspect will be the focus. Furthermore, the differences between the publishers, as well as the visual representations used within the *about-this-game section* will be analyzed. These findings will then build the basis for the discussion part in Chapter 6, where the outcome of this thesis will be related to the findings of the research done on blurbs.

5.1 Community on *Steam*

Due to the widely distributed use and access to computers, video games could become popular across different age groups and genders, with an estimated market value of 178 billion U.S. dollars in 2021 (Statista 2023b). However, the popularity of video games cannot be solely attributable to affordable computers.

Video games are a key point of insight into what is happening in the world and a potential site to realize substantial change. Video games are a harbinger of things to come, a model of the world we inhabit, and an extreme where certain behaviors and practices were honed before being integrated into contemporary political movements in the United States and the United Kingdom. Video games offer a unique space of insight into the interests and practices of white men of means. They are a place where meritocracy is made real through consistent interaction and reinforcement. (Paul 2018: 8)

This quote by Paul (2018) already indicates the appeal of video games, especially for the younger generations. It describes video games as a vessel of social criticism and satire. However, this argument is often ignored in public discussions, where the focus is on displaying video games as an amplifier of violence. This narrative surrounding the gaming community is likely formed based on gender stereotypes, as it is supposed that gamers are predominately male. In fact, a survey by Picton, Clark, and Judge (2020: 2) with 4,626 participants aged eleven to sixteen showed that nearly all boys in England played video games, whereas only 65,2 percent of girls consider themselves gamers. These results are reinforced by *Steam* statistics, which show that the majority of the U.S. user base is male (68%) and 20 to 29 years (33%) old (Statista 2023a).

Having shortly outlined the demographics of the gaming community on *Steam*, based on the U.S. example, the language aspect of gaming will now be illustrated. In general, the interaction

of the gaming community can be categorized under the umbrella term of internet communication, which is seen as “a combination of written and spoken language” (Balteiro 2019: 41). According to Balteiro (2019: 39), the gaming language is unique with regards to word choice and meaning-making, which are both heavily influenced by the communicative channel. This influence becomes especially apparent in the turn-taking process, which is characterized by reduced words and phrases due to the limited response time (Ensslin 2011: 70). Subsequently, the constraints imposed by the communicative channel results in a “highly specialized style of discourse, especially as regards vocabulary, terms and/or lexical chunks” (Balteiro 2019: 43), which refer to in-game content and processes as well as peer-language. Thus, it is to be expected that the *about-this-game* section on *Steam* assimilates this style of communication by using technical terms and reduced chunks or phrases in order to appeal to the gaming community.

Furthermore, the common use of the community language helps to “develop feelings of shared identity” (Balteiro 2019: 41), to strengthen the sense of belonging and simultaneously, exclude non-gamers. This shared identity is useful for negotiation and cooperation, which are two prevalent needs in the gaming context (Peake & Reynolds 2020: 8). However, Perreault and Lynch (2022: 402) point out that the gamer identity is not only shaped within the community but is also influenced by conceptions of it from the outside. According to them, to understand the shared identity of the gaming community, research has to take different gaming discourses into account, as “[t]he *identity* mechanism in discourse of gaming concerns how one engages the medium” (Perreault & Lynch 2022: 405; [original emphasis]). These discourses refer to the chat function available in online video games, gaming journalism, as well as platforms designed for gaming communication and other social media forums (Perreault & Lynch 2022: 403). Perreault and Lynch explain that “[b]y spanning these genres, the discourse of gaming does not solely focus on the practice of gaming; individuals extend the play space, using various communication channels to discursively construct boundaries, legitimate practices, and the acceptable identities of a gamer” (2022: 403). On a similar line of argumentation, research has shown that central motives of playing video games surround social exchange to “initiate, maintain, and strengthen relationships” (Gonçalves et al. 2023: 3), which can be achieved through the channels designed for communication (in-game chats, platforms such as discord, or social media forums).

In 2016, Nick Yee, co-founder of Quantic Foundry, established a twelve motivation model based on responses from over 140,000 gamers. Figure 5 illustrates the findings of this study and shows that besides social interaction, motivational factors of gaming encompass *action*, *mastery*, *achievement*, *immersion*, and *creativity*, thus, portraying the manifold catalysts of the appeal of video games that extend beyond the graphic details and gripping storylines of the games. Nevertheless, even though all of these reported motivations influence the gaming community to some extent, it is obvious that the social aspect of gaming has the strongest connection to community shaping. In fact, it can even be said that it provides the basis for establishing a community in the first place.



Figure 4: Gamer motivation model by Quantic Foundry (2016)

This community-building aspect of video games is facilitated by platforms that allow players all over the world to connect. One of these platforms is *Steam*, a distribution service of video games developed by Valve, where players all over the world can sign up, purchase games, download and play these games. According to *Steam's* website it "is the ultimate destination for playing, discussing, and creating games" (Steam 2023). The networking aspect that refers to playing and discussing, as well as the distribution of the created games, is reflected on the platform itself.

In addition to its digital store, Steam provides numerous social networking features such as profile pages, friends, groups, instant messaging, voice chat, and news feeds. Steam also provides some social networking features specific to its gaming emphasis such as screenshot and video sharing, game achievement showcases, leader board statistics, and more. Each group on Steam has an event calendar, a group chat room, and a group message board to allow their members to better communicate and organize. (O'Neill et al. 2016: 82)

The features of *Steam* mentioned in the quote above can be ascribed to the social motivation of gamers outlined in Figure 5. The leader board statistics refer to the competitive aspect of the social category, whereas the chat functions indicate the community category. In addition, the achievement showcases belong to the achievement motivation established by Quantic Foundry (2016). Furthermore, these components of *Steam* fulfill two of the six characterizing features of a discourse community introduced by Swales (1990): the existence of intercommunication through different channels and the use of these channels by the discourse community.

5.2 Multimodal analysis

After discussing the gaming community on *Steam* to investigate the social aspect of genre to some extent, the next step is to look at the structure and layout of *Steam* to outline the multimodal characteristics of the platform which needs to be considered in order to lay the foundation for the analysis part of this thesis. The second part of the multimodal analysis will focus on the *about-this-game section* itself and will investigate five examples with regard to the purpose of this visual representation.

5.2.1 Multimodal analysis: structure of Steam

Due to the limited scope of this paper, it is only possible to focus on the introductory page of one chosen example game called *Terraria*. All other aspects of the website *Steam*, such as the start page, the community tab, or the store, will be neglected (see yellow frame in Figure 5). The reason for choosing only the introductory page is that it serves as the main marketing page of the individual games. It contains the most important details about the games, the trailer video, the download link, as well as the *about-this-game section*.

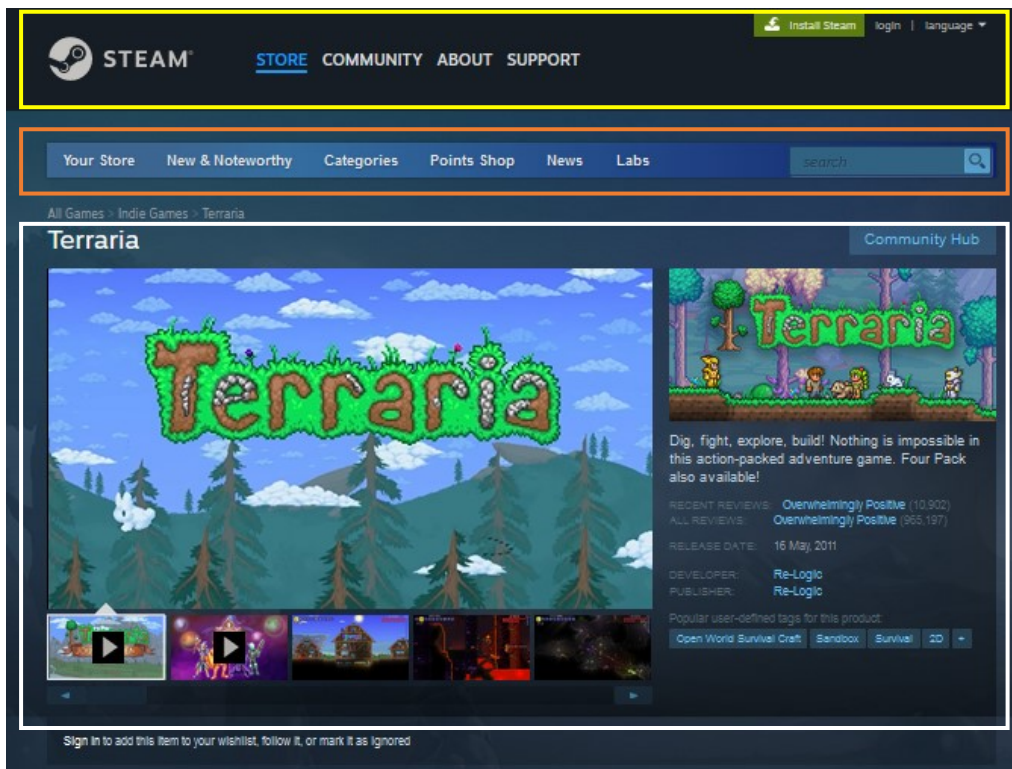


Figure 5: Introductory page of Terraria – part 1 (Steam 2023)

The basic layout of the navigating part of this introductory page (see yellow frame in Figure 5) consists of the logo of *Steam* in the top left corner, the installation, login, and language buttons in the top right corner, and the four navigation tabs store, community, about, support. All of these tabs are written in white and placed on a dark blue horizontal bar, which accentuates the buttons, as the main background color of the page is a lighter blue. In addition, Figure 5 shows that the installation button for *Steam* is shaded in green for further emphasis. The placement of the *Steam* logo on the top left corner is considered customary and aligns with the expectations of users of websites in general (Loranger 2017). Interestingly, all tabs lead to a different page, even the logo, which serves as a home button. According to research, the use of the logo as a shortcut to visit the start page of the website increases the usefulness of the user interface (Loranger 2017). However, there is an arrow next to the language button, which indicates that the user of the website is dealing with a drop-down menu. By clicking this arrow, the selectable languages for the website *Steam* appear. As selecting the language known by the user of the website is the first step of understanding the content of the page, the location of the language button as well as its drop-down character are not only timesaving but also ensure fast localization of information (Shah 2021).

Below the main navigation bar, a second bar can be found (see orange frame in Figure 5). Similar to the main navigation bar, this one is also highlighted by a different shade of blue as the background color and consists of six different tabs and a search bar on the right. In contrast to the upper navigation bar, the first three tabs are drop-down windows, and the other ones lead to a different page. According to Shah (2021), these drop-down windows “conserve screen space” and increase the usability of the website. This usability is further reflected by the search bar on the right, as it is the only navigational tool that browses the whole website of *Steam* to find specific information and leads users to its location.

Moreover, Figure 5 (see white frame) illustrates the first encounter with information regarding the video game. The title of the game is written in white, in a bigger font size than the rest of the information and can be found above the trailer video for the game. Below the trailer, snippets in the form of screenshots taken from the video serve as reference points for easier navigation and often depict different stages of the game. The trailer video itself predominately focuses on the content of the game by showing extracts of it. Right next to the trailer, the poster frame of the game is placed above an information section. The use of the poster frame itself can be seen as informative, as the synergy between the visual and the verbal (Marshall & Meachem 2010: 103) indicates and reminds the reader what game is being presented. Within the section below the poster frame, a short description of the game, recent as well as older reviews, the release date, the developer, the publisher, and user tags can be found. Except for the release date, all the other information is hyperlinked, written in a light-blue color, and directs the reader to a different informative page. The use of the different color for hyperlinked text further emphasizes the clickable aspect of the text and signals the reader that more information is available if needed (Blanchard 2021). In addition, using a different shade of blue indicates that the information is of more importance, as “colour communicates [certain] ideas” (Ledin & Machin 2020: 89).

Based on the analysis outlined above, it can be said that the short description and the trailer serve as a persuasion strategy and thus, need to provide enough information to arouse interest without disclosing too much of the game. Furthermore, the reviews can also be seen as a persuasive factor, especially if they are *overwhelmingly positive*. Due to the feeling of a shared identity among members of the gaming community (Balteiro 2019: 41), they trust and value the opinions of each other. Therefore, it is assumed that the reviews as well as the user tags are considered trustworthy and are taken into consideration when purchasing a game.

This could also be a reason why *Steam* mentions that the tags are user-defined (see sentence above tags in Figure 5).

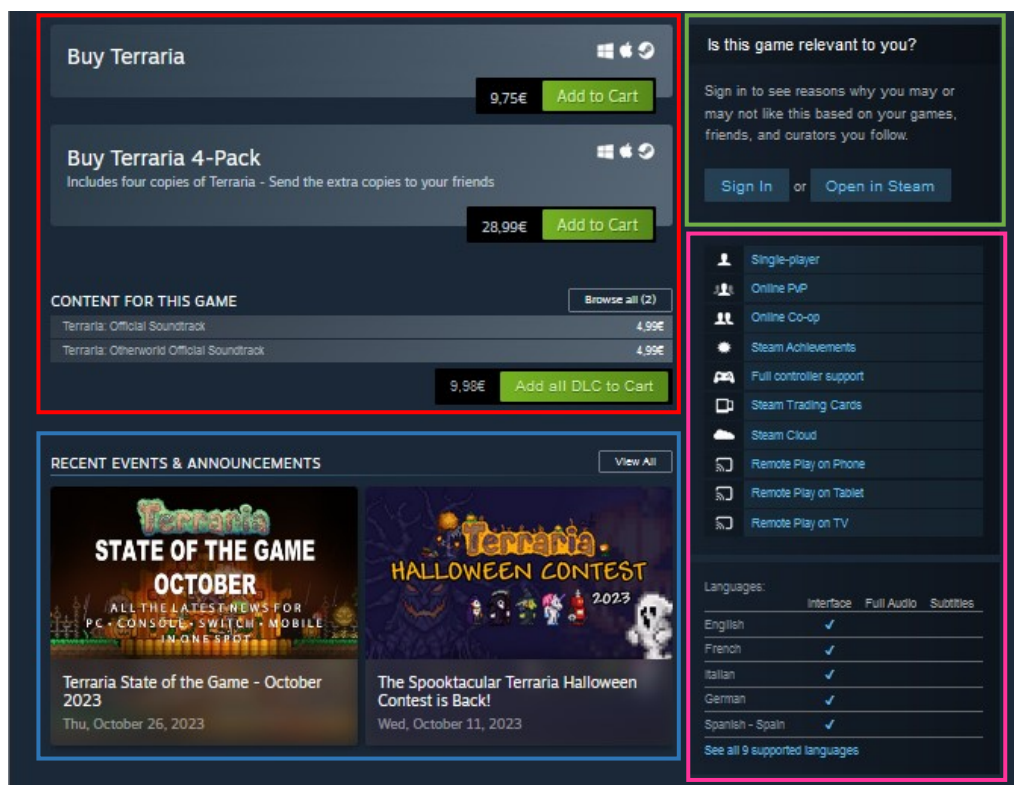


Figure 6: Introductory page of *Terraria* – part 2 (Steam 2023)

Further down on the introductory page of *Terraria* are the links to purchase the game (see red frame in Figure 6). Depending on the game, different offers will lead to the respective download page. In this case, people can either buy the game as a single pack or purchase a 4-pack version they can share with friends, again highlighting the social aspect of gaming. In addition, the icons above the price for the video game indicate the supported stores by the different providers Windows, Apple, and Steam. Icons are used to convey meaning without relying on text (Picardal 2018). In this case, the logo of the respective company constitutes the icon. Thus, it is assumed that the company is internationally prominent, and people recognize their logo without the additional brand name. Moreover, this game also offers additional downloadable content, short DLC, which can also be purchased by clicking on the button.

For regular users of *Steam*, the upper right section of Figure 6 (see green frame) offers an analysis by *Steam* on the relevance of the game *Terraria*. *Steam* bases this statistic on the player's games, friends, and curators they follow (Steam 2023). Below this section, a short but detailed summary of the game's most important key data is listed (see pink frame in Figure 6), including information on the game mode (single-player, online PvP, online co-op), storage

process, controller support, output devices, and supported languages. All of this information, except for the languages, is hyperlinked and can be clicked to receive more information. Regarding the languages, they are listed in a table from which players can discern if a certain language is available for the interface, the audio, or the subtitles. Furthermore, beneath the downloadable content, there is a section with announcements and events (see blue frame in Figure 6). The latter refers to in-game events, which are often released seasonally and can be seen as a mini-game within the game, characterized by competition. This competitive aspect might make the game more appealing, as it is considered one of the main motivational influences in Quantic Foundry's (2016) motivation model.

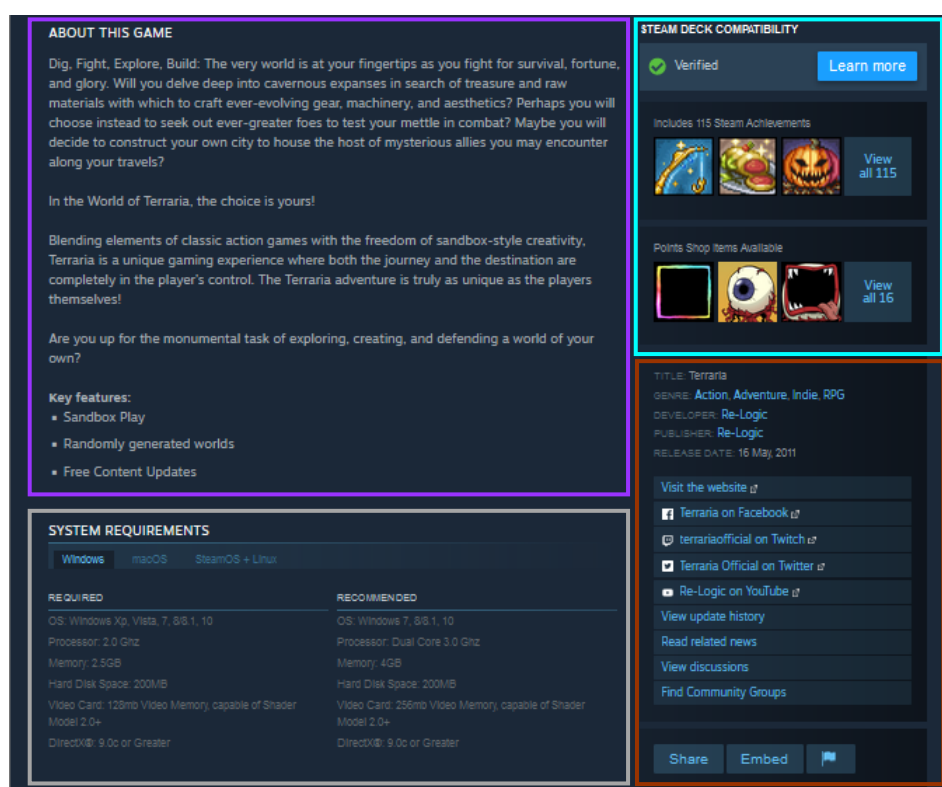


Figure 7: Introductory page of Terraria – part 3 (Steam 2023)

After scrolling past recent events and announcements, one reaches the section of the main part of this thesis. Figure 7 (see purple frame) demonstrates how the *about-this-game* section looks in the context of the whole introductory page. The running text is divided into sections and in this case, includes bullet points, which not only facilitates the visual readability of the text but also helps to make the text more comprehensible by structuring the text according to ideas (Ledin & Machin 2015: 469). Below the *about-this-game* section, the system requirements are stated and divided into the aforementioned providers Windows, Apple, and Steam (see grey frame in Figure 7). This section is the only part that can be considered solely

informational. In addition, the placement of the system requirements below the *about-this-game section* seems to be intentional, as they are an integral part of the game and need to be taken into consideration before purchasing a game.

On the right in Figure 7 (see turquoise frame), the game's Steam Deck compatibility, the achievements for this game, its points shop items, and further links are located. The verified sign under the compatibility window indicates that the game can be played on Steam Deck, the proprietary console developed by Valve. For gamers whose motivation can be categorized under the subcategory of completion (see Figure 4), the achievements bar might be an appealing factor for purchasing the game. They signal that the game includes a certain amount of Steam achievements, the general collectible awards for completion of certain actions. In addition, *Steam* offers Steam Points. For each purchase on *Steam*, players earn these points and can use them "to customize [their] Steam presence or award fellow members of the community" (Steam 2023).

Interestingly, the further links (see brown frame in Figure 7) are introduced by a summary again. This time, the name, the genre, the release date, as well as the developer and publisher of the game, are mentioned, and some parts are hyperlinked. Due to these hyperlinks, the text receives further emphasis, and the user has instant access to more information on similar games or games by the same developer and publisher. The recommendations based on similar genres or the same developer also have a separate section, which can be inferred from Figure 8 (see orange frame) below. Furthermore, the listed links beneath the summary also contribute to an effective user interface. However, these links not only provide the user with more information but also try to persuade him by giving insights into the update history and presenting community groups as well as discussion forums. The latter two address the feeling of a shared identity, highlighting the importance of community and socializing in gaming (Quantic Foundry 2016).

For gamers who also want to obtain an expert opinion, *Steam* offers a direct link to *Metacritic*, a website for game reviews (see yellow frame in Figure 8), which again, emphasizes the value of different opinions among the community. This also becomes apparent within the awards section (see blue frame in Figure 8) and the customer review section at the very end of the introductory page (see green frame in Figure 8). With several filter options, the reviews are divided into the most helpful and most recent. Users can also react to these reviews, giving them an opportunity to fulfill the need for social interaction to some extent. Furthermore, the

opinions of the curators also receive a separate section (see white frame in Figure 8). According to Steamworks, “[c]urators [are] an individual or group of people who are interested in improving the shopping experience for others by highlighting games from within the Steam catalog” (Steamworks 2023). Thus, curators are comparable with the recently widely established job of influencers.

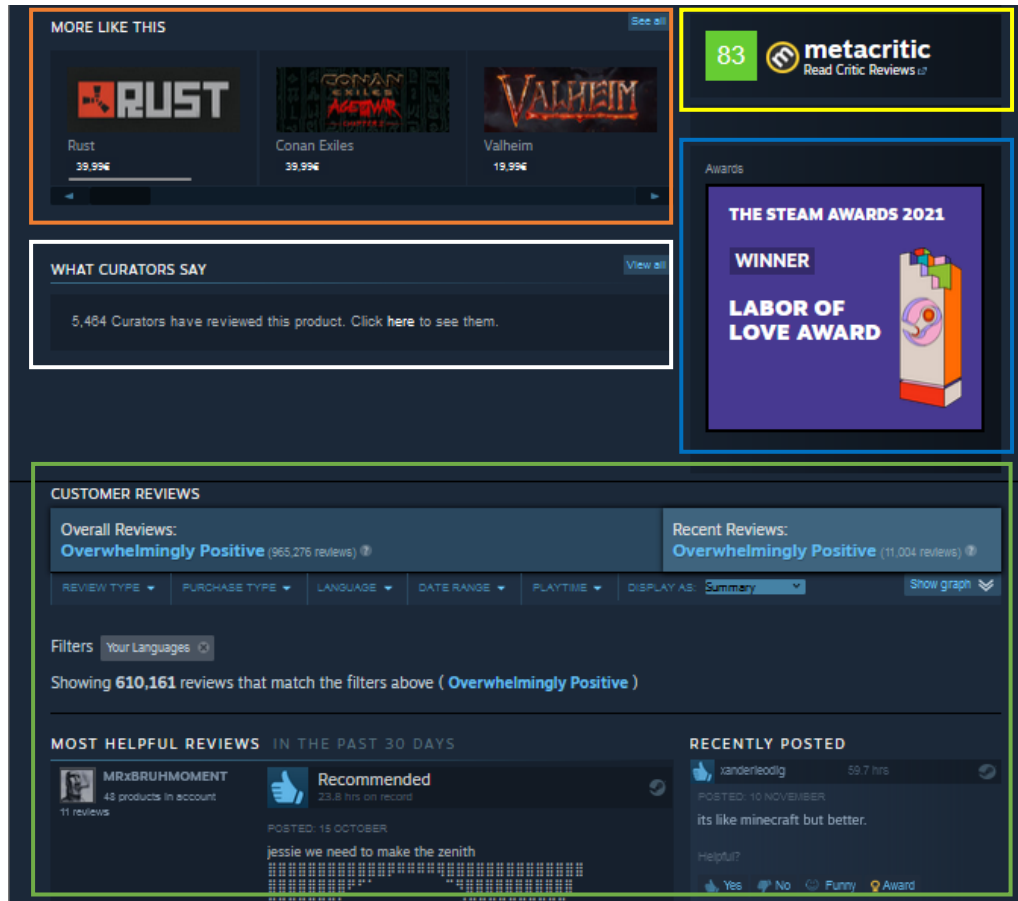


Figure 8: Introductory page of Terraria – part 4 (Steam 2023)

Using Askehave and Ellerup Nielsen’s (2005) framework for categorizing links on homepages, it can be said that the introductory page of video games on *Steam* uses *generic* as well as *specific links*. What is striking is the fact that generic links that navigate the user through the website predominately occur at the top of the page, whereas the specific links can be located further down on the page. A possible explanation could be that the user immediately realizes whether they are on the page they intended to be or not. Thus, navigational links are needed at the top of the page to save time, whereas *specific links* are useful when the user wants further information.

To conclude, the introductory video game page consists of visuals, texts, and hyperlinks, combining informative and persuasive content to create a structured overview of the video

game by using different strategies to emphasize certain information and provide easy accessibility to the game. It focuses on community by presenting reviews written by players and experts and mainly highlights the positive aspects of the video game to increase the appeal. Moreover, it creates a space for social exchange by allowing users to write reviews and react to them. Furthermore, the page incorporates different tabs as well as hyperlinks to equip the reader with more information on certain topics without risking an information overload on the page itself.

Based on the multimodal analysis, it becomes apparent that the decision to purchase a game is influenced by various factors. These factors not only refer to the different aspects of the introductory page analyzed above but also include extrinsic motivations, such as recommendations by peers or advertisements. Thus, the *about-this-game section* is not the sole influential aspect in the buyer decision process. Nevertheless, the significance of the *about-this-game section* was shown in a study by Picton, Clark, and Judge (2020). They investigated the “literacy-related interactions both within, and in relation to, video games” (Picton, Clark & Judge 2020: 1) of eleven- to sixteen-year-olds. Their results indicate that at least a fourth of the respondents read the *about-this-game section* (Picton, Clark & Judge 2020: 10) of the video game they intend to purchase.

5.2.2 Multimodal analysis: the about-this-game section

As pointed out above, besides the visual and animated representation on the introductory page in general, this utilization of visuals can also be found in the majority of the *about-this-game sections* of this data set. Out of 149 *about-this-game sections*, 93 include some visualizing aspect, which can be broadly categorized as pictures (40 texts), GIFs (47 texts), or short clips in video format (26 texts). Several *about-this-game sections* even include two different visualization techniques, with pictures and GIFs being the most popular combination. Figure 9 below shows pictures or screenshots taken from GIFs occurring in the *about-this-game section* of the video games *Borderlands 3*, *The Witcher 3*, and *Rust*.



Figure 9: *Borderlands 3* (left), *The Witcher 3* (right), *Rust* (bottom) (Steam 2023)

All three examples were chosen as they represent the different uses of pictures and GIFs, the most frequently used visualizations, all of which can be distinguished by location or realization. The location of visual representation is either above or below the text, serving as headlines or visualization of the text. As for the realization, there are either pictures, GIFs, or short clips used that are sometimes accompanied by supplementary text (see *Borderlands 3* or *The Witcher 3*). Within the data set for this thesis, GIFs, short clips, and pictures are mainly used for supplementing the text (as in Figure 9, *Borderlands 3*) or replacing the headings (Figure 9, *The Witcher 3*). The former occurs in over 80% of the data and represents the most popular visualization strategy.

Based on the categorization of pictures by Marshall and Meachem (2010: 98), the three examples in Figure 9 can be assigned to the tactic of *hierarchy* in terms of directing the reader to the message. With regards to *The Witcher 3* screenshot, it serves as an alternative heading with the supplementary text *track down the child of prophecy* and is located above the respective text “to guide the reader through [the] story” (Marshall & Meachem 2010: 98) and “providing the clue [...] to the message” (Marshall & Meachem 2010: 98). The *Borderlands 3* GIF and *Rust* picture are placed after the text, in between paragraphs, hence, supplementing the text by still giving guidance to the reader. A visual supplementation of the text is used to “bring a story to life by developing characters or scenes” (Marshall & Meachem 2010: 104). Therefore, even though the screenshot taken from *The Witcher 3* is placed above the text, it

also supplements the text by introducing the main protagonists of the game. A different way of establishing the characters of the game is shown in the screenshot taken from *Borderlands 3*. In this case, the character is even introduced with his name and function in the game. As for the *Rust* screenshot, it is placed under the heading *build* and illustrates one of the items that can be crafted, hence depicting a scene from the game.

To illustrate these findings in context, the top screenshot in Figure 10 below shows a supplementary picture under the headline *light your path* of the *about-this-game* section of the game *Deep Rock Galactic*. The purpose of this specific multimodal use of pictures and text is to strengthen the claim of the text and set the scene for the reader, thus, appealing to the reader and arousing their interest by visualizing certain snippets of the game. On the contrary, the screenshot at the bottom of Figure 10 depicts the use of multimodality as a replacement for the headline. In this case, the use of the GIF as a headline draws the reader in and stimulates their senses. Both strategies are effective persuasive tools as they serve as a complementation of the text (Christopher 2012: 517; Henson 2022: section 4).

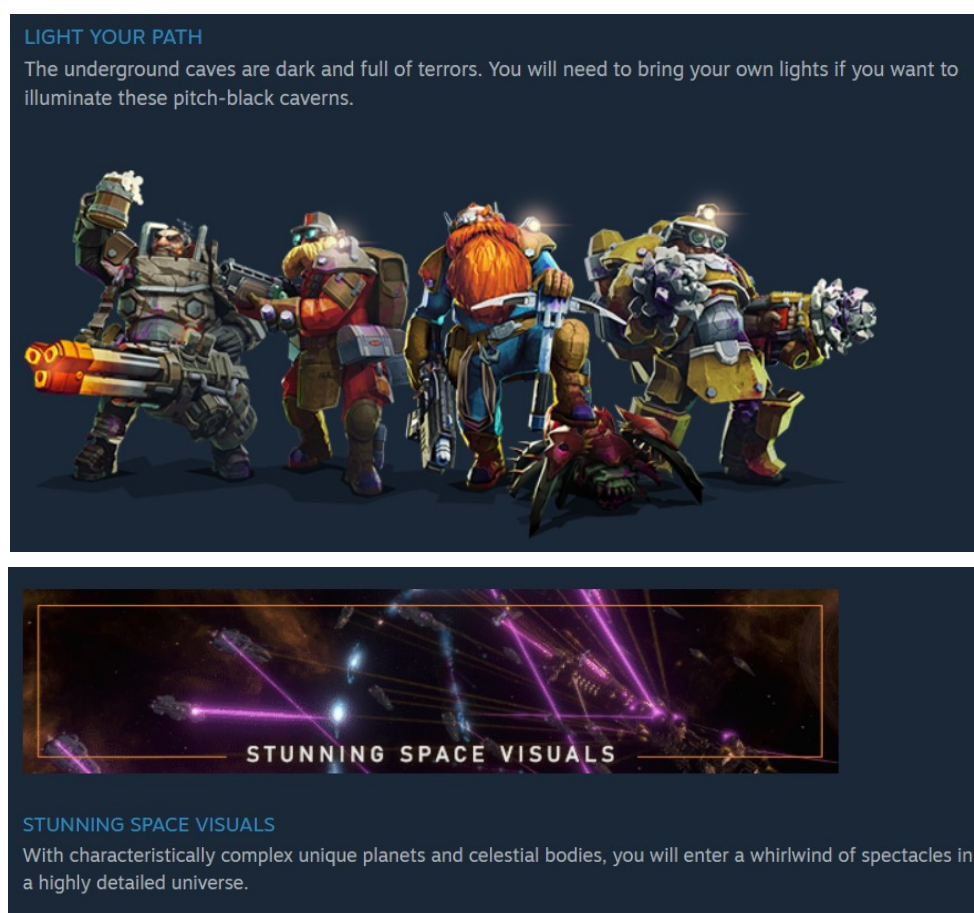


Figure 10: Part of the about-this-game section of the game *Deep Rock Galactic* (above) and *Stellaris* (below) (Steam 2023)

5.3 Move analysis

According to the manual move analysis of 40 sample texts, the *about-this-game sections* incorporate twelve distinct moves in total, which are listed in Table 5 below. Each of these twelve moves can be categorized into obligatory, core, ambiguous, and optional moves and fulfill a specific purpose. To find out the status of the individual moves, Hüttner's (2010) framework has been followed (see Table 3).

To simplify the calculation, multiple instances of the same move within a single *about-this-game section* were counted as a single occurrence. However, some moves were realized by various steps, as can be inferred from Table 6 below. In this case, the occurrence of one step was counted as the appearance of the whole move. For instance, if a text states the game's name, the whole move *presenting the game* is applied in this text, even though the other steps might not be applied in the same *about-this-game section*.

Before presenting the findings of the move structure in greater detail, it is important to examine the purpose each move fulfills. Based on the results listed in Table 5, it becomes apparent that several moves have an informing character whereas others are used to appeal to the reader and promote the game. Occasionally, one move even fulfills more purposes, as can be seen in the descriptive character of Move 7, which also highlights improvement. Nevertheless, the results indicate that the purpose of the *about-this-game section* on *Steam* is to inform the reader about the game, and thus, also promote the game, while simultaneously trying to persuade the potential customer to purchase the game, as the latter two purposes overlap. However, further investigations show that the persuasive and promotional aspects of the moves prevail. Whereas Move 2 and Move 10 are informational, the other moves can be characterized as persuasive and promotional. Thus, just like blurbs, the *about-this-game section* can be considered a primary member of Bhatia's (2004: 62) categorization of the promotional genre colony, as its purpose is to inform the reader about the content and requirements of the video game by using persuasive strategies to promote the game and convince the potential customer to purchase the game.

Table 5: Categorized move scheme of the about-this-game section on Steam

MOVE	PURPOSE	OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE
MOVE 1: CATCHPHRASE	Grabbing the reader's attention	13	33 %
MOVE 2: PRESENTING THE GAME	Defining the game's content features, aim, narrative, setting, genre, and activities to give the reader an insight into what to expect	40	100%
MOVE 3: EMPHASIZING PROGRESS	Signaling the reader this version of the game is improved and constantly evolving	26	65%
MOVE 4: REFERRING TO HISTORY OF GAME	Mentioning forerunner, or games by the same creator or publisher of the game to remind the reader and activate positive or negative feelings towards the game □ to place emphasis on familiarity	10	25%
MOVE 5: PRAISING THE GAME	Using quotes, positive evaluation, the variety factor, or the originality factor to make the game more interesting and appealing to the reader	37	93%
MOVE 6: INDICATING DEGREE OF SELF-INVOLVEMENT	Stating the reader's involvement in the game's process to arouse interest	23	58%
MOVE 7: SPECIFYING TECHNICAL DETAILS	Describing the system requirements or the improved technical aspects of the game	23	58%
MOVE 8: SPECIFYING THE GAME MODE	Mentioning the game mode to place emphasis on familiarity	31	78%
MOVE 9: ADDITIONAL FEATURES	Listing other interesting features that make the game stand out	17	43%
MOVE 10: ADDITIONAL NOTE	Issuing a warning or referring to parental controls	6	15%
MOVE 11: CALL FOR ACTION	Inviting the reader to or reassuring the reader of the best possible gaming experience	14	35%
MOVE 12: LINK TO FURTHER WEBSITES	Providing the reader with links for further information	4	10%
NOTE: all moves are categorized according to Hüttner's (2010) classification scheme into obligatory, core, ambiguous, or optional moves			

The manual move analysis revealed that two moves can be considered obligatory: Move 2 (*presenting the game*) and Move 5 (*praising the game*). This means that a prototypical *about-this-game* section on *Steam* incorporates a presentation of the game as well as appraising phrases. Moreover, other common moves in the genre concentrate on progress (Move 3), self-involvement (Move 6), technicalities (Move 7), and the game mode (Move 8). Following Hüttner's (2010) categorization, these four moves are considered core moves and thus, are also seen as typical components of *about-this-game* sections. The two obligatory and four core moves, hence, build the "model' genre structure" (Hüttner 2010: 205) of the *about-this-game*

section on *Steam*. In other words, the structure of a typical *about-this-game* section presents aspects of the game, emphasizes progress, praises the game, indicates the degree of self-involvement, specifies technical details, and specifies the game mode. The sequence of the individual moves is irrelevant.

In the case of *catchphrases* (Move 1), *additional features* (Move 9), and the *call for action* (Move 11), the status is not clearly defined. In the literature, such ambiguous moves are characterized by uncertainty and analysts should rely on specialist knowledge to decide whether the move is useful or not (Hüttner 2010: 205). Moreover, the moves *referring to history of game*, *additional note*, and *link to further websites* are optional but can contribute important information to the *about-this-game* section. Especially the link to other websites can provide the potential buyer with more information that might be helpful in the purchase decision.

Table 6: Categorized move scheme and individual steps of the *about-this-game* section on *Steam*

MOVE	OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE
MOVE 1: CATCHPHRASE	13	33%
MOVE 2: PRESENTING THE GAME	40	100%
Step 1: Stating the game's name	35	88%
Step 2: Stating the game's genre	17	43%
Step 3: Setting the scene	20	50%
Step 4: Narrative of the game	29	73%
Step 5: Aim of the game	16	40%
Step 6: Background information on character(s)	2	5%
Step 7: Referring to in-game activities	29	73%
Step 8: Highlighting the game's content features	32	80%
Step 9: Reference to the game	2	5%
MOVE 3: EMPHASIZING PROGRESS	26	65%
Step 1: Enhancements/Improvements	12	30%
Step 2: Highlighting updates	19	48%
Step 3: Mentioning new features	8	20%
MOVE 4: REFERRING TO HISTORY OF GAME	10	25%
Step 1: Mentioning forerunner	8	20%
Step 2: Mentioning games by same creator	3	8%
Step 3: Indicating publisher	1	3%
MOVE 5: PRAISING THE GAME	37	93%
Step 1: Quotes	3	8%
Step 2: Positive evaluation	10	25%
Step 3: Mentioning success	11	28%
Step 4: Mentioning originality	8	20%
Step 5: Emphasizing variety	24	60%
MOVE 6: INDICATING DEGREE OF SELF-INVOLVEMENT	23	58%
Step 1: Customization	10	25%
Step 2: Choices	17	43%

MOVE 7: SPECIFYING TECHNICAL DETAILS	23	58%
Step 1: Stating technical details of the game	16	40%
Step 2: Mentioning (free) access	13	33%
Step 3: Storage process of the game	1	3%
MOVE 8: SPECIFYING THE GAME MODE	31	78%
Step 1: Mentioning game mode	27	68%
Step 2: Emphasizing cooperation	16	40%
Step 3: Highlighting competitive mode	6	15%
MOVE 9: ADDITIONAL FEATURES	17	43%
Step 1: Referring to soundtrack	6	15%
Step 2: Mentioning workshop	5	13%
Step 3: Emphasizing the community aspect	14	35%
MOVE 10: ADDITIONAL NOTE	6	15%
Step 1: Additional note	4	10%
Step 2: Warning	1	3%
Step 3: Reference to parental controls	2	5%
MOVE 11: CALL FOR ACTION	14	35%
Step 1: Inviting reader	10	25%
Step 2: Reassuring reader	4	10%
MOVE 12: LINK TO FURTHER WEBSITES	4	10%

To give further insight into the categorization process of the moves and their respective steps, the following part will provide examples and clarifications of the six moves used in a typical *about-this-game section*. Due to the scope of this thesis and the number of occurrences in the texts under investigation, the ambiguous and optional moves will not be discussed.

5.3.1 Realization of the move presenting the game

As already mentioned, the analysis revealed that several moves are realized by various steps, which are listed in Table 6 above. In the case of the move *presenting the game*, nine steps have been used, which makes it the most varied move in the *about-this-game section*. This variation also becomes apparent in the realization of the steps. To better follow the analysis, the individual steps are color-coded in examples (1) to (5).

- (1) **Trap, fortify and create defensive systems** to prevent being breached by the enemy. (Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege, [my emphasis])
- (2) **The only aim in Rust is to survive.** (Rust, [my emphasis])
- (3) **You are Geralt of Rivia, mercenary monster slayer. Before you stands a war-torn, monster-infested continent you can explore at will. Your current contract? Tracking down Ciri – the Child of Prophecy,** a living weapon that can alter the shape of the world. (The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, [my emphasis])

- (4) *Cyberpunk 2077* is an open-world, action-adventure RPG set in the megalopolis of Night City, *where you play as a cyberpunk mercenary* wrapped up in a do-or-die fight for survival. (Cyberpunk 2077, [my emphasis])
- (5) *Disciplined and proud*, Titans are capable of both aggressive assaults and stalwart defenses. *Set your hammer ablaze, crack the sky with lightning, and go toe-to-toe with any opponent.* (Destiny 2, [my emphasis])

Whereas example (2) concisely states the *aim of the game*, example (3) incorporates the aim into the steps *narrative of the game* as well as *setting the scene*. Thus, through its shortness, example (2) has the effect of a catchphrase, whereas the aim in example (3) merges with the step *narrative of the game*. As for the *introduction of the characters*, examples (3), (4), and (5) show different approaches used in the *about-this-game section*. The text in example (3) addresses the reader directly and involves him or her in the narrative with the words *you are*. Similarly, example (4) introduces the reader to the character by using the phrase *where you play as*. However, even though both examples employ the personal pronoun *you*, example (3), using the verb *are*, is characterized by a higher degree of personal involvement than example (4). Another way of introducing the characters of the game is outlined in example (5). It represents a more detailed character description with personality traits and skills instead of only naming the character's name or profession, as in examples (3) and (4). These examples additionally show that a seemingly descriptive step always contains an underlying, subliminal persuasive aspect.

Moreover, examples (2) and (4) indicate the different uses of the *name of the game* within the *about-this-game section*. Example (2) incorporates the name into the step *aim of the game*, whereas in example (4), the name serves as an introduction to a further description of the game mode and genre. Interestingly, the first part of the first sentence in example (4) recurs in a similar manner in different *about-this-game sections*. For instance, "Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six® Siege is an elite, realistic, tactical team-based shooter" (Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six® Siege), "PAYDAY 2 is an action-packed, four-player co-op shooter" (PayDay 2), or "Dead by Daylight is a multiplayer (4vs1) horror game" (Dead by Daylight), all state the name of the game, refer to the game mode (RPG (roleplay game), team-based, co-op, multiplayer), and indicate the genre of the game (action-adventure, shooter, action, horror).

Furthermore, the implementation of the step *referring to in-game activities* also varies. Whereas example (1) lists the activities *trap*, *fortify*, and *create*, example (5) states them in greater detail by adding further descriptions to the verb. Intriguingly, both instances make use

of three enumerations. This could also be observed in several other *about-this-game sections*. For instance, “[l]and on strategic locations, loot weapons and supplies, and survive to become the last team standing” (PUBG: Battlegrounds), “[p]atch up damaged clothes, craft improvised items, and head out to deceptively dead cities” (DayZ), or “[e]mploy every weapon and gadget from your deadly arsenal to locate, manipulate and destroy your enemies” (Tom Clancy’s Rainbow Six Siege) all include the in-game activities in a similar manner than in example (5) above. Whereas the first two instances even follow the same structure as in (5), the latter differs to some extent. In this case, the enumeration does not focus on listing separate phrases but rather extends the phrase stated by adding an enumeration of actions. To achieve the effect of a catchphrase, more enumerations of actions like “hunt, catch and sacrifice” (Dead By Daylight), “[b]uild, explore, survive” (The Forest), “[g]ather, craft and survive” (Valheim), or “[d]odge, dash and slash” (Hollow Knight) are used in a climactic order (Melnichuk 2013: 3).

In contrast to in-game activities, the content features do not refer to actions carried out while playing but rather to additional information regarding what to expect in the game. For instance, Dota 2 mentions the “diversity of heroes, abilities, and powerful items”, which does not indicate active gameplay but features of the game. Other examples are “[e]ach level is procedurally generated” (Dead By Daylight), “armed with a wide and devastating array of classic and upgraded weapons” (Left For Dead 2), or “[i]n-game text chat” (Among Us). All the examples list features integrated into the game that do not represent actions carried out by the character.

5.3.2 Realization of the move emphasizing progress

According to the move analysis, progress is a fundamental concept used in the *about-this-game section*. Due to the growing efficiency of computers and gaming consoles, video games could also evolve in different areas like graphics, gameplay, or capacity, setting new standards for further development. Nowadays, constant updates and new features for a steady gaming experience are expected by the gaming community. Thus, the *about-this-game section* utilizes this expectation and highlights improvements done regarding the game, updates, or new features to persuade potential customers.

- (6) This edition of The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt has been *enhanced with numerous visual and technical improvements*, including vastly improved level of detail (The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, [my emphasis])
- (7) A Kingdom *Upgraded*. New Boss. *Upgraded Bosses*. *Tweaks and Refinements* across the whole game. (Hollow Knight, [my emphasis])
- (8) Regular *content updates* including *new vehicles, maps, missions, and nations*. (War Thunder, [my emphasis])

Examples (6), (7), and (8) indicate the way the concept of progress is employed in the data. Whereas example (6) concentrates on enhancements with regard to visualization and technicality, (7) and (8) emphasize the updating aspect. Interestingly, the latter two steps focus on new content features with varying degrees of specificity. The game Hollow Knight vaguely mentions an upgraded kingdom and bosses in example (7), which are both considered content features, while example (8) from War Thunder specifically lists the new features available with every update. Based on the three examples chosen, it becomes apparent that the two steps *highlighting updates* and *mentioning new features* overlap. Therefore, differentiation of these steps is difficult, as new features presuppose foregone updates. For this thesis, however, they were counted as different steps. The argumentation for this approach is based on the aforementioned degree of specificity. According to that, *highlighting updates* includes vague statements on updates, whereas *mentioning new features* specifies these updates by listing the features in question.

5.3.3 Realization of the move praising the game

Most of the analyzed data includes an evaluation of the video game. This evaluation is characterized by positivity and differs in terms of explicitness. While the steps *quotes*, *positive evaluation*, and *mentioning success* explicitly praise the game in question, *mentioning originality* and *emphasizing variety* only implicitly suggest evaluation.

- (9) For the past 12 years, it has continued to be one of the *most-played* games in the world (Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, [my emphasis])
- (10) ... to bring every corner of this *massive, rich, and detailed* world to life (Red Dead Redemption 2, [my emphasis])
- (11) ... to explore the *award-winning* world of Los Santos and Blaine County (Grand Theft Auto, [my emphasis])
- (12) Squad up and join the Battlegrounds for the *original* Battle Royale experience *only* PUBG: BATTLEGROUNDS can offer (PUBG: Battlegrounds, [my emphasis])

(13) Dota boasts an *endless array* – no two games are the same. (Dota 2, [my emphasis])

Example (9) demonstrates the incorporation of quotes within the *about-this-game section*, where a third-party voice, in this case, Doug Lombardi, is used to make the video game more appealing. Similar to example (9) using the superlative *most-played*, example (10) uses positively connotated words like *rich*, *massive*, and *detailed* to portray the game in a visualizing manner. In terms of referring to the success of the video game, example (11) shows the use of adjectives like *award-winning*. Similarly, example (9) also highlights the success of the game in question by stating that its popularity makes it one of the most-played games in history. Thus, example (9) could also be categorized as *mentioning success*. Nevertheless, the example shows the difficulty surrounding the categorization of the single steps within the *about-this-game section* due to overlaps. For the rather implicit steps *mentioning originality* and *emphasizing variety*, examples (12) and (13) display the use of words like *original* and *only* or the collocation *endless array* to indicate a unique selling point of the video game.

5.3.4 Realization of the move indicating degree of self-involvement

Even though the move *indicating degree of self-involvement* is not considered obligatory, it can be said that it is the most characteristic one of the genre *about-this-game section*. This uniqueness is rooted in the interactivity of video games. Due to video games being modifiable in terms of process and outcome, as opposed to already-produced films or written books, self-involvement is an essential factor in the decision-making process of purchasing the game. Therefore, more than half of the *about-this-game sections* analyzed emphasize the concepts of choice and customization.

(14) Dota doesn't provide limitations on how to play, it empowers you to *express your own style*. (Dota 2, [my emphasis])

(15) In the World of Terraria, the *choice is yours*. (Terraria, [my emphasis])

(16) *You decide* where your legend begins. (Destiny 2, [my emphasis])

(17) *Tweak* your favorite class to suit your gameplay style and personal taste. (Team Fortress, [my emphasis])

(18) You can *develop* your character according to your play style (Elden Ring, [my emphasis])

(19) Weapons, clothing & armor gear can also be painted to *express your own visual style*. (Ark: Survival Evolved, [my emphasis])

Whereas the step *choices* refers to the main concept of the interactive gaming experience, the step *customization* concentrates on modifications within the game. Examples (14), (15), and (16) display the different strategies used to express that the decisions are limitless and can be freely made by the player. Phrases like *express your own style*, *the choice is yours*, and *you decide*, signal freedom of choice, and simultaneously address the potential customer directly by using *you* as a possessive or personal pronoun. This enhances the persuasive aspect of the step *choices* even further. Furthermore, examples (15) and (16) resemble a catchphrase due to their narrative-like structure, which makes the phrases more memorable and unique. Based on examples (17), (18), and (19), it can be said that the step *customization* includes synonyms of customize, like *tweak*, *develop*, and *express*. Moreover, the word *style* is used in all of the three examples and is modified by *your* or *your own*. Thus, the use of the second person possessive pronoun emphasizes the self-involvement aspect by personally addressing the reader and making them a part of the gaming process.

5.3.5 Realization of the move specifying technical details

With regards to technical details of the video games, the *about-this-game* section includes different aspects such as resolution and frame rate, screen support, controller support, platform support, sound, and voice recognition. Furthermore, several texts also state the accessibility of the game, even though it has to be noted that this predominately applies to freely accessible games and thus, concentrates on phrases such as *free access*, *free to play*, *play for free*, or *download for free*.

(20) ... in *resolutions* of up to *4k* and beyond, as well as the chance to experience the game running at *60 frames per second*. (Grand Theft Auto V, [my emphasis])

(21) The over-the-top *hyper real imagery* of the ARK its creatures is brought to expressive life using a highly-customized Unreal Engine 4, with fully dynamic lighting (ARK: Survival Evolved, [my emphasis])

Based on examples (20) and (21), it can be said that for the move *specifying technical details*, specific vocabulary is used. Words and phrases like *resolution*, *4k*, *frames per second*, and *imagery* are all highly technical words belonging to the area of technology. In addition, the technical vocabulary is modified by adjectives and adverbs that positively highlight the technical aspect. For instance, *resolutions up to 4k and beyond* already indicate a high resolution that reaches 4k. The phrase *up to* in this context implies that 4k is the limit. The

additional word *beyond*, however, objects to this limit by stating that the resolution, depending on the capacity of the computer used, can be even better. Thus, the combination of *up to* and *beyond* is creatively used to emphasize the high-resolution aspect of the video game. In example (21), adjectives such as *over-the-top*, *hyper*, *real*, and *expressive* all positively highlight the imagery of the video game. These adjectives are utilized to strengthen the statement of great visuals and appeal to the emotions of the reader, as adjectival modification makes claims more convincing (Jalilifar, Banari & Shooshtari 2019: 11).

5.3.6 Realization of the move specifying game mode

In the data for the move analysis, over three-fourths of the texts include the game mode of the video game. Game mode refers to the way the game is played. To be more specific, game mode incorporates the amount of people that can simultaneously play and the perspective of the player character. The former is realized by words such as *team-based*, *multiplayer*, *single-player*, *two-player*, *four-player*, or *MMO* (Massively Multiplayer Online Game), whereas the latter concentrates on *first-person (mode)* or *third-person (mode)*. Interestingly, *two-player* and *four-player* are subcategories of *multiplayer*. However, in the texts analyzed, *multiplayer* is the preferred term to indicate that the game is meant for more than one person. Nevertheless, stating that the game is two-player or even four-player specifies the game mode and thus, helps the customer to find the most suitable game for their requirements. With regards to the number of players, the concepts of cooperation and competition are also frequently referred to within the *about-this-game section*. To indicate whether the game includes the cooperative or competitive aspect, PvP (player versus player) or PvE (player versus environment) is used as an indication. As for the perspective, first-person means that the player character is invisible as the game is experienced through the player character's eyes. In contrast, the third-player perspective has a visible player character in front of the screen, who is operated by the gamer.

5.3.7 Move analysis: differences by publisher

With regards to the differences between the three publishers Electronic Arts, Valve, and Xbox Game Studios, Table 7 represents the findings of the move analysis of seven *about-this-game sections* of each publisher. Hence, the calculation of the percentage differs from the one in

Tables 5 and 6, as Table 7 is based on seven texts per publisher (as opposed to 40 texts in total). Several of these texts are also incorporated in the 40-text-corpus used for the general move analysis. However, certain texts are only part of this sub-corpora, as they are not ranked in the top 40 reviewed games (see Table 2). Further information on the length of the corpora and the games included in the corpora can be found in Table 4 in Chapter 4.3.1.

Table 7: Categorized move scheme of the about-this-game section on Steam with individual steps differentiated by publisher

	ELECTRONIC ARTS	VALVE	XBOX GAME STUDIOS
MOVES & STEPS	%	%	%
MOVE 1: CATCHPHRASE	57%	29%	43%
MOVE 2: PRESENTING THE GAME	100%	100%	100%
Step 1: Stating the game's name	100%	86%	100%
Step 2: Stating the game's genre	57%	43%	29%
Step 3: Setting the scene	57%	29%	57%
Step 4: Narrative of the game	86%	29%	57%
Step 5: Aim of the game	29%	14%	29%
Step 6: Background information on character(s)	57%	14%	14%
Step 7: Referring to in-game activities	71%	57%	43%
Step 8: Highlighting the game's content features	100%	43%	86%
Step 9: Reference to the game	--	14%	--
MOVE 3: EMPHASIZING PROGRESS	71%	71%	86%
Step 1: Enhancements/Improvements	43%	14%	57%
Step 2: Highlighting updates	43%	57%	43%
Step 3: Mentioning new features	43%	43%	71%
MOVE 4: REFERRING TO HISTORY OF GAME	57%	43%	71%
Step 1: Mentioning forerunner	29%	43%	71%
Step 2: Mentioning games by same creator	--	--	--
Step 3: Indicating publisher	29%	14%	14%
MOVE 5: PRAISING THE GAME	71%	100%	100%
Step 1: Quotes	--	43%	14%
Step 2: Positive evaluation	--	14%	86%
Step 3: Mentioning success	14%	86%	14%
Step 4: Mentioning originality	43%	14%	71%
Step 5: Emphasizing variety	43%	43%	86%
MOVE 6: INDICATING DEGREE OF SELF-INVOLVEMENT	57%	43%	86%
Step 1: Customization	43%	14%	43%
Step 2: Choices	29%	43%	57%
MOVE 7: SPECIFYING TECHNICAL DETAILS	71%	57%	71%
Step 1: Stating technical details of the game	29%	29%	57%
Step 2: Mentioning (free) access	71%	43%	43%
Step 3: Storage process of the game	--	--	--
MOVE 8: SPECIFYING THE GAME MODE	71%	71%	86%
Step 1: Mentioning game mode	57%	57%	43%
Step 2: Emphasizing cooperation	43%	43%	43%
Step 3: Highlighting competitive mode	--	14%	14%
MOVE 9: ADDITIONAL FEATURES	--	43%	57%
Step 1: Referring to soundtrack	--	14%	14%
Step 2: Mentioning workshop	--	29%	--
Step 3: Emphasizing the community aspect	--	14%	43%

MOVE 10: ADDITIONAL NOTE	29%	14%	29%
Step 1: Additional note	29%	14%	29%
Step 2: Warning	--	--	--
Step 3: Reference to parental controls	--	--	--
MOVE 11: CALL FOR ACTION	57%	57%	--
Step 1: Inviting reader	57%	14%	--
Step 2: Reassuring reader	--	43%	--
MOVE 12: LINK TO FURTHER WEBSITES	--	--	--

The results for the sub-corpora bear resemblance to the findings of the main move-analysis-corpus. In both analyses, *presenting the game* and *praising the game* represent obligatory moves. However, all three publishers tend to have different moves. Whereas a typical *about-this-game section* for Electronic Arts consists of nine moves, Valve uses six moves, and Xbox Game Studios eight. It has to be noted that these results are context-specific and they can change depending on the number of texts analyzed. With a data set of seven texts, the categories by Hüttner (2010) are not clear-cut but rather fluid. Thus, generalizing statements cannot be made.

All three publishers utilize the moves *presenting the game*, *emphasizing progress*, *praising the game*, *specifying technical details*, and *specifying game mode*, which coincides with the result of the main move analysis outlined in the previous chapter. Interestingly, the only move that is not considered obligatory or core for all three publishers but is so for the general move structure of the *about-this-game section* is *indicating degree of self-involvement*. In the data for Valve, self-involvement seems to be less important than for Electronic Arts and Xbox Game Studios, with the latter publisher considering it a very important aspect (six out of seven texts). Also, Electronic Arts puts less emphasis on *praising the game* than the other two publishers, as for the Electronic Arts *about-this-game sections*, *praising the game* is considered a core move (five out of seven texts) instead of an obligatory one (Hüttner 2010). The differences for the rest of the typical moves for all three publishers are not significant.

Interesting findings can also be found in the variations of the prototypical move structure between the individual publishers. For instance, the data for Electronic Arts lacks the move *additional features*, unlike Valve and Xbox Game Studios. Similarly, a *call for action* is used in four out of seven texts in the Valve and Electronic Arts data, but none of the *about-this-game sections* in the Xbox Game Studios corpus includes one. Moreover, even though *catchphrases* are featured in all of the publishers' corpora, Electronic Arts includes the most. Significant differences occur within the move *referring to history of game*, especially with regards to the

step *mentioning forerunner*. The interesting part about this result is that all sub-corpora include at least one sequel game, with Valve including the most sequels. Thus, it would be expected that the Valve corpus predominantly applies the step *mentioning forerunner* as opposed to the other publishers, which is not the case.

Based on these findings, it can be said that there are certain differences between the publishers Electronic Arts, Valve, and Xbox Game Studios. This becomes apparent in the utilization of a different number of moves and the categorization of these moves within Hüttner's (2010) framework. However, even though these differences are occasionally noteworthy, they are context-dependent and grounded on a small data set. To verify these findings, more data needs to be considered and analyzed.

5.4 Lexico-grammatical features

Within the realization of the moves, the rhetorical strategies and the communicative purpose of the *about-this-game section* have already been discussed in the previous section. To gain a more in-depth view of the language used in the *about-this-game section* on *Steam*, the following subchapter focuses on the lexico-grammatical level. For this purpose, word lists with the reference corpus English Web 2021 were compiled, and keywords, collocations, synonyms, and phrases were investigated. Furthermore, a comparison between the three different publishers Valve, Electronic Arts, and Xbox Game Studios was conducted to unveil possible differences.

As anticipated, the frequency-based word list¹ composed by *SketchEngine* of the 149 *about-this-game sections* shows a predominant use of the connectors *and*, and *or*, the articles *the* and *a*, as well as the prepositions *to*, *of*, *in*, and *for*. These results are not surprising, as these word classes represent the most prominent in nearly every genre (West 1953). Furthermore, the analysis reveals that *your* occurs 1,624 times in the corpus and *you* 1,498 times. This is attributable to the communicative purpose of the *about-this-game section*. The use of personal pronouns in persuasive genres is seen as a way to address the reader directly and thus, establish the need to purchase the advertised product. By doing that, "the advertisements no longer present (only) facts about the product but insist on its potential benefit for the client" (Schoenmakers, Hachimi & de Hoop 2023: 2). In order to convey these

¹ The word list of the 90 most frequent words in the *about-this-game sections* can be found in the appendix.

benefits, the personal pronoun is used to simulate a close relationship “with trust being the most important component” (Schoenmakers, Hachimi & de Hoop 2023: 2).

Moreover, the *about-this-game* section on *Steam* makes use of the semantic field of *gaming*, including words such as *game*, *play(ers)*, *gameplay*, *multiplayer*, and *team*. In addition, words such as *experience*, *skills*, *features*, and *items* are also prominent and can be ascribed to the semantic field of *gameplay*. These are also related to gaming but refer to the more technical parts of games. Especially the word *skill* “is a vital part of discussions about video games” (Paul 2018: 4), as competition and ranking are inherent in the gaming context and reflect the ideology of meritocracy (Paul 2018: 8). Unsurprisingly, another semantic field used in the *about-this-game* section is *war*. Within this field, words like *combat*, *weapons*, *fight*, *battle*, and *enemies* are used to describe the storyline of the game. It has to be noted that words related to war are only apparent due to the approach of categorization of the data, as specific semantic fields, such as *war*, only occur in the *about-this-game* section of games imitating war scenes. Thus, a different categorization approach would generate a different word list and hence, different semantic fields. Conversely, this means that the corpus under investigation incorporates several war-imitating video games.

Another interesting finding is that *unique* and *powerful* are the only emotive adjectives that appear in the list. Due to the persuasive character of the *about-this-game* section, predominant use of emotional language would be expected. Nevertheless, even though adjectives are often used in promotional genres to appeal to emotions, in the *about-this-game* section, emotive words can be classified as verbs. For instance, *experience*, *explore*, *build*, *create*, or *discover* evoke the feeling of autonomy or at least co-determination. In addition, these verbs are used as imperatives to establish a bond with the reader and simultaneously function as a tool to explain what players can do in-game. Apparently, the imperative verb form in the *about-this-game* section on *Steam* should not be seen as a command but rather as a recommendation. This recommending function of the imperative can be linked back to the attempt to build a trusting relationship with the potential buyer by highlighting the benefits of the game.

To further investigate the word level and discover technical terms of the *about-this-game* section, a keyword list² was compiled. As a reference corpus, the *English Web 2021*

² The keyword list of the first 60 words (without abbreviations) can be found in the appendix.

(enTenTen21) was used, which is the default corpus in *SketchEngine*. This corpus contains 52 billion words collected from the internet (SketchEngine 2023). However, the pre-designed character of the corpus limits the results to a specific context, as other reference corpora might obtain different results due to their content. Nevertheless, the findings illustrate that the semantic field of *gaming* is the most prominent. To be more precise, the results focus on the gaming mode, with words like *multiplayer*, *first-person*, *co-op*, *third-person*, *single-player*, and *team-based*. These words are more frequently used in the focus corpus as opposed to the reference corpus and thus, can be considered technical words of the *about-this-game* section.

Within *SketchEngine*, the context of the words in the keyword list can also be examined. For instance, in the case of the aforementioned word *multiplayer*, the analysis reveals that in the focus corpus the word *multiplayer* modifies nouns such as *battle*, *shooter*, *survival*, and *fight*, whereas in the reference corpus, the modified nouns are less specific like *mode*, *gameplay*, *gaming*, or *game*. On the one hand, the use of emotive language in the *about-this-game* section becomes apparent, as words such as *battle*, *survival*, or *fight* are emotionally more charged than *game* or *mode*. On the other hand, the modified nouns in the focus corpus represent the use of additional information to state the mode of the game more explicitly.

Furthermore, another interesting result is the use of synonyms in the corpus. The *about-this-game* section makes use of different words to express a similar idea. As can be seen in examples (22), (23), and (24), the words *unique*, *special*, and *original*, are used to convey a certain degree of individuality.

(22) In addition to multiplayer, where you can directly connect with other players and travel together, the game supports a *unique* asynchronous online element that allows you to feel the presence of others. (Elden Ring, [my emphasis])

(23) As players progress they can invest in any of five *special* Skill Trees: Mastermind, Enforcer, Ghost, Technician and Fugitive. (Payday 2, [my emphasis])

(24) A Pirate's Life, an acclaimed *original* story that brings Disney's Pirates of the Caribbean sailing into Sea of Thieves. (Sea of Thieves 2023 Edition, [my emphasis])

However, in the case of *original*, there seems to be a predominant use in connection with the words *music*, *soundtrack*, and *game*. The latter is an interesting case in that it only occurs within the *about-this-game* sections of sequel games. The collocation *original game* then, refers to the first published game of the series, as in "[p]erks from the original game have been

reimagined with more added to the fold” (Killing Floor 2). It can be assumed that this strategy is used to build on the success of the predecessor, and thus, aims at triggering the concept of recognition and familiarity.

Furthermore, the words *build*, *create*, and *construct* are near synonyms which signal the tasks of the game. Examples (25), (26), and (27) demonstrate the different ways of expressing similar ideas. Interestingly, the imperative form in all examples is followed by the possessive pronoun *your*. In several cases, the postmodifier of *your* is the word *own* (see examples (26) and (27)). This combination aims at establishing a personal relationship with the reader and reflects the essence of video games, namely the active participation of the player. The word *own* shows the potential players of the video game that they can alter certain features of the game and thus, influence the game’s storyline development or visuals to some extent.

- (25) Engage in statecraft, diplomacy, exploration and *build* your empire, turn by turn. (Total War: Warhammer II, [my emphasis])
- (26) Maybe you will decide to *construct* your own city to house the host of mysterious allies you may encounter along your travels? (Terraria, [my emphasis])
- (27) Once unlocked, you may be taken to a Hideout, where you can *create* your own personalised town. (Path of Exile, [my emphasis])

This emphasis on the personal involvement of potential buyers also becomes apparent by looking at the collocations³ list. The personal pronoun *you* frequently occurs with a form of *to be* and is used to address the reader directly to establish a sense of involvement. In most cases, *you are* introduces the character in the game. For example, the quotations in examples (28), (29), and (30), indicate the role the potential player takes on during the game and thus, implicitly provide information by simultaneously trying to persuade the reader. By using *you are*, the persuasive aspect builds on visualizing language, as it prompts the reader to imagine themselves in the role of a survivor, a creature, or a guardian, for instance.

- (28) By bittersweet fortune, *you are* one of the few survivors of this massacre. (Kingdom Come: Deliverance, [my emphasis])
- (29) Take part in a dynamic ecosystem life-cycle with its own predator & prey hierarchies, where *you are* just one creature among many species struggling for dominance and survival. (Ark: Survival Evolved, [my emphasis])
- (30) *You are* a Guardian, defender of the Last City of humanity in a solar system under siege by infamous villains. (Destiny 2, [my emphasis])

³ The collocation list can be found in the appendix.

Additionally, the personal pronoun *you* is also frequently used in combination with the word *want*. Further investigation shows that the use of *you want* can either be categorized as signaling freedom or a conditional expression. The words *anyway*, *whatever*, and *whoever* function as modifiers of *you want* to emphasize the aforementioned personal involvement aspect. Phrases such as “[p]lay as much as you want” (Team Fortress 2), or “[d]o whatever you want” (Fallout 4) communicate a certain degree of freedom while playing the game. As for the conditional expression category, the word *if* modifies *you want* to symbolize self-determination, such as in the example “[b]ut if you want to do more, we have the means” (Garry’s Mod). In this case, self-determination refers to the choices that can be made by the player.

Contrary to expectations, another frequent collocation is the verb *do* modified by the word *not*. As pointed out in the theoretical background of this thesis, advertisements, and especially blurbs, tend to utilize positively connotated expressions to highlight the advantages of the product as well as show the potential buyer all of its possibilities. The negation *do not* achieves the opposite effect of that. It limits the possibilities and imposes certain courses of play on the reader. However, the use of *do not* in the *about-this-game section* fulfills a different function.

(31) If you're not too great at construction - *don't* worry! (Garry’s Mod, [my emphasis])

(32) New to TF? *Don't* sweat it! (Team Fortress, [my emphasis])

(33) It’s an exceptional game that you *don't* want to miss. (Ori and the Will of the Wisps, [my emphasis])

Examples (31), (32), and (33) demonstrate that instead of the limiting and prescriptive role it normally inherits, *do not* aims at reassurance (examples (31) and (32)) and positive evaluation (33). Furthermore, it becomes apparent that the contracted form *don't* is preferred, reflecting the more informal nature of the *about-this-game section*. This informality also contributes to the persuasive aspect of the genre and is used to establish a bond where both parties are equivalent.

Phrases and multiword units⁴ are also an integral part of the *about-this-game section* on *Steam*. For instance, *one of the*, *as well as*, and *a variety of* appear in different texts of the genre. With a frequency of (over) 30 occurrences, these phrases are the most used ones in the genre. The examples below show that these phrases in the *about-this-game section* are

⁴ The multi-word unit and phrases list can be found in the appendix.

applied to list certain points (35), emphasize positive aspects or rewards of the game (34), or signal diversity (36).

- (34) For the past 12 years, it has continued to be *one of the* most-played games in the world. (Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, [my emphasis])
- (35) All structures and items can be painted to customize the look of your home, *as well as* placing dynamically per-pixel paintable signs, textual billboards, and other decorative objects. (Ark: Survival Evolved, [my emphasis])
- (36) A vast world where open fields with *a variety of* situations and huge dungeons with complex and three-dimensional designs are seamlessly connected. (Elden Ring, [my emphasis])

Other multi-word units concentrate on the word *choice*. For instance, *choice is yours*, *choices you make*, and *to choose from* all emphasize the personal involvement of the player as well as freedom regarding the course of play. Similarly, the phrase *customize your character* appears frequently in different texts of the genre. All of these phrases emphasize the importance of conveying a certain degree of autonomy and agency in the *about-this-game section*. It can be argued that this reflection of personal involvement is based on the interactive nature of video games.

The above-outlined analysis revealed that the *about-this-game section* is characterized by words and phrases conveying the personal involvement of the player as well as establishing a personal relationship with the potential buyer. Furthermore, it makes use of different words expressing the same thought in order to make the texts more varied. Emotive language concentrates on verbs instead of adjectives and serves as imperative forms that aim at inviting the reader to purchase the game.

5.4.1 Lexico-grammatical features: differences by publishers

Similarly to the results of the move analysis, the lexico-grammatical analysis of the sub-corpora also bears resemblance to the results of the main corpus. Both corpora revealed a predominant use of the words *and*, *you*, *your*, and *the* as well as the word *game*. In general, the three sub-corpora contain a different number of words, meaning that the *about-this-game section* texts by Electronic Arts tend to be longer than those by Valve and Xbox Game Studios. One possible explanation for the low word count in the Valve corpus could be based on the fact that three out of seven *about-this-game sections* are those of the freely available games. In this case, it could be argued that the free availability of the game causes a shorter *about-*

this-game section with less information, as the willingness to download the game is higher regardless of the *about-this-game* section.

However, further investigations refute this line of argumentation. The texts in the Valve corpus are between 48 and 305 words long. Whereas the *about-this-game* sections of the free games count 136, 190, and 244 words, the charged ones consist of 48, 207, 258, and 305 words. This shows that for both sides, the length of the texts considerably varies and thus, a general statement concerning the word count cannot be made. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that due to the different sizes of the corpora, the results only refer to the context of this thesis and might differ depending on the data used for analysis. In other words, the analysis in terms of the differences between publishers might reveal different results with different *about-this-game* sections by the same publishers.

Table 8: Wordlists of different publishers EA, Valve, and Xbox Game Studios (special characters not included, words selected)

ELECTRONIC ARTS (2,119 WORDS)		VALVE (1,363 WORDS)		XBOX GAME STUDIOS (1,722 WORDS)	
WORD	FREQUENCY	WORD	FREQUENCY	WORD	FREQUENCY
the	113	the	71	the	88
and	90	and	50	and	84
your	32	you	21	new	25
new	20	game	19	your	21
you	17	your	15	halo	19
experience	13	new	10	world	19
game	13	characters	8	game	19
abilities	12	gameplay	8	explore	11
battlefield	11	players	7	adventure	9
combat	10	play	7	experience	9

Table 8 shows the frequent use of the article *the* as well as the connector *and* in all of the sub-corpora. As for the main corpus, due to articles and connectors being frequently used word groups, this result is not surprising. Furthermore, the personal pronoun *you* and the possessive pronoun *your* occur quite often in the selected texts. Interestingly, however, Xbox Game Studios only use *your* in their texts.

Also, the word *new* is used in all of the sub-corpora. However, based on the lengths of the corpora, it can be said that Xbox Game Studios incorporates the word *new* the most,

emphasizing progress, as examples (37) and (38) show. In general, the word *new* in all corpora signals further development of the games as opposed to preceding versions and games. Furthermore, the use of *new* in example (39) refers to in-game progress and discoveries, emphasizing the adventurous aspect of video games.

- (37) With each Season bringing in *new* game features every three months alongside regular in-game Events and new narrative Adventures, Sea of Thieves is a service-based game that's still growing and evolving. (Sea of Thieves 2023 edition, [my emphasis])
- (38) CS: GO features *new* maps, characters, weapons, and game modes. (Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, [my emphasis])
- (39) Master your Legend's unique abilities and coordinate with your teammates to discover *new* tactics and powerful combinations. (Apex Legends, [my emphasis])

The rest of the word lists represent the most important aspects of the games within each sub-corpora. Whereas the Electronic Art corpus focuses on advanced gameplay termini such as *abilities* and *experience*, the Valve corpus can be seen as reflecting a more general knowledge about video games, as words like *characters*, *players*, and *gameplay* represent common words within the area of gaming. In the case of Xbox Game Studios, the words *adventure* and *explore* indicate that the *about-this-game* sections within the corpus can be considered adventure games, where unknown territories have to be explored. On the contrary, the Electronic Arts corpus most probably includes *about-this-game* sections of war-imitating games, where the objective is to defeat the enemy, as words such as *battlefield* and *combat* are frequently used. Due to the general character of the most frequent words in the Valve corpus, a similar assumption about the kind of games included cannot be made.

As for the keywords⁵ in the different sub-corpora, it can be said that several keywords only occur due to being the title of the game, such as *titanfall*, *dota*, or *ori*. This is also the case for *jedi*, *battlefield*, *counter-strike*, *half-life*, *halo*, and *wisp*. Other keywords refer to the developing studio (*hazelight*) or reviewers of the game (*gamestar*). Similar to the findings of the main corpus, the mentioning of the gaming mode, which often also refers to the video game genre, becomes apparent in all of the sub-corpora. The terms *action-adventure*, *third-person*, and *first-person* appear in the Electronic Arts corpus, whereas Valve is characterized by *team-based*, *two-player*, *two-person*, and *single-player*. In the Xbox Game Studios corpus,

⁵ The selected keyword list of the sub-corpora can be found in the appendix.

words such as *multiplayer*, *action-platformer*, and *metroidvania*, a subgenre of action-adventure games, are considered keywords. It can be assumed that within the gaming community, there are personal preferences of each player regarding the genre or gaming mode of the video game. Thus, the *about-this-game section* specifically states this information to help the reader find a suitable game.

A common aspect of all the keywords in the sub-corpora is the hyphenation. When investigating the list, it is noticeable that a high number of words across all texts are hyphenated to create new compound words. Interestingly, the focus of the terms differs. For the Electronic Arts corpus, the words emphasize attributes of the games, such as *deep-tactical* or *system-striking*, whereas the Valve texts highlight positive feedback with terms like *highly-rated* and *most-played*. This focus on positive resonance is also reflected in the Xbox Game Studios corpus, where *critically-acclaimed* and *fan-favorite* are considered keywords. Additionally, Xbox Game Studios makes use of hyphenated words related to the story of the games, such as *narrative-driven* and *side-story*.

The different foci also become apparent when looking at the multiword units, which are oftentimes an extension of the above-discussed keywords. Electronic Arts emphasizes the content of the game by using phrases such as *pilot ability*, *force ability*, *character ability*, and *legendary character*, and hence, can be seen as informative. The main aspect reflected in the Valve corpus can be summarized as evaluative, as *most-played game*, *game-of-the-year award*, *award-winning formula*, and *highly-rated free game* lead the multiword units list.

To conclude, there are no striking differences in the *about-this-game section* of the publishers Electronic Arts, Valve, and Xbox Game Studios in terms of the most frequently used words. All publishers incorporate personal pronouns to establish a close relationship with the reader and put emphasis on progress by including the word *new* in their texts. Small variations could only be found with regard to the type of games the sub-corpora incorporate. Whereas the game genre becomes apparent in the Electronic Arts and Xbox Game Studios corpora, Valve keeps their *about-this-game sections* in a rather neutral and general tone. However, differences could be found in terms of keywords. Even though all sub-corpora include a high number of hyphenated words, the focus of these terms can be categorized as attributional (Electronic Arts), evaluative (Valve and Xbox Game Studios), or narrative (Xbox Game Studios).

6. Discussion

The analysis outlined in the previous chapters obtained several interesting results, which will be summarized, discussed, and subsequently contrasted with existing research in this chapter. At the beginning of this thesis, research on book blurbs (see Chapter 3.2), as well as the language of advertising (see Chapter 3.3), have been investigated to build a fundamental framework for comparison. This outline will be revisited and compared to the findings of this thesis. In addition, this summary explicitly answers the research questions based on the results of the analysis.

With regards to the research question on move structure (RQ2), the analysis revealed a prototypical structure of the *about-this-game section* consisting of six moves in total: *presenting the game*, *emphasizing progress*, *praising the game*, *indicating degree of self-involvement*, *specifying technical details*, and *specifying game mode*. Even though several researchers also established a six-move scheme (Kathpalia 1997; Ashgar, Mahmood & Ashgar 2015) within their studies on book blurbs, none of the move structures presented in Table 1 (see Chapter 3.2) coincide with the results of this thesis. Nevertheless, there are some significant overlaps between already existing research and the findings of this study: blurbs, or in this case, *about-this-game sections*, incorporate evaluation and description of the product advertised. These two aspects are the main components and occur simultaneously, meaning that descriptive instances contain evaluative aspects (Jasim 2016; Orna-Montesinos 2012; Jalilifar, Banari & Shooshtari 2019; Ashgar, Mahmood & Ashgar 2015). Thus, it can be argued that the move structure established by Gea-Valor (2005), containing *description*, *evaluation*, and *about the author*, bears the most resemblance to the structure found based on the data of this thesis, as *about the author* is an irrelevant part for the gaming context. In addition, Gea-Valor and Inigo Ros (2009) found a decrease in the move *about the author* in their diachronic study, which makes this aspect generally less relevant.

Due to the interrelation of description and evaluation, the *about-this-game section* is mainly persuasive, which is also reflected in the other four moves *emphasizing progress*, *indicating degree of self-involvement*, *specifying technical details*, and *specifying game mode*. Thus, it can be categorized as a promotional genre based on Bhatia's (2004: 49) framework. Within this framework, the *about-this-game section* is also considered a primary member, as it pre-eminently values persuasion (and promotion) over information. Hence, to answer research

question one (RQ1), the *about-this-game section* informs, promotes as well as persuades, with focus on the latter two. In this regard, the *about-this-game section* exhibits similarities to blurbs. However, research on the move structure does not indicate a mere transformation of the blurb into the *about-this-game section*. To verify the assumption made at the beginning of this thesis, a comparative study of video game blurbs on CD-ROM and the *about-this-game section* would have to be conducted.

Nevertheless, certain similarities might suggest that the *about-this-game section* is a variation of the blurb, similar to a sub-category. In general, blurbs, and *about-this-game sections*, are characterized by evaluative statements. Thus, it was to be expected that the results of evaluation for this thesis match the main findings of evaluation in book blurbs. First of all, nearly all texts in this data set include an instance of evaluation, which was also found by Cacchiani (2007). Secondly, only positive evaluation could be found in the data, which is realized through words such as *unique*, *special*, or *original* and which confirms Cacchiani's (2007) and Gesuato's (2007) findings. Gesuato (2007) and Jasim (2016) also argue that the main word form used to realize the evaluative component in book blurbs is adjectives, which also applies to the findings of this thesis. Contrary to expectations, besides evaluation, the adjectival use to appeal to the emotions of the reader was not applied in the *about-this-game section*. Rather, the emotive component in these sections is realized through verbs. This might be connected to the interactive character of the medium itself, as interactivity and players' agency are best conveyed through words that symbolize action, hence, verbs.

Furthermore, the results by Cacchiani (2007) on evaluation revealed the use of different strategies for promotion. Even though evaluative adjectives are the main way to positively promote an item and appeal to the reader, strategies such as narration, characterization, and description are more frequently used to arouse the interest of the reader. These findings not only strengthen the claim of the interconnectedness between description and evaluation in blurbs but also confirm the results of this thesis, as within the move of *presenting the game*, the two steps *background information on character(s)* and *narrative of the game* are employed. Hence, the *about-this-game section* uses explicit strategies, such as evaluative adjectives and emotive language, as well as implicit strategies like characterization and narration, to persuade the potential customers into purchasing the game, which aligns with the view of Henson (2022) and follows the framework established by Shafer (2019). The narratively written aspect of the *about-this-game sections* also confirms the findings by

Schable (2015), as the language used, especially within the step of *narrative of the game*, is a reflection of the game's tone in general.

Interestingly, Önder (2013) detected variations with regard to positive evaluation. In their study, this variation referred to the use of negatively connotated adjectives for positive effect in blurbs. Similarly, the *about-this-game section* makes use of the negation *don't*, which is normally seen as restrictive and commanding. In this context, however, it is used to reassure the reader and positively evaluate the game. Even though the findings of this study concentrate on the word *don't* and not adjectives, they do align with Önder's (2013) research to some extent, showing that words with a generally negative connotation can be used positively in certain contexts.

The findings regarding the differences in move structure between the three publishers Valve, Electronic Arts, and Xbox Game Studios verify the results by Kathpalia (1997) and Önder (2013), who also investigated variations between publishers concerning the move structure of their blurbs. To answer the sub-question (RQ2.1), just like the other two studies showed, the significance of the differences is small. Though the number of moves to structure the *about-this-game sections* varies depending on the publisher, the deployed move structures of the three publishers overlap in five moves. Önder (2013) identified similar variations and overlaps in move structure. Furthermore, both Kathpalia (1997) and Önder (2013) argued that differences become apparent within the realization of the moves. This also holds true for the utilization of steps within the different *about-this-game sections* and word-level differences to some extent, which also answers the second sub-question (RQ3.1) regarding the differences between publishers on the word level. The analysis of this study revealed that the different publishers tend to include hyphenated words that differ in terms of their focus, namely attributional, narrative, or evaluative. Also, the differences concentrate on the types of games included in the data set for each publisher. However, all other findings did not indicate significant differences. Thus, Kathpalia's (1997) and Önder's (2013) findings regarding differences between different publishers could only be partially verified.

As for research question three (RQ3), the general analysis of the language within the *about-this-game section* on the word level revealed a predominant use of semantic fields and the personal pronoun *you*. As for the semantic fields, the fields of *gaming*, *gameplay*, and *war* were established. These findings contribute to the concept of the organization of language "in a mental lexicon with particular semantic features" (Smoliana 2013: 53) and demonstrate the

technical vocabulary of the *about-this-game section*. With regards to the use of the personal pronoun, *you* is utilized to establish a relationship with the reader and invite the potential customer to play the game. This usage of *you* coincides with Gea-Valor's (2005) and Labrador et al.'s (2014) findings on the application of *you* within advertisements. Both studies showed that in order to build a trusting relationship with the customer, the personal address of *you* is an effective tool. Other researchers, however, disagree with this view and claim that *you* establishes an authoritarian voice (Yang 2012), which does not pertain to the context of the *about-this-game sections*.

Moreover, the use of *you* also involves imperative forms. The results of the lexico-grammatical analysis showed that verbs such as *build*, *construct*, and *create* are deployed as imperatives and serve as an invitation for the reader. This inviting aspect of imperatives was also pointed out by Gea-Valor (2005). In addition, whereas personal addresses explicitly institute a direct relationship, the use of imperatives helps to implicitly establish a relationship with the reader, and thus, confirms Labrador et al.'s (2014) findings. All aspects surrounding the use of imperatives and the personal pronoun *you*, lead to an informal tone of the *about-this-game section*. Informality within advertisements, and hence, also the *about-this-game section*, reinforces a personal relationship based on trust and familiarity (Labrador et al. 2014).

This trusting relationship is especially important for the community aspect of gaming. The findings of this study indicate that the gaming community highly values the social aspect of gaming, which is also reflected in the *about-this-game section*. By concentrating on cooperation, competition, or community, the texts try to appeal to the values of the respective discourse community, which confirms the findings by Yang (2012) and Basturkmen (2009). Furthermore, the results also strengthen the claim made by Basturkmen (2009) that the purpose of blurbs is not only to inform and persuade but should also include "appealing to values" (Basturkmen 2009: 81).

Speaking of purpose, the multimodal analysis of this thesis indicates that the use of pictures, short clips, or GIFs is deliberately chosen and placed and influences the *about-this-game section*. The influence becomes apparent in the persuasive character of the utilization of multimodality. Popular strategies include the replacement of the headline or the supplementation of the text with a picture or a GIF. The former serves as an eye-catcher at the beginning of the text to draw the reader in, whereas the latter reinforces the statements made by the text. Hence, visualization within the section contributes to the effectiveness of

the persuasive aspect of the text. In other words, multimodality reinforces the persuasive purpose of the *about-this-game section*, which answers research question four (RQ4). It has to be noted that the multimodal analysis concentrates solely on the introductory page of the video game, and thus, only represents a fraction of the multimodality aspect *Steam* has to offer. Further research is needed to examine the full extent of the influence of multimodality on the *about-this-game section*.

These findings lead to the conclusion that the *about-this-game section* can be considered a subcategory of blurbs, due to their similar purposes of informing as well as persuading, their main components description and evaluation, and their language use on the word level. Nevertheless, the differences between blurbs and the *about-this-game sections* cannot be ignored. Due to these similarities and differences, this thesis contributes to the verification of the assumption made by Caballero (2008: 21) that the adaptation of genres into the online mode might involve significant changes regarding move structure and lexico-grammatical components (Kathpalia 2021: 14).

However, there are certain limitations to this study. First, the use of a different reference corpus for the lexico-grammatical analysis might obtain different results. Second, a high number of freely available games within the data set influence the findings. Thus, a different categorization of video games might reveal a different move structure and word-level composition. However, due to the complexity surrounding video game genres, a clear-cut concept does not exist, which aggravates a transparent data categorization. Third, existing research concentrates on book blurbs. To verify the findings, more research on video game blurbs, the *about-this-game section*, and a comparative study of both is needed. Fourth, to generalize the differences between publishers, a more conclusive corpus size would be needed.

Even though these limitations need to be considered due to their influence on the results, this thesis provides insights into the promotional genre of the *about-this-game section* and represents a solid framework for further research. By dissecting the individual parts of the *about-this-game section* and presenting a prototypical move structure and a word-level analysis, valuable information on the composition of *about-this-game sections* could be found. For producers of the texts, it not only offers a framework for creating *about-this-game sections* but also represents a source of ideas for variation. In addition, the results of this thesis could also be applied in an ESP context. The itemized move and purpose analysis helps to identify

different promotional strategies, an integral part of advertising texts, which are sometimes a required text form in certain types of schools. These promotional strategies could also help students to make stronger claims for their arguments. As for potential customers, this study improves their awareness of implicit advertising strategies, which helps them to reflect before making an impulse purchase. Furthermore, the multimodal analysis serves as a guideline through the navigational aspects of the webpage and helps the reader to easily locate information. Hence, this thesis contributes to the ever-growing linguistic research, especially in the field of (online) genre analysis and multimodality.

7. Conclusion

The *about-this-game* section on the gaming platform *Steam* constitutes an important part of the advertising context of video games. Even though video games in general gained popularity over the last two decades and blurbs have been extensively researched, the studies in the field of genre analysis mainly focus on book blurbs, whereas video game blurbs remain an understudied field. Due to the technological progress, an analysis of the *about-this-game* section, the digital counterpart of the blurb, seemed to be more important. Thus, this thesis contributes to compensate for the lack of research on the *about-this-game* sections, and to some extent also blurbs, of video games.

Following a mixed framework approach by Swales (1990), Bhatia (2002), and Bateman (2008), a corpus of 149 *about-this-game* sections taken from *Steam* was analyzed with regards to the purpose, move structure, and lexico-grammatical composition of the data. The approach consisted of a linguistic analysis with the help of *SketchEngine*, an online tool for analyzing various lexical aspects of a corpus, a manual move and steps analysis of 40 sample texts, which were categorized according to Hüttner's (2010) framework, as well as a multimodal analysis of the introductory page of video games and the *about-this-game* section.

The findings indicate a typical move structure consisting of the six moves *presenting the game*, *emphasizing progress*, *praising the game*, *indicating degree of self-involvement*, *specifying technical details*, and *specifying game mode*. The rhetorical strategies used to realize each move considerably vary in number and are mainly utilized for persuasion and promotion. Nevertheless, the *about-this-game* section also includes informative aspects and thus, features the three purposes persuasion, promotion, and information. As for the linguistic

realization on the word level, the analysis revealed the use of video game-specific semantic fields such as *gaming* and *gameplay*. Whereas the former focuses on general words known to the broader public, the latter includes more technical vocabulary pertaining to the field of gaming. Moreover, evaluation, which emphasizes the promotional purpose, forms a substantial part of the *about-this-game section* and is implemented through positively connotated adjectives, and emotive language conveyed through verbs. Another integral aspect is the utilization of the personal pronoun *you*, which not only indicates personal involvement of the player but also establishes a trusting relationship between the producer of the text and the recipient. Simultaneously, it signalizes an informal character of the *about-this-game section* and highlights the community aspect, which builds one of the main motivations, according to Quantic Foundry's (2016) gamer motivation model. Hence, this informality also contributes to the purpose of persuasion.

Furthermore, the community aspect as well as the persuading aspect also becomes apparent in the multimodal analysis. The majority of the *about-this-game sections* analyzed contain a visualizing component, such as pictures, GIFs, or short clips. These multimodal parts either serve as an attention-grabbing strategy or complementation of the text to strengthen the claims and arouse the reader's interest. As for the community aspect, the introductory page of the video games includes tools for communication to improve the community-internal bond. In addition, the review section of the webpage reflects the value of different opinions within the gaming community and further establishes a sense of strong social cohesion.

Nevertheless, this study also has its limitations, which focus on the reference corpus, the data and the categorization of it, and existing research. In general, the use of a different reference corpus might lead to different results for the lexico-grammatical analysis. This also holds true for a different data categorization, as a different data set might focus on other moves and game genres, which influences the occurrence of certain words. In addition, existing research concentrates on book blurbs, and thus, the findings mismatch to a certain degree. Still, this thesis makes an important contribution to the research on online genres and promotional texts by confirming Caballero's (2008: 21) assumption to the effect that online genres differ from their offline counterparts.

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9. Appendix

9.1 Wordlists SketchEngine

Table 9: Frequency-based word list of main corpus by SketchEngine (excluding special characters)

NO.	WORD	FREQUENCY	NO.	WORD	FREQUENCY
1	the	4,488	46	build	192
2	and	4,234	47	each	190
3	to	2,734	48	through	188
4	of	2,520	49	take	176
5	a	2,068	50	every	172
6	our	1,624	51	one	170
7	you	1,498	52	system	166
8	in	1,448	53	gameplay	164
9	with	1,286	54	out	162
10	for	676	55	make	160
11	or	672	56	fight	158
12	is	664	57	friends	154
13	as	642	58	multiplayer	148
14	new	634	59	choose	148
15	on	612	60	use	146
16	from	574	61	them	144
17	game	528	62	mode	144
18	world	514	63	they	140
19	that	504	64	battle	138
20	an	422	65	content	136
21	can	388	66	not	134
22	by	376	67	where	134
23	be	352	68	any	134
24	it	352	69	most	134
25	are	348	70	but	132
26	more	340	71	its	132
27	will	336	72	discover	132
28	play	306	73	way	132
29	players	302	74	story	130
30	all	288	75	there	130
31	up	270	76	time	128

32	own	258	77	team	124
33	experience	258	78	enemies	122
34	their	248	79	has	120
35	explore	240	80	create	120
36	unique	246	81	find	120
37	features	222	82	who	120
38	combat	222	83	action	118
39	weapons	220	84	items	118
40	other	214	85	modes	118
41	into	208	86	life	116
42	at	198	87	powerful	114
43	this	198	88	skills	112
44	over	194	89	across	112
45	have	194	90	online	110

Table 10: Keyword list with reference corpus English Web 2021 (excluding abbreviations)

NO.	WORD	NO.	WORD	NO.	WORD
1	multiplayer	21	trucks	41	replayability
2	playstyle	22	counter-strike	42	lara
3	open-world	23	stardew	43	dota
4	beamng	24	metroidvania	44	titanfall
5	astroneer	25	ori	45	team-based
6	procedurally	26	warframe	46	wraecclast
7	vrchat	27	loadout	47	splitgate
8	first-person	28	third-person	48	teem
9	arma	29	single-player	49	aeternum
10	free-to-play	30	hazelight	50	vermintide
11	gameplay	31	factorio	51	scavenge
12	co-op	32	roguelite	52	subnautica
13	sandbox	33	parkour	53	tobii
14	in-game	34	horde	54	weaponry
15	bloons	35	close-quarter	55	immersive
16	kerbal	36	zed	56	unlockable
17	modding	37	all-new	57	impostor
18	destructible	38	ark	58	customization
19	warhammer	39	battlefield	59	cross-play
20	villedor	40	turn-based	60	sandstorm

Table 11: Selected collocation list by frequency (excluding abbreviations)

COLLOCATIONS	FREQUENCY PER MILLION
critically modified by acclaimed	128.20
be pronominal objects of yours	348.10
much adverbs modified by more	219.80
as adverbs modified by well	293.10
do modifiers of not	622.90
other nouns modified by player	586.30
key nouns modified by feature	274.80
game nouns modified by mode	531.30
customize objects of character	128.20
be pronominal subjects of you	1,007.60
want pronominal subjects of you	366.40
skill pronominal possessor of your	531.30
way pronominal possessor of your	494.70
friend pronominal possessor of your	476.30
character pronominal possessor of your	439.70
explore pronominal subjects of you	201.50
find pronominal subjects of you	201.50
choose pronominal subjects of you	201.50
need pronominal subjects of you	201.50
play pronominal subjects of you	201.50
team pronominal possessor of your	201.50
journey pronominal possessor of your	183.20
creation pronominal possessor of your	164.90
city pronominal possessor of your	146.60
destiny pronominal possessor of your	146.60
life pronominal possessor of your	146.60

Table 12: Selected multi-word units list by frequency (excluding abbreviations)

MULTI-WORD UNITS	FREQUENCY IN CORPUS
one of the	32
as well as	32
a variety of	30
with other players	26
in the world	26
world of trucks	26
be able to	24
and much more	22
with their own	22
of the most	22
grand theft auto	22
with up to	22
in the game	20
choice is yours	20
call of duty	20
you and your	20
of the world	18
for you to	18
with your friends	18
around the world	18
you want to	18
the world of	18
choices you make	16
to choose from	16
up to you	16
or with friends	16
with its own	16
a multitude of	16
the ability to	16
customize your character	14

Table 13: Selected keyword lists of the three sub-corpora (irrelevant terms omitted)

KEYWORDS		
ELECTRONIC ARTS	VALVE	XBOX GAME STUDIOS
hazelight	dota	ori
titanfall	counter-strike	halo
jedi	most-played	ultrawide
lightsaber	team-based	wisp
warpaint	half-life	metroidvania
close-quarter	cooperatively	gamers
genre-bending	contraption	ever-evolving
padawan	alien-infested	free-to-play
loadout	game-mode	multiplayer
action-adventure	game-like	videogamer
battlefield	skill-based	gamestar
third-person	highly-rated	community-created
titan	shape-shifting	action-platformer
inquisitor	unenviable	finely-crafted
first-person	two-player	narrative-driven
gleefully	two-person	side-quest
dodging	crowbar	community-focused
deep-tactical	gameplay	service-based
system-striking	airlock	critically-acclaimed
hero-turned-fugitive	single-player	fan-favorite

Table 14: Selected multiword lists of the three sub-corpora (irrelevant terms omitted)

MULTI-WORD UNITS		
ELECTRONIC ARTS	VALVE	XBOX GAME STUDIOS
deluxe edition	most-played game	open world
ultimate edition	online action game	game mode
virtual in-game item	test chamber	horizon adventure
disruptive gameplay	team fortress	master chief collection
range of screen setups	game mode	ever-evolving open world
pilot ability	massive sequel	open world landscape
gameplay challenge	constant free updates	emotional masterpiece
third-person action-adventure	kitten dance party	ultrawide support
gameplay content	new proprietary engine technology	dynamic season
all-out warfare	new range of interesting challenges	age of empires
squad play	game-of-the-year award	new civilization
hero shooter	fresh puzzle element	multiplayer map
force ability	own dedicated story	strategy game
character ability	array of human emotion	acclaimed original story
in-game purchase	murderous computer	hundred of other optional goals
legendary character	award-winning formula	gameplay toolset
in-game item	highly-rated free game	hardware minimum
single-player campaign	advanced facial animation	awe-inspiring weather
first-person shooter	never-before-seen area	iconic map editor
key feature	alien-infested earth	fan-favorite infection game mode

9.2 Data texts

The following texts serve as representative examples of the *about-this-game* section on the gaming platform *Steam*. The reason for choosing them is that they are considered the top twenty most reviewed games on *Steam*, which can be inferred from Table 2. All the texts are available on steam.com and were copied. Alterations only concern the structure of the texts in order to adjust them to the guidelines of this thesis, not the texts themselves.

1 COUNTER-STRIKE: GLOBAL OFFENSIVE

Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS: GO) expands upon the team-based action gameplay that it pioneered when it was launched 19 years ago.

CS: GO features new maps, characters, weapons, and game modes, and delivers updated versions of the classic CS content (de_dust2, etc.).

"Counter-Strike took the gaming industry by surprise when the unlikely MOD became the most played online PC action game in the world almost immediately after its release in August 1999," said Doug Lombardi at Valve. "For the past 12 years, it has continued to be one of the most-played games in the world, headline competitive gaming tournaments and selling over 25 million units worldwide across the franchise. CS: GO promises to expand on CS' award-winning gameplay and deliver it to gamers on the PC as well as the next gen consoles and the Mac."

2 PUBG: BATTLEGROUNDS

LAND, LOOT, SURVIVE!

Play PUBG: BATTLEGROUNDS for free.

Land on strategic locations, loot weapons and supplies, and survive to become the last team standing across various, diverse Battlegrounds.

Squad up and join the Battlegrounds for the original Battle Royale experience that only PUBG: BATTLEGROUNDS can offer.

This content download will also provide access to the BATTLEGROUNDS Test Server, which requires a separate download to play.

Optional in-game purchases available.

3 DOTA 2

The most-played game on Steam.

Every day, millions of players worldwide enter battle as one of over a hundred Dota heroes. And no matter if it's their 10th hour of play or 1,000th, there's always something new to discover. With regular updates that ensure a constant evolution of gameplay, features, and heroes, Dota 2 has truly taken on a life of its own.

One Battlefield. Infinite Possibilities.

When it comes to diversity of heroes, abilities, and powerful items, Dota boasts an endless array—no two games are the same. Any hero can fill multiple roles, and there's an abundance of items to help meet the needs of each game. Dota doesn't provide limitations on how to play, it empowers you to express your own style.

All heroes are free.

Competitive balance is Dota's crown jewel, and to ensure everyone is playing on an even field, the core content of the game—like the vast pool of heroes—is available to all players. Fans can collect cosmetics for heroes and fun add-ons for the world they inhabit, but everything you need to play is already included before you join your first match.

Bring your friends and party up.

Dota is deep, and constantly evolving, but it's never too late to join. Learn the ropes playing co-op vs. bots. Sharpen your skills in the hero demo mode. Jump into the behavior- and skill-based matchmaking system that ensures you'll be matched with the right players each game.

4 GRAND THEFT AUTO V

When a young street hustler, a retired bank robber and a terrifying psychopath find themselves entangled with some of the most frightening and deranged elements of the criminal underworld, the U.S. government and the entertainment industry, they must pull off a series of dangerous heists to survive in a ruthless city in which they can trust nobody, least of all each other.

Grand Theft Auto V for PC offers players the option to explore the award-winning world of Los Santos and Blaine County in resolutions of up to 4k and beyond, as well as the chance to experience the game running at 60 frames per second.

The game offers players a huge range of PC-specific customization options, including over 25 separate configurable settings for texture quality, shaders, tessellation, anti-aliasing and more, as well as support and extensive customization for mouse and keyboard controls. Additional options include a population density slider to control car and pedestrian traffic, as well as dual and triple monitor support, 3D compatibility, and plug-and-play controller support.

Grand Theft Auto V for PC also includes Grand Theft Auto Online, with support for 30 players and two spectators. Grand Theft Auto Online for PC will include all existing gameplay upgrades and Rockstar-created content released since the launch of Grand Theft Auto Online, including Heists and Adversary modes.

The PC version of Grand Theft Auto V and Grand Theft Auto Online features First Person Mode, giving players the chance to explore the incredibly detailed world of Los Santos and Blaine County in an entirely new way.

Grand Theft Auto V for PC also brings the debut of the Rockstar Editor, a powerful suite of creative tools to quickly and easily capture, edit and share game footage from within Grand Theft Auto V and Grand Theft Auto Online. The Rockstar Editor's Director Mode allows players the ability to stage their own scenes using prominent story characters, pedestrians, and even animals to bring their vision to life. Along with advanced camera manipulation and editing effects including fast and slow motion, and an array of camera filters, players can add their own music using songs from GTAV radio stations, or dynamically control the intensity of the game's score. Completed videos can be uploaded directly from the Rockstar Editor to YouTube and the Rockstar Games Social Club for easy sharing.

Soundtrack artists The Alchemist and Oh No return as hosts of the new radio station, The Lab FM. The station features new and exclusive music from the production duo based on and inspired by the game's original soundtrack. Collaborating guest artists include Earl Sweatshirt, Freddie Gibbs, Little Dragon, Killer Mike, Sam Herring from Future Islands, and more. Players can also discover Los Santos and Blaine County while enjoying their own music through Self Radio, a new radio station that will host player-created custom soundtracks.

Special access content requires Rockstar Games Social Club account. Visit <http://rockstargames.com/v/bonuscontent> for details.

5 TERRARIA

Dig, Fight, Explore, Build: The very world is at your fingertips as you fight for survival, fortune, and glory. Will you delve deep into cavernous expanses in search of treasure and raw materials with which to craft ever-evolving gear, machinery, and aesthetics? Perhaps you will choose instead to seek out ever-greater foes to test your mettle in combat? Maybe you will decide to construct your own city to house the host of mysterious allies you may encounter along your travels?

In the World of Terraria, the choice is yours!

Blending elements of classic action games with the freedom of sandbox-style creativity, Terraria is a unique gaming experience where both the journey and the destination are completely in the player's control. The Terraria adventure is truly as unique as the players themselves!

Are you up for the monumental task of exploring, creating, and defending a world of your own?

Key features:

- Sandbox Play
- Randomly generated worlds
- Free Content Updates

6 TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX SIEGE

"One of the best first-person shooters ever made. 10\10" – GameSpot

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six® Siege is an elite, realistic, tactical team-based shooter where superior planning and execution triumph. It features 5v5 attack vs. defense gameplay and intense close-quarters combat in destructible environments.

Engage in a brand-new style of assault using an unrivaled level of destruction and gadgetry. On defense, coordinate with your team to transform your environments into strongholds. Trap, fortify and create defensive systems to prevent being breached by the enemy. On attack, lead your team through narrow corridors, barricaded doorways and reinforced walls. Combine tactical maps, observation drones, rappelling and more to plan, attack and defuse every situation.

Choose from dozens of highly trained, Special Forces operators from around the world. Deploy the latest technology to track enemy movement. Shatter walls to open new lines of fire. Breach ceilings and floors to create new access points. Employ every weapon and gadget from your deadly arsenal to locate, manipulate and destroy your enemies and the environment around them.

Experience new strategies and tactics as Rainbow Six Siege evolves over time. Change the rules of Siege with every update that includes new operators, weapons, gadgets and maps. Evolve alongside the ever-changing landscape with your friends and become the most experienced and dangerous operators out there.

Compete against others from around the world in ranked match play. Grab your best squad and join the competitive community in weekly tournaments or watch the best professional teams battle it out in the Rainbow Six Siege Pro League.

7 GARRY'S MOD

Garry's Mod is a physics sandbox. There aren't any predefined aims or goals. We give you the tools and leave you to play.

You spawn objects and weld them together to create your own contraptions - whether that's a car, a rocket, a catapult or something that doesn't have a name yet - that's up to you. You can do it offline, or join the thousands of players who play online each day.

If you're not too great at construction - don't worry! You can place a variety of characters in silly positions. But if you want to do more, we have the means.

Beyond the Sandbox

The Garry's Mod community is a tremendous source of content and has added hundreds of unique modes to the game. In Trouble In Terrorist Town, you can be a detective solving an online murder as criminals attempt to cover up their homicides. Be a ball, a plant, a chair, or anything else in Prop Hunt's elaborate, shape-shifting game of Hide & Seek. Elevator: Source is gaming's first elevator thrill ride, delivering players to airlocks and kitten dance parties.

We have one of the most vibrant Steam Community Workshops, with over 300'000 models, maps, and contraptions to download. It has everything from new tools to improve your builds, to guns that fire rainbow-tinged nuclear blasts from space. Take as much or as little as you need: it's all free.

Please note: Some multiplayer servers and game-modes might require you to own other games - such as Counter-Strike: Source and Team Fortress 2.

8 TEAM FORTRESS

"The most fun you can have online" - PC Gamer

Is now FREE!

There's no catch! Play as much as you want, as long as you like!

The most highly-rated free game of all time!

One of the most popular online action games of all time, Team Fortress 2 delivers constant free updates—new game modes, maps, equipment and, most importantly, hats. Nine distinct classes provide a broad range of tactical abilities and personalities, and lend themselves to a variety of player skills.

New to TF? Don't sweat it!

No matter what your style and experience, we've got a character for you. Detailed training and offline practice modes will help you hone your skills before jumping into one of TF2's many game modes, including Capture the Flag, Control Point, Payload, Arena, King of the Hill and more.

Make a character your own!

There are hundreds of weapons, hats and more to collect, craft, buy and trade. Tweak your favorite class to suit your gameplay style and personal taste. You don't need to pay to win—virtually all of the items in the Mann Co. Store can also be found in-game.

9 RUST

The only aim in Rust is to survive. Everything wants you to die - the island's wildlife and other inhabitants, the environment, other survivors. Do whatever it takes to last another night.

Rust is in its 9th year and has now had over 350 content updates, with a guaranteed content patch every month. From regular balance fixes and improvements to AI and graphics updates to adding content like new maps, musical instruments, trains and drones, as well as regular seasons and events, there's always something interesting or dangerous (or both) happening on the island. Updates to the game include:

- Procedurally generated worlds with map editor support
- Host your own servers and with server-side modding support
- Vehicles: horses, modular cars, hot air balloons, helicopters, trains and more
- Complex electrical systems
- Farming
- New enemies, wildlife and factions
- New monuments and areas to explore
- Gestures and contact system
- Musical instruments
- Large train network
- Huge recent graphics overhaul
- ..and more

EXPLORE

You wake naked on a mysterious island armed only with a rock and a torch. You'll need to brave natural dangers (from heat and cold to thirst and starvation), build a shelter, eat (or be eaten), scavenge materials. Explore the island, its abandoned settlements, mysterious monuments and the factions that occupy them. But, above all, watch out for other survivors...

BUILD

Design and build bases to defend your territory or control the resources of the island. Research the tech tree, grow farms, command electricity, commandeered vehicles from horses to cars to boats to helicopters. Whatever it takes to get ahead.

SURVIVE

There are no rules in Rust but the ones you make for yourself. Craft tools, armor and weapons to defend yourself. Cooperate with friends and allies and build a town together. Explore the island and what's happening in it. Trade with other players. Or prey on them, raiding their bases and taking their hard-won goods.

For parental controls, please see Steam Family View:

<https://help.steampowered.com/en/faqs/view/6B1A-66BE-E911-3D98>

10 LEFT FOR DEAD 2

Set in the zombie apocalypse, Left 4 Dead 2 (L4D2) is the highly anticipated sequel to the award-winning Left 4 Dead, the #1 co-op game of 2008.

This co-operative action horror FPS takes you and your friends through the cities, swamps and cemeteries of the Deep South, from Savannah to New Orleans across five expansive campaigns.

You'll play as one of four new survivors armed with a wide and devastating array of classic and upgraded weapons. In addition to firearms, you'll also get a chance to take out some aggression on infected with a variety of carnage-creating melee weapons, from chainsaws to axes and even the deadly frying pan.

You'll be putting these weapons to the test against (or playing as in Versus) three horrific and formidable new Special Infected. You'll also encounter five new uncommon common infected, including the terrifying Mudmen.

Helping to take L4D's frantic, action-packed gameplay to the next level is AI Director 2.0. This improved Director has the ability to procedurally change the weather you'll fight through and the pathways you'll take, in addition to tailoring the enemy population, effects, and sounds to match your performance. L4D2 promises a satisfying and uniquely challenging experience every time the game is played, custom-fitted to your style of play.

Next generation co-op action gaming from the makers of Half-Life, Portal, Team Fortress and Counter-Strike.

Over 20 new weapons & items headlined by over 10 melee weapons – axe, chainsaw, frying pan, baseball bat – allow you to get up close with the zombies

New survivors. New Story. New dialogue.

Five expansive campaigns for co-operative, Versus and Survival game modes.

An all new multiplayer mode.

Uncommon common infected. Each of the five new campaigns contains at least one new uncommon common zombies which are exclusive to that campaign.

AI Director 2.0: Advanced technology dubbed The AI Director drove L4D's unique gameplay – customizing enemy population, effects, and music, based upon the players' performance. L4D 2 features The AI Director 2.0 which expands the Director's ability to customize level layout, world objects, weather, and lighting to reflect different times of day.

Stats, rankings, and awards system drives collaborative play.

11 THE WITCHER 3

THE MOST AWARDED GAME OF A GENERATION NOW ENHANCED FOR THE NEXT

You are Geralt of Rivia, mercenary monster slayer. Before you stands a war-torn, monster-infested continent you can explore at will. Your current contract? Tracking down Ciri — the Child of Prophecy, a living weapon that can alter the shape of the world.

Updated to the latest version, The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt comes with new features and items, including a built-in Photo Mode, swords, armor, and alternate outfits inspired by The Witcher Netflix series — and more!

Behold the dark fantasy world of the Continent like never before! This edition of The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt has been enhanced with numerous visual and technical improvements, including vastly improved level of detail, a range of community created and newly developed mods for the game, real-time ray tracing, and more — all implemented with the power of modern PCs in mind.

Trained from early childhood and mutated to gain superhuman skills, strength, and reflexes, witchers are a counterbalance to the monster-infested world in which they live.

Gruesomely destroy foes as a professional monster hunter armed with a range of upgradeable weapons, mutating potions, and combat magic.

Hunt down a wide variety of exotic monsters, from savage beasts prowling mountain passes to cunning supernatural predators lurking in the shadowy back alleys of densely populated cities.

Invest your rewards to upgrade your weaponry and buy custom armor, or spend them on horse races, card games, fist fighting, and other pleasures life brings.

Built for endless adventure, the massive open world of The Witcher sets new standards in terms of size, depth, and complexity.

Traverse a fantastical open world: explore forgotten ruins, caves, and shipwrecks, trade with merchants and dwarven smiths in cities, and hunt across the open plains, mountains, and seas.

Deal with treasonous generals, devious witches, and corrupt royalty to provide dark and dangerous services.

Make choices that go beyond good & evil, and face their far-reaching consequences.

Take on the most important contract of your life: to track down the child of prophecy, the key to saving or destroying this world.

In times of war, chase down the child of prophecy, a living weapon foretold by ancient elven legends.

Struggle against ferocious rulers, spirits of the wilds, and even a threat from beyond the veil — all hell-bent on controlling this world.

Define your destiny in a world that may not be worth saving.

12 ELDEN RING

THE NEW FANTASY ACTION RPG.

Rise, Tarnished, and be guided by grace to brandish the power of the Elden Ring and become an Elden Lord in the Lands Between.

A Vast World Full of Excitement

A vast world where open fields with a variety of situations and huge dungeons with complex and three-dimensional designs are seamlessly connected. As you explore, the joy of discovering unknown and overwhelming threats await you, leading to a high sense of accomplishment.

Create your Own Character

In addition to customizing the appearance of your character, you can freely combine the weapons, armor, and magic that you equip. You can develop your character according to your play style, such as increasing your muscle strength to become a strong warrior, or mastering magic.

An Epic Drama Born from a Myth

A multilayered story told in fragments. An epic drama in which the various thoughts of the characters intersect in the Lands Between.

Unique Online Play that Loosely Connects You to Others

In addition to multiplayer, where you can directly connect with other players and travel together, the game supports a unique asynchronous online element that allows you to feel the presence of others.

13 APEX LEGENDS

Conquer with character in Apex Legends, a free-to-play* Hero shooter where legendary characters with powerful abilities team up to battle for fame & fortune on the fringes of the Frontier.

Master an ever-growing roster of diverse Legends, deep-tactical squad play, and bold, new innovations that go beyond the Battle Royale experience — all within a rugged world where anything goes. Welcome to the next evolution of Hero Shooter.

KEY FEATURES

A roster of legendary characters

Master a growing roster of powerful Legends, each with their own unique personality, strengths, and abilities that are easy to pick up, but challenging to truly master.

Build your crew

Choose your Legend and combine their unique skills together with other players to form the ultimate crew.

Strategic squad play

Whether you're battling on a massive floating city in Battle Royale or dueling in limited time modes, you'll need to think fast. Master your Legend's unique abilities and coordinate with your teammates to discover new tactics and powerful combinations.

Innovative combat

Master an expanding assortment of powerful weapons and equipment. You'll need to move fast and learn the rhythms of each weapon to get the most of your arsenal. Plus change it up in [sic!] with a boatload of new content each season.

Ever-expanding universe

Apex Legends takes place in an immersive universe where the story continues to evolve, maps change, and new Legends keep joining the fight. Make your mark on the Apex Games with a multitude of distinctive outfits and join the adventure!

Wide range of screen setups

Never miss a moment of the battle with support for a range of screen setups, including 4:3, 5:4, 16:9, 16:10 and 21:9 aspect ratio.

Adaptive resolution FPS target

Rack up kills with a clear field of vision, even at distances with a smooth and stabilized framerate, producing amazing images taking advantage of your system's capabilities.

Deep control customization

Customize your experience with gamepad supporting multiple configs and sensitivity options. With fully remappable key bindings to match your playstyle.

This game includes optional in-game purchases of virtual currency that can be used to acquire virtual in-game items, including a random selection of virtual in-game items.

Note that any unused Apex Coins will expire 180 days after the first date in which they are acquired or purchased. The oldest Apex Coins that are subject to expiration in your balance will always be used first when using them to make in-game purchases.

Apex Packs purchase is not available in Belgium.

14 DEAD BY DAYLIGHT

Death Is Not an Escape.

Dead by Daylight is a multiplayer (4vs1) horror game where one player takes on the role of the savage Killer, and the other four players play as Survivors, trying to escape the Killer and avoid being caught, tortured and killed.

Survivors play in third-person and have the advantage of better situational awareness. The Killer plays in first-person and is more focused on their prey.

The Survivors' goal in each encounter is to escape the Killing Ground without getting caught by the Killer - something that sounds easier than it is, especially when the environment changes every time you play.

More information about the game is available at <http://www.deadbydaylight.com>

Key Features

- **Survive Together... Or Not** - Survivors can either cooperate with the others or be selfish. Your chance of survival will vary depending on whether you work together as a team or if you go at it alone. Will you be able to outwit the Killer and escape their Killing Ground?
- **Where Am I?** - Each level is procedurally generated, so you'll never know what to expect. Random spawn points mean you will never feel safe as the world and its danger change every time you play.
- **A Feast for Killers** - Dead by Daylight draws from all corners of the horror world. As a Killer you can play as anything from a powerful Slasher to terrifying paranormal entities. Familiarize yourself with your Killing Grounds and master each Killer's unique power to be able to hunt, catch and sacrifice your victims.
- **Deeper and Deeper** - Each Killer and Survivor has their own deep progression system and plenty of unlockables that can be customized to fit your own personal strategy. Experience, skills and understanding of the environment are key to being able to hunt or outwit the Killer.
- **Real People, Real Fear** - The procedural levels and real human reactions to pure horror makes each game session an unexpected scenario. You will never be able to tell how it's going to turn out. Ambience, music, and chilling environments combine into a terrifying experience. With enough time, you might even discover what's hiding in the fog.

WARNING: PHOTSENSITIVITY/EPILEPSY SEIZURES - READ THIS NOTICE BEFORE PLAYING

A very small percentage of people may experience epileptic seizures or blackouts when exposed to certain kinds of flashing lights or light patterns. These persons, or even people who have no history of seizures or epilepsy, may experience epileptic symptoms or seizures while playing video games. If you or any of your relatives has an epileptic condition or has had seizures of any kind, consult your physician before playing any video game.

IMMEDIATELY DISCONTINUE use and consult a physician if you or your child experience any of the following symptoms: dizziness, altered vision, eye or muscle twitching, involuntary movements, loss of awareness, disorientation, or convulsions. Parents should watch for or ask their children about the above symptoms. You may reduce risk of photosensitive epileptic seizures by taking the following precautions: sit farther from the screen, use a smaller screen, play in a well-lit room, do not play when you are drowsy or fatigued.

15 AMONG US

Play with 4-15 player online or via local WiFi as you attempt to prepare your spaceship for departure, but beware as one or more random players among the Crew are Impostors bent on killing everyone!

Originally created as a party game, we recommend playing with friends at a LAN party or online using voice chat. Enjoy cross-platform play between Android, iOS, PC, and console.

The crew

- Win by completing tasks to prepare the ship or ejecting all Impostors.
- React quickly to undo the Impostor's sabotages.
- Check the Admin map and Security cameras to keep tabs on other Crewmates.
- Report any dead bodies immediately to start a discussion of who the suspected Impostor is.
- Call emergency meetings to discuss suspicious behavior.
- Vote to eject suspected Impostors.

The imposter

- Kill Crewmates and frame bystanders.
- Pretend to run tasks to blend in with the crewmates.
- Sneak through the vents to quickly move about the ship.
- Use sabotages to cause chaos and divide the crew.
- Close doors to trap victims and kill in private.

Features

- Customization: Pick your color, hat, visor, skin, and pet.
- Lots of game options: Add more Impostors, more tasks, different roles, and so much more!
- Different modes to choose from: Classic or Hide n Seek.
- 4 different maps to play in: The Skeld, MIRA HQ, Polus, and the Airship.
- Quickly find a game online from the host list.
- In-game text chat.
- Rich Discord integration.
- Cross-platform play between PC, console, Android, and iOS!

16 EURO TRUCK SIMULATOR 2

Travel across Europe as king of the road, a trucker who delivers important cargo across impressive distances! With dozens of cities to explore from the UK, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and many more, your endurance, skill and speed will all be pushed to their limits. If you've got what it takes to be part of an elite trucking force, get behind the wheel and prove it!

Key Features:

- Transport a vast variety of cargo across more than 60 European cities.
- Run your own business which continues to grow even as you complete your freight deliveries.
- Build your own fleet of trucks, buy garages, hire drivers, manage your company for maximum profits.
- A varied amount of truck tuning that range from performance to cosmetic changes.
- Customize your vehicles with optional lights, bars, horns, beacons, smoke exhausts, and more.
- Thousands of miles of real road networks with hundreds of famous landmarks and structures.

World of Trucks

- Take advantage of additional features of Euro Truck Simulator 2 by joining our online community on World of Trucks, our center for virtual truckers all around the world interested in Euro Truck Simulator 2 and future SCS Software's truck simulators.
- Use in-game Photo Mode to capture the best moments and share them with thousands of people who love trucks.
- Favorite the images you like the most and return to them anytime in the future.
- Discuss the screenshots with everyone using World of Trucks.
- See the best images hand-picked by the game creators in Editor's Pick updated almost every day. Try to get your own screenshot on this list!
- Upload and use your custom avatar and license plate in the game.
- More features coming soon!

To join World of Trucks, simply sign up with your Steam account on the join page.

World of Trucks is an optional service, registration on World of Trucks isn't required to play the game.

17 ARK: SURVIVAL EVOLVED

As a man or woman stranded naked, freezing and starving on the shores of a mysterious island called ARK, you must hunt, harvest resources, craft items, grow crops, research technologies, and build shelters to withstand the elements. Use your cunning and resources to kill or tame & breed the leviathan dinosaurs and other primeval creatures roaming the land, and team up with or prey on hundreds of other players to survive, dominate... and escape!

Tame, train, breed & ride dinosaurs, in a living ecosystem

Dinosaurs, Creatures, & Breeding! -- over 100+ creatures can be tamed using a challenging capture-&affinity process, involving weakening a feral creature to knock it unconscious, and then nursing it back to health with appropriate food. Once tamed, you can issue commands to your tames, which it may follow depending on how well you've tamed and trained it. Tames, which can continue to level-up and consume food, can also carry Inventory and Equipment such as Armor, carry prey back to your settlement depending on their strength, and larger tames can be ridden and directly controlled! Fly a Pterodactyl over the snow-capped mountains, lift allies over enemy walls, race through the jungle with a pack of Raptors, tromp through an enemy base along a gigantic brontosaurus, or chase down prey on the back of a raging T-Rex! Take part in a dynamic ecosystem life-cycle with its own predator & prey hierarchies, where you are just one creature among many species struggling for dominance and survival. Tames can also be mated with the opposite gender, to selectively breed successive generations using a trait system based on recombinant genetic inheritance. This process includes both egg-based incubation and mammalian gestation lifecycles! Or put more simply, raise babies!

Food, water, temperature and weather

You must eat and drink to survive, with different kinds of plants & meat having different nutritional properties, including human meat. Ensuring a supply of fresh water to your home and inventory is a pressing concern. All physical actions come at a cost of food and water, long-distance travel is fraught with subsistence peril! Inventory weight makes you move slower, and the day/night cycle along with randomized weather patterns add another layer of challenge by altering the temperature of the environment, causing you to hunger or thirst more quickly. Build a fire or shelter, and craft a large variety of customizable clothing & armors, to help protect yourself against locational damage & extreme temperatures using the dynamic indoor/outdoor insulation calculation system!

Harvest, build structures, paint items

By chopping down forests full of trees and mining metal and other precious resources, you can craft the parts to build massive multi-leveled structures composed of complex snap-linked parts, including ramps, beams, pillars, windows, doors, gates, remote gates, trapdoors, water pipes, faucets, generators, wires and all manner of electrical devices, and ladders among many other types. Structures have a load system to fall apart if enough support has been destroyed, so reinforcing your buildings is important. All structures and items can be painted to customize the look of your home, as well as placing dynamically per-pixel paintable signs, textual billboards, and other decorative objects. Shelter reduces the extremes of weather and provides security for yourself and your stash! Weapons, clothing & armor gear can also be painted to express your own visual style.

Plant, farm and grow

Pick seeds from the wild vegetation around you, plant them in plots that you lay down, water them and nurture them with fertilizer (everything poops after consuming calories, which can then be composted, and some fertilizer is better than others). Tend to your crops and they will grow to produce delicious and rare fruits, which can also be used to cook a plethora of logical recipes and make useful tonics! Explore to find the rarest of plant seeds that have the most powerful properties! Vegetarians & vegans can flourish, and it will be possible to master and conquer the ARK in a non-violent manner!

Summon the ultimate life forms

By bringing sufficient rare sacrificial items to special Summon locations, you can capture the attention of the one of the ARK's god-like mythical creatures, who will arrive for battle. These gargantuan monstrosities provide an end-game goal for the most experienced groups of players and their armies of tames, and will yield extremely valuable progression items if they are defeated.

Tribe system

Create a Tribe and add your friends to it, and all your tames can be commanded by and allied to anyone in your Tribe. Your Tribe will also be able to respawn at any of your home spawn points. Promote members to Tribe Admins to reduce the burden of management. Distribute key items and pass-codes to provide access your shared village!

RPG Statistics

All items are crafted from Blueprints that have variable statistics and qualities, and require corresponding resources. More remote and harsh locales across the ARK tend to have better resources, including the tallest mountains, darkest caves, and depths of the ocean! Level-Up your player character by gaining experience through performance actions, Level-Up your tames, and learn new "Engrams" to be able to craft Items from memory without the use of blueprints, even if you die! Customize the underlying physical look of your character with hair, eye, and skin tones, along with an array of body proportion modifiers. As you explore the vast ARK, you'll find clues left by other Survivors who have made the ARK their home in ages past, in the form of collectible detailed 3D "Explorer Notes". By uncovering all of these, you can begin to piece together the true nature of the ARK, and discover its purpose!

Hardcore mechanics

Everything you craft has durability and will wear-out from extended use if not repaired, and when you leave the game, your character remains sleeping in the persistent world. Your inventory physically exists in boxes or on your character in the world. Everything can be looted & stolen, so to achieve security you must build-up, team-up, or have tames to guard your stash. Death is permanent, and you can even knock out, capture, and force-feed other players to use them for your own purposes, such as extracting their blood to for transfusions, harvesting their fecal matter to use as fertilizer, or using them as food for your carnivorous tames!

Explore and discover

The mysterious ARK is a formidable and imposing environment, composed of many natural and unnatural structures, above-ground, below-ground, and underwater. By fully exploring its secrets, you'll find the most exotic procedurally randomized creatures and rare blueprints. Also to be found are Explorer Notes that are dynamically updated into the game,

written by previous human denizens of the ARK from across the millennia, creatively detailing the creatures and backstory of the ARK and its creatures. Fully develop your in-game ARK-map through exploration, write custom points of interest onto it, and craft a Compass or GPS coordinates to aid exploring with other players, whom you can communicate with via proximity text & voice chat, or long-distance radio. Construct & draw in-game signs for other players to help them or lead them astray... And yet.. how do you ultimately challenge the Creators and Conquer the ARK? A definitive end-game is planned.

Large-world persistence and meta-universe

On the 100+ player servers, your character, everything you built, and your tames, stay in-game even when you leave. You can even physically travel your character and items between the network of ARK's by accessing the Obelisks and uploading (or downloading) your data from the Steam Economy! A galaxy of ARKs, each slightly different than the previous, to leave your mark on and conquer, one at a time -- special official ARKs will be unveiled on the World-map for limited times in singular themed events with corresponding limited-run items! Furthermore, you can now design or randomize your own unique 'Procedurally Generated ARKs', for infinite replayability and endless surprises.

Robust steam workshop mod support

You can play single-player local games, and bring your character and items between unofficial player-hosted servers, back and forth from singleplayer to multiplayer. Mod the game, with full Steam Workshop support and customized Unreal Engine 4 editor. See how we built our ARK using our maps and assets as an example. Host your own server and configure your ARK precisely to your liking. We want to see what you create!

High-end next-gen visuals

The over-the-top hyper real imagery of the ARK its creatures is brought to expressive life using a highly-customized Unreal Engine 4, with fully dynamic lighting & global illumination, weather systems (rain, fog, snow, etc) & true-to-life volumetric cloud simulation, and the latest in advanced DirectX11 and DirectX12 rendering techniques. Music by award-winning composer of "Ori and the Blind Forest", Gareth Coker!

18 PAYDAY 2

PAYDAY 2 is an action-packed, four-player co-op shooter that once again lets gamers don the masks of the original PAYDAY crew - Dallas, Hoxton, Wolf and Chains - as they descend on Washington DC for an epic crime spree.

The CRIMENET network offers a huge range of dynamic contracts, and players are free to choose anything from small-time convenience store hits or kidnappings, to big league cyber-crime or emptying out major bank vaults for that epic PAYDAY. While in DC, why not participate in the local community, and run a few political errands?

Up to four friends co-operate on the hits, and as the crew progresses the jobs become bigger, better and more rewarding. Along with earning more money and becoming a legendary criminal comes a character customization and crafting system that lets crews build and customize their own guns and gear.

Key Features

Rob Banks, Get Paid – Players must choose their crew carefully, because when the job goes down they will need the right mix of skills on their side.

CRIMENET – The dynamic contract database lets gamers pick and choose from available jobs by connecting with local contacts such as Vlad the Ukrainian, shady politician "The Elephant", and South American drug trafficker Hector, all with their own agenda and best interests in mind.

PAYDAY Gunplay and Mechanics on a New Level – Firing weapons and zip tying civilians never felt so good.

Dynamic Scenarios – No heist ever plays out the same way twice. Every single scenario has random geometry or even rare events.

Choose Your Skills – As players progress they can invest in any of five special Skill Trees: Mastermind, Enforcer, Ghost, Technician and Fugitive. Each features a deep customization tree of associated skills and equipment to master, and they can be mixed and matched to create the ultimate heister.

More Masks than Ever – PAYDAY 2 features a completely new mask system, giving players the ability to craft their own unique mask with a pattern and color of their choice, resulting in millions of different combinations.

Weapons and Modifications – A brand new arsenal for the serious heister, covering everything from sniper and assault rifles to compact PDWs and SMGs. Once you've settled for a favorite, you can modify it with optics, suppressors, fore grips, reticles, barrels, frames, stocks and more, all of which will affect the performance of your weapon. There are also purely aesthetic enhancements - why not go for the drug lord look with polished walnut grips for your nine?

Play It Your Way – Each job allows for multiple approaches, such as slow and stealthy ambushes or running in guns blazing. Hit the target any way you want, each approach will provide a different experience.

A Long History of Additional Content – More than 70 updates since release, including new heists, characters, weapons and other gameplay features like driving cars and forklifts.

19 CYBERPUNK 2077

Cyberpunk 2077 is an open-world, action-adventure RPG set in the megalopolis of Night City, where you play as a cyberpunk mercenary wrapped up in a do-or-die fight for survival. Improved and featuring all-new free additional content, customize your character and playstyle as you take on jobs, build a reputation, and unlock upgrades. The relationships you forge and the choices you make will shape the story and the world around you. Legends are made here. What will yours be?

CREATE YOUR OWN CYBERPUNK

Become an urban outlaw equipped with cybernetic enhancements and build your legend on the streets of Night City.

EXPLORE THE CITY OF THE FUTURE

Night City is packed to the brim with things to do, places to see, and people to meet. And it's up to you where to go, when to go, and how to get there.

BUILD YOUR LEGEND

Go on daring adventures and build relationships with unforgettable characters whose fates are shaped by the choices you make.

EQUIPPED WITH IMPROVEMENTS

Experience Cyberpunk 2077 with a host of changes and improvements to gameplay and economy, the city, map usage, and more.

INCLUDES FREE ADDITIONAL CONTENT

Get your hands on a haul of free items including new guns and melee weapons, as well as extra customization options and more.

GO TO CYBERPUNK.NET

20 STARDEW VALLEY

Stardew Valley is an open-ended country-life RPG!

You've inherited your grandfather's old farm plot in Stardew Valley. Armed with hand-me-down tools and a few coins, you set out to begin your new life. Can you learn to live off the land and turn these overgrown fields into a thriving home? It won't be easy. Ever since Joja Corporation came to town, the old ways of life have all but disappeared. The community center, once the town's most vibrant hub of activity, now lies in shambles. But the valley seems full of opportunity. With a little dedication, you might just be the one to restore Stardew Valley to greatness!

Features

Turn your overgrown field into a lively farm! Raise animals, grow crops, start an orchard, craft useful machines, and more! You'll have plenty of space to create the farm of your dreams.

4 Player Farming! Invite 1-3 players to join you in the valley online! Players can work together to build a thriving farm, share resources, and improve the local community. As more hands are better than one, players have the option to scale profit margin on produce sold for a more challenging experience.

Improve your skills over time. As you make your way from a struggling greenhorn to a master farmer, you'll level up in 5 different areas: farming, mining, combat, fishing, and foraging. As you progress, you'll learn new cooking and crafting recipes, unlock new areas to explore, and customize your skills by choosing from a variety of professions.

Become part of the local community. With over 30 unique characters living in Stardew Valley, you won't have a problem finding new friends! Each person has their own daily schedule, birthday, unique mini-cutsscenes, and new things to say throughout the week and year. As you make friends with them, they will open up to you, ask you for help with their personal troubles, or tell you their secrets! Take part in seasonal festivals such as the luau, haunted maze, and feast of the winter star.

Explore a vast, mysterious cave. As you travel deeper underground, you'll encounter new and dangerous monsters, powerful weapons, new environments, valuable gemstones, raw materials for crafting and upgrading tools, and mysteries to be uncovered.

Breathe new life into the valley. Since JojaMart opened, the old way of life in Stardew Valley has changed. Much of the town's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair. Help restore Stardew Valley to its former glory by repairing the old community center, or take the alternate route and join forces with Joja Corporation.

Court and marry a partner to share your life on the farm with. There are 12 available bachelors and bachelorettes to woo, each with unique character progression cutsscenes. Once married, your partner will live on the farm with you. Who knows, maybe you'll have kids and start a family?

Spend a relaxing afternoon at one of the local fishing spots. The waters are teeming with seasonal varieties of delicious fish. Craft bait, bobbers, and crab pots to help you in your journey toward catching every fish and becoming a local legend!

Donate artifacts and minerals to the local museum.

Cook delicious meals and craft useful items to help you out. With over 100 cooking and crafting recipes, you'll have a wide variety of items to create. Some dishes you cook will even give you temporary boosts to skills, running speed, or combat prowess. Craft useful objects like scarecrows, oil makers, furnaces, or even the rare and expensive crystalarium.

Customize the appearance of your character and house. With hundreds of decorative items to choose from, you'll have no trouble creating the home of your dreams!

Xbox controller support (with rumble)! (Keyboard still required for text input)

Over two hours of original music.

10. Abstract (German)

Obwohl technische Fortschritte und der Zugang zu Computern zu einer steigenden Popularität von Videospielen und Onlineplattformen wie *Steam* führten, auf denen diese Spiele vermarktet werden, gibt es zu wenig linguistische Forschung in diesem Gebiet. Ein wichtiges Genre dieses online Werbekontextes ist der Teilbereich *Über dieses Spiel* (*about-this-game section*).

Diese Masterarbeit untersucht daher den Bereich *Über dieses Spiel* mittels einer Genreanalyse. Dazu wird die Struktur von 40 ausgewählten *Über dieses Spiel*-Texten und die Lexis sowie Grammatik basierend auf einem Korpus von 149 Beispieltextrn ermittelt. Zudem wird der multimodale Aspekt der Daten berücksichtigt. Während die Struktur- und Multimodalanalyse händisch durchgeführt werden, wird für die Untersuchung der lexikalisch-grammatikalischen Merkmale die Software *SketchEngine*, ein korpusanalytisches Computerprogramm, herangezogen.

Die Ergebnisse weisen darauf hin, dass ein prototypischer *Über dieses Spiel*-Text aus einer sechsstufigen Struktur besteht und einen dreifachen Zweck erfüllt: er versucht zu überzeugen, zu promoten, und zu informieren. Dabei wird der Fokus auf die Bewertung sowie Beschreibung des zu vermarktenden Spiels gelegt. Ersteres wird durch den Gebrauch von positiv konnotierten Adjektiven und gefühlsgeladenen aktiven Verben erzielt. Zudem besitzt die Mehrheit der *Über dieses Spiel*-Texte visualisierende Aspekte, welche zum überzeugenden Tonfall des Textes beitragen.

Diese Masterarbeit trägt zur Forschung im Bereich von Online-Genre und Multimodalität bei und stellt ein informatives Rahmenkonzept für Autoren von Werbetexten bereit. Zudem könnte sie sich auch in einem ESP-Kontext als nützlich erweisen, da sie Werbestrategien aufzeigt, welche Schüler*innen dabei helfen könnten, ihre Argumente zu verbessern.