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ENGLISH VOCABULARY ENRICHMENT THROUGH TABLE GAMES  
*Bachelor's thesis*

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## PREFACE

Nowadays, most children of the modern society play games. Those could be computer games, table games, outdoor games and other games. Currently, taking table games into account, specific game types can be distinguished, such as, role playing games, card games, dice games and quests. In the framework of the present research these types mean no difference, while what it is primarily concerned with is examining the possibility to actually learn new words while playing such games.

Table games are one of the modern hobbies for people of various ages. Such games, as stated earlier, vary by type and playing style. Some of them can be played in one night while others require months. But almost all of table games are united by the fact that a player needs to think, communicate, cooperate and roll the dice to win or to simply play.

This paper is primarily focused on finding the way to develop one's language proficiency through playing table games only. The main goals are to find the best and the most vocabulary-rich games through which the language vocabulary could be improved; and the way new words can be learned without actually leaving the gaming process.

The present paper will also contrast playing games and rote learning to find out whether learning new words by playing is more effective than word drilling.

The paper consists of the introduction, falls into three core chapters which are also divided into smaller sub-chapters, and ends with a conclusion.

The introduction provides an overview of modern table games, gaming community and some gaming specific belongings, like books with lore and characters.

Each of the first two core chapters explains in detail a particular table game, and describes specific researches and tests that have been done before and after playing specific games. The tests will reflect the results of learning-through-gaming.

The third core chapter compares the results of learning-through-gaming of two different groups of people, who have participated in the research described in the first and second chapter, and later compares their results with these of the people who only learned specific vocabulary by heart.

The conclusion sums up the results of the researches and comment on the hypothesis.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

RPG – Role playing game

D&D – Dungeons & Dragons

DM – Dungeon master

PC – Player Character

NPC – Non-player character

EXP/XP - Experience

MTG – Magic: The Gathering

## INTRODUCTION

“Trick them into thinking they aren’t learning and they do,” says Roland Pryzbylewski in the series “The Wire”, where he got a very challenging group of kids to learn math, using Monopoly.

Learning language is a very difficult process and requires not only a good motivation of a student, but also a lot of teaching skills and tactics from a teacher. Teacher has to be innovative, friendly and willing to use different methods in order to achieve his/her professional goals of educating people (J. Harmer 1998: 1)

The present research is aimed at examining the use of table games for teaching and learning foreign language vocabulary and discussing whether or not it is possible to enlarge one’s foreign language vocabulary by means of reading the core “rules-and-characteristics” books and using their terminology while playing. As for the games, the ones used for the purposes of the present research would be the “Dungeons and Dragons v3.5” (D&D) and “Magic: The Gathering” (MTG). These are two different role playing games (RPG) united by particular important features. One of them is the original language. Both games are originally English, were first published in the USA and are still not completely translated to other languages. That is the reason why even now most people play these games in their original language, looking up for specific translations in vocabularies. This usually results in learning at least one new word every time a game is organized. Also, most of the time players do not use the translated version of a specific expression but use its original name. For instance, they say “stun” in English every time they hit an enemy to the head. According to B. J. Thomas (1990), in order to learn a word, the word must become a part of learner’s life. And to do so, students should be using the word in conversations, compositions or letters. In her graduation thesis, I. Rodchenkova (1999: 7) suggested, that “knowing a word” is the ability to recognize it in its spoken or written form. Reading words and then using them orally are some of the ways students may enrich their vocabulary.

The games used in the research differ from each other in terms of playing style. D&D is a book-based RPG that requires you to play as a character in an imaginary world, using abilities and skills by rolling specific dice. This game needs a Game Master; several books with rules, characters, races, abilities, skills, classes, monsters, locations and other things; a desk with a grid; figures; dice; character lists and pencils. A group of people can play using 3 books only: Game Master’s book, Player’s handbook and Monster’s book.

As for the MTG, players face each other in a battle of card decks that they have previously gathered. Cards are bought from stores or other people. Players are not allowed to print cards themselves to play as they could be unofficial. Decks consist of 60+ cards that can vary by type: creatures, instant spells, sorceries, plainswalkers, lands, artifacts, enchantments. Every card has its abilities, stats and attributes that are described on a card itself. The game is not arcading but strategic. Games cannot be won by means of cheating or luck. There is no “strongest” deck as every deck can be countered by specific cards, which can be also countered by other cards.

To determine the possibility to study language through playing those games, there will be taken two different groups of people of almost same age, sex and language skills. Both groups will start playing a different game for at least a month, and every two weeks they will be tested for their English vocabulary knowledge to reflect any progress.

The test will check whether they are succeeding in learning new words and which words are the most difficult to learn. At the same time, there will be a third group of people that will not know about the research. These are the people who learn English only at school or with the help of an individual trainer. These people will learn words given by the researcher once, and later they will be also tested whether they remember the words or not.

The comparison of the results of all the groups will help to determine if gaming is a possible way of learning, why or why not it is so, and in which cases it could be used in schools or other education facilities.

All the words that will be tested will be prepared before the research. The words will be taken out of different sources: rule books, card texts, etc. All the words will be divided by parts of speech in a minimum of three different tests. The words will not repeat.

There will be some specific rules for each group. None of them will know that they are being tested for, since it would be unfair to other groups. If any participant starts learning words by heart before the testing day, the results will be considered false. The main goal is to find out whether people learn while playing, and learning before tests would make the whole research meaningless.

Another rule will hold that no information be provided about the tests. There will be no dates, so research participants cannot discuss the content of the upcoming tests. Also, the people who don't play the games but simply learn English vocabulary by heart with the help of a personal trainer will learn the words only once. They will not repeat them if their current studying topic doesn't require it. The last rule is made, because the participants of

gaming experiments will not learn the words, they will just be using them, even with help of the researcher or any paper source.

Table games require a lot of communication, knowledge and skills. In order to play specific games, players need to read several books or instructions first; otherwise they will not understand the basic rules. According to this, it is possible to practice reading in English even before the game actually starts. From that moment on, communication is the next key step on the way of success. If a person cannot communicate and/or use the core language of the game (here: English), that person will hardly succeed. So in order to play specific games, it is necessary to actually study, and learn both rules and language. According to P. Litvinov (2011: 3), learning new words comes in parallel with the development of sentence constructing skills and speech listening and understanding skills. It means that having English language of instruction would only benefit those trying to learn new words by playing. Vocabulary is very important in such situations, because it is common among players to call various things by their original name (ex. stun, grapple, trip, skill). This leads to the important hypothesis: people can actually learn a lot of new words just by playing games (especially table games), and the increase of their word knowledge will be higher in comparison with those, who drill the words.

The aim of this paper is to find out whether it is possible and/or effective to use specific table games to enrich one's vocabulary.

## **CHAPTER I. DUNGEONS&DRAGONS**

### **1.1 “Dungeons and Dragons” history**

According to the official website Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) originated back in 1974 as a set of rules. It was created by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson as they tried to “personalize the massive battle of their fantasy war games with the exploits of individual heroes” (What is D&D? 2014). After a while, this set of rules became a game with own settings, rules, characters, worlds and many other things. Such a new type of a game rapidly became popular among youth.

The core of this game is storytelling. A group of people create a story together, guided by the Dungeon Master (DM), to complete a quest or a series of quests created by the Dungeon Master. A game of D&D could be a story of love, war; hatred or mercy. This game has no limitations, and players’ imagination is the main mechanism of the creation of plot. Today, a lot of novels are written by a variety of fantasy writers, so the exploration of the game corners never ends.

In D&D, each player controls a specific character he/she has created. Everything depends only on a player him- or herself. Once the characters are created, they embrace the adventures within a fantasy setting, created by the Dungeon Master. “A Dungeon Master serves as the game's referee and storyteller, while also maintaining the setting in which the adventures occur and playing the role of the inhabitants. The characters form a party that interacts with the setting's inhabitants (and each other).” (Weiner et al 2003: 4) Together they solve dilemmas, engage in battles and gather treasure and knowledge. In the process the characters earn experience points to become increasingly powerful over a series of sessions.

Until 2006, D&D was the most popular role playing game. According to 1999 survey presented in the article of State of the Industry, “2/3 of people who played RPG played D&D; also products branded Dungeons & Dragons made up over fifty percent of the RPG products sold in 2005” (Hite 2005).

### **1.2 Game overview**

Dungeons & Dragons is a structured RPG with an open end. It is usually played indoors with an average of four participants seated around a tabletop. Each player controls a single character, which represents an individual in a fictional setting.

While playing as a group, these player characters (PCs) are often described as a 'party' of adventurers, with each member having his or her own areas of specialty that plays a significant role in the success of the whole team. During the game, each player directs the actions of his or her character and its interactions with the other characters in the game (Weiner et al 2003: 5).

A game of D&D often lasts for weeks of meetings in order to complete the "main" quest or task, created by the Dungeon Master. In such meetings, or sessions, players make their way to the top through fighting different hostile creatures or "monsters". D&D has a complex set of rules by means of which almost every action can be done in the extent of a game. Those rules cover such things as social interactions, combat, magic use, survival, simple actions that could require specific conditions in order to be done (e.g. jumping wearing a heavy full metal armor). The DM takes different things into consideration while allowing a person to use specific skill, lowering or increasing the difficulty of success. The DM can also set his or her own rules, which are called "homerules" that can shape the main rules. There are three main books which have all the main rules necessary to play: The Player's Handbook, the Dungeon Master's Guide and the Monster Manual.

The core items necessary to play are the rulebooks, a character sheet for each player and a set of special dice. There is also a lot of merchandise, like action figures, maps, plastic walls to imitate dungeons and so forth.

In order to start a game, each player must create a character using the Player's Handbook and his Character Sheet to write everything down. Each player decides who he or she wants to play as, picks necessary skills, stats (there are 6 of them: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma), decides on the main parameters of the character (name, age, race, sex, alignment, hair and eye color, body shape and so on) and equips him according to the amount of money he or she gets at the start. As the game proceeds, every player should describe his or her actions in-game. Such actions could be separated according to their relevance and difficulty. For instance: fighting someone, bluffing, stealing, riding a horse etc demand the player to roll a dice, adding his "skill" parameter. Simple actions such as picking up a flower do not demand to be rolled by dice and can be done with no extra efforts. The difficulty of an action is decided by the DM, taking into the account a variety of things, like the number of people near, magic, equipment, health state and other things that are logically applied.

As the game goes on, each PC changes over time and generally increases in capability. Characters gain (or sometimes lose) experience, skills and wealth, and may even alter their alignment or add additional character classes. The key way characters progress is by earning experience points (XP/EXP), which happens when they defeat an enemy or accomplish a difficult task. A typical Dungeons & Dragons game consists of an adventure, which is roughly equivalent to a single story. The DM can either design an adventure on his or her own, or follow one of the many additional pre-made adventures (previously known as "modules") that have been published throughout the history of Dungeons & Dragons (Weiner et al 2003: 43).

### 1.3 Work overview

In order to find out whether playing D&D can provide a rich vocabulary enrichment environment, it is necessary to do a step-by-step vocabulary analysis. For this purpose, the experiment will last for a month, and it will be divided into three steps. A group of five people, four of which will be the participants and one will be the DM, will be playing an overall of eight sessions, two sessions per week. The first step will be the first two weeks. At the beginning of those weeks, all participants will be asked to pass a short vocabulary test, which will consist of 25 words. Those words will be taken from either player's handbook or character sheet. Those words will be divided into three groups:

1. basic (words taken from introduction, descriptions) 20%
2. common (words taken from character sheet) 40%
3. individual (words taken from spell books and class features) 40%

Participants will have a single task to translate the words given in English into their native language (Russian). This test will examine how well the participants already know English in terms of vocabulary. After the test, the gaming process will start. All the "common" and "individual" words will be said by the DM in English. DM will be translating everything on demand. The gaming process itself will be in Russian. Later on, after 4 sessions, the second step will take its place. It will begin with another test. This test will consist of words taken from the same group, as the words from the previous test. There will also be 25 words, but this time, students will have to translate words from Russian into English. The testing itself will be in writing, using any MS Word supportive device. Using a laptop or a tablet, students will need to fill in the necessary translations and immediately send their answers to the instructor. This test is aimed at finding out whether the students have improved their knowledge of words. During the next four sessions, the language of the gaming process will be English. Translations will be provided on demand. Players will not be prohibited to use Russian, but all the characters controlled by the DM (NPCs) will speak only in English. As all eight sessions pass by, the third and concluding step will take its place. The last step will be another test, now consisting of all 50 words that were given in the tests previously. The language in which those words were previously given will be swapped. This means, that the participants will translate the first group of 25 words from Russian into English, and the second group of 25 words from English into Russian. This will reflect whether students have or have not achieved the main goal of this experiment – to broaden one's vocabulary.

### 1.4 Testing process

As stated earlier, the testing will consist of three different steps, providing 3 somewhat similar vocabulary tests. The words for these tests are the following:

1. basic (*character, adventure, rule, to represent, to create, ability, description, personality, language, to depend on*)
2. common (*strength, dexterity, constitution, intelligence, wisdom, charisma, health, experience, alignment, intimidate, will, equipment, bluff, knowledge, speed, defense, to gather, sleight, forgery, silently*)
3. individual (*to wander, rage, lawful, illiteracy, deity, to track, unarmed, movement, evasion, to smite, to detect, endurance, to sneak, to manipulate, perception, to reveal, to give up, to animate, to bless, deafness*)

There will be no time limit; however, participants are awaited to finish each test in less than 30 minutes. Participants will not know what words will be prepared for them. Participants will also not know anything about steps, number of sessions and so forth. For them, it will be a simple gaming experiment oriented towards vocabulary enrichment.

Every following test is considered to be more difficult than the previous one. All the participants have earlier stated that translating from native to foreign language is easier for them than vice-versa.

### 1.5 Step One

This step starts with the test, which will indicate how broad participants' English vocabulary is.

<b>Test #1</b>	
<b>Translate from English into Russian</b>	
Character Adventure Rule To represent To create	
Strength Dexterity Constitution Health Experience Alignment Intimidate Will Equipment Bluff	
To wander Rage	

Lawful Illiteracy Deity To track Unarmed Movement Evasion To smite	
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Participants are not allowed to use dictionaries or any help. After finishing with this test, the gaming phase begins. During this phase, 4 meetings will be arranged. Each meeting will last for ~5 hours, during which participants will be playing. During the first 4 sessions, or two weeks, the language of instruction (which the DM speaks) will be Russian. However, most of the terminology will be used in original language. This is a common practice for any non-experimental gaming environment, when players use the game's original language instead of their native language to name different things.

### 1.6 Step Two

This step starts immediately as the first four sessions pass. This step also starts with a test, which will indicate the current state of players' knowledge of gaming vocabulary.

<b>Test #2</b>	
<b>Translate from Russian into English</b>	
Способность Описание Личность Язык Зависеть от	
Интеллект Мудрость Харизма Знания Скорость Защита Собирать, добывать Ловкость, фокусничество Подделка Бесшумно	
Обнаруживать Выносливость, стойкость Красться Управлять, манипулировать Восприятие Раскрывать Сдаваться Оживлять, анимировать Благословлять, освящать Глухота	

The participants are not allowed to use dictionaries or any help. After finishing with this test, the gaming phase continues. During the phase, another four meetings will be

arranged. Each meeting will last for ~5 hours, during which the participants will be playing. During these four sessions, or two weeks, the language of instruction will be English.

### 1.7 Step Three

This is the final step and thus will consist of only a test. This test will unite the previous two, changing the language used vice-versa. This test will indicate whether the players have achieved the main goal of the experiment and whether it was, or was not successful.

<b>Test #3</b>	
<b>Translate from English into Russian and from Russian into English</b>	
Персонаж Приключение Правило Представлять, изображать Создавать Ability Description Personality Language To depend	
Сила Ловкость Телосложение Здоровье Опыт Мировоззрение Устрашать Воля Снаряжение Блеф Intelligence Wisdom Charisma Knowledge Speed Defense To gather Sleight Forgery Silently	

Бродить Ярость Законопослушный Неумение читать Божество Отслеживать Безоружный Движение Уклонение Карать To detect Endurance To sneak To manipulate Perception To reveal To give up To animate To bless Deafness	
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The participants are not allowed to use dictionaries or any help. After finishing with this test, the gaming phase finishes. From now on, all the data that were gathered during the steps will be compared and analyzed. This will determine whether the aims have been achieved or not.

### 1.8 Comparison and analysis of results

After gathering all the necessary information, everything was organized in one place and calculated.

According to the information received, participants did actually improve their knowledge of specific words and terminology. Here are the results for all three tests:

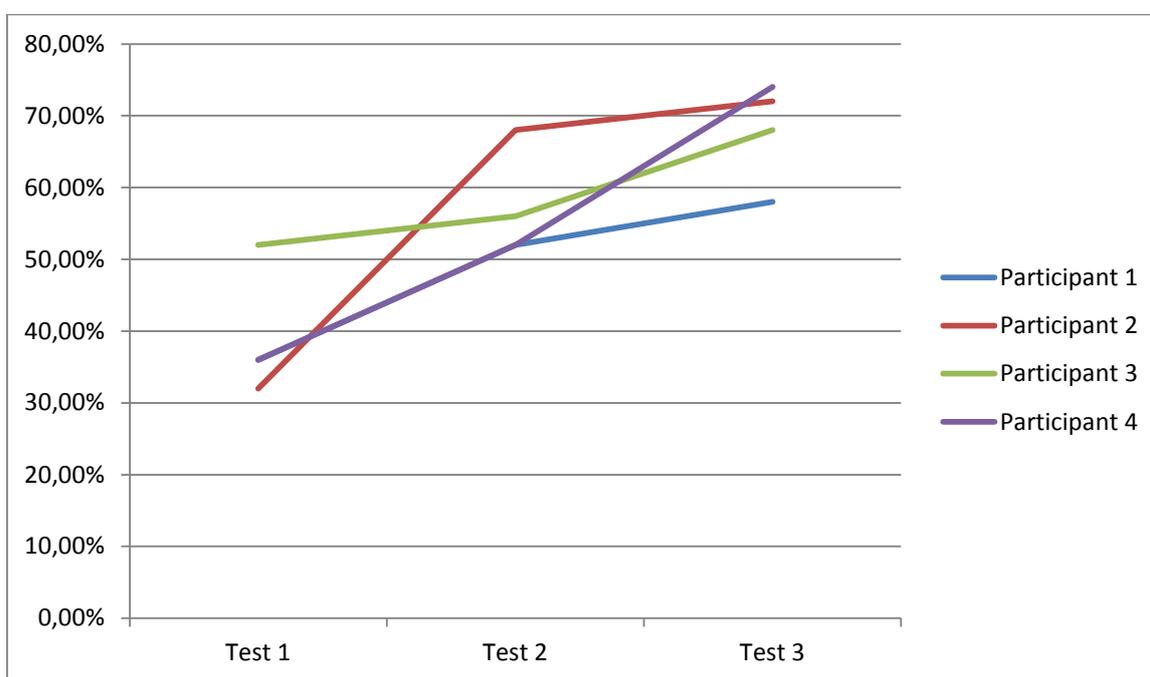
1. Out of 25 words, participants knew 9 words on average. That was good information for the experiment because it would be easier later to find out whether the experiment was or was not successful.
2. Out of 25 words, participants knew 14 words on average. This information gives no transparency on the success of the experiment. Taking the first two experiments into account, an average of 23 words from the list of 50 is known to the participants.
3. Out of 50 words, participants succeeded in translation of 34 words on average. This information shows how much the knowledge of English words has increased.

Even though the participants increased their language proficiency, this chapter and the experiment described in it may be considered a failure. Learning only 11 new words in

a progression of a month is a weak result and cannot be distinguished even nearly as successful. However, there is a positive side as well – after the last two weeks of oral English practice, participants’ pronunciation got better and participants lost their fear of speaking English. But even with a positive side, the main aim of the experiment was not achieved.

The diagram below shows the individual success of every participant in per cent. The dispersion is very large and shows two things:

1. for the majority of the participants, the experiment was unsuccessful (participants 1, 2, 3)
2. for some people, such way of learning may be positive (participant 4)



**Diagram 1.** The results of D&D experimental tests for every participant

In order to understand this diagram, one must look at the difference between the second and the third test. The difference between the first and the second test is irrelevant, as it does not provide any information for comparison.

## CHAPTER II. MAGIC: THE GATHERING

### 2.1 “Magic: The gathering” history

Magic: The Gathering (MTG; also known as Magic) is the first trading card game, created by Richard Garfield and introduced in 1993 by Wizards of the Coast (who also publish D&D). MTG has an always-growing community with approximately 12 million players as of 2011. MTG can be played by two or more players with decks of printed or virtual cards. Each game represents a battle between ‘wizards’ who employ spells, items, and creatures depicted on individual MTG cards to defeat their opponents. MTG has a little similarity with paper-and-pencil adventure games such as D&D. MTG requires more skills than a simple card game. Language, logic and strategy skills are necessary to win, because luck is a less important element in a battle of two well-built decks. Also MTG cards can be valuable due to their rarity and utility in gameplay.

A 2004 article in *USA Today*, called “Magic the Gathering casts its spell” (Slavin 2004) suggested that playing Magic might help improve the social and mental skills of some of the players. The article interviewed players’ parents, who believe that the game, similar to sports, teaches children how to win and lose more gracefully. Magic also contains a great amount of strategy and vocabulary that children may not be exposed to on a regular basis. Parents also claimed that playing Magic helped keep their children out of trouble, such as using illegal drugs or joining criminal gangs.

MTG also has an enormous variety of social awards that can easily be found on the Internet. In fact, at one point, Wizards of the Coast stopped advertising MTG because they could not handle the sales with existing demand.

### 2.2 Game overview

As for the rules, MTG rules are extremely detailed and sometimes very complex. Each player uses his or her own deck to play the game. In most formats, a deck must have a minimum of 60 cards; there is no maximum deck size. With the exception of basic lands, only four cards with the same name can be in a deck. Certain formats have exceptions or additional limitations to the above rules. In tournaments, players may be allowed the use of a fifteen card sideboard. Sideboard cards can be swapped for cards in the main deck in between games against the same opponent.

At the beginning of a game, each player shuffles his or her deck. Players then decide who will start, using any mutually agreeable method (flipping a coin, for example).

Each player then draws seven cards from his or her library to form his or her starting hand. In turn order, each player may then decide to mulligan; that player shuffles his or her hand and library together and draws a new hand of one less card. A player can do this all the way down to a zero-card hand if he or she wishes. In multiplayer games, players can mulligan for free one time, drawing seven cards a second time. Any further mulligans draw one card fewer each time, as normal.

All the rules necessary to play this game are usually provided with the “Starter’s Pack”, sometimes they are written on cards, and they can also be found on the Internet on a vast variety of different web resources ([Magiccards.info](http://Magiccards.info)).

A player wins the game by eliminating all opponents. Players typically begin the game with 20 lives and lose when any of the following conditions are met:

- That player has 0 or fewer lives
- That player is required to draw a card but has no cards left in his or her library
- That player has 10 or more poison counters (although poison cards are not printed very frequently)
- Specific cards may also dictate (or prevent) other ways of winning or losing the game

At any given time, every card is located in one of the following “zones”:

- Library: A player’s deck. These cards are kept face down and should be randomly ordered (shuffled) to begin the game.
- Hand: A player’s hand of cards that can be played. They are kept hidden from other players. If a player has more than seven cards in hand at the end of his or her turn, any extras must be discarded.
- Battlefield: Most cards need to enter the battlefield to have an effect in the game. Unlike other zones, the battlefield is shared by all players.
- Graveyard: A player’s discard pile. When a card on the battlefield is destroyed, a card is discarded from hand, or after a single-use card is used, it is put in its owner's graveyard. These cards are face up, and can be examined by any player at any time.
- The stack: This is the place for cards that have been cast, but have not yet resolved. While on the stack, they are called “spells.” This zone is also shared by all players.
- Exile: Cards that have been exiled by a certain effect wind up here. Unless a card says otherwise, cards in this zone are face-up. Comparatively few cards and abilities can affect cards in the exile zone.

- **Command:** Used mainly in some variant formats of play, cards that have a special status or abilities within the game are kept here. Cards in the Command Zone can be affected by virtually nothing that affects cards in the other zones.

### 2.3 Types of cards

**Creatures** represent people or beasts that are summoned to the battlefield to attack opposing players and defend their controller from the attacks of enemy creatures. Creatures have two values that represent their strength in combat, printed on the lower right-hand corner of the card. The first number is the creature's power, the amount of damage it deals in combat. The second number is its toughness; if it receives that much damage in a single turn, the creature is destroyed and placed in the graveyard.

**Enchantments** represent persistent magical effects; they are spells that remain on the battlefield and alter some aspect of the game. Some enchantments are attached to other cards on the battlefield (often creatures); these are known as Auras.

**Artifacts** represent magical items, animated constructs, pieces of equipment, or other objects and devices. Like enchantments, artifacts remain on the battlefield until something removes them. Many artifacts are also creatures; artifact creatures may attack and block as other creatures, and are affected by things that affect creatures.

**Planeswalkers** are extremely powerful spellcasters that can be called upon for aid. According to Magic lore, the player is a "planeswalker," a wizard of extraordinary power who can travel ("walk") between different realms or universes ("planes"); as such, planeswalker cards are meant to represent scaled-down versions of other players, with their decks represented by the card's abilities, and originally were designed to move through a roster of effects without player control, as though they had a mind of their own. If two planeswalkers with the same type are on the battlefield, both are put into their owner's graveyards.

**Sorceries** and **instants** both represent one-shot or short-term magical spells. They never enter the battlefield. Instead, they take effect and then are immediately put into their owner's graveyard. Sorceries and instants differ only in when they can be cast. Sorceries may only be cast during the player's own main phase, and only when the stack is empty. Instants, on the other hand, can be cast at any time, including during other players' turns and while another spell or ability is waiting to resolve.

## 2.4 Work overview

In order to find out whether playing MTG can provide a rich vocabulary enrichment environment, it is necessary to again analyze a set of steps, during which participants will be asked to pass specific vocabulary tests. The testing period will last for a month, being divided into two weeks, four sessions each.

The working process during this phase of research will have some connections and similarities with the “D&D” part. The concept of this work, however, is not oriented towards being creative and role-playing a character. The key activity, which will be used during this phase, is describing cards while playing them. Once again, the group will consist of four people of approximately the same age, who have approximately the same level of English.

Working process will have the same plan: three steps, during which participants will have their native language use circumscribed. Every test in this phase will also consist of 25-25-50 words accordingly. The first and the second tests will be in the beginning of the first two steps, while the third test, meaning the third step, will finish this part of researching process, leading us to the comparison and analysis of the achieved results.

The words for the tests will be taken from different materials associated with MTG

1. rules (words taken from rules that can be found on the official MTG web page) 20%
2. common (words taken from cards: abilities or special features) 40%
3. individual (words taken from cards: names and legal text) 40%

The tests themselves will be translation exercises, same as they were in the previous chapter, but consisting of different words. The players are required to build themselves a deck, learn the rules and also translate their decks individually. There are no Dungeon Masters or Game Masters, but there will be a jury, who will be helping players with both rules and translations. The participants’ task will be to describe their cards every time they put them onto the battlefield. During the first four sessions (first step), the players are allowed to explain their cards in Russian. After the first step, during the next four sessions, the only allowed language will be English. Translations or any help will be provided on demand in any case.

## 2.5 Testing process

Again, testing will consist of three steps. This is important for analysis to have different approaches to translation and it will demonstrate the way participants better remember words – in Russian or in English. There will be 50 words in total; 10 taken from the rules; 20 taken from cards' abilities and special features' descriptions and 20 from card names and description in *italics*. The words used in the tests will be the following:

1. rules (*additional, to modify, to involve, to transfer, activity, to compete, power, toughness, library, land*)
2. common (*to sacrifice, to shuffle, to return, colorless, opponent, other, enough, to reveal, as though, to cost, to prevent, to enter, undying, owner, target, equal, opponent, protection, before, to discard*)
3. individual (*to double, dust, to betray, explorer, infinite, mountain, island, swamp, plain, forest, lighting, runner, ancient, to break, hard, to weep, corpse, mortal, cemetery, to discover*)

There will be no time limit; however, participants are awaited to finish each test in less than 30 minutes. The participants will not know what words will be prepared for them. The participants will also not know anything about steps, number of sessions and so forth. For them, it will be a simple gaming experiment oriented towards vocabulary enrichment.

Every following test is considered to be more difficult than the previous one. All the participants have earlier stated that translating from native to foreign language is easier for them than vice-versa.

## 2.6 Step One

This step starts with the test, which will indicate how broad participants' English vocabulary is.

<b>Test #1</b>	
<b>Translate from English into Russian</b>	
Additional To modify To involve To transfer Activity	
To sacrifice To shuffle To return Colorless Opponent Other Enough To reveal As though	

To cost	
To double	
Dust	
To betray	
Explorer	
Infinite	
Mountain	
Island	
Swamp	
Plain	
Forest	

The participants are not allowed to use dictionaries or any help. After finishing with this test, the gaming phase begins. During this phase, four meetings will be arranged. Each meeting will last for an indefinite number of hours, during which the participants will be playing versus each other until everyone gets matched with everyone. During the first four sessions, or two weeks, the language of instruction, which the spectator (the person conducting the research) will be speaking will be Russian. However, most of the terminology will be used in original, English language. This is a common practice for any non-experimental gaming environment, when players use the game's original language instead of their native language to name different things.

## 2.7 Step Two

This step starts immediately as the first four sessions pass. This step also starts with a test, which will indicate the current state of players' knowledge of gaming vocabulary.

<b>Test #2</b>	
<b>Translate from Russian into English</b>	
Соревноваться Сила Стойкость, выносливость Библиотека Земля	
Предотвращать Входить Бессмертный Владелец Цель Равно Противник Защита До Выбрасывать	
Молния Бегун Древний Ломать Жёсткий, сложный	

Плакать Труп Смертный Кладбище Открывать, обнаруживать	
--	--

The participants are not allowed to use dictionaries or any help. After finishing with this test, the gaming phase continues. During the next phase, another four meetings will be arranged during the following two weeks. Each meeting will last for an indefinite number of hours, during which participants will be playing versus each other. During these four sessions, or two weeks, the language of instruction will be English. The players will also be asked to play (explain their moves, actions and cards) in English.

### 2.8 Step Three

This is the final step and thus will consist only of only a test. This test will unite the previous two, changing the language used vice-versa. This test will indicate whether the players have achieved the main goal of the experiment and whether it was, or was not successful.

<b>Test #3</b>	
<b>Translate from English into Russian and from Russian into English</b>	
Дополнительный Изменять Включать, привлекать Переносить Деятельность To compete Power Toughness Library Land	
Жертвовать Перемешивать Возвращать Бесцветный Противник Иной, другой Достаточно Раскрывать Как будто Стоить To prevent To enter Undying Owner Target Equal Opponent Protection Before To discard	

Удваивать Пыль Предавать Исследователь Бесконечный Гора Остров Болото Поле Лес Lighting Runner Ancient To break Hard To weep Corpse Mortal Cemetery To discover	
--	--

The participants are not allowed to use dictionaries or any help. After finishing with this test, the gaming phase finishes. From now on, all the data that were gathered during the steps will be compared and analyzed. This will determine the success of previously set aims.

## 2.9 Comparison and analysis of results

After gathering all the necessary information, everything got organized in one place and calculated.

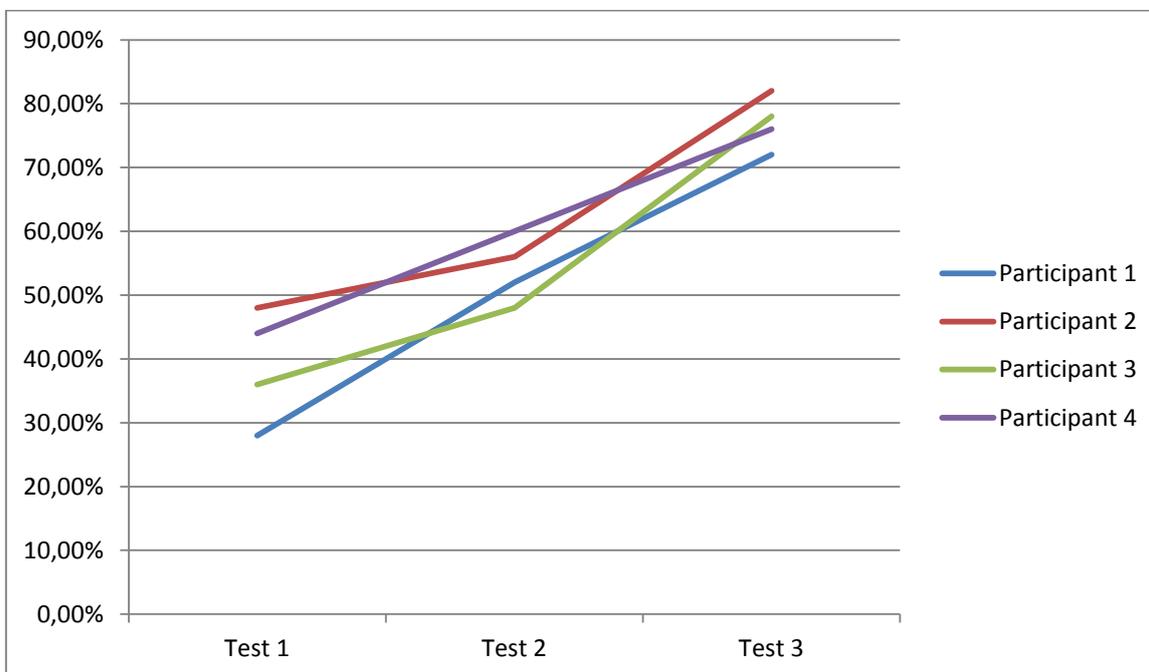
According to the information received, the participants did actually improve their knowledge of specific words and terminology. Here are the results for all three tests:

1. Out of 25 words, the participants knew 9 words on average. That was good information for the experiment because it would be easier later to find out whether the experiment was or was not successful.
2. Out of 25 words, the participants knew 12 words on average. This information gives no transparency on the success of the experiment. Taking the first 2 experiments into account, an average of 21 words from the list of 50 is known for participants.
3. Out of 50 words, the participants succeeded in translation of 38 words on average. This information shows how much their knowledge of English increase.

Even though the participants have increased their language proficiency, this chapter and the experiment connected to it may be considered a failure as well. Learning only 17

new words in a progression of a month is a weak result and can hardly be distinguished as successful. However, there is a positive side as well – after the last two weeks of oral English practice, participants’ pronunciation got better and participants lost their fear of speaking English. But even with a positive side, the main aim of the experiment was not achieved.

The diagram below shows the individual success of every participant in per cent. The dispersion is very large and the following: for the majority of the participants, the experiment was unsuccessful in terms of vocabulary enrichment. The percentage by which the knowledge of English has improved is no match to the percentage of the following experiment.



**Diagram 2.** *The results of MTG experimental tests for every participant*

In order to understand this diagram, one must look on at the difference between the second and the third tests. The difference between the first and the second tests is irrelevant, as it does not provide any information for comparison.

## CHAPTER III. ROTE LEARNING

### 3.1 Work overview

This part of the experiment has nothing to do with gaming, however, is strongly related to the topic of vocabulary enrichment. This chapter is focused on people who are studying English and learning words during their individual classes. There will be a group of students of approximately the same level of English who will be taking individual studying courses of English. During these courses, they will be asked to learn specific words as a part of their studying process. The researcher will be working as a teacher with a group of students who wanted to study individually. No information about the experiment will be provided to students in order to keep the veracity high. The experiment will also consist of three tests, however, students are supposed to think that this is just a typical part of their studies. These three tests will have the same construction (language wise) as the ones from Chapter I and II. At first, students will be provided a list of 25 words in English for translating. After the first test, students will receive the list of 50 words consisting of words from the previous test and extra 25 words. Their task will be to learn the words in two weeks. Two weeks later, students will have the second test of 25 words in Russian. Two weeks after the second test, students will have a spontaneous third test for which they will not be asked to prepare.

This type of a working process is aimed on contrasting the previous type of work. Instead of learning-by-playing, without any strict lists of words, the participants of this part of experiment will have a list of words which they will have to learn by heart. The reason behind not telling the students about the third test is the following. It is important to find out whether students who have previously learned a list of words by heart tend to keep the learned words in mind for a period of time without any strong necessity for their usage. This part of the experiment is focused on being introduced as a typical experience of studying in school (teacher-pupil education process, with a demand to learn words).

### 3.2 Test One

Translate from English into Russian.

<b>Test #1</b>	
<b>Translate from English into Russian</b>	
Character	
Adventure	
Rule	
To represent	

To create	
Strength Dexterity Constitution Health Experience Alignment Intimidate Will Equipment Bluff	
To wander Rage Lawful Illiteracy Deity To track Unarmed Movement Evasion To smite	

This test will be given out during one of the individual classes to every participant. There will be 3 participants in total, each having the same test. Starting with this test, the experimental phase begins. Right after the testing, students will get a 50-word list to learn by heart in two weeks straight. After two weeks, students will be passing the second test.

### 3.3 Test Two

Translate from Russian into English.

<b>Test #2</b> <b>Translate from Russian into English</b>	
Соревноваться Сила Стойкость, выносливость Библиотека Земля	
Предотвращать Входить Бессмертный Владелец Цель Равно Противник Защита До Выбрасывать	
Молния Бегун Древний Ломать Жёсткий, сложный Плакать Труп Смертный	

Кладбище Открывать, обнаруживать	
-------------------------------------	--

This time, as usual, students will need to translate another set of words from Russian into English. Those are another 25 words, compared to the first test, however, they are still in the 50-word list. After this test, students will no longer be required to learn words by heart. However, two weeks later they will be spontaneously asked to pass another, third test.

### 3.4 Test Three

<b>Test #3</b>	
<b>Translate from English into Russian and from Russian into English</b>	
Персонаж Приключение Правило Представлять, изображать Создавать To compete Power Toughness Library Land	
Сила Ловкость Телосложение Здоровье Опыт Мировоззрение Устрашать Воля Снаряжение Блеф To prevent To enter Undying Owner Target Equal Opponent Protection Before To discard	
Бродить Ярость Законопослушный Неумение читать Божество Отслеживать Безоружный Движение Уклонение Карать Lighting Runner	

Ancient To break Hard To weep Corpse Mortal Cemetery To discover	
---	--

This is the last test that will reflect the efficiency of “classical”, i.e. rote learning of words. From now on, participants will continue their studies and will no longer be tested.

### 3.4 Comparison and analysis of results

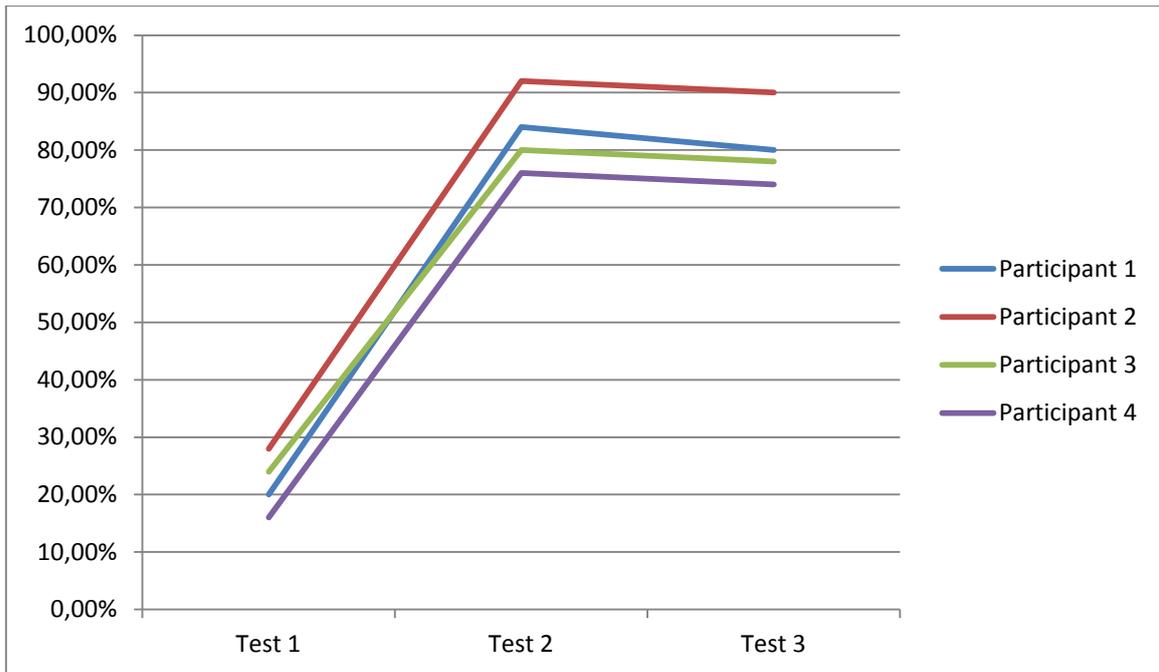
After gathering all the necessary information, everything got organized in one place and calculated.

According to the information received, students did improve their knowledge of specific words and terminology dramatically. Here are the results for all three tests:

1. Out of 25 words, the participants knew 5 words on average. That was good information for the experiment because it would be easier later to find out whether the experiment was or was not successful.
2. Out of 50 words, the participants knew 41 words on average. This test shows how well their knowledge of English has improved. In two weeks, the vocabulary of students increased dramatically – after writing correctly ~5 words out of 25, students increase their proficiency by 4 times.
3. Out of 50 words, the participants succeeded in translation of 39 words on average. This information shows how many words students have forgotten on average after not being asked to use these words for two extra weeks.

As students increased their language proficiency, this chapter and the experiment connected to it may be considered a success. Learning ~35 new words in a progression of a month is an excellent result and can be distinguished as successful. The success of this experiment gives the lead to this part of the research, showing that the idea of basing word learning solely on gaming is a rather unproductive way of enriching one’s language proficiency.

The diagram below shows the individual progress of every participant in per cent. The diagram shows, that rote learning is quite a useful way of learning a big number of words in a short period. The diminishing of the acquired knowledge is small and is around 1-2%.



**Diagram 3.** *The results of rote learning experimental tests for every participant*

## CONCLUSION

This is the end of the research, and this short summary will point out the main aspects of the research.

First of all, the hypothesis of this bachelor's thesis appears to have been too optimistic. As the experiments have shown, students did not learn a lot of new words in a progression of a month. They were motivated participants, they tried their best and they challenged themselves to speak English. This even helped them to polish their pronunciation and lose their fear of speaking English. But as far as the effective vocabulary enrichment is concerned, mere games playing is insufficient.

Second, rote learning resulted to be a rather productive way of learning words. Maybe it is not innovative or revolutionary, but it appears to be quite effective. People tend to dislike memorizing words by rote, but this method of learning is even suggested as good and intellect-healthy. (Justin Snider 2011)

Summing everything up, present research can suggest nothing revolutionary or new to modern education system. The research has tried to prove that playing table games is an effective way of learning words, however, it appeared not to be true. However, taking all the results into account, playing table games may be a successful way of developing one's oral skills, especially if there would be an English native speaker who could participate in the gaming process.

## RESÜMEE

Praeguses kaasaegses ühiskonnas enamik lapsi mängib mängu. Need võivad olla arvutimängud, lauamängud, vabaõhumängud ja muud mängud. Lauamänge arvesse võttes, eristatakse tänapäeval näiteks rolli-, kaardi-, täringu- ja otsingumänge. Käesoleva uurimistöö raames need mängud suurt rolli ei mängi, kuigi rõhk on pandud võimalusele õppida uusi sõnu selliste mängude mängides.

Lauamängud on kaasaegne hobi, mis sobib erinevas eas inimestele. Need mängud, nagu varem oli öeldud on erinevaid tüüpe. Mõni nendest saab mängida ühe ööga läbi, teised aga nõuavad rohkem aega, aga peaaegu kõike lauamänge ühendab asjaolu, et mängijal on vaja mõelda, suhelda, arendada koostööd ja täringuid veeretada selleks, et võita või lihtsalt mängida.

Käesolevas töös proovitakse leida võimalust arendada oma keeleoskust ainult lauamänge mängides. Peamised eesmärgid on leida parimad ja kõige sõnavararikkaimad mängud, mille kaudu saab sõnavara arendada ning kuidas saab uusi sõnu õppida ilma mängu protsessi jätmata.

Samuti see töö võrdleb õppimist läbi mängude ja pähe õppimist, mis aitab teada saada, kumb on tõhusam - kas õppida uusi sõnu mängides või nende tavaline tuupimine.

See töö koosneb sissejuhatuses, ning jaguneb kolmeks üldpeatükideks, millised on järgnevalt jaotatud ka väiksemateks alateemadeks mis lõppevad järeldusega.

Sissejuhatus sisaldab ülevaadet kaasaegsetest lauamängudest, mänguseltsist ja mõnedest mängimisega seotud spetsiifilistest asjadest, nagu raamatud mängu reeglitest ja tegelastest.

Kahes esimeses üldpeatükides üksikasjalikult selgitatakse konkreetset lauamängu, ja kirjeldatakse uuringuid ja katseid tehtud enne ja pärast teatud mängu mängimist. Testid peegeldavad õpi-läbi-mängude tulemusi.

Kolmas üldpeatükk võrdleb tulemusi õpi-läbi-mängude kahe eri inimrühmade kohaselt, kes on osa võtnud esimeses ja teises peatükis kirjeldavast uurimuses, ning hiljem võrreldud oma need inimeste tulemustega, kes õppis konkreetse sõnavara tuupimise varal.

Kokkuvõtte summeerib uuringute tulemusi ja kommenteerib hüpoteesi.

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(title of thesis)

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