

Moby respią się dla leveli – a Corpus-Based Study of English Lexical Influence on the Polish Community of Minecraft Gamers

Polish online gamers remain in continuous contact with English, either while playing games, communicating with other gamers or using social media. Given the relative intensity of language contact, one may expect gaming sociolect to be a rich source of anglicisms of various type. Nevertheless, the influence that English exerts on the sociolect of Polish gamers has attracted little scholarly attention thus far. The present paper aims at investigating anglicisms occurring in the sociolect of Polish Minecraft gamers, basing on the corpus compiled from 21 YouTube gaming videos and 10 Internet forum threads devoted to the game. More specifically, the author seeks to analyze to which extent the loanwords are adapted into Polish in terms of phonology, morphology and spelling as well as to discuss the examples of calques and hybrids that have been attested in the corpus. Additionally, the paper tries to identify the meaning and function of borrowed elements. Overall, the corpus gathers 122 loanwords (simple lexemes, compound nouns and acronyms), 20 calques and 1 hybrid loan. The analysis has shown preliminarily that although a majority of loanwords is integrated into the Polish language in terms of morphology and phonology, nearly all elements retain their original spelling. Moreover, the corpus reveals a group of lexemes whose pronunciation is based on spelling, which indicates the fact that lexemes are transferred to the sociolect of gamers in a twofold way, namely graphic and spoken. As for the use of loanwords, the study exemplifies both anglicisms used exclusively in the Minecraft community as well as those constituting a universal part of the lexical repertoire of all gamers and thus points out the diversity of the gaming sociolect.

Keywords: anglicisms, gaming community, gaming sociolect

Moby respią się dla leveli – eine korpusbasierte Studie zum lexikalischen Einfluss des Englischen auf die polnische Community von Minecraft-Spielern

Es ist eine Tatsache, dass Englisch als lingua franca, zur Hauptkommunikation in der Computerwelt dient. Das ist besonders erkennbar in dem Fall von polnischen Online-Spielern, die in dem ständigen Kontakt mit der englischen Sprache stehen, sowohl beim Spielen, bei der Kommunikation mit anderen Spielern, als auch über soziale Medien. Wenn man die Intensität der sprachlichen Kontakte in Betracht zieht, kann man erwarten, dass ein Soziolekt von Spielen eine reiche Quelle für verschiedene Arten von Anglizismen ist. Trotzdem hat dieses Phänomen keine besondere Aufmerksamkeit der Wissenschaftler auf sich gezogen und deshalb ist es wert genauer zu untersuchen. Die vorliegende Arbeit hat als Ziel, die Anglizismen zu untersuchen, die in einem Soziolekt polnischer Minecraft-Spieler auftreten, auf der Grundlage der Sammlung aus 21 YouTube-Filme und 10 Online-Foren, die dem betreffenden Spiel gewidmet sind. Der Autor versucht, den Grad der Anpassung der Lehnwörter an die polnische Sprache in Bezug auf Phonologie, Morphologie und Rechtschreibung näher zu analysieren und die Beispiele für die in der Sammlung dargestellten Lehnübersetzungen und Hybriden zu besprechen. Darüber hinaus konzentriert sich der Artikel auf die Bedeutung geliehener Elemente und es wird versucht, ihre Rolle im Soziolekt der Minecraft-Spieler-Gemeinschaft festzustellen. Insgesamt sammelt der Korpus 122 Lehnwörter (einfache Lexeme, zusammengesetzte Substantive und Akronyme), 20 Lehnübersetzungen und eine Lehnhybride. Die Analyse legte vorläufig fest, dass obwohl die meisten Lehnwörter morphologisch und phonologisch mit der polnischen Sprache integriert sind, behalten fast alle Elemente die ursprüngliche Rechtschreibung. Der Körper zeigt auch eine Gruppe der Lexeme, deren Aussprache auf der Rechtschreibung basiert, was

beweist, dass Lexeme auf zwei Arten auf den Soziolekt der Spieler übertragen sind: grafisch und gesprochen. Die Forschung hat gezeigt, dass Anglizismen nicht nur in der Minecraft-Community verwendet sind, sondern sind sie auch in der Soziolekt von Spielen akzeptiert. Dies selbst zeigt auflexikalische Vielfalt des Soziolekts von Spielen.

Schlüsselwörter: Anglizismen, Gaming-Community, Gaming-Soziolekt

Author: Katarzyna Faliszewska, Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa, al. Armii Krajowej 36a, 42-200 Częstochowa, Poland, e-mail: katarzyna.faliszewska@doktorant.ujd.edu.pl

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1. Introduction

The rapid influx of English borrowings into Polish can largely be attributed to the prominent role that English plays in Internet communication. Although the presence of English borrowings in both blogs and Internet forums has been illustrated in numerous studies (see: Zabawa 2010, 2014, 2017; Dylewski/Jagodziński 2012, Wiśniewska-Białas 2011), little heed has been paid to the influence that English exerts on sociolects¹ developed by virtual communities. A notable example of a virtual community that remains under the constant influence of English is the Polish community of online gamers. There is no doubt that English plays the dominant role in the gaming world, both because many gaming products originate from English-speaking countries and because English serves as a communication tool, which interconnects gamers from all over the world.

An initial survey distributed among 100 Polish gamers² by the present author has revealed that 79% of the informants communicate with other gamers in English on a regular basis – either while playing multiplayer games or taking part in international gaming forums. The respondents emphasized that some games and gaming resources are only available in English, thus, a good command of this language is, in some cases, a necessity. Furthermore, 57% of informants prefer English-language games to their Polish equivalents. Taking the above into consideration, one may expect gamers to be prone to the lexical influence of English.

The language of Polish gamers has been addressed in several publications. A general overview of linguistic practices of gamers provided by Urbańska-Galanciak (2009), highlights the colloquial and concise character of the gaming language and draws attention to the frequent use of English borrowings by Polish gamers. In his survey-based study, Maćkowiak (2020) investigates the popularity of gaming terms³ among Poles and reaches an interesting conclusion that gaming-related vocabulary is widely recognized

¹ The term sociolect will be understood, after Crystal (1985: 93) as “a linguistic variety (or lect) defined on social (as opposed to regional) grounds”.

² The survey was conducted among 68 men and 32 women aged 14 to 40.

³ Although the author does not directly address anglicisms in the study, the vast majority of the investigated terms constitute elements borrowed from English.

not only among gamers but also among those who do not play games. In a similar vein, Szymańska and Sporek (2016) scrutinize the use of gaming-related loanwords in the language of students. Overall, however, the previous studies discuss loanwords rather selectively, while focusing on the most universal and commonly used examples and thus overlooking a great deal of diversity in the gaming sociolect. Moreover, to the author's knowledge, none of the previous studies discusses other possible outcomes of language contact in the gaming sociolect, such as loan translations and semantic loans.

The present study is part of a larger research project attempting to investigate the influence of English on the sociolect of gamers. The article aims to shed some light on the use and adaptation of anglicisms in the community of Minecraft gamers, reflected in YouTube gaming videos and forum threads. The central questions to be examined in this paper are: 1) what types of loanwords can be found in the sociolect of Minecraft gamers?; 2) to what extent are the loanwords adopted into mainstream Polish in terms of morphology, phonology, and spelling?; 3) what is the function and meaning of borrowed elements?

2. Gaming community as a Community of Practice

The development of digital communication at the beginning of the 21st century has led to the proliferation of studies investigating linguistic aspects of computer-mediated-communication (hereafter CMC). Initially, most scholars were preoccupied with a variety of modes that enable Internet communication. In his seminal work, Crystal (2001) introduces the term *netspeak* as a general term to describe the distinctive features of the language of the Internet users. The author distinguishes five "Internet situations" (e-mail, web, chat groups, and virtual worlds) and assigns a set of characteristics to each of them⁴. More recently, scholars turned their attention towards the social diversity of the CMC and, hence, the notion of virtual Communities of Practice (CoP) became prominent in the analysis of the linguistic repertoire of Internet users (see Herring 2004, 2007; Androutsopoulos 2006).

The term Community of Practice was coined by Lave & Wenger (1991) in their publication dealing with social aspects of the learning process and was subsequently developed by Wenger into a detailed framework covering "groups of people, who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger et al. 2002: 4). The term started to attract considerable attention from scholars in a variety of disciplines, including sociolinguistics, wherein the Community of Practice was introduced as an alternative to Discourse Community established by Swales (1990)⁵. Although

⁴ According to Crystal (2001), the distinctive characteristics of *netspeak* involve, among others, the frequent use of neologisms, abbreviations and nonstandard spelling.

⁵ Another term which bears certain resemblance to CoP is speech community. However, as pointed out by Eckert and McConnel-Ginet (1992: 7) the crucial difference between the

the two concepts overlap in many respects, the notion of CoP draws particular attention to the aspect of membership, reflected in the three criteria, which are explained by Wegner (1999) as follows:

- 1) **mutual engagement** i.e. practice exists because people engage in actions whose meanings they negotiate with one another (1999: 73);
- 2) **a joint enterprise** i.e. the enterprise that keeps the community of practice together [...] [i]t includes all the energy they spend – within the stricture of their tight institutional context and also in spite of it – not only in making claims processing possible in practice but also in making the place habitable for themselves (1999: 78);
- 3) **a shared repertoire** i.e. routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice (1999: 22).

Notably, the characteristics of a CoP are consistent with these of a gaming community. First of all, gamers come into regular contact with one another by playing multiplayer games and/or by using social media⁶, Internet forums or taking part in gaming conventions and, thus, creating a membership. A joint enterprise of gamers finds reflection in actions that help gamers develop their shared goals. For instance, Minecraft gamers are involved in various collaborative tasks, such as creating servers, virtual maps or databases that enhance the gameplay.

Most importantly, the sense of membership is reflected by shared linguistic and verbal practices. The practice of gamers is marked with jargon and paralinguistic features⁷. At this point, however, it is necessary to stress that a gaming community is not a homogenous group, but rather a mixture of communities that may be further subdivided according to particular games, each developing their own game-specific linguistic repertoire. Likewise, the gaming community constitutes a network of people representing different backgrounds and, therefore, one may expect certain aspects of the linguistic repertoire to be culturally dependent. Nevertheless, as emphasized by Wegner (1999) it is mutual engagement, rather than locality, that creates a Community of Practice: “The members of an incipient community of practice may belong to very different localities of practice to start with, but – after sustaining enough mutual engagement – they will end up creating a locality of their own, even if their backgrounds have little in common” (Wegner 1999: 51).

concept in question is that contrary to speech community, a Community of Practice is not defined by the location and population of its members.

⁶ In the aforementioned survey, the respondents declared to use various social network sites such as Facebook, Reddit, YouTube, and Discord.

⁷ Ensslin (2011) points out that gamers express their emotions non-verbally, be means of emoticons or performing physical actions using their game characters.

3. The notion of anglicism

The term anglicism has been primarily associated with lexical units which are characterized by English phonetics and morphology (Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2010). It should be pointed out, however, that the influence of English on Polish goes beyond the incorporation of single English lexemes and, hence, a broader perspective is essential when investigating the outcomes of English-Polish contact. For this reason, the following study applies the definition proposed by Witalisz (2016, 2013), who uses the term *anglicism* as an umbrella term encompassing the following types of borrowing:

- 1) **loanwords**, i.e. simple and complex lexemes, acronyms and phrases, whose form and meaning have been either partially or fully adapted to the recipient language,
- 2) **calques**, i.e. loan translations, whose form has been replaced with the corresponding equivalent in the recipient language and semantic loans in which a new meaning is added to the existing lexical unit,
- 3) **semi-calques** i.e. partial translations of foreign compound words (Witalisz 2013: 332).

Another issue that seeks clarification is the actual origin of borrowed elements. In a general sense, the term anglicism is used either with reference to elements, which have been incorporated directly into the recipient language or indirectly, with English being an intermediate language⁸. Nevertheless, some scholars limit the notion of anglicism to the former. Since it is not always possible to make a clear-cut distinction between the two cases, for the sake of the present study, the term anglicism will be applied in either situation.

4. The corpus

The present study is a corpus-based analysis of the anglicisms occurring in the sociolect of Minecraft gamers. Minecraft is a sandbox game⁹ in which gamers explore the open world, build constructions, create weapons or fight various game characters, depending on the selected game mode. The gamer chooses between single- or multi-player mode. The in-game communication is based upon voice or text-chats, which allow synchronous interaction during the game. The game is available in Polish and offers Polish equivalents of the majority of the English terms, though some lexical elements, for example, console commands¹⁰ remain untranslated. The choice of the

⁸ The distinction between direct and indirect borrowing was introduced by Fisiak (1961).

⁹ "A video game or part of a video game in which the player is not constrained to achieving specific goals and has a large degree of freedom to explore, interact with, or modify the game environment" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. sandbox).

¹⁰ "Commands, also known as console commands, are advanced features activated by typing certain strings of text" (Minecraft Gamepedia, s.v. commands). Accessed at: <https://minecraft.fandom.com/wiki/Commands>, date of access: 1.3.2021.

game is dictated by two reasons. First of all, Minecraft enjoys immense popularity among Polish gamers. Secondly, the game is based on the open world and thus not only provides gamers with a variety of possibilities in terms of the gameplay but also gives them a lot of opportunities to interact with others.

With the aim of investigating both written and spoken forms of borrowed elements, the corpus has been compiled on the basis of two sources, namely 21 YouTube gaming videos and 10 forum threads, all devoted exclusively to the game under discussion¹¹. The videos show gamers playing Minecraft and commenting on the gameplay while referring either to other gamers or the viewers. As for the forums, the subjects covered in the discussions concern gameplay tips as well as opinions on the game itself. The overall number of collected examples of anglicisms consists of 148 tokens (types), more specifically, 122 loanwords, 25 calques and 1 hybrid loan. In order to decide whether a particular element belongs to the category of borrowing¹², each element has been searched for in other sources, such as corpus engine Monco¹³ and Minecraft Glossary¹⁴. The lexemes which were used only once by a single YouTuber/forum user and were not attested in other sources have been excluded from the study. Additionally, since the primary focus of the study is on the gaming sociolect, it has been decided to exclude anglicisms that are not related directly to gaming but rather constitute a part of youth slang (e.g. *cool*, *nice*, *LOL*).

5. Discussion

5.1 Loanwords

Out of 125 loanwords, 68 nouns, 35 compound nouns, 11 verbs, 5 adjectives, 5 acronyms and 1 abbreviation have been identified in the corpus. The predominant number of nouns, unsurprisingly, confirms the assumption supported by numerous studies, that nouns are borrowed more frequently than any other part of speech (cf. Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2008). A possible explanation for this phenomenon is the denotative function of nouns, i.e. nouns are borrowed in order to fill in the lexical gap. Forasmuch as the language of gamers resolves around imaginary virtual worlds, the gaming sociolect constitutes a rich source of lexemes that designate new objects, places, characters, and phenomena. Typically, these involve English neologism that sprang from English gaming sociolect and were subsequently transferred to the sociolect of Polish gamers. At this point, it is important to note that English gaming neologisms are

¹¹ The total number of words in the corpus is 95 000.

¹² The number of English elements attested in the corpus is much higher. However, the elements that appear only once in the corpus and are not attested elsewhere cannot be considered to have entered the sociolect of gamers. Rather, they constitute examples of single-word switches.

¹³ Accessed at: <http://monco.frazeo.pl>, date of access: 10.2.2021.

¹⁴ Accessed at: https://minecraft.fandom.com/wiki/Minecraft_Wiki, date of access: 10.2.2021.

formed through word-formation processes including derivation (1), compounding (2), acronymization (3) or and clipping (4), the former two being the most prominently exemplified in the present corpus (see (1)–(4) below):

- (1) Engl. *creep* > *Creeper* (Pl. *Creeper*), Engl. *let's play* > *let's players* (Pl. *let's playerzy*);
- (2) Engl. *Iron Golem* (Pl. *Iron Golem*), Engl. *redstone* (Pl. *redstone*), Engl. *crafting box*, Engl. *soul sand* (Pl. *soul sand*);
- (3) *PVP* ('player versus player'), *NPC* ('non-player character');
- (4) *co-op* ('cooperation'), *exp* ('experience').

Apart from loanwords that enter the sociolect of gamers for gap-filling purposes, the corpus reveals 21 English nominal elements that have been applied by Minecraft gamers, even though their native counterparts remain in common use in standard Polish, e.g. *emerald* (Pl. 'szmaragd'), *cocoa beansy* (Pl. 'ziarna kakaowca'), *zone* (Pl. 'strefa') *stone* (Pl. 'kamień'), *flint* (Pl. krzemień). This, in turn, illustrates that gamers are familiar with the names used in the original, English-language version of the game and, perhaps out of habit, use the English forms.

As far as the meaning of the excerpted elements is concerned, the corpus reveals anglicisms that are related exclusively to the Minecraft environment as well as those that are universally used by gamers. The former ones are proper nouns such as names of places and character as well as names of crafting tools and materials. These words are commonly used by Minecraft gamers, but rarely if ever appear in the context unrelated to the game. The latter group are anglicisms that refer to gamers *per se* (e.g. *noob*, *nerd*, *mapmaker*, *pro community*), actions taken by gamers (e.g. *speedrun*, *drop*, *double jump*), words or phrases describing games (e.g. *RPG*, *sandbox*) or terms that are commonly used in most games (e.g. *level*, *save*, *efficiency*). Since the subject of discussions about games covers technical specifications of games and technical issues encountered during the game, the sociolect of gamers overlaps in many respects with computer lingo (e.g. *plugin*, *update*, *crash*, *patch*, *shader*, *bugfix*).

5.1.1 Morphological adaptation

The corpus has revealed the existence of 111 morphologically adapted elements and 11 elements that remain uninflected e.g., *render distance*, *ultimate attack*, *floating island*, *HP*, *gamerule*.¹⁵ The prevalence of the former stems from the fact that Polish, being a highly inflectional language, is characterised by the complex repository of bound morphemes. It is therefore the case that suffixes that indicate the tense, gender and mood, as well prefixes that carry perfective meaning are appended to verbs (see (5)–(7)):

- (5) *pobugować*, *zbugować* (Engl. *to bug*),
- (6) *tradować*, *wytradować* (Engl. *to trade*),

¹⁵ The word *gamerule* is one of the Minecraft console commands. It is typed into a command chat as a single word.

(7) *prze**glitch**owywać* (Engl. *to glitch*).

Likewise, a vast majority of nouns (both simple lexemes as well as compound nouns) and acronyms have been adapted to the Polish morphological system in terms of gender, number and case. The plurals are typically formed by the replacement of the English plural marker *-s* with the Polish one, according to the assigned gender (8). The only exceptions being examples (9) and (10) have undergone the process of depluralisation, i.e., borrowing the plural form with a singular meaning (Fisiak 1961). Following the assumptions made by Fisiak, it might be presumed that the use of double plural form in the examples in question results from the fact that both of them carry collective meaning.

- (8) *Dziwne **enchanty**¹⁶ miał* [‘He got weird enchants’]¹⁷, *Idziemy szukać **emeraldów**¹⁸* [‘We’re going to look for emeralds’], *Chcemy mieć więcej **villagerów**¹⁹ niż mamy obecnie* [‘We want to have more villagers than we do now’]²⁰;
- (9) *Mam 30 **FPS-y***²¹ [‘I have 30 FPS (frames per second)’],
- (10) *Masz tutaj swoje **cocoa beansy*** [‘Here are your cocoa beans’].

Apart from inflectional adaptation, borrowed elements undergo the derivation processes. All of the adjectives attested in the corpus are derivative forms of simple nouns and compound nouns that have been embedded with adjective suffixes *-owy* or *-ny* (11). Other examples involve noun derivatives that give new meanings to borrowed nouns, e.g. *stone* > *stoniarka* (Engl. ‘stone generator’), *exp* > *ekspiarka* (Engl. ‘exp generator’) as well as a verb *tepnąć* (7), which has been derived from an English abbreviation *TP* (Engl. ‘teleport’).

- (11) *cobble stonowy* (Engl. ‘cobble stone’), *netherytowy* (Engl. ‘netherite’), *ironowy* (Engl. ‘iron’), *dirtowy* (Engl. ‘dirt’),

¹⁶ “Enchantments (sometimes shortened to ‘enchants’) are special bonuses or assets that can be applied to armor, tools or weapons through the use of an enchantment table, or an anvil if you have enchanted books” (Minecraft Wiki, s.v. sandbox). Accessed at: <https://minecraft-archive.fandom.com/wiki/Enchantments> (date of access: 20.2.2021).

¹⁷ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uI8B2bA3S38>, date of access: 20.1.2021.

¹⁸ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Epqrq5lSo4&t=125s>, date of access: 20.1.2021.

¹⁹ “Villagers are passive mobs that inhabit villages, work at their professions, breed, and interact” (Minecraft Gamepedia, s.v. villager). Accessed at: <https://minecraft.gamepedia.com/Villager>.

²⁰ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Epqrq5lSo4&t=125s>, date of access: 20.1.2021.

²¹ “Frames are still pictures that when sequenced together form a fluid animation that is the basis for all moving media. Frame rate is most often expressed in frames per second (FPS)” (Minecraft Gamepedia, s.v. frame rate). Accessed at: https://minecraft.gamepedia.com/Debug_screen#Frame_rate, date of access: 4.3.2021.

- (12) *Mogę się tutaj teleportować?* ['Can I teleport here?']²².

It is also interesting to note that compound nouns, with the lexeme *mode* as a head, are commonly reduced to the modifying adjective, which fulfils the function of a noun (see (13)–(16)). In a similar vein, the words *cobble stone*, *multiplayer*, *singleplayer* are frequently reduced to the first component: *coble*, *multi*, *single* (also *singiel*) respectively (10). Such cases fall into a sub-category of loanwords, referred to by Witalisz (2013) as redundant compounds (examples (13)–(16)),

- (13) *Mam teraz **creativa**, ale jak sobie dam **survivalka** to będę mógł zabić go tutaj* ['I'm using the **creative mode** now but if I switch to **survival mode**, I will be able to kill him here']²³;
- (14) *Potem przeprowadziłem się do innej, bardzo wysokiej (w porównaniu do poprzedniej) góry. Wszystko było fajnie, tylko nie miałem surowców, bo bałem się zejść do jaskini. (nie znałem **pacefull'a**)* ['Then I moved to another, very high (compared to the previous one) mountain. Everything was fine, but I didn't have the raw materials because I was afraid to go down to the cave. (I didn't know the **peaceful mode**)']²⁴;
- (15) *Gra wciąż, a najbardziej na **multi*** ['The game is addictive. In particular, the **multiplayer mode**'];
- (16) *Żmudne kopanie **cobla** aż po w pełni piękną rozbudowaną wyspę i udogodnienia jakie przychodzą w zamian za poświęcony czas* ['Digging up the **cobble stone** tediously, until your beautiful island is fully developed with all the goods that come in exchange for your time'].

Furthermore while compiling the corpus, it has been noted that gamers, Youtubers in particular, have a general tendency to create diminutive forms of borrowed nouns. This phenomenon can be explained by the casual and humorous way in which Youtubers express themselves, perhaps, to attract the attention of the viewer. Since the use of diminutives is rather idiosyncratic and does not affect the process of morphological adaptation, such cases have been excluded from the study, though some of them are presented below (17).

- (17) *itemki*, *itki* (Engl. 'items'), *modzik* (Engl. 'mode'), *kejwik* (Engl. 'cave'), *slajmik* (Engl. 'slime'), *survialek* (Engl. 'survival mode') *potki* (Engl. 'potions').

5.1.2 Phonological adaptation of loanwords

Phonetic realization of English loanwords is conditioned by the dissimilarities between Polish and English phonological systems. These involve quantitative and qualitative differences concerning phonemic inventories and word-stress patterns of both

²² Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOUaD-SpAVY>, date of access: 2.2.2021.

²³ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeBzOjkNeiA>, date of access: 2.2.2021.

²⁴ Available at: <https://www.gry-online.pl/S043.asp?ID=10726449&PAGE=3&N=1>, date of access: 20.2.2021.

languages. As for the latter, whereas stress in English words is variable, Polish is characterized by a relatively fixed stress-pattern, i.e., most commonly the accent is put on the second-last syllable. It is therefore not uncommon that loanwords change the placement of stress in the process of phonological assimilation, e.g. Engl. *villager* /'vɪl.ɪ.dʒə/ and Pl. /vi'ladʒɛr/. Due to the fact that English and Polish phonemes are, to a large extent non-equivalent, the process of phonological adaptation involves replacing English morphemes with the Polish ones which correspond more closely with the pronunciation of the English lexemes so as to imitate the pronunciation of the English lexemes. Indeed, the question of phonemic substitution remains a subject of broader, more detailed investigation, though some examples are presented below:

- the English phonemes /æ/, /ɑ:/ and /ʌ/ are replaced with the Polish /a/ vowel, e.g.: Engl. *scam* (Engl. /skæm/, Pl. /skam/), *stack* (Engl. /stæk/, Pl. /stak/), *craft* (Engl. /kra:ft/, Pl. /kraft/);
- /i:/ and /ɪ/ are replaced with /i/ e.g. *creeper* (Engl. /kri:pə/, Pl. /kriper/), *achievement* (Engl. /ə'tʃi:v.mənt/ Pl. /ɛ'tʃivment/), *hit* (Engl. /hɪt/, Pl. /xit/), *skill* (Engl. /skɪl/ Pl. /skil/), *ultimate attack* (Eng. /ʌl.tɪ.mət ə'tæk/ Pl. /'altimɛjt 'atak/);
- /ɒ/ and /əʊ/ are replaced with /ɔ/ or /ɔw/ e.g. *drop* (Eng. /drɒp/ Pl /drrɔp/), *stone* (Eng. /stəʊn/ Pl. /stɔwn/);
- /ə/ is replaced either with /a/ or /ɛ/ or /ɔ/ e.g. *level* (Eng. /'lɛvəl/, Pl. /'lɛvɛl/), *iron* (Eng. /aɪən/ Pl. /ajrɔn/);
- /ʊ/ and /u:/ are replaced with /u/ e.g. (Engl. /nu:b/, Pl. /nɔb/);
- /ð/ is replaced by /d/ e.g. *wither* (Engl. /wɪð.ər/, Pl /widɛr/), *nether* (Engl. /'nɛðə/, Pl. /'nɛdɛr/).

Since the spoken corpus is relatively small, not all of the English phonemes have been attested. Nevertheless, it can be noted that the exemplified cases conform with general tendencies concerning phonological assimilation of anglicisms in standard Polish which have been discussed in detail by Fisiak (1961), Mańczak-Wohlfeld (1995) and Witalisz (2016).

Apart from the loanwords, which are characterized by English-like pronunciation, the collected material has revealed several elements whose pronunciation is based on spelling. This indicates that some lexemes enter the sociolect of gamers in a graphic form, most plausibly by means of the inscriptions that can be found in the game (18). Interestingly, only one out of 5 acronyms attested in the spoken material preserves the English-like pronunciation (19). The remaining cases are pronounced with accordance to the Polish phonological system (20), as attested by the examples (18)–(20).

- (18) *dirt* (Engl. /dɜ:t/ Pl. /dirt/), *item* (Engl. /'aɪ.təm/ Pl. /item/), *guardian* (Eng. /gɑ:diən/ Pl. /gwardʲan/), *bug* (Eng. /bʌg/ Pl. /bɔg/);
- (19) *TNT* (Eng. /ti:.en'ti/ Pl. /ti.ɛn'ti/);
- (20) *FPS* (Eng. /ɛf.pi:'es/ Pl. /ɛf'pɛ.ɛs/), *HP* (Eng. /'eɪtʃ.pi:/ Pl. /xa'pɛ/), *NPC* (Eng. /ɛn'pi:. si:/ Pl. /ɛn.pɛ 'tɛɛ/), *TP* (Eng. /ti:.pi:/ Pl. /tɛ'pɛ/).

What is more, the English lexeme *damage* (Eng. /'dæm.ɪdʒ/, Pl. /'dimejdz/) has been universally mispronounced by gamers. The example, thus, neither points out to morphemic substitution nor importation, but rather constitutes an example of a loanword whose pronunciation has been erroneously rendered by Polish speakers.

5.1.3 Graphic adaptation of loanwords

Based on the material excerpted from the Internet forums, it can be noted that nearly all of the anglicisms retain the original spelling, the only exception being single cases wherein the forum users either reduce the spelling of words containing double consonants (e.g. *coble stone* Eng. *cobblestone*), misspell the words (e.g. Pl. *achivment*, Eng. *achievement*) or try to imitate the English pronunciation with quasi-transliteration (e.g. Pl. *dajmond*, Eng. *diamond*). The cases in question appear sporadically and indicate of lack of fluency in English of a particular person, rather than rules applied universally by gamers.

5.2 Calques and semi-calques

The use of calques in the sociolect of Minecraft gamers stems largely from the fact that most English terms used in the original version of the game have been translated into Polish, for the purposes of the Polish edition of the game. For this reason, some elements are used interchangeably by different gamers and thus it is not possible to assign them unequivocally either to the category of loanwords or (semi)calques. (e.g. *command block* / *bloki komend*). However, taking into account the collected examples, a preliminary conclusion can be drawn that English equivalents are more preferable among gamers. Only a few cases of loan translation appear recurrently in the corpus and thus might be considered to have entered the sociolect of Minecraft gamers as illustrated by (21):

- (21) *plączący obsidian*²⁵ (Engl. 'crying obsidian'), *plomienny proszek*²⁶ (Engl. 'blaze powder'), *otwarty świat*²⁷ (Engl. 'open world'), *jedwabny dotyk*²⁸ (Engl. 'silktouch'), *słodkie jagody* (Engl. 'sweet berries'), *diamentowy miecz* (Engl. 'diamond sword'), *czarne tekstury* (Engl. 'black textures').

²⁵ "Crying obsidian is a luminous variant of obsidian that can be used to craft a respawn anchor and produces purple particles when placed". Accessed at: https://minecraft.gamepedia.com/Crying_Obsidian. (date of access: 1.3.2021).

²⁶ "Blaze powder is an item made from a blaze rod obtained from blazes" (Minecraft Gampedia, s.v. crying obsidian). Accessed at: https://minecraft.gamepedia.com/Blaze_Powder (date of access: 2.3.2021).

²⁷ A term for a game that allows you to explore the entire world and have barely any limits. Accessed at: <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Open%20World>, date of access: 2.3.2021.

²⁸ Silk Touch is an enchantment that allows many blocks to drop themselves instead of their usual items when mined. (Minecraft Gamepedia, s.v. silk touch) Accessed at: https://minecraft.gamepedia.com/Silk_Touch, date of access: 2.3.2021.

As can be seen, all of the examples above have been translated literally into Polish. One exception found in the corpus is a blended noun *czernit* (*czerni* + *granit*, Engl. ‘black + granite’) which renders, though inexactly, the English compound noun *blackstone*. Only one word, namely *enderperła* (Engl. ‘ender pearl’) has been identified as a hybrid loan. The lexeme *ender*, which originates from the English language version of the game, is a derivative form of the name of a Minecraft dimension called “End”. It is frequently used to formulate compound nouns that denote names of game characters and objects e.g., *Enderman*, *Enderdragon*, *Ender Chest*. As for the semi-calques, it is typical that gamers combine adjective-noun phrases, using one foreign and one native element, most commonly with the adjective in attributive position (22):

- (22) *ironowy kilof* (Engl. ‘iron axe’), *dirtowa lepianka* (Engl. ‘dirt hut’), *netherytowa zbroja* (Engl. ‘netherite armor’), *kreatywny builder* (Engl. ‘creative builder’).

The phrase *to one-hit somebody*, which is used in the sociolect of English gamers, meaning ‘to kill somebody at once’, has been introduced to the sociolect of Polish gamers as a prepositional phrase *na hita*, which collocates with the verbs *zabić* (Engl. ‘to kill’) or *ginąć* (Engl. ‘to get killed’). This example can, nonetheless, neither be classified as a loanword nor as a calque. Rather, it constitutes a type of inexact semi-calque, whose meaning has been imported into Polish along with partial translation and substitution of the grammatical form (23):

- (23) *Tutaj są moby. Na hita będą ginąć, patrzcie!* [‘Here are the mobs. Look, I’m going to **one-hit** them!’]²⁹.

Another type of calque exemplified by three lexical items attested in the corpus are words that are entrenched in the Polish lexical system but have gained a new shade of meaning through the influence of the English gaming sociolect. One of these is the Polish word *biom* (Engl. ‘biome’), which has been used primarily in the field of ecology with reference to communities of plants and animals that inhabit ecologically diverse regions³⁰ (24). The term has been applied by Minecraft gamers with a corresponding, though more specified meaning, limited exclusively to the Minecraft environment, “a region in a world with distinct geographical features, flora, heights, temperatures, humidity ratings, sky and foliage colours” (25)³¹. Likewise, the meaning of the word *życie* (Engl. ‘life’) has been limited to denote a lifespan of a gaming character (26).

The word *gildia* (Engl. ‘guild’), traditionally referred to as an ‘association of a religious, political or social nature’ has been extended to include a group of gamers who play multiplayer games together.

²⁹ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkOMlJqSI7w>, date of access: 20.2.2021.

³⁰ „Słownik języka polskiego PWN”, s.v. *biom*. Accessed at: <https://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/biom;2552225.html> (date of access: 10.3.2021).

³¹ The examples 18 and 19 have been obtained from Monco corpus engine. Accessed at: <http://monco.frazeo.pl/index>, date of access: 20.3.2021.

- (24) *Wielu graczy tworzy **gildie**, czyli sprzymierzone drużyny, co także się przyczynia do uzależnienia, ponieważ trudno iść spać, gdy wiesz, że trzy osoby z Twojej gildii, z Kopenhagi, Tokio i Mumbaju uczestniczą w jakiejś epickiej misji bez ciebie* [‘Many people create **guilds**, i.e., allied teams. This also contributes to addiction because it’s hard to go to sleep when you know that three people from your guild, from Copenhagen, Tokio and Mumbai are on an epic mission without you’];
- (25) *W październiku dowiedzieliśmy się, że w tej aktualizacji dostaniemy nie tylko nowe biomy i moby, ale też – dużo nowych bloków, ze szczególnie dużą liczbą tych związanych z roślinnością* [In October, we found out that this update allowed us not only to get new biomes and mobs, but also – a lot of new blocks, with a particularly large number of those related to vegetation];
- (26) *Minecraft to gra stricte budownicza, jednak występują tam potworki itd. Masz poziomy trudności peaceful (na tym poziomie **życie** Ci się samo regeneruje i nie ma żadnych potworków), Easy, Normal i Hard (czy coś w tym stylu)* [Minecraft is a strictly building game, but there are some monsters etc as well. There are difficulty levels: peaceful (at this level your **life** regenerates itself and there aren’t any monsters) easy, normal and hard (or something like that)].

6. Conclusion

The study has provided a general overview of the anglicisms used in the sociolect of Minecraft gamers. Undoubtedly, drawing unambiguous conclusions based on the relatively small-scaled corpus proves impossible, nevertheless, some preliminary observations can be made.

First of all, it is worth noting that gaming sociolect constitutes a rich source of loanwords, most of which being nominal neologisms that have been derived directly from the sociolect of English gamers. The use of anglicisms among Polish Minecraft gamers is to large extent arbitrary, in the sense that some speakers prefer to use elements that retain the English form, whereas others adopt corresponding loan translations. Moreover, as preliminarily demonstrated in the discussion part, the influence that English exerts on the gaming sociolect is manifested in semantic extensions of native lexemes.

As for the process of loanword adaptation, the vast majority of loanwords attested in the corpus undergo substitution at the level of phonology and morphology but remain unchanged in terms of spelling. The existence of loanwords whose pronunciation is based on spelling proves that some anglicisms are transferred to the gaming sociolect in a graphic form, presumably, by means of contact with gaming products. As far as the meaning of borrowed elements is concerned, the anglicisms attested in the corpus fall into two broad categories: (1) game-specific borrowings that constitute an exclusive characteristic of the lexical repertoire of the Minecraft gaming community (names of tools and building materials, places, characters); (2) borrowings that

are universally applied by gamers (computer-related terminology, game genres, game features, terms referring to gamers). It is interesting to note, that even though a vast majority of loanwords are adopted into the sociolect of Polish gamers in order to fill the lexical gap, there exist a number of anglicisms that can be easily substituted with their Polish counterparts. This phenomenon not only indicates of the relatively high intensity of language contact among gamers but also proves the positive attitude that gamers have towards English.

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