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Terminology in Videogames; Analysing Gamer Speak in League of Legends

BY

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ABSTRACT

League of Legends is one of the most popular MOBA games of the 21st century. The game has garnered a massive scene of both casual and competitive players who use specific terminology which is only understood within the speech community. The objective of this study was to discuss the terms used within the context of the *League of Legends* professional scene, and to discuss whether a form of term evolution exists over the lifespan of the game. To complete this objective, an explorative method which studied three different matches from the *League of Legends World Championships* were considered, one from 2011, another from 2017, and another from 2024. Following this, terms were identified within these games and analysed for their word class, alongside their term formation. These terms were then compared between games, and it was discovered that term usage within *League of Legends* is steadily evolving over time. The results of this analysis showed that terms in *League of Legends* are mostly nouns that are formed through compounding, but also suffer radical semantic change. Additionally, it was discovered that these terms have many more unique formations than general vocabulary, and many terms possess levels of creativity which are exclusive to the videogame sphere.

Key words: lexicology, terminology, videogames, League of Legends, videogame jargon

RESUMEN

League of Legends es uno de los juegos MOBA más populares del siglo XXI. El juego ha atraído a una gran cantidad de jugadores casuales y competitivos que utilizan una terminología específica que solo se entiende dentro de la comunidad de habla. El objetivo de este estudio era analizar los términos utilizados en el contexto del ámbito profesional de *League of Legends* y discutir si existe una forma de evolución de los términos a lo largo de la vida útil del juego. Para alcanzar este objetivo, se consideró un método exploratorio que estudiaba tres partidas diferentes de los Campeonatos Mundiales de *League of Legends*, una de 2011, otra de 2017 y otra de 2024. A continuación, se identificaron los términos utilizados en estos juegos y se analizaron su categoría gramatical y su formación. Posteriormente, se compararon estos términos entre los distintos juegos y se descubrió que el uso de los términos en *League of Legends* evoluciona constantemente con el tiempo. Los resultados de este análisis mostraron que los términos de *League of Legends* en su mayoría son sustantivos formados mediante composición, pero que también sufren cambios semánticos radicales. Además, se descubrió que estos términos tienen muchas más formaciones únicas que el vocabulario general, y muchos términos poseen niveles de creatividad que son exclusivos del ámbito de los videojuegos.

Palabras clave: lexicología, terminología, videojuegos, League of Legends, jerga de los videojuegos.

1. INTRODUCTION

League of Legends is a popular multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) which has become one of the most popular videogames of all time. Since its commercial release in 2010, its characters, design, gameplay, community, and cultural relevance has made it only increase in popularity over time, with current player counts reaching upwards of 117 million players (ActivePlayer.io, 2025) which is more than most games ever reach in their lifetimes. This large number of players from all over the world shows that there is a massive interest surrounding this game. The cultural influence of *League of Legends* cannot be understated, and it is an extremely relevant aspect of contemporary online culture and gaming, even non-experts are familiar with its existence, and its unique words. Those who have a passing interest in the game, may have heard utterances such as *farm, level, push* or *XP.* These terms have either originated in *League of Legends* or have been popularised by its existence, showing that its cultural impact may be larger than anticipated.

League of Legends has its own speech community, with concepts, mechanics, plays, events, gameplay, viewer count, tournaments, and most importantly for this investigation, terms, are all frequently discussed. For a passing hobbyist, these aspects may seem confusing, or irrelevant. However, the amount of information that these items possess demonstrate that the speech community has created

phenomenon that are unique when compared to general speech communities. While one may know a language, and can speak it to a communicative level, they may find themselves unable to understand terms which originate from a videogame, either due to their complexity, their unique nature, or their multiple levels of abstraction from the original meaning. Due to this reason, videogame terms are often disregarded as nonsense words, which has left a large research gap that this project aims to fill.

A highly regarded aspect of this game is that of the *League of Legends World Championship* which occurs near the end of every year. This tournament has existed since 2011 and continues to be a massive landmark in the community until today. It is of the most yearly watched *League of Legends* event, with viewer counts in the millions (Escharts, 2025). This milestone of the *League of Legends* community is a focal point for term usage, as similar to football tournaments, presenters are hired to explain the games that are underway, and the descriptions of these games lend themselves to term usage, often having no other option than explaining specific forms of play with terms invented by the community. This event is the centre point of the present study, as the terms used by these presenters show that term usage is high enough in the community, that even those employed by the company itself, use them.

In order to contribute to linguistic studies in the area of videogames, this project wishes to examine a linguistic aspect of the speech community, that being terms. As this game has been out for 15 years at the time of writing, the many terms that have emerged may be considerable, and may also show an aspect of contemporary culture that is not widely known, and may also show how language has evolved within online communities. In order to discuss these ideas, the following objectives have been created.

The objective of this project is to examine the evolution of terms over time in *League of Legends World Championships* from the years 2011 to 2024. With the specific objectives being to identify the terms that have emerged within the *League of Legends World Championships* between 2011 and 2024, to analyse the terminological density of terms in the *League of Legends World Championships*, to discuss whether the number of terms used has increased, decreased or remained constant over time, and to examine the morphological and lexical patterns used in the formation of these terms.

The methodology for the current investigation has five stages. Firstly, the corpus is described, being a collection of three separate games taken from different points in the lifespan of *League of Legends;* the final match of 2011, the final match of 2017, and the final match of 2024. Secondly, the games are transcribed using YouTube's automatic translation software and corrected manually by the

researcher. Thirdly, the transcriptions are analysed, and potential terms are extracted into a database. Fourthly, these terms are organised depending on their type of speech, their formation and their contexts. Finally, these results are displayed, grouped, and commented on in order to see how the speech community uses these terms and how these terms have evolved since the early inception of this game.

This project is divided into the following sections. Chapter 2 focuses on the theoretical framework, from general theories to specific theories. Chapter 3 gives the problem statement, which explains the reasoning behind a study of this nature. Chapter 4 explains the main objective and specific objectives of this study. Chapter 5 explores in detail the methodology behind this research project. Chapter 6 then demonstrates the results of this study with data points and visual guides, which are then elaborated on in chapter 7, which discusses the results in detail. Finally, chapter 8 contains the conclusions of the investigation, with potential proposals of future investigation.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study explains both general and specific theories in order to have an understanding of the topics to come. It starts by introducing the most general studies, which focus on discourse studies, and discourse communities, then the specific theories, which involve linguistic studies around the topic of videogames, ludology, neology, terminology, word formation and neonymy.

2.1. Discourse Analysis

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. While there are many different avenues to study language from, the current avenue, or *paradigm* of this study has been undertaken from the point of view of *discourse analysis*, also known as *discourse studies*, which is **"**the study of the ways sentences and utterances are put together to make texts and conversations and how those texts and conversations fit into the social world" (Jones, 2024, p. 2), or "the study of language beyond the sentence" (Rholetter, 2024, para. 1). Those who study discourse analysis do not simply look at the literal meaning of words, instead they analyse how meaning is made and how it is altered by situations. Discourse

analysis studies the speaker, the recipient, and both the linguistic and social contexts (Rholetter, 2024).

According to Jones (2024), there are four main assumptions which surround the area of discourse analysis. These are that:

1. Language is ambiguous. Communication involves interpreting what other people mean and what they are trying to do.
2. Language is always situated in “the world”. The meaning of language depends on where and when it is used and what it is used to do.
3. The way we use language is inseparable from who we are and the different social groups to which we belong.
4. Language is never used all by itself. There are many extralinguistic aspects in play when using language, such as tone, facial expressions and gestures. The meaning of language is often a combination of all of these features.

Jones (2024) mentions how in order to analyse discourse, discourse analysists tend to analyse *texts* and *conversations*, which contain meaning that needs to *make sense*. Texts and conversations are made up of relationships, or connections, which are elements like words, sentences, or other aspects in order to make it cohesive. Alongside *cohesion*, the relationship between background knowledge and the social situation of a person are taken into account, which is

known as *coherence*. Finally, another text may be needed in order to understand the present one, and the relationship between using one text to understand another is called *intertextuality*.

Another point of discourse analysis which has heavy emphasis on the present study is that of *genre* in discourse. According to Bhatia (1993: 13), as cited in Jones (2024, p. 9):

> (A genre is) a recognisable communicative *event* characterised by a set of *communicative purposes* identified and mutually understood by members of the community in which it occurs. Most often it is highly structured and *conventionalised* with *constraints* on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often *exploited by expert members* of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of the socially recognised purpose(s).

To expand on the explanation found in Jones (2024), a *communicative event* refers to communication instances, such as the reason someone performs a speech, or writes an e-mail, or initiates a conversation, etc. It is the *purpose* of the text/conversation. The *conventions and constraints* refer to what can be included in a text and how it can be included. An example of this in practise would be the formation of a cover letter. In order to create one, it has to be done in a specific order, this involves an introduction to the post one is applying for, followed by the relevant work experience, finalising with requesting an interview. In not following this order, the event seems *off*, whereas in following this order, a person

participating in the event, i.e. the recruiter, knows that the potential employee *knows how to do things*. These conventions and constraints are most commonly exploited by experts of a specific area.

As the present study discusses videogames, it is relevant to give an example of how these events can take place inside a game. During a match of *League of Legends*, one player might say the phrase "*come hover bot, the Lee's looking to gank*". The text is both cohesive and coherent to the other player, due to how the sentence has been made and the player's relationship to the game itself. The communicative event is that of requesting help, which can be seen with the word "come". Additionally, the wording has the conventions of an expert player with words like "*hover*" and "*gank*". In analysing this sentence, we see how the discourse used can give insights to the type of person talking, as well as their level of expertise in the specific situation, showing they are an expert in this *discourse community.*

2.1.1. Discourse communities

A discourse community, according to Jones (2024), refers to a particular group that does particular activities. These areas tend to have specific vocabulary or *jargon* which is used in order to reach common goals or find the means of reaching these goals. These discourse communities tend to have expert members who

teach new members how things are done by using *genres*. Every time a member makes use of a genre, they validate both themselves and the wordage as legitimate. It can be said that genres both link people together, as well as link them with certain activities. Jones (2024) also mentions that the genres that are used within these communities tend to promote the values of the community, whether it be explicitly or implicitly. They also try to bring new members into the community via socializing, which has the double purpose of teaching new members how to act and think, as well as allowing those inside the community to portray themselves as competent members of the community.

In the area of videogames, many different communities are formed in order to cater to the different types of people that play games. Common websites that people conglomerate in to talk about them are Reddit, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitch. However, these are not the only places, and oftentimes while a player is inside a match of a particular videogame, like *Battlefield*, *Call of Duty*, or *League of Legends*, they will make use of the *chat* feature inside the game. It could be said that this chat feature functions as a final test of being part of a community, as the player must navigate in-game conversations using speech events in order to affirm themselves as a member of the community. Hsu (2020) mentioned that gamers tend to do this to reaffirm their place among their peers. They do this by using jargon, or *ludolect*, that is either *game-specific* or *genre-specific*, depending on the speech act.

Figure 1

Varieties of ludolects in a gradual scale of specialized vocabulary (left) to general vocabulary (right). Hsu (2020)

More specialized vocabulary ⟷ More general vocabulary

World of Warcraft	**MMORPG**	**General gaming**
Lich King	Raid boss	Boss
Zul'gurub	Instance	Map
Amani War Bear	Mount	Carriage

In essence, when an expert uses highly specialized vocabulary, it tends to be used when speaking to another who also possesses this vocabulary, or as a way of teaching the new member how to use specific vocabulary. This type of discourse is commonly found in written form; however, spoken discourse is just as important.

2.1.2. Spoken discourse

According to Jones (2024), speech is not too dissimilar to that of writing. Speech also tends to use various types of genres, alongside using different registers or social languages. There are several differences though which the author mentions thusly:

Firstly, speech is more interactive, it happens in *real time* to other people, being effectively co-constructed with feedback which allows us to change how we are talking. Secondly, speech is much more spontaneous than writing. It is seldom planned, and while some genres, such as formal speaking or lectures are planned, most casual conversation is transient. Finally, speech tends to be less explicit than writing, due to how during speaking, there are other methods of communicating, such as gazes, facial expressions, gestures, tone, etc.

These aspects of spoken discourse tend to happen in a physical or social context. The phrasing we use for the context is known as *deixis*, which according to Lyons (1977, p. 636), refers to “the function of personal and demonstrative pronouns, of tense and of a variety of other grammatical and lexical features which relate utterances to the spatio-temporal co-ordinates of the act of utterance”. In essence it is how people use words relative to the time, place, or person according to the context. In the context of videogames, many different aspects of deixis take place. The deixis may be a person talking to an audience of people if they are streaming, another situation may be talking to a friend if they are in a call with them, deixis

may affect a community when they talk amongst themselves in a chat forum, a youtuber may consider the deixis if they are recording a video with a script, or it might even be thought about in a one on one conversation inside a game. The most important aspect to consider is the purpose of the event.

This is not to say that deixis is a perfect solution when discussing speech acts. According to Jones (2024, p. 19) “one of the main problems that people have when communicating is that quite often people do not mean what they say, and people do not say what they mean”. This is true for both written and spoken events. In uttering the phrase “do you have a pen?”, this speech act is formatted as a question, but it is in reality a request for a pen. In order to engage in conversations with others, we must make decisions about what we think people mean, in order to have the conversation to proceed. In analysing the context beyond the actual words used, one can employ studies in the area of *pragmatics*, which, according to Huang (2014, p. 2), “is the systematic study of meaning by virtue of, or dependent on, the use of language. The central topics of inquiry of pragmatics include implicature, presupposition, speech act, deixis, and reference”. For the purpose of this investigation, it can be assumed that all participants are saying what they mean.

While all these features of discourse analysis are important to note, the one that is most pertinent to this investigation is that surrounding discourse analysis in

discourse communities in the videogame *League of Legends*. Discourse analysis can be applied to a budding area of investigation, known as *game studies*.

2.1.3. Discourse studies in the area of videogames

While it has been stated that videogames are a relatively new academic field, it is not uncommon in current times to find many linguistic studies around videogames. This section will give a small insight into current linguistic research inside this area, alongside giving examples of previous studies that have a strong relation to this present study.

2.1.3.1. Game studies

One might argue that discussing videogames is synonymous with discussing art. As a concluding statement from the thesis of Rough (2016) titled “Are videogames art?” it concluded with the following statement: “Not only **can** videogames be artworks, some actually **are**”. Art, like many aspects of society, represents the culture of a specific period in time, and videogames are one of the topics that frequently appear whenever discussions around contemporary art is discussed.

Mäyrä, (2008, p. 6), defines game studies as “a multidisciplinary field of study and learning with games and related phenomena as its subject matter”. This very

general definition can encompass many different streams of study related to videogames, such as technology, innovation, history, criticism, development, and for the purposes of this section, discourse studies.

Mäyrä (2008) mentions that game studies is a new academic field, which focuses primarily on three aspects: Videogames themselves, videogame players, and the contexts that surround them. Some of the areas associated with game studies are anthropology, psychology, sociology, educational sciences, computer sciences, and lately, literary and art studies. Linguistic studies, in this case, fall under sociology and art studies. Despite not being a linguist, the author cites an instance of a speech community found inside the videogame *Everquest.* According to Mäyrä (2008), players inside this game have created their own speech communities, which contain linguistic features taken from online chat discussions on the internet in general, and features taken from spending a lot of time within the game itself. This phenomenon is both interesting from an anthropological perspective, as well as a linguistic perspective, as a micro-culture being formed via a videogame is exceptionally contemporary, and mimics real-life example of micro-communities being formed in other areas around the world.

Game studies exemplifies itself an important aspect of contemporary culture, which is that humans find themselves in an increasingly more connected world. In applying linguistics to the area of game studies, many undocumented cases of

linguistic development could come to light, allowing both linguists and players to understand more of the world as a whole.

2.1.3.2. Previous research in the area of discourse studies in videogames

One of the examples of how discourse studies can be used in videogames can be found from Gee (2014) in the book *Unified discourse analysis: Language, reality, virtual worlds and video games.* This book explains discourse analysis, language, meaning, video games, the real world, imaginary worlds, human development, and life. The author explains that he aims to bring together a theory and method of discourse analysis that can connect language, games, science, and human action and interaction, in both real and imaginary worlds.

Methods for Studying Video Games and Religion by Zeiler (2017) also discusses discourse studies, and how there are many different methods to study religion through the interactive medium of videogames. This book analyses many different and specific areas of religion in videogames, focusing on Islam in *Medal of Honor, Warfighter*, religious symbolism in the first person shooter *Bioshock*, general religion in videogame environments such as in the life sim *Second Life*, how avatars in videogames can become a representation of a real person, how a mobile GPS game can be used to teach Jewish history, how visual novels can express the religio-aesthetic concept of ma, a reflection on the religious themes

of *Fallout 3* and *Divinity: Original Sin,* the biases that appear when selecting a religion in a gameplay mechanic in *Age of Empires III*, methods to explain religion to players from a "player-centred" perspective, and finally by discussing the characteristics and difficulties of analysing comments on gaming videos, also known as Let's Play videos, on YouTube. This book expresses many different avenues of videogame study from a discourse analysis perspective, all with unique methods behind them.

Paul (2012) in his book *Wordplay and the discourse of video games: Analyzing words, design, and play*, discusses rhetoric inside videogames, in order to introduce players to the games, to socialise them into how the game works and to introduce players to the games themselves. This has the dual purpose of socialising players into how the game works, as well as analysing the rhetoric behind the constructions of context and the perception of gamers. Additionally, this book goes into detail on how humour is used inside videogames, bringing the *Grant Theft Auto* franchise into view with its abundance of satirical humour, an important area of discourse analysis. The author continues with an analysis on "how video games work, what video games mean, and how video games both construct and are constructed culturally." He also makes reference to other prominent authors that will be mentioned below.

Bogost (2008), in the book *Unit Operations: An approach to videogame criticism*, discusses the relationships between computation, literature and philosophy. He undertakes this study from a humanist approach, as he mentions "*I wish primarily to encourage the use of criticism as a tool for understanding how videogames function as cultural artifacts, and how they do so along with other modes of human expression*" (Bogost, 2008, p. 12). The book discusses many areas of game studies, with much focus on the technological side. However, the author argues for a comparative approach to videogame criticism as a critique of the conflict between ludology and narratology.

Alongside books about discourse studies and game studies, there are also many articles that discuss videogames from a discourse analysis approach.

Trigo Maldonado (2025) in the article "South Korean videogame narratives: exploring historical trauma through interactive memory", discusses how videogames can be perceived as a sort of memory, rather than history. The idea of taking some historical facts while discarding others is brought forward, alongside the idea of how videogames can be used to represent historical events, but with care needing to be taken because if the videogame plays badly, then the events become overshadowed by the poor gameplay, which is at the forefront of most games.

Keever (2022) in *Videogames and the technicity of ideology: The case for critique*, discusses how “agency” is seen from a post humanist perspective, which goes beyond both discourse studies and game studies. The proposal is discussed using examples from the dialogue and mechanics in games such as *The Outer Wilds* and *Civilization II*.

Zou & Gómez, (2025), in *Invitations Within and Beyond the Fictitious World: An LDA Discourse Analysis of Female Game Preferences in Chinese CMC Forums*, the focus becomes the discussion around the preference of female Chinese videogame players towards videogames from female only videogame forums. The topics discussed were game characters, aesthetic appeal, genre, game narratology and empathy.

These studies demonstrate that there is a wide range of aspects surrounding videogames and discourse studies that can be analysed, from in game texts, to player preferences, to developer intent, and even philosophical ideology. Many aspects of discourse analysis are used when discussing videogames. However, as videogames are more than just words, they are also an interactive medium with pictures, movies, mechanics, worlds, stories and conflicts, researchers may decide to use models from discourse analysis and modify them to a videogame environment.

2.2. The language of videogames

In order to play videogames, it is usually required to understand the mechanics first. Developers of videogames have many internal words that they use to define the mechanics of their games. These internal words are then sometimes used when trying to tutorialise[1] the player. Studies behind the language used in videogame development are scarce, however, in the video “The Making of Halo Combat Evolved” by myepicbanana (2021), the developers of *Halo* constantly allude to concepts such as “physics engines” or “scripting” or “environments”, which shows they have an internal development language which appears to be prevalent inside the videogame development sphere. These *in house languages* are sometimes reflected in tutorials and gameplay explanations which are then transmitted to the players. Having mentioned this, the developers cannot expect every eventuality, and sometimes the language of a videogame will obtain a life of its own once the audience begins to discuss it.

Alongside tutorials, videogames exist in a current world where people are able to share moments from their games via websites such as YouTube or Twitch. These websites allow anybody to comment their opinion on the videogame, regardless of their expertise. Because of this, word homogenization may happen, where

[1] The action of teaching a player how to play a game through the use of on-screen hints or gameplay mechanics.

developers and videogame experts express their opinions on these posts and in doing so, create their own specific dialect, or *ludolect*, towards either the specific game, or gaming as a whole. These words are then used both inside and outside the videogame, and consequently reenforce their prestige. For example, if a new player were to download a videogame and not understand how to complete a level, they may ask for help online. When this happens, an expert player will offer advice such as telling the new player to use a specific item. The new player will then use this item, and understand more about both the game, and the name of the item, as it has just helped them to continue.

This phenomenon happens in many different videogames, but the topic of this investigation is focused on one videogame in specific, *League of Legends*.

2.2.1. League of Legends

League of Legends is a Multiplayer Online Battle Area (MOBA) videogame. It is one of the most consistently popular multiplayer games ever released, with monthly player counts in the multi-millions (lolvvv, 2023). It is widely considered as being one of the most influential MOBAs ever created, alongside *DOTA 2*.

Many of the descriptions of *League of Legends* could be considered strange to that of a non-gamer, so this section is designed to explain and elaborate on the game, the community, and the language used inside it.

One of the first aspects of *League of Legends* to understand, is the map the game is played on. Similar to a board game, *League of Legends* employs a symmetrical map, with asymmetrical objectives, seen below.

Figure 2

A Map of League of Legends in the classic mode

League of Legends was created by Riot Games, with the beta being released in 2009, and the full game being released in 2010. This videogame has multiple different game modes, but the most common game mode is known as *classic mode* or *ranked mode* which is played on a virtual map called *Summoner's Rift*, a symmetrical fantasy-like square divided into 2 sections diagonally, with each side having a specific name; the bottom-left corner is called *blue side*, and the top-right corner is called *red side*. Each side is characterised by having 3 turrets and an *inhibitor* in each *lane*, divided into top lane, middle lane and bottom lane. At least 1 lane's turrets and inhibitor must be destroyed in order to reach the enemy base,

which is defended by 2 more turrets. The main objective of the game is to destroy the enemy team's base, also known as their *nexus*. The nexus will create *minions* every 30 seconds, starting at 1:30 into the game which follow the lanes, and these minions are needed in order to siege the turrets and destroy them, which in turn allows access to the base and subsequently the nexus. The players must escort these minions to the enemy team's base while simultaneously halting the enemy team's progress.

This game is mostly played with 10 players on each map, 5 on each side. The players are given specific roles to accomplish in order to win each match. These roles are *Top Laner* who defends and pushes the top lane. *Mid Laner* who defends and pushes the middle lane. *Bot Laner* who pushes and defends the bottom lane. *Support* who helps the Bot Laner, as well as all other teammates as the game progresses, and the *Jungler* who has the unique role of killing monsters in the jungle, as well as invading the enemy team's jungle, and securing objectives for their team. While these roles can be ignored in favour of a different strategy, it is not recommended as it will put the team at a disadvantage. Adhering to these rules is known as *following the meta.* The best players tend to understand each of the aspects of this game and use their understanding to reach high levels of play. These players oftentimes stream their gameplay to people, who watch them on the aforementioned websites (YouTube and Twitch). An example of one of these players is *Pobelter*, who is a famous *League of Legends* player from the

United States. The image below shows him attempting to destroy the enemy's base with his team.

Figure 3

An example of sieging a base in League of Legends (*Pobelter*, 2025)

Note: In this current game there are a few points to mention. The top of the screen (from left to right) shows the current health of the turret currently being attacked. The right side shows the in-game score, the enemy team has 16 kills, whereas *Pobelter's* team has 29. Additionally, *Pobelter* himself has contributed to 17 of his

team's kills, which means he is playing exceptionally well. In the bottom left of the screen, the chat box is shown which contains both important in-game information, as well as in-game conversations (the enemy team's Yasuo is complaining about a teammate). The middle bottom shows the current character being played, alongside their abilities, mana, health, statistics and items. The right side of the screen shows the mini-map, a real time indicator of allies, enemies and monsters' positions (in-game vision is shared between teammates, but enemies can hide from vision which makes them not appear on the mini-map). 4 aspects are *not* part of the game, and are edited in overlays by the streamer: The box on the bottom left that says "challenger" (statistics for the viewer), the text underneath that says "New Sub" (part of the viewing experience, seeing your name on the stream), the face camera on the bottom middle-right (*League of Legends* does not record you as you play), and the chat-box on the bottom far-right (the chat box from the streaming website Twitch).

The complexity behind this game is also one of the driving forces of the competitive scene. The basic gameplay loop[2] behind League of Legends is that of killing enemy minions or monsters in order to obtain gold, with gold you can buy items which gives you more damage in order to defeat enemy players, which in turn gives you time to destroy a turret uncontested or take an objective

[2] Commonly known as the "moment to moment gameplay" or "the 30 second loop".

uncontested, which in turn can give your team more gold or even other advantages such as more damage, more defence, more speed, or many other *buffs* which gives a huge advantage to the player and their team. These buffs could be important to win a match; however, it is still possible to win from a disadvantage, which is what makes many matches, both casual and professional, so exciting. The complexity of *League of Legends* allows no two games to ever be played the same, meaning that the best players are constantly improving and learning, with new and different strategies to win being developed every day; MoreLegends (2019), goes into detail with some of the most important “meta” defining moments in *League of Legends* history, and explains how these moments affected the game in such a way, that both the general player base and the development team behind *League of Legends* (who continuously update the game to this day) have shaped the game, and will most likely continue to do so for years to come.

2.2.2. Communication in League of Legends

Communication is done both in-game and out of game. It can be done in-game in multiple ways, and a few will be mentioned here. The game features a ‘ping’ system, which is effectively a wheel of predetermined statements that indicate what you are trying to do quickly, such as *I am going to this location* or *an enemy*

might be in the area, with an accompanying symbol. Figure 4 shows an example of the ping system and all of the different symbols it possesses.

Figure 4

An example of the Ping Wheel in League of Legends, taken from League of Legends Wiki (n.d.)

Alongside this system, *League of Legends* also has an *in game chat* which is a small text box that allows players to communicate with each other, both teammates and enemies. This can be done for more important information, such as saying “the enemy is dead, let’s take this objective”, as well as voicing frustration, such as “the play you made was not very good”. This has led to an

impression that the community has a tendency to be *toxic*. Huang (2016) shows that there are unfortunately millions of players that exhibit toxic behaviour, creating an environment that could be anxiety inducing for new players and frustrating for those who must deal with these teammates during some matches. This toxicity is a phenomenon that has been mitigated in recent years with Riot's policy changes and community involvement, but it could be considered a reason why new players may not enjoy the game as much as professionals might.

Outside of game there are many different ways to communicate, online platforms like Reddit or Instagram tend to have the most amount of activity regarding communication. YouTube videos, Instagram reels and TikTok, allow people to share moments from games with discussions in the comment sections. Additionally, as the game requires you to have teammates, oftentimes people will form teams in order to compete. These teams work like other professional teams in sports, oftentimes with a dedicated gaming house, or gaming area, a coach, sponsors, and the possibility to compete in large tournaments for money. These players tend to invent strategies together, either learning new characters or practising techniques in order to improve.

One of the rather unique aspects about *League of Legends,* and videogames as a whole, is that they have the ability to transverse cultures. A reason that this may be the case could be that many of the most popular videogames both currently

and historically have been online multiplayer videogames (SteamDB, 2025). According to the aforementioned section regarding game studies, playing videogames usually involves interacting with an established community that has its own jargon and nomenclature, which has usually been created by players from all over the world. This phenomenon would explain why so many new words are found within discussion surrounding videogames.

2.3. Neology

New words are commonplace in the area of videogames, which falls under the branch of *neology*. This aspect, while relevant to the present work, is not the focal point of this study. However, important concepts that will be explained further along share similar traits to neology, so explanations are warranted.

Neology is commonly considered as being the *study of new words*. Cabré (1993) discusses how authors like Guilbert (1975) and Rondeau (1983) believe that neology refers to the study of new linguistic phenomenon that appears in any of the descriptive levels of a language, being either phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntaxis or lexicon; this final example is the most common aspect of neology, oftentimes referred to as *lexical neology*.

Boulanger (1989), as cited in Cabré (1993), discusses the study of neology in five different activities.

1. The practical process of creating new lexemes, either with or without the conscious use of the usual linguistic mechanisms of linguistic creativity within a language
2. The theoretical and applied study of lexical innovations, such as the process of creation, recognition criteria, acceptability, dissemination of neologisms or the social and cultural aspects of neology
3. Systematic institutional activity, specifically organised to collect, record, disseminate and implement neologisms within a specific framework or language policy
4. The task of identifying new or recent specialised fields that have gaps which require intervention
5. The relationship of novelty with dictionaries, either with the use of the dictionary as a filter to recognise neologisms, or the analysis of how neology is treated within dictionaries.

According to Cabré (1993), neology itself originally only referred to the linguistic processes to define new words, however, recent years and studies have brought forth the need to add to this definition. Neology itself commonly deals with *neologisms*.

2.3.1. Neologism

A neologism is a *new word*. Rey (1988), cited by Cabré (1993), states that a neologism is a “pseudo-concept”, due to the fact that it depends on a relative and even subjective judgement, it is not based on an objective novelty but a *feeling* of novelty.

As the very sentiment of a new word is subjective, neologisms tend to have multiple definitions. Three prominent experts in neologisms are Rey (1976), Cabré (1993) and Alvar Ezquerra (2005), who each have their own definition of a neologism which at times overlaps or is repeated.

For the first author, Rey (1976), a new word has a temporal aspect, a psycholinguistic aspect and a lexicographical aspect; temporal is associated with a new word that has appeared recently, psycholinguistic is associated with a new word that speakers feel is recent, and lexicographical is associated with a new word that is undocumented in a lexicographic corpus.

The second author, Avlar Ezquerra (2005), believes that it is not sufficient to define a neologism as just a new word in a language, as once a word is included, it stops being new. This contrasts to the definition from Rey (1976) as he believes

that any word that has recently appeared can be considered neological. This shows a small contrast which is a result of neological studies, it is very difficult to determine what is *new*, as the very nature of novelty is subjective.

The final author (Cabré, 1993) presents a method to define a neologism that is believed to be one of the most complete studies, as it is not based on perfectly objective measures, but instead refers to *neological sentiment*, that is, how neological a word is based on several factors, these being:

a) diachrony: a unit is neological if it has appeared in a recent period;

b) lexicography: a unit is neological if it does not appear in dictionaries;

c) instability, systematic: a unit is neological if it shows signs of formal instability (morphological, graphic, phonetic) or semantic instability;

d) psychology: a unit is neological if speakers perceive it as a new unit.

Cabré (1999a) also gives four basic types of neologism formation. These formations are not a comprehensive list, but do explain how and why speakers decide how to create neologisms. These are:

> Neologisms in form, which involve derivation, compounding, phases and shortenings.
> Functional neologisms, which involve lexicalisation of an inflected form[3], and syntactic conversion.

[3] Lexicalisation means adding a word to a dictionary, and an inflected form is a word that has been modified to show number, tense, gender, etc. An example would be “dropshotted”, which despite having the word “shoot” already as the past tense “shot”, it becomes “dropshotted” in the

> Semantic neologisms, which can be broadening, narrowing, or changing the meaning of the base form.
> Borrowed neologisms, either true borrowings or loan translations/calques[4]. (p. 207)

In summary, it is important to note that there is no possible measure to accurately define a subjective notion like *newness*. Different authors that discuss linguistics all have their different opinions and ideas on what is truly a *new word*. Because of this, in most studies, the researcher will define for themselves what they believe to be a set definition of a new word and will focus their attention on the data itself, rather than technicisms behind it.

2.3.2. Denominative and stylistic neologisms

The authors Cabré (1993, 1999a, 1999b) and Freixa & Llopart-Saumell (2014) additionally mention that a neologism is not just limited to the aforementioned aspects, a neologism could also be considered denominative or stylistic depending on the context.

A *denominative neologism* is a word that is similar to that of a term. It is a word that is used to denominate/specify a concept. For example, a crime that has become relevant in recent years within Chile, is the crime of a *portonazo*. This

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context of videogames.

[4] A word that has been translated literally, such as a word-for-word translation. An example is "flea market" from French "*marché aux puces*" (lit. market of fleas).

crime involves criminals ambushing a driver as they either leave or enter their gate (hence the root word *porton* or gate). The criminals proceed to force the driver out of the car through violence or intimidation and then steal the car (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, n.d.). When talking about this crime, a speaker may say something along the lines of "*hace unos días vi un portonazo en las noticas*" (A few days ago I saw a *portonazo* in the news). A speaker uses this word, despite having other options like *robo de vehículo* (vehicle robbery), because it refers to a specific situation in which other speakers inside a community know of, even though it is not in the dictionary and speakers outside the community may not understand this word.

A *stylistic neologism* is a word that is used simply for the speaker's sake. It is a word that, despite having alternatives, may be used because the speaker wants to explain something in their own way. For example, during a match of *League of Legends*, a speaker says, "I absolutely *Garened* the enemy team". The word *Garened* involves the word "Garen" (a character in *League of Legends*) and the suffix -ed (used to make verbs in the past). Despite having alternatives like "I destroyed the enemy team with the character Garen" or "I used Garen's abilities to win against the enemy", the speaker invents a word that can be understood by other speakers, for mostly stylistic reasons, hence the name *stylistic neologism*.

Regardless of the type of neologism, a word may be more *denominative* or more *stylistic* depending on the context. In the case of videogames, both concepts are used very frequently, which can be seen in the following section.

2.3.3. Neological and terminological studies in the area of videogames

Videogames are generally considered a new form of media, and as such, tend to have many studies that focus on neologisms used within their respective games. This can be noticed in the corpus based studies such as the ones from Álvarez de Mon Rego, & Álvarez-Bolado Sánchez (2013), Álvarez-Bolado Sánchez (2013), Zefanya, Sanusi, & Lesmana (2019), Johnston (2021), Susanti (2022), Cerna Garcés, & Vizcarra Sepúlveda (2022), Okazaki (2023), Corradini (2024), Matiini (2024), and Fernández de Molina Ortés (2024).

The conclusions of these studies argue that not only are gamers using neologisms to express their communities, but they are also actively changing and modifying existing language so that new concepts can be addressed. While these studies have different objectives that they wished to achieve, it can be said that all of these studies show both the impact and influence of neologisms within the gaming community. However, neologisms are not the only words that are discussed.

In the studies of Suchanek (2021), and Kuchumidze & Jolchibekova (2024), the focus of the studies were *terms*. These studies demonstrated a large amount of terminology that is found within specific videogames. While neology in videogames is certainly a large area of study, terminology is yet another point of view from which to analyse videogames and their language. Terms and neologisms do share many similarities; however, terms are studied differently than their denominative counterpart, which will be explored in the following chapter.

2.4. Terminological studies

Linguistics is a science that primarily focuses on language, and a key part of most languages are words. Studies that discuss words tend to have difficulty when deciding which words are to be analysed, as there is considerable overlap in the subfields of linguistic studies. This section aims to discuss the areas of study that deal with words, in order to give a greater idea on what types of words are considered necessary for a terminological study. This section will begin by first explaining the larger area of study, being lexicology, and then going into detail on how terminology separates itself from lexicology and neology.

2.4.1. Lexicology

Lexicology is the area of study dedicated to the words of a language and the rules accounting for a speaker's creativity (Cabré, 1999a). The lexicons that humans have, contain phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic information which means that every time a speaker wishes to make an utterance, the lexicon is the first thing they consult (Cabré, 1999a). It could be considered as a small dictionary inside the head of speakers.

Biderman (2001) explains that a lexicon exists because humans wish to organise the universe, their experiences, their wisdom, their perceptions and the world in general. To do this, humans needed some linguistic signs that are associated with these concepts. This goes in tandem to the affirmations made by Cabré (1999a) who states that words are units of references to reality and therefore, they connect us to the real world.

Cabré (1999a) explains that speakers do not limit their knowledge of words to simply linguistic aspects. This is because alongside simple linguistic information, speakers use paralinguistic, communicative, and extralinguistic information which determine the usage of a word. As an example of this in practise, one could take the word inquisition. The features behind this word are the pronunciation, the relation to the word "inquire", the fact that the word is a noun, and the meaning is "the action of inquiring". However, this word is not said in a linguistic vacuum, and a speaker has many other linguistic pieces of information, such as how the word

historically refers to the ecclesiastic court that defended the purity of the Catholic Church, which is an organisation which is reproached by many who defend human rights, and how it is related to the word “inquire” because it refers to the name of a court based on the interrogation of the accused (Cabré, 1999a). It can be explained then, that a word is almost never used in isolation, and in using any word, one considers the context, both linguistically and other, to decide how the word is going to be used.

However, similar to how in real life some dictionaries can be used in specialised situations, the mental dictionaries that speakers use can also be used in specialised situations. When speakers use words that are not commonly found in general use, these specialised words are classified as *terms* which falls under the branch of *terminology*.

2.4.2. Terminology

Terminology is the study of terms. Sager (1990 p. 2) describes terminology as “the study of and the field of activity concerned with the collection, description, processing and presentation of terms, i.e. lexical items belonging to specialised areas of usage of one or more languages.”

Terminology is a slightly different field of study compared to other linguistics studies. Cabré (1999a, p. 33) express the differences between words and terms:

> Regarding the perception of the nature of language, lexicology is based on words and does not conceive of meaning unless it is related to the word; terminology, in contrast, considers that the concept, which is its main focus, is prior to the name and can be conceived of independently from the name or term that represents it. In addition, lexicology is always linked to grammar. Words in dictionaries are described with respect to their use in context; they are considered as elements of discourse. For terminology, on the other hand, terms are of interest on their own account, and neither inflection (provided by the morphological form appropriate for its use in context) nor syntax (which inserts them in the proper grammatical context) are of consequence. Finally, linguistics distinguishes between and includes both synchronic[5] and diachronic[6] features of words, whereas terminology is only concerned with synchronic aspects.

Wüster (n.d.) as cited in Cabré (1999a) also mentions how terminology intervenes more than lexicology. Terminologists may try and develop standardised forms in order to be used internationally, whereas lexicologists prefer to see words from a mostly descriptive point of view.

From a classical perspective, a term is similar to any other dictionary entry, in which the term is defined based on *what it is* and *what it is part of*. Kockaert and Steurs (2015, p. 4) exemplify this with the definition of planet:

> [A planet is] a celestial body that is:
> a. in orbit around the Sun,

[5] How language is at one specific point in time
[6] How language has been used over time

> b. has sufficient mass for its self-gravity to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic equilibrium (nearly round) shape, and
> c. has cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit.

This definition is similar to that of componential analysis in nature, which defines what something is or isn't based on semantic features. Kockaert & Steurs (2015) also mention that this approach is very similar to the definition which Aristoteles gave for a human, which was defined as an animate being with two legs and no feathers. As an aside, Diogenes humorously found a flaw in this logic and found a plucked chicken, held it high and shouted "behold! A man". This story could be applied for the previous definition for planet, if a ball were to be inflated to the point where it is large enough to clear the neighbourhood around its orbit, would it be classified as a planet? These issues are present when making any form of definition, and as terms are part of language, they also suffer the same issues which are characteristic of language as a whole.

According to L'Homme (2020 p. 5) "*terminology* studies *terms* which can be defined as linguistic expressions that designate *items of knowledge* within *special subject fields*". Terminologists tend to analyse terms in special subject fields, or domains. In many aspects of terminological studies, the goal is to create a specialised dictionary that is composed of terms. L'Homme (2020) exemplifies this by mentioning Wüster, the founder of terminology, and how he compiled a dictionary entitled The Machine Tool Dictionary (1968) dealing with types of machine tools, their parts, etc.

L' Homme (2020), believes that Wüster's papers were considered revolutionary for his time, especially for the immense detail in explaining every term inside it. However, terminologists nowadays believe that Wüster's explanations for his terms written in the dictionary are excessive in their onomasiological[7] nature, and neglect semasiology[8]. (Trojar, 2017) states that Wüster's idea's to terminology do not necessarily correspond to the current day approach to terminology, which is that terms are full linguistic units, and they have the same kind of phenomena that other linguistic units undergo, such as variation and ambiguity.

L'Homme (2020) also mentions that terminology is very deeply rooted in applications, which revolve around specialized dictionary compilation, specialized translation, document indexing and/or classification, knowledge modelling, language planning, and standardization. A lexicologist may study words regardless of possible applications, whereas a terminologist tends to analyse data based on one of the aforementioned applications.

While both of these fields have aspects that at times relate to one another, there are four main distinctions between the two which require discussion (Cabré, 1999a).

[7] Linguistics branch that deals with concepts and the terms that represent them, in particular contrasting terms for similar concepts, like what is done with a thesaurus.
[8] Linguistics branch that deals with words and phrases and the concepts that they represent.

Firstly, the domain. In the aforementioned section about lexicology, the analysis was that of the description of the lexical competence of speakers. It is assumed that speakers have a repertory of words, a set of word formation rules and linguistic and encyclopaedic data about each word. Terminology deals precisely with that of the words belonging to either a specific field (such as physics, anthropology or drawing) or a professional activity (business, industry, videogames, etc.). Therefore, the domain of lexicology is wider, and one could argue that terminology would be part of lexicology (Cabré, 1999a).

Secondly, the basic unit. Lexicology deals with the study of words, whereas terminology deals with terms. Terms and words are similar, but differ in the sense that a word is a unit described by a set of systematic linguistic characteristic and refers to an element in reality. A term is a unit with similar linguistic characteristics, but used in a special domain. With this affirmation, any word of a special subject field could be considered a term (Cabré, 1999a). From a linguistic analysis alone, there is no specificity that differs terms from a lexicon, only that when terms are compared with a dictionary, some specific differences emerge. One key factor is that terms are much more productive than in general language word formation, and tend to contain Greek/Latin combination forms (Cabré, 1999a). Another difference between words and terms is that of how pragmatics affects both. Pragmatically, terms and words differ in the situation in which they are used, the

topics they communicate, and the type of discourse in which they usually occur. Users of words are all speakers of a language. Users of terms are professionals that deal with the special subject field in question. Finally, Terms usually appear in technical and scientific discourse, i.e. in texts that are predominantly objective in nature (Cabré 1991).

Thirdly, the objectives. Lexicology deals with words in order to account for the lexical competence of speakers. Terminology, on the other hand, deals with terms in order to establish a reference to concepts of the real world. To put it plainly, as terminology does not aim to provide an explanation of the knowledge that experts have on terms, it instead aims to identify segments of a specialised professional reality, and naming the concepts belonging to a specific subject (Cabré, 1999a).

Finally, the methodology. Lexicology works from theoretical hypotheses, taken from samples of speakers' discourse. Terminology does not explain human behaviour, but rather looks for terms to fill a previous established conceptual grid (Cabré, 1999a).

In summary, the difference between terminology and lexicology is that terminology starts with the concept and lexicology from the word. Cabré (1999a) argues that the domains of both simply do not coincide, therefore terminology and

lexicology are different disciplines. Lexicology deals with words, and terminology deals with *terms.*

2.4.3. Terms

A term is a specialised word used in a specialised field. Gaussier (2001, p 168) as cited in L'Homme (202) wrote "There is no fully operational definition of terms". When trying to discover if a lexical unit is a term, there are many disagreements that can occur.

A term is effectively a word, but whereas a word is a unit described by a set of systematic linguistic characteristics, and refers to an element in reality. A term on the other hand is a unit with similar linguistic characteristics, but used in a specialised domain (Cabré, 1999a). In other words, a term is a word used in a special subject field. For example, in the field of biology, theology, sports, engineering, and videogames.

L'Homme (2020) provides a method for the traditional terminology approach, via an onomasiological approach which discusses how concepts can (theoretically) be delineated regardless of the linguistic expressions that label them. In this case, a concept is a designation, so "an input device", "captures movements on a flat

surface and translates these movements to control a pointer on a graphical display" correspond to the term "*mouse*".

Temmerman (2000) as cited in Kockaert and Steurs (2015, pp. 4 – 5) argues that "terms are not crucially different from words in the sense that both are based on prototypes". These authors believe that there is no distinction between terms and specialized vocabulary, unless there is a need to resolve conflicts, a term is created when precise boundaries are defined. In this sense, a term is *taming* the natural prototype.

Cabré (1999a), mentions that terms are primarily nouns, whereas verbs, adjectives and adverbs do not commonly appear when discussing terms. This is opposed to general vocabulary, which correspond to all types of words. Additionally, when looking at them from a pragmatic perspective, terms and words differ with respect to their users, the situations in which they are used, the topics they communicate, and the type of discourse in which they usually occur. This means that pragmatics is one of the key aspects to decide whether a lexical unit falls under the category of being a word or term.

2.4.3.1. Problems when identifying terms

One of the biggest issues when deciding whether a lexical unit is a term, is relating it to a specialised field. In order to exemplify this point, the examples are taken from *League of Legends*.

If a reader were to observe the sentence: *the player used the brush to attack the enemy*, one could argue that the sentence employs the term *brush.* However, *brush* is a commonly used word in general vocabulary, the main difference is that the term has undergone a form of semantic change inside the particular domain. One must be careful so as not to conflate terms with general vocabulary.

Terms from one videogame may also correspond to other videogames. Terms such as *AFK*[9] can be found in almost every online multiplayer game, and *bot lane, mid lane, top lane,* can also be found in other games in the MOBA genre. Therefore, a term being exclusive to *League of Legends,* may in fact be a term taken from another specialised domain and used in this one.

From the information that has been explained, it can be stated that the definition of a term is at times subjective in nature. Therefore, this study will discuss terms from a broad approach. More information can be found in the methodology section, but in summary, a term will be any lexical unit which is used in a special subject field, by experts of the special subject field, about the special subject field.

[9] Away From Keyboard.

2.4.3.2. Term formation

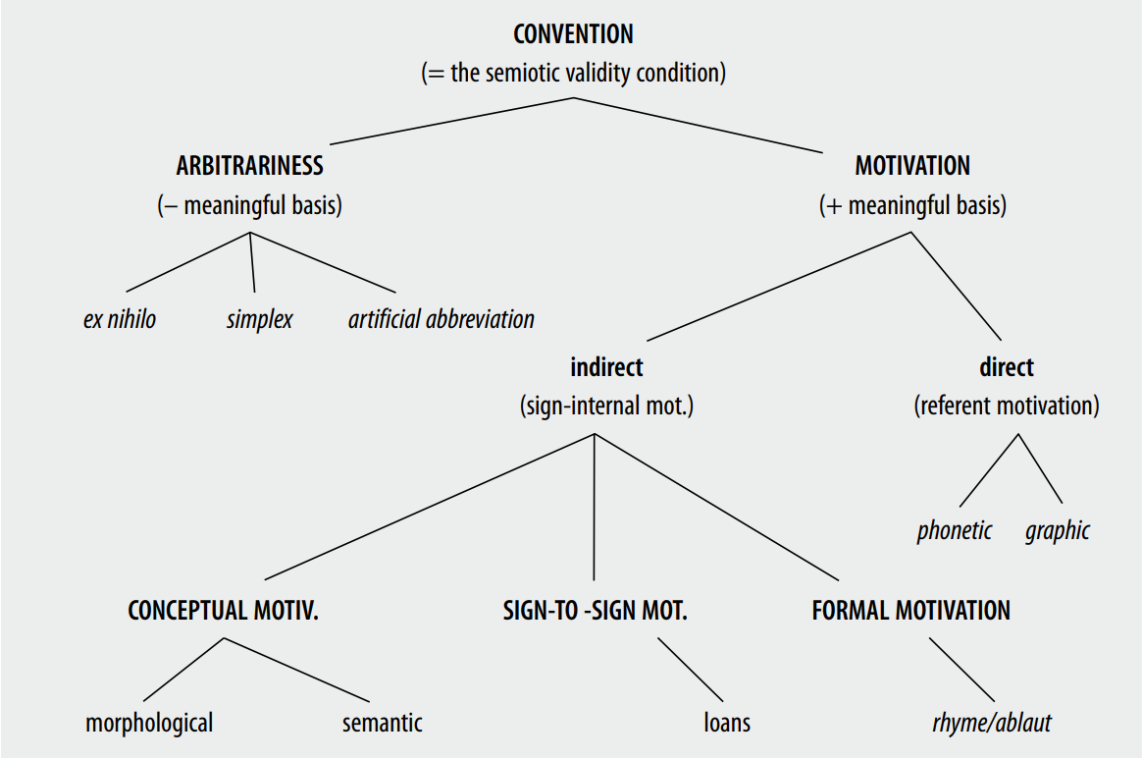
As a term is a lexical unit first and foremost, it goes through the same kind of word formation as most other words do. Mel'čuk and Milićević (2014) as cited in L'Homme (2020) mention that terms fall into the category of open class[10] units that are created on a regular basis, which convey a lexical meaning, i.e. they denote entities, activities, relations, properties or concepts that correspond to the speaker's construction of the real world. Additionally, they include nouns, verbs (other than auxiliaries), adjectives and adverbs.

Terms are formed for many different reasons. Myking (2008) provides a comprehensive view of the motivations behind term formation.

Figure 5

Motivations behind term formation according to Myking (2020 p. 12)

[10] Loosely defined, "open class" refers to parts of speech that have new words added to them constantly, like nouns or verbs. "Closed class" refers to parts of speech that don't have new words added to them constantly, like prepositions or articles.



Note: There exists another version of this figure, but it has been slightly reduced due to its unnecessary complexity. As this study does not intend to explore all edge cases behind the motivations of term formation, a general guideline is considered to be sufficient.

As for the patterns behind term formation, Sager (1990, p. 71) explains that there are three major approaches to designing terms, these being the use of existing resources, the modification of existing resources, the creation of new linguistic entities.

To give an example regarding the use of existing resources. Sager (1990) mentions reusing an old word that has been historically used for another purpose, for example, words like spaceship, aircraft or car. These words originally had different definitions compared to what they do today, but the definitions have been widened in order to accommodate a new concept. This is commonly known as “semantic shift/change”. Another example of reusing existing resources occurs within metaphors or similes. A speaker uses what they already know in order to designate another object, which then becomes a term. For example, *this is a rock-like substance* or *anchor* are examples of terms, albeit only when used in a special designation field.

There are several examples which fall under the category of modifying existing resources. Sager (1990) mentions four. The first is *derivation* or *affixation*, which is the addition of affixes (an example would be the prefix ‘a-‘ used in order like asexual or atypical). The second is *compounding*, which is the combination of existing words into new ones (*top + side + brush. Topside brush*). The third is *conversion*, which is changing a word class entirely (a noun into a verb, for example). The final is *compression*, which is any form of shortening (abbreviation, clipping, acronyms, etc.). These aspects of term formation are also similar to that of regular word formation. This is intended, as terms, like words, are effectively lexical units which undergo similar processes.

Finally, when discussing the creation of new linguistic entities, Sager (1990) mentions the aforementioned topic of neologisms, which can be totally new creations or borrowings from other languages. The author mentions the difficulty behind distinguishing neologisms and the re-use or modification of existing elements. Examples are how words like *diameter*, *tangent* or *spiral* are borrowings, whereas *excavator*, or *pylon* are Greek and Latin expression forms of new concepts.

From the point of view of a researcher, it is extremely difficult to fully express the difference between a neologism and a term. The simple way is to decide if the word is being used in a general context (neologism) or specialised context (term). However, this is not always so obvious, as the corpus may be taken from someone who is not an expert in the field, but may know a term and is applying it to a general situation. In order to classify the word as a term or neologism, it may depend on whether the researcher is a terminologist or neologist.

In the case of neologism, Cabré (1999a) defines the usage of a neologism in a specialised context as *neonymy*, with the terms being called *terminological neologisms* or *neonyms*. This will be explained in detail in the next section.

2.4.3.4. Neonymy

Cabré (1999a, p. 206) expresses that a neonym has the following set of factors that differs it from a regular neologism:

> 1. They (neologisms) are usually more spontaneous, i.e. they arise for no apparent reason, they appear to be frivolous and are generally short-lived; neonyms, on the other hand, arise because of a need for a designation and are usually more stable.
> 2. They (neologisms) are not affected by synonymy but usually coexist with synonyms and acquire a certain stylistic value as a contrasting feature. Neonyms, in contrast, reject synonymy because it can distort communicative efficiency.
> 3. They (neologisms) tend toward formal conciseness, whereas many neonyms are phrases.
> 4. They (neologisms) often appeal to old and dialectal forms of the language and to borrowings, rather than to compounds based on neoclassical languages.
> 5. They (neologisms) do not usually spread beyond the language In which they have been created, as opposed to neonyms, which are designed to be international.

Cabré (1999a) expresses that neonyms cannot be separated from the features expected of terms. A neonym has the same characteristics of other terms, which according to the author, involve a lack of ambiguity, a single reference, the belonging to a special field, stability, and a conformity to existing term formation patterns.

As a final note, Cabré (1999a) mentions that a society must continuously import techniques, science and technology, and that it may control or adapt loan words in order to not become overwhelmed by foreign structures. This aspect is more prominent in translation studies or neological studies in non-English languages,

but it is important to note that an individual videogame might use a different term to describe the same concept found in another videogame. For example, the term to describe being attacked by two teams at the same time is known as *third partying* in *Apex Legends.* While in *The Finals* the same term is known *as double teaming.*

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

League of Legends is a *multiplayer online battle arena* (*MOBA*) that has been active since the early 2010s, becoming one of the most played and influential video games in recent history. Given the complexity and size of its player base, it is reasonable to expect the community has developed unique forms of communication and interaction. Understanding how the *League of Legends* community constructs and evolves its language is important not only to observe social and linguistic dynamics within the videogame area, but also to understand similar patterns in real-world communities. However, despite the global reach and the size of its community, academic research surrounding linguistic aspects of videogames, especially *League of Legends*, remains moderately scarce (Cerezo-Pizarro, 2023). Of the studies made, the focus has been primarily on neologisms, and not terminology. Additionally, the terminological studies that were found only express terms in general areas of videogames or focus on one *League of Legends World Championship* from a mostly anecdotal perspective (Kuchumidze & Jolchibekova, 2024). Due to this, the present study aims to expand the area of terminological studies in videogames by analysing terms from *League of Legends* using a qualitative perspective. The focus will be on identifying the number of terms used over the lifespan of this videogame alongside an analysis of the change of these terms. Additionally, this study will be in English, as some other

studies choose to focus instead on the English influence in their respective languages (Cerna Garcés & Vizcarra Sepúlveda, 2022; Okazaki, 2023).

Capturing moments in time in *League of Legends* may provide an insight into how the community has maintained relevance and interest over the years, when other multiplayer games fade into obscurity. Additionally, it may be possible to see how culture evolves over time, within the context of videogames.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1. Main objective

Examine the evolution of terms over time in *League of Legends World Championships* from the years 2011, 2017, and 2024.

4.2. Specific objectives

1. Identify the terms that have emerged within the *League of Legends World Championships* between 2011, 2017 and 2024.
2. Analyse the terminological density of terms in the *League of Legends World Championships*.
3. Discuss whether the number of terms used has increased, decreased, or remained constant over time.
4. Examine the morphological and lexical patterns used in the formation of these terms.

5. METHODS

5.1. Type of study

The following work is a descriptive, explorative investigation which focuses on language spoken by presenters in *League of Legends Worlds Championship* matches, with the aim being to describe how terms are used by these presenters in a natural context. The study is qualitative, as it focuses on finding terms and analysing the change between years.

5.2. Corpus

In order to extract terms for analysis, a suitable corpus had to be found. In the case of most multiplayer videogames, there are several areas to choose from to have a corpus. One method is to extract terms from online forums, as these areas are veritable hotspots for neologisms and terms. Another method is to use large online corpora, such as *English-corpora.org* which was used (albeit the Portuguese version) in the study of Okazaki (2023). In-situ investigations are also commonplace, which involves extracting terms from inside the chat function that games provide. Other common term hotspots are interviews, blog posts, surveys and articles. However, an important aspect to consider about videogames is that

it is an audio-visual interactive media. In this sense, one aspect of media that is almost synonymous with videogames is video streaming.

Videogame players that transmit their gameplay online, also known as *streamers* or *content creators,* tend to play a videogame and record their screen at the same time, then upload it to video streaming sites such as YouTube, or in real time with Twitch.tv. Sometimes if the videogame event is large, a company or organization will upload or transmit the gameplay from their account, which is the case for large videogame tournaments, such as the ones for *Counter Strike*, *Valorant, Street Fighter, DOTA,* and important for this study, *League of Legends*.

The *League of Legends World Championship* (sometimes known as just *Worlds*) is the largest e-sports event surrounding the videogame *League of Legends*, with the best teams from around the world being flown into a specific host country, similar to what is done with other tournaments like The FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games. These teams then compete on a large stage, in front of hundreds of thousands of fans, through a tournament setting until only two teams are left. The event is hosted by Riot Games, and they employ many people to set up and manage the event, from directors, cleaners, security, managers, camera crew, production staff, and presenters (or casters). The casters are oftentimes considered the *face* of the tournament, as they are dressed up, they present the pre-game casting (where they discuss the teams, the players, and voice their

predictions), the in-game casting (where they discuss the game, the plays and the players), and the post-game casting (where they interview players and coaches on the performance, give predictions for the next match, and comment on plays from the previous game in more detail).

Each game of the tournament is a best of five (BO5), and upon losing the BO5, the team is eliminated from the tournament. The most important game of the *World Championship* is the final game, which is another BO5. Winning this one, grants the team victory for the tournament, winning a trophy, recognition internationally, and a prize pool, consisting of several million US dollars.

Every game in the series is streamed live on Twitch.tv and YouTube, allowing fans to also watch the games from the comfort of their own homes. Just like the in-person event, the fans from their homes can also watch the games on their computers and listen to the presenters discuss what is happening during the tournament.

The *League of Legends World Championship* has been taking place for over a decade. While there was one event in 2010 known as *WCG Grand Finals 2010*, the first official worlds tournament took place in 2011, during *DreamHack*, which is a videogame event held in Sweden. The most recent event to date took place

in 2024 in Europe, concluding in London[11].

The *League of Legends World Championship* finals from 2011, 2017, and 2024 have been used as a corpus. The biggest and most watched games are always the final games of the *Worlds* series as these games tend to contain the best teams, with the most interesting games, and the highest viewer base. The presenters must be able to accurately express these games to a large number of people effectively and efficiently. The reasoning for the distribution is due to the objective of this investigation, to see how the language has evolved over time. Simply analysing how terms are used in one game would not be enough to argue that videogames could contain a complex and evolving culture, therefore multiple games have been studied.

Of these games, only the final game of each tournament has been considered, with terms being taken from when the game is on screen, neither including preamble nor post-game interviews. The videos have had their automatic transcriptions downloaded from YouTube and pasted in a document in order to complete the next step of the analysis.

The transcriptions needed to be corrected for errors, as the YouTube auto

[11] This chapter was written in May 2025, therefore the 2025 tournament had not been done by this point.

subtitles feature oftentimes makes mistakes, due to factors such as unclear microphones, background noise, multiple voices, or a combination of these factors. This processes had to be done manually, as no tools yet exist that can accurately correct transcriptions without hallucinating.

One key factor to note is that the presenters are not the same in every video. This is an inevitability when it comes to sports broadcasting, as new presenters are rotated due to contractual obligations, personal motivation, or outside factors. More information is mentioned in the limitations section.

The first video is called "*aAa vs fnatic - Grand Final Season 1 Championship"*. This was uploaded in 2011 on YouTube with roughly 1 million views. Analysis of the video begins at 1:14:20 and ends at 1:58:00. A duration of 43 minutes and 40 seconds. The game is presented by Rivingtonthe3rd and Phreak.

The second video is called "*SKT vs SSG Grand-Final ALL GAMES FULL | World Championship 2017 | SK Telecom T1 vs Samsung Galaxy"* on Youtube with roughly 783,000 views. Analysis of the video begins at 3:44:43 and ends at 4:24:58. A duration of 40 minutes and 15 seconds. The game is presented by Deficio, Kobe, and Phreak.

The final video is called "*Worlds 2024 - T1 vs BLG - Grand Final"* with roughly 10

million views. Analysis of the video begins at 5:53:00 and ends at 6:25:10. A duration of 32 minutes and 10 seconds. The game is presented by Medic, Vedius, and Kobe.

An example of a term in *League of Legends* can be defined using the proposal by Cabré (1999a) as a base. This proposal has been slightly adjusted to fit that of a videogame context. Therefore, a word has been considered a term if:

1. It refers to a concept exclusive to the *League of Legends* discourse community.

This step is the key to determining term identification. The transcript is from presenters discussing a professional game in *League of Legends*, which is considered discourse within a community. This step could be applied to any corpus taken from a specialised context. However, the key word here is *videogame concept*, as that excludes general vocabulary.

It was expected that some of the terms used were found in areas outside just *League of Legends*. Terms such as *health* or *mana* do not necessarily relate to *League of Legends* exclusively, but instead they relate to videogames as a whole. When these terms were extracted, they were analysed among the other terms, as

despite being general videogame terms, they are still used within the context of *League of Legends.*

2. It is intelligible among experts or advanced players.

Confirmation that a word is a term does not necessarily require an expert to speak it. Nevertheless, the word primarily needs to be understood and commonly used by experts, who in this case are the presenters of the *League of Legends* matches, and the terms are used by the players who both participate in the matches and who watch the games unfold.

One of the more difficult aspects to define is *advanced player*. It was impossible to ask each individual viewer of this tournament whether they understand the terms used, or whether they consider themselves advanced players. Due to this impossibility, an assumption has been made. Those who are watching the tournament either play or watch enough *League of Legends* to understand the terms used, and can therefore be defined as advanced players.

As this may not be enough to justify a term, the following step was also considered:

3. It avoids synonymy or excessive variation.

The terms observed did not have much in the way of synonymy. While some terms do contain slight variations in their formations, the variations are limited to that of at most, one similar meaning. Therefore, it can be reasonably assumed that the terms extracted did not possess synonymy or excessive variation. A term that had variation did not necessarily disqualify it from being a term, but instead it might have implied that the term is not as specific as once thought.

Once the terms were identified, they were then extracted from the transcriptions. The extraction method was manual, where the researcher had to look over the three transcriptions, apply a judgement based on the definition of a term, and extract it into a table where it was then grouped.

As a final consideration, the list of extracted terms was sent to experts in the field of both videogames and English language. In regard to the *League of Legends* expert, he is a professional player that has reached the highest level, being *Challenger*. This player has participated in a professional team, and has played the game for thousands of hours. It can therefore be said that this player possesses an advanced understanding of the game. With this taken into account, he has confirmed that the words are specific to *League of Legends*, additionally mentioning that some words are used in general videogame vocabulary, but are considered *League of Legends* terms due to the context they are found in.

The second expert is a university professor of the English language department from *Universidad San Sebastian*. This English professor is not an expert in videogames, but is an expert in the English language. Therefore, this professor has been able to analyse the term list sent and has confirmed their categorization as terms, as they are not used in general vocabulary.[12]

The identified terms upon being placed in a table needed to undergo a suitable process of analysis. While the following section discusses the analysis process, the following table provides an overview of the terms considered during the analysis, and what the analysis of one specific term may have looked like.

Table 1

Example of a term within the database of game transcriptions.

Term	**Variants**	**Word class**	**Term formation**	**Context**	**Comments**
run down[13]	run it	verb	Semantic change	"he's running it	Commonly used in gerund form.

[12] The researcher wishes to thank the expert in the field of videogames who wishes to remain anonymous, and Professor Camila Polanco, for their help in the confirmation of this section.
[13] This term is purely for exampling purposes and has no basis on this present study

				down”	

This table has six different sections which make up the database. Firstly, the term itself. This section shows the term which has been extracted from the corpus in its base form. In the case of adjectives, some of them had the suffix *-ed* added as that was the base form for that specific adjective. Other adjectives were untouched.

The second section shows the possible variants the term has, in order to check to see if the term had excessive variation. While the vast majority of terms had this category blank, it was used a handful of times for some specific terms, which are mentioned in the discussion section.

The third section shows the word class. According to authors such as L’Homme (2020) and Cabré (1999a). It was expected that the terms would be nouns in their majority, though verbs, adjectives, and adverbs were also expected to appear to a lesser degree.

The fourth section shows the term formation. A term may be formed based on the use of existing resources, the modification of existing resources, or the creation of new linguistic entities. In this study, the categories for this section are

compounding, compression, conversion, derivation, semantic change, and other (terms which are excluded from the previous categories).

The fifth section shows the context. This section provided relevant information as to where the term was taken from. As *League of Legends* is a very complex game to understand, even for advanced players, the context surrounding the term can help with its comprehension. Additionally, this section was important for term analysis, as the syntax could help in revising what the word class of the term is.

The final section shows the comments related to the terms. These comments were mostly for the researcher to categorize terms and come back to them during the discussion section.

5.2.1. Excluded terms

During the transcription, there were several terms that designate a character, or player in *League of Legends*. These terms, despite being part of the game, were excluded from the term analysis, due to their status as proper nouns.

Another exclusion were terms related to the tournament setting. As the main event is a tournament, there were many tournament specific words such as big game, best of three, finals, elimination round, reverse sweep, etc. These words are more

related to general tournament formatting and not specifically terms in the area of *League of Legends,* therefore, they were excluded.

5.2.2. Limitations

As was mentioned, the transcription contained several errors due to microphone interference, or the YouTube auto transcription software being unable to identify uncommon words or accents. Additionally, at times multiple presenters talked over one another which made extracting specific words impossible. These sections were labelled as (unintelligible) or (incomprehensible) within the transcription, and were not considered for term analysis.

Another limitation is related to the presenters of these games. Throughout the 15 years of *League of Legends* history, there have been many presenters employed by Riot games, and they can be rotated out in-between years for the aforementioned reasons. This is an expected limitation, and it should not influence term analysis, as all presenters are employed to cast the same matches as objectively as they can.

5.3 Analysis Methodology

In order to complete the first objective, the games were transcribed so the terms

could be identified. The identification of terms was mentioned in the previous section, and it has been applied to every potential term in order to see how many terms exist within the transcriptions. While this step was relatively simple, it was also the longest step, as the number of terms that may have appeared could number the thousands, and multiple passes needed to be done to check if the words follow the criteria.

In order to complete the second objective, the terminological density was calculated by doing a simple calculation of the total number of words divided by the total number of terms found. The idea behind discussing the terminological density, was to see if the number of terms discovered constituted a large portion of the games, and if this percentage was comparable to other studies. The terminological density calculation was also a simple process, but the potential reasons behind the percentage needed to be considered.

The results from the second objective were needed in order to complete the third objective, which is to discuss how many terms have been used over time. The terminological density of the three games was individually considered, and then compared to one another. This was done to see the evolution of the number of terms used and what year used the most number. While the length of the games was not equal, the percentage gave a more accurate overview of term usage, and the year that contained the most terms could have specific reason as to why there

were more terms used over the others.

In order to complete the final objective, an analysis was made that discussed the lexical and morphological formations of these terms. This analysis was based on the works of Sager (1990), with influences from Myking (2008), and L'Homme (2020). The categories that were used are compounding, compression, conversion, derivation and semantic change. In the case that a term did not correspond with any of the previous categories, it was labelled as *other*. This was by far the most complicated step, as there were several problems when identifying terms which were both expected and unexpected. An example of an expected problem was the amount of time needed in order to classify all the terms, and an example of an unexpected problem was when multiple terms had the same spelling but different meanings. These types of problems were resolved in a timely manner, and the results of the study can be seen in the following chapter.

6. RESULTS

This section expresses the data in its base form. Explanations, special cases, and detailed comments are expressed in the discussion section.

6.1. Total terms

The total number of terms observed were 2451 over the three games. The first transcription contained 937 terms, the second transcription contained 891 terms, and the third transcription contained 623 terms. As the games were not equal in length (Game 1 was 45:55, Game 2 was 40:17, and Game 3 was 32:08), the percentage of terms used gives an idea as to the terminological density. Table 2 expresses the data which is used further along for analysis purposes.

Table 2

Number of words in all games with the terminological density

	Words	**Terms**	**Terminological density**
Game 1	10838	937	8.65%
Game 2	8463	891	10.53%

Game 3	6298	623	9.89%
Total	25599	2451	9.57%

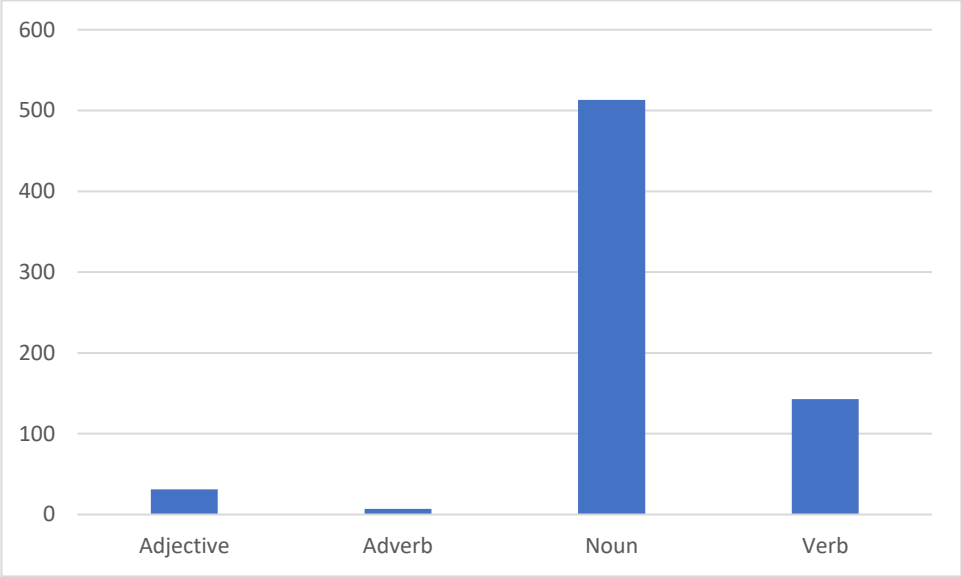
Regarding unique terms, there were 694 observed, which equates to 2.71% of the overall words used in the three games. These unique terms are the object of the following analysis.

6.2. Word class

The results from the study demonstrated a remarkably high number of nouns, followed by a comparatively low number of verbs, then adjectives, and finally adverbs. This can be seen in figure 6 below.

Figure 6

Word class count



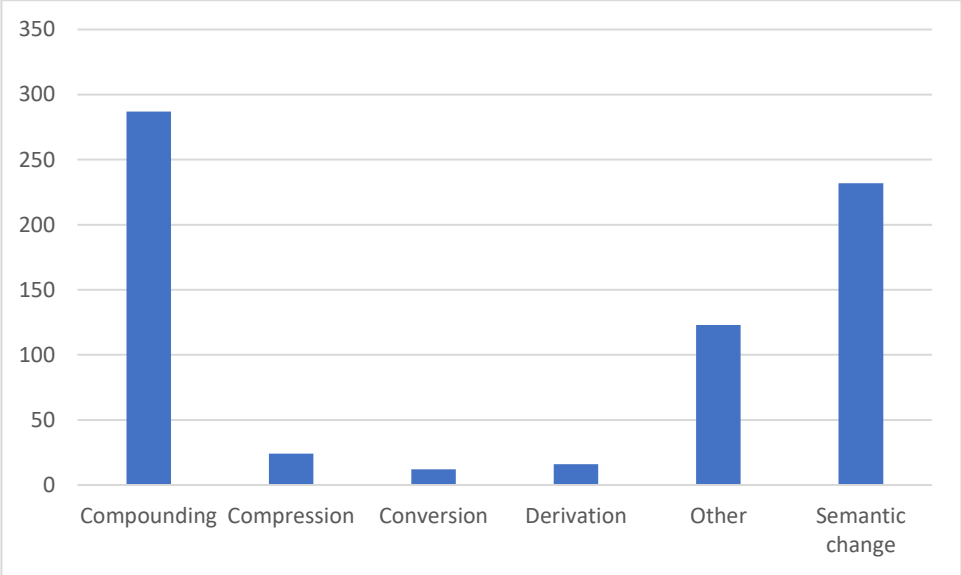
The results of this figure are consistent with most terminological studies, according to L'Homme (2020, p. 28) "An analysis carried out within a knowledge-driven approach inevitably favors nouns".

6.3. Term formation results

In the case of term formation, the highest number of terms observed were made with compounding, and the second highest was semantic change. The third highest category was other, followed by compression, derivation, and finally conversion. The final three categories were relatively low in comparison to the other three, which can be seen in figure 7.

Figure 7

Term formation count



The category of “other” mostly falls under terms that do not have a clear formation, and therefore require a slightly different analysis. This is explained in further detail during the discussion.

6.3.1. Word class according to term formation

While nouns predominate terminological studies, the formations behind terms are less clear, and were also considered for analysis. Table 3 expresses the type of word class associated with their formations.

Table 3

Term formation according to word class

	Nouns	**Verbs**	**Adjectives**	**Adverbs**
Compounding	238	49	3	5
Semantic change	127	84	19	2
Other	123	0	0	0
Compression	21	2	1	0
Derivation	7	3	6	0
Conversion	5	5	2	0

6.4 Term characteristics and phenomenon

During the term analysis, trends started to appear in regard to different areas of play. Many terms referenced an element of gameplay which fell into six distinct areas. These areas are map-specific, ability-specific, item-specific, objective-specific, positioning-specific, and general videogame-specific. Alongside these elements, there were minor cases that require more discussion, also known as *special cases*. These special cases refer to terms that did not fit in any of the aforementioned categories due to their unique formations or historical contexts

which have been adapted to fit the context of *League of Legends*. A section has been added in the discussion which addresses these terms.

7. DISCUSSION

This section is designed in an order that follows the objectives of this study. As the first objective was addressed with the results section (this being, identifying terms used in *League of Legends*), chapter 7.1 is used to discuss the terminological density, as well as to discuss the change in terms over time. Chapter 7.2 contains the largest amount of data, which explores the morphological and lexical patterns observed.

7.1. Terminological density and evolution

Of the 25599 words used throughout the three games, there was a terminological density of 9.57%, with 2451 words being considered terms, and 694 of them being wholly unique terms. The rather high number could be due to the nature of videogaming. Due to the lack of professional restrictions placed on gamers, they tend to speak in a more informal manner, allowing for more levels of variation. This may explain why the presenters used a very large number of terms to describe what was taking place during the game.

Due to the explorative nature of this study, there are few projects which it can be compared to. However, one study was found from Pomat (2025), who discussed

terms in areas in applied linguistics, chemistry, education, nursing, and finance. While the objects of study were predominately Academic Word Lists (AWL), they are still considered specialised words used in a specialised domain, and therefore classify as a reference point for the purposes of comparison. The terminological densities found were 11.17% in applied linguistics articles, 4.94% in education research articles, 13.64% in English nursing articles, and 10.46% in financial articles. Another study from Oliva Sanz (2023), had a terminological density of 19.34%, which demonstrates that this study in the area of videogames, has a comparatively similar reference point. However, as terminological studies within videogames is not a common topic, more research needs to be undertaken in order to have a rigid point of comparison, as the only studies found were unrelated to videogames as a whole.

The lowest number of terms used was in Game 1, with only 8.65% of the words used being terms. This is expected, as the game was only about a year old, which means that specific strategies and gameplay variations had not fully developed. Some terms used within Games 2 and Game 3 were unused in Game 1, as the concept had not existed by that time, such as *elder dragon, sweeper, grubs* and *demolish*.

Game 2 had the most terms, with a terminological density of 10.53%, which is the highest of the three games. As expected, some terms refer to aspects that did not

exist in Game 1. For example, the term *gromp* refers to a jungle objective which simply did not exist in Game 1, as it was added many years later. However, it is unknown if this is the primary reason for the increase in terms.

Game 3 had the second highest number of terms, at 9.89%. While not as high as Game 2, it is still more than 1% higher than Game 1. Similar to Game 2, some concepts only existed in 2024, such as *hextech* or *infernal* which refer to jungle objectives which were added many years after Game 2. An important note regarding Game 3 is that it contained concepts such as *tempo* or *tier x*, which despite these mechanics and strategies having existed for many years, these terms refer to advanced concepts which have become commonplace for contemporary professional *League of Legends* gameplay, and are mentioned more so in modern day games.

From the percentages shown, it can be stated that the number of terms has increased over time, with Game 2 and Game 3 having an increased number of terms in comparison to Game 1. As previously mentioned, the change in presenters could have influenced the increase in terminological density, however, this is unlikely as the presenters have the same job every year, which is discussing the games as they are taking place, and as most games have between 2-3 presenters at one time, excessive variation between presenters is unlikely.

Another factor that could have influenced the change in terminological density, is the natural evolution of the game. *League of Legends* uses a *free to play* model, which involves constant content updates, also known as *patches*, with large, often themed updates happening at the start of every year. Game 1 was played on a very old patch, and many aspects of *League of Legends* were rudimentary, either due to the lack of experience of the players, or the map being bare in comparison to later years. However, as the game developed, new features were added, and old features were changed. An example is with the term *blue trinket,* which is an item added in 2013, or *hextech,* which was added in 2022. Additionally, as players gained more experience, specific strategies such as *baron fight, tempo, catching the wave, pulling the* wave, etc., also appeared. These strategies could have been used in 2011; however, the players did not possess enough experience for them to have been invented. These new features could have influenced the increase in terms, but it would not explain Game 3, which despite being more recent, had less terms in comparison to Game 2. Therefore, the change in terms over time is more than likely a combination of all of the mentioned reasons.

7.2. Morphological and lexical patterns

7.2.1. Word class

There were 4 different parts of speech observed: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

7.2.1.1. Nouns

Nouns make up the vast majority of terms taken from the three games. Many of these nouns refer to the aforementioned specific areas, such as map-specific terminology “that one down at the *bottom lane”*, objective-specific terminology “going to help Linak with the *Golem”*, videogame-specific terminology “likely there's a *Spam* lots of *aoe”*, item-specific terminology “the *regeneration pendant* of uh *fairy charm*”, positioning-specific “flashes getting used to get this *out of position* you know”, and ability-specific terminology “he does land the *sear”*. There are many other terms in this section that do not fall under these categories, such as strategies “we're actually going to have an *invasion* here from fnatic”, gameplay mechanics “he did *max W* in fact”, or a combination of such.

Many nouns are either made from compounding, followed by the category of *other*, and semantic change being a close third. While derivation and compression do occur in this category, a lot of these terms are in fact simply two other terms put together, such as *bot laner*, *mid wave, auto attack* and *supportive champion*. In almost all cases, a form of semantic change occurred before compounding, but this can be applied to most terms discovered, as multiple instances of term

formation have occurred, such as *aoe spam (area of effect = aoe. Then aoe + spam*).

Many of these nouns are shortened further based on context, for example the terms *steal*, *carry*, *plate*, *infernal*, *build*, etc., are all specifically used in other smaller micro-aspects of *League of Legends* play. *Steal* is commonly used with the ability *smite* in order to *smite-steal* an objective. *Carry* is commonly used with words like *ADC* or *bot* to refer to the most important player on the team for dealing damage, and metaphorically *carrying their team to victory*. *Plate* refers to *turret plating*, which is a mechanic added in season 8 to the pre-existing turrets. *Infernal* is a shortening of *infernal dragon*, an objective, or *neutral jungle monster* which teams can take in order to gain an advantage. *Build* refers to the specific items that a player has bought, which increases the statistics of the player, and oftentimes granting an extra ability.

Many of these nouns are also used as verbs, such as *counter jungle*, *spam*, *push*, *trade*, *tank*, *path*, *follow up*, *split push*, and *stun*. These terms are oftentimes map-specific, such as “these *lanes* are quite pushed” and “they are *laning* roughly equivalently”. They are also ability-specific, such as “it's one of the few mages who actually have a *stun”* and “I can think of off hand [sic] who *stuns* early on in the game”. The terms are very similar in nature, and the semantics of the noun usually allows understanding of the verb and vice versa: “he did use *teleport* to

get in there” and “the person that *teleports* in will not be seen right away”. In some cases, the verb allows the creation of nouns: “Yellowstar going to *last hit* some minions” and they won't be able to get too many *last hits*”.

7.2.1.2. Verbs

Many of these terms have multiple potential formations. For example, in the case of *bot laner*, it is unclear whether it was a process of derivation, and that made *laner* come first, and then compounding the term *bot,* or if the compounded form of *bot lane* came first, and then had the derivation applied. As it is impossible to know which was the final term formation applied, only the most probable type of formation was considered. When these cases occurred, one had to consider the natural progress of the game’s development cycle. This videogame was released with a foremost focus on *laning*, and therefore characters began to perform better in specific *lanes*. From this point, a metagame was developed, which meant that the *laners* started to perform better in specific lanes, either *top, mid,* or *bot*. The final process therefore must be that of a compounded word. Due to the subjective nature of this conclusion, arguments could be made that the process was derivation. However, these subjective points are commonplace within qualitative studies, and do not detract from the point that many formations have occurred.

The majority of verbs are formed from semantic change. Terms such as *push* have the meaning of exerting force on something to make it move, whereas in *League of Legends* the definition is killing enemy minions to make your minions move towards the enemy base, which is a radical change in meaning. Compounding is second, with the creation of many phrasal verbs, such as *flash away*, *heal up, ward down*, *crash in* and *pull back*. One phrasal verb was made via an adjective and a noun “Triple A will actually *blue pill* back”.

Many verbs were made with get, such as *get in*, *get silenced*, *get low*, *get caught*, *get chased down*, *get tanked up* and *get turned on*, with semantic change happening alongside compounding.

In the cases of derivation, over- is the only prefix added, such as *overextend*, *overstep*, and *overcommit*.

7.2.1.3. Adjectives

Adjectives are the third highest number of terms observed, with most being formed with semantic change. Terms such as *pushed*, *pushed up*, *zoned off*, *secured* and *denied* all have a general vocabulary counterpart, but the meaning is different inside *League of Legends*, for example: *Punished* means to receive a penalty for making a mistake, whereas in *League of Legends* it means a player is

playing in such a way, that the other team can take advantage of the situation: “though they had vision on him and that's what CuVee desperately needs on the Cho’Gath so he´s not *punished* again”.

At times, the suffix -less is used to form the adjective, such as *tpless*, *manaless*, *turretless*, and -able is also used, such as in the term *gankable*. The counterpart to -less, -ful is not used.

7.2.1.4. Adverbs

There are only 7 adverbs in total: *up*, *out of position*, *in range*, *in position*, *tanky*, *out of place*, and *early on*. Most of these adverbs refer to how *League of Legends* is a game that involves a lot of positioning, in order to use abilities, take objectives, and use your team as bait.

Early and *late* are oftentimes used to refer to the game state, as early in the game characters are often weak, whereas late in the game the characters have gold and experience, making them much stronger.

Up is a very special case, because it has two definitions. In the case of an adverb, the definition is that of having an advantage ”the advantage 900 gold *up”*. The

other definition is that of an adjective, which means spawned, or appeared “dragon is of course *up”*.

Tank is the only term that is used as a noun, verb, adjective and adverb: “it's a major *tank* of support”, “Huni’s *tanking* the tower”, “it *gets tanked up* by the Leona”, “PK loves to play *tanky* with his Mage”. While not documented, the adjective *tanky* and *tanked* are also commonly used as an adjective, however, this is undocumented and cannot be corroborated from this study alone.

7.2.1.5. Discussion of word class findings

With the vast majority of terms found belonging to the category of nouns, it can be stated that the reason for many terms is due to the need for designation. This is consistent with most other terminological studies (L’Homme 2020), the need for designation tends to create the need for terms.

The word classes of nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives fall under the category of open class parts of speech, which tends to accept new additions much easier than closed class. As no pronouns, interjections, conjunctions, or prepositions were used as terms, it can be stated that specialised vocabulary in *League of Legends* adheres to traditional grammar rules. However, due to the sense of informality and community that videogames tend to create, the types of formation

are more radical than what occurs in general vocabulary, which is expected according to Cabré (1999a). Examples such as *get turned on, burst, buff, race, tank, pop, ult, rotate,* and *auto,* are so far detached from the original meaning that it may be difficult to fully express the importance without having played the game.

It is important to remember that *League of Legends* is a game with a fail state and a win state. Due to the many advantages with obtaining the win state, i.e., winning the tournament, there appears to be great care in using terms that allow for the easiest and clearest way of understanding a given situation. For example, when the presenters say, “even though that *baron fight* just happened”, an expert player immediately understands that a fight occurred between the two teams, this fight was around the objective *baron,* and due to the importance of that objective, these types of fights are common enough to have a specific term made for them.

Verbs carry the semantic meaning from their noun counterparts most of the time. When the presenters use terms such as *backdoor, push down, freeze, secure, tping,* etc*.,* There is almost always a noun counterpart that involves the same meaning, and the verb simply means to effectuate the action. However, phrasal verbs tend to break this action and tend to be enigmatic in their meanings; an example is *tank up*, as this doesn’t mean to be a tank, instead it refers to the idea of absorbing damage and remain standing, like a tank. Another example is *open up* which is often used as an order in general English, but the term refers to the

idea of destroying a tower in order to put pressure on the enemy team and allow your team to act more freely, in essence, making the map more available to play. It can be said that the general definition can help to understand the specific usage, but not fully, as it is mostly contextual.

Adjectives, similar to verbs, tend to have a noun counterpart. *Laned* is converted from *lane, pushed* is converted from *push*, *ccd* is converted from *cc,* etc. It appears to be the case that nouns are primordial in term usage, with other forms branching from them. One hypothesis could be that terms are created to designate a concept, whereupon the action of effectuating this concept is created (verb form), and then the concept of the action being done is created (adjective form). The adverb form is trickier to fit into the hypothesis, as it appears to be formed in regard to the way something is done or where something is. As this process is rare, it would also explain why there were so few adverbs observed.

One interesting formation process that appeared using derivation, was the usage of the suffix *-less.* As *League of Legends* is a resource intensive game, and many games revolve around attrition, that would mean that being without something, i.e., -less, would come as an advantage for the enemy. *Turretless, manaless, flashless and tpless,* are all examples of how resources are used in order to have an advantage, and not having this resource is a point of intrigue, as in doing so,

one can make a play off the information. This could also explain why *-ful* is never used, as it is implied that the ability is ready, which should always be assumed.

Adverbs are almost always related to positioning, verbal phrases such as *out of position, in range, in position,* and *out of place,* denote areas of play which are important, as most abilities in *League of Legends* have a specific range in order to be used. This is what makes positioning such a fundamental aspect of play, and not having good positioning is notable, hence the presenters commenting on it. *Early on,* and the undocumented *late*, refer to how matches in *League of Legends* are effectively a race against the clock. As players generate gold passively, it is common to push an advantage if the players has kills, cs, objectives or turrets, as this implies a gold advantage, which can lead to buying more items, taking objectives, and winning the game. However, the most advantaged team can still get overconfident and lose due to allowing the opposing team to come back by not using their time and resources efficiently, hence the noun *comeback*.

In summary, nouns are used to denote areas of *League of Legends*. Verbs are used commonly as a noun counterpart, or to express a strategy, adjectives are explanations of nouns or player/game states, and adverbs tend towards positioning or gametime.

7.2.2. Term formation discussion

As was mentioned in the results, 276 terms fall under compounding, 241 terms fall under semantic change, 130 terms fall under other, 22 terms fall under compression, 15 terms fall under derivation, and 11 terms fall under conversion.

Many of these terms have multiple potential formations. For example, in the case of *bot laner*, it is unclear whether it was a process of derivation, and that made *laner* come first, and then compounding the term *bot,* or if the compounded form of *bot lane* came first, and then had the derivation applied. As it is impossible to know which was the final term formation applied, only the most probable type of formation was considered.

This chapter mentions the most notable cases regarding term formation, such as most common terms, alongside unique aspects that terms inside *League of Legends* possess.

7.2.2.1 Compounding

Of the 273 cases of compounding, the majority of cases are nouns. These terms can be map-specific (*mid lane*), objective-specific (*baron pit*), ability-specific (*karthus wall*), positioning-specific (*out of position*), item-specific (*BF sword*), and general videogame-specific (*follow up*).

Of the types of compounding that involve noun formation, the three types are noun + noun (*skill shot*), verb + noun (*rush baron*) and adjective + noun (*tanky dps*). The main difference between compounding in general vocabulary and term vocabulary, is that in the case of *League of Legends*, acronyms are commonly used within terms and allow for more productivity. For example, *aoe spam* or *AD carry.*

Three very important terms used in compounding are *top, mid* and *bot*. 14 terms contain *top*, 15 contain *mid* and 20 contain *bot*. One of the explanations as to why these are so common, is due to how presenters tend to reference a place in order to have listeners access their pre-existing knowledge of the surrounding area, which explains why terms such as *support, carry, turret, side of the map, side, laner, vision control, brush, wave, push, tower, tier, jungle, lane duo, inhibitor, lane priority, matchup, sider,* and *side objective* are all commonly used with *top, mid* or *bot*. As much of the matches of *League of Legends* are focused on *lanes*, it could explain why map-specific terms are so productive in nature.

In some cases, a preposition is put between two terms to link them somehow, for example, a *push in lane* “not really *gank* but y’know a *push in lane*”. This term may simply be two terms together (*push* & *lane*), however, due to the meaning of *push* being the aforementioned use of killing minions, a *push in lane* refers to a

different concept altogether, that of simply walking down the lane to try and *kill* the opponent. Perhaps due to the simplicity of this strategy and how infrequently it appears, no term has been created, and existing vocabulary was needed to be used.

Side, fight, damage, flash, and *dps,* are commonly used terms that frequent the category of compounding. In the case of *side,* it is commonly used with *top*, *bottom*, and *lane*, such as *side lane*, *top side*, *top side of the map*, *other side of the map*, and *bottom side of the map*. *Fight* is commonly used with terms around objectives, such as *grub fight*, *baron fight*, *dragon fight*, and more general fights such as *team fight*. *Damage* appears in formations such as *return damage*, *top sider damage*, *damage crits*, and *single target damage. Flash* is used both at the start and the end of terms, such as *body slam flash*, *flash root*, *flash* Q, and *flash ult*. Finally, *dps*[14] is used, albeit seldomly in terms such as *ranged dps* or *tanky dps*.

With verbs, get + adjective is the most common formation, such as *get tanked up* or *get turned on*. *Down* and *away* are also often used in verbs, such as *swap down* or *smite away*.

7.2.2.2. Semantic change

[14] Damage Per Second

Semantic change makes up the second highest number of terms extracted from the 3 games. In the case of most terms in compounding, there has been some form of semantic change. For example, some compounded terms have two cases of semantic change, these examples are explained in the following paragraph.

Bottom lane has the term *bottom* being used to specify the location, with the other term, *lane,* now used exclusively as the place where minions walk down in order to reach the enemy base. *Spam down* has the term *spam,* which while originally meaning a type of meat, now refers to an excessive repetition of an action, such as using a damaging ability on a location or player, with the particle *down* being added, most likely to refer to bringing an enemy *down* or *low*. *Siege minion* has the term *siege,* in order to refer to attacking the enemy base, and *minion* to refer to a type of expendable monster that helps one specific team by absorbing *tower* damage. Finally, *split push* has the term *split* to refer to being done on another side of the *map,* and *push* to refer to the action of killing enemy minions. All of these examples show that the compounded nouns have many aspects of semantic change alongside them.

Other compounded terms have only one term that has undergone semantic change, such as *core item*, an *item* which is fundamental, or *core* to the character. *Farm advantage*, which shows that the *farm* of a player is higher and therefore

there is an *advantage.* And finally *smite steal,* with the ability *smite* being used to *steal* an objective. These terms may be easier to understand for a non-expert, as one of the verbs has the same meaning as the general vocabulary counterpart.

Semantic change makes up map-specific terms (*mid*), item-specific terms (*build*), objective-specific (*baron*), ability specific (*punch*), positioning-specific (*hit*), and general videogame-specific (*farm*). In the case of many general videogame-specific terms, there are some slight differences between *League of Legends* and other videogames, for example *health* typically refers to the points a character has before the damage they take kills them. *Health* in *League of Legends* has some interesting properties, for example it can be regenerated passively, it can be supplemented with a shield, and it is less affected by abilities if the character has some form of defensive item. Not all games have the same properties with *health*, so while the general idea is the same, there are enough differences so the word *health* can be used with other unique terms to *League of Legends,* such as *health potion* and *health bar*.

7.2.2.3. Compression

Many of the terms under compression are acronyms, such as *aoe*, *cc, cs, hp*, and *ie*. At other times, the word was originally compounded, but one of the terms was

removed, such as *full* from *full health*, *auto* from *auto attack*, or *neutral* from *neutral monster*.

In one specific term, *aggro*, the shortened meaning has changed quite massively from the original word, which was aggravation. While the original meaning of aggressive behaviour remains, the new meaning has the connotation of aggressive behaviour only within a specific area relative to its spawn point, which shows both radical semantic change and compression.

7.2.2.4. Derivation

Of the derived terms, the most common affixation is -er, such as *bot laner* or *jungler*, the -er suffix is consistent with general vocabulary, as it commonly means a person who fulfils that role (*jungler* is a player in the *jungle*). The suffix -less also appears in 4 cases, such as *manaless*, *flashless*, *turretless*, and *tpless*. However, in no case does the suffix have a different meaning to its definition in general vocabulary.

7.2.2.5. Conversion

In the case of conversion, most terms refer to the result of the original action, for example, *knock up* and *lane* come from their verb counterparts, such as to knock

someone up and lane with another person. *Heal* has undergone conversion and semantic change, as to heal someone does not refer to a quantifiable number, therefore, in *League of Legends* and most videogames, the meaning has changed, instead referring to the amount of *hit-points* a character has. *Zone out* and *time out* are nouns that come from verbs, whereas *chase down* and *setup* are verbs that come from nouns. One adjective, *laned*, comes from *lane*, a verb which is a conversion of the noun *lane*, therefore two forms of conversion have occurred.

There is one special case which has occurred with the term *back.* It has been converted from an adverb into a verb. This can be seen in the example “they do have time to *back”*. This is the only case of a verb being converted from an adverb. This type of formation is very uncommon, which may give another example to the greater levels of linguistic creativity that *League of Legends* players possess.

7.2.2.6. Other

The terms which fell under the section of other had aspects about them that excluded them from the other categories. These were terms that were directly created by the developers, for example, item names, objective names, and ability names. In most cases, they are terms that have been created by the developers in order to have a name that represents an aspect, and now players simply use this name. At times, the name is modified slightly (for example, *best friend sword*

instead of *BF sword*, or *tri force* instead of *trinity force*), but the terms largely remain static. There are some exceptions, and these are explained in the special cases.

One of the more interesting cases in *other* was that of using letters to discuss abilities. As a reminder, *League of Legends* is a computer game, typically played on a keyboard and mouse. It is precisely due to this reason that presenters and players tend to say letters to refer to abilities “his *Q,* his *W,* his *E”.* Due to this reason, players can understand what a character is doing, simply by mentioning the button press, e.g. “actually going *E* first”. This allows experienced players to understand what a character is trying to do by simply knowing the abilities on a keyboard. Importantly, the *R* ability, also known as the *ultimate* ability, is the definitive ability of most characters within the game, and it is oddly not mentioned within the data. Interestingly, *ult*, *ultimate*, *ulti* and *flash ult*, are all mentioned, showing that the ultimate ability is very important both lexically and within gameplay. This could potentially be considered excessive variation, but one could hypothesize that it is dependent on the speaker, rather than the community.

There was only one case in *other* which did not fall under item names, objective names, or ability names, being *proc*. *Proc*, in the context “more turret plate money more demolished *procs”*, is a noun which means activation or trigger. However, the exact formation is uncertain, as folk etymology tends to give conflicting

reasons. *Proc* is commonly used in many different videogames, oftentimes with an ability. While undocumented, proc commonly is used with abilities which require some form of buildup, such as in the case of the character Darius, who can *proc* his passive after attacking another character five times.

7.2.1.5. Discussion of term formation findings

Compounding was the most common formation observed, however, the reasons behind most terms being compounded are varied. Firstly, it is important to remember that in most, if not all cases of compounding, one of the words has also undergone a form of semantic change. For example, the term *top lane* (*lane* semantic change), *deep pit* (*pit* semantic change), *frontline tank* (*tank* semantic change), *split map* (*map* semantic change), and *turret plate money* (*turret,* and *money* semantic change). Due to these multiple processes at play, it can be stated that semantic change is the main driving force behind terminology in *League of Legends*.

Another point regarding compounding, is that many are made up of two terms, this being one common reference point, e.g. *game*, then a specific point, e.g. *early* (*early game)*. An example of this in practise can be seen with the term *lane*; 28 unique terms contained the term *lane* in some form (*top lane, lane gank, lane duo*, etc.). This demonstrates that one of the main factors behind term formation in

League of Legends, is that of building upon the linguistic knowledge that players already possess to explore new avenues of gameplay.

Context surrounding numbers appears to be an aspect that is innate within players and presenters of *League of Legends*, as in many instances, only a number is stated, and the meaning of the number must be understood by the semantic and pragmatic context. For example, “now 2 zero *up*” refers to one team having 2 kills, and the other having none. Due to the importance of *kills* within *League of Legends*, the presenters must know the number at all times in order to see which team is winning, similar to goals in football. What’s different between football and *League of Legends*, is that victory is not attained with points, instead the objective is very simply, to kill the *nexus.*

Another area of large importance which has contributed to linguistic development is the concept of a *gold game*. Killing *minions*, taking *objectives*, farming *jungle* camps, taking down players, and simply waiting for time to pass, all give gold to the team and are therefore commonly commented on. An example of this is when the presenters wish to show which particular player is winning a *top lane matchup;* “only *34* right now for his Cho’Gath *64*”. This shows that the Cho’Gath is winning, as 64 minion kills means the player has more gold than the player who has only killed 34 minions. More gold typically means more in-game impact, and it is

important to recognize this so that players know who to focus or who to play around.

Gold is not the only linguistic area where numbers are stated, as sometimes the number of players alive on a team is a point of notice, as if a team does not have any players alive, then plays cannot be made, and the team with less players is put on the defense. An example is from a player fight “yeah *1v4* no TP” referring to how one player has to defend against 4 enemy players, and that they don’t have the teleport ability, which would imply they are at a heavy disadvantage.

Time also plays a key role in numbers being stated, as jungle camps spawn at set intervals, and *wards*[15] expire after a certain interval. This can be seen in the comment “dragon spawning in *55* Herald in *25*” referring to how many seconds are left before an important play making objective is *up* and needs to be focus on, whereas in the case of wards there is “I think place a *ward* down as it as they have all *timed out*”. All of these examples show that numbers are surprisingly semantically rich in nature, and most players intuitively understand numbers even though they oftentimes lack proper context.

[15] A *ward* is an item in *League of Legends* which provides vision in a small area. Due to the nature of *fog of war* in many MOBA games, having vision in an area can explain where the enemy is, and where they are not, which is important information and allows for important plays to be made.

The linguistic complexity behind terms is certainly greater than that of general vocabulary usage, which can be seen within the terms that have experienced compression or shortening. Terms such as cs, cc, *aggro, ie, aoe, tp, ap, ad, cv,* etc., are all used without causing confusion, as they only refer to one specific concept. On top of this, compressed terms can also become adjectives, something which is not considered in general vocabulary, such as in the terms *ccd, tpd,* and *tpless*. The exact reason as to why terms are shortened this way is uncertain, with two potential explanations. Either these terms are formed due to linguistic efficiency, with the need to express multiple concepts succinctly, or due to these concepts being such commonplace that over time players have simply cut down on the number of words needed to express the same concept.

It appears that there is some sort of transgression towards pre-established English grammar rules, with derived compressed adjectives being the greatest example. The various uses of these terms show that players have areas of play which require focus or discussion, such as fights, gold, plays, minions, turrets, positioning, cooldowns, objectives, and ways to win, which surges the need to create a team to complete these goals. The way terms are formed is similar to term formation within sports, where strategies to win appear over time and players begin to use them in order to have an advantage. However, term formation in *League of Legends* is much more extensive than pre-established sports due to the nature of *patches,* as every year the game can expand or change drastically,

which does not commonly happen in regular sports. New terms are then invented to discuss these changes, which could also explain why the number of terms slightly increases over time, and if the trend continues, term usage could be much higher in following years, especially with the release of the 2025 update, which involved a new objective known as *Atakhan*[16].

Many terms show great levels of creativity and understanding of the game, as with more recent terms like *tempo* and *open*, the game has become so advanced that it may even alienate new players. However, players that stick through the admittedly difficult initiation process can find a complex but structured game, with terms that designate important situations that once understood, can become second nature.

As a final statement regarding discussion of these terms, a player that knows the definitions of all these terms also knows why these terms are important, as knowing these terms involves knowing strategies that could achieve victory. A player must understand the lexical nature of *League of Legends* if they wish to advance to the next level of play.

7.2.3. Special cases

[16] Undocumented. A jungle objective similar to *dragon* or *baron*

There were several special cases which were discovered during the term analysis. These cases possess a unique type of term formation which requires further analysis, and this section is dedicated to that purpose. This section aims to discuss the special cases and try to explain the reasoning and complexity behind their formations. It has been divided into three sections: Adapted general videogame terms, *League of Legends* gameplay mechanics, and other cases.

7.2.3.1. Adapted general videogame terms

Terms that are universal in videogames are commonplace within *League of Legends*; however, many adaptions have been made in order to have it apply within the community.

To begin, a common concept within games that require killing monsters or minions is the act of *farming. League of Legends* also uses the term *farm,* alongside the verbs *farm* and *farm up*. While the term *farm* is expected, *farm up* is unique in its formation. The reason for this distinction may be that *farm* is the action of killing minions, whereas *farm up* is the action of killing minions in order to achieve something, usually to purchase an item, which would add the connotation of having a specific purpose, whereas *farm* just implies obtaining gold, similar to how in other games, *farm* has the meaning of obtaining *XP.*

Another term that is taken from general videogame terminology is that of *getting low.* This term is used when talking about *health* in order to represent that a player has few hit points remaining, e.g., “Kube *getting low,* the chase onto wolf, one more attack…”. When used outside the videogame sphere it relates to height, i.e., being low to the ground, which is unused within *LoL*. Due to how *League of Legends* is played from a bird’s eye perspective on a two-dimensional plane, height is not considered, and whether a target is high up or low to the ground is irrelevant, but for terms of *health* it is fundamental.[17] *HP* is one of the most important resources in *League of Legends*, and terms around its usage appear frequently.

Level is a common term in videogames, however, in *League of Legends* it refers to a gameplay mechanic where the player will gain experience close to dying minions or champions, which is reset from game to game, unlike other games where the *level* is permanent. A player’s *level* dictates what their character can do in game, as the *ultimate* ability is only unlocked at *level 6*, which is why games tend to be a race to reach that level as soon as they can, as an *ultimate* ability tends to be much more powerful than regular abilities, and can be a huge advantage for the team that gets theirs first.

[17] Technically there is a case within the game where there is a small height difference around the river area in the map, however, this is usually irrelevant and is unimportant for this present paper.

Stack is a term that refers to two different definitions. The first definition is the same as *equal*, in “for the most part could not be more equally *stacked”.* The other definition refers to abilities that can be applied multiple times, such as “*stack* it *up* with your melee attacks giving two *stacks* for yourself”. This term highlights two important aspects of gameplay, being game state, and abilities, and how terms commonly appear linked to them.

The term *auto*, alongside *auto attack* and *auto attack bot*, comes from the mechanic in *League of Legends* where your character will automatically attack the closest target if no other input is made. This mechanic is not unique to *League of Legends,* as other MOBA games have a similar mechanic. The main difference is that these attacks differ from other attacks. Most champions have their own unique abilities, but something that every character has is *auto attacks.* This mechanic has been shortened into the term *auto* after several different processes of compression (*automatic attack, auto attack, auto*). Some characters are also called *ADCs* or *AD Carries* “they got the flash away from the *ad carry*”, as they commonly use *auto attacks.*

CS is a very historical term, as it does not originate in *League of Legends* and instead comes from other MOBA games, most commonly referenced being *DOTA 1*. It means *creep score*, despite how the *minions* in *League of Legends* are never called *creeps*, this term has fossilized within *League of Legends* due to its

similarity with other MOBAs. Other terms, such as *damage, XP, TP, HP, team fight,* etc., are also general terms which have been fossilized, but *cs* stands out due to its alien nature to *League of Legends*.

Spam, used in the context of “there's a *spam* lots of aoe” means an abundance of abilities or damage being sent at a singular location. This is a general videogame term, commonly used in many other videogames outside *League of Legends*. This term has its roots in a sketch from *Monty Python* called *Spam*, which shows that cultural phenomena that happen outside of videogames as a whole, can also influence games.

Control is used as a noun, which means *control ward* or *pink ward* (outdated) being an item that allows the user to destroy enemy wards, which leads to its second meaning of *vision control* over an area. The importance of *control* in *League of Legends* comes from controlling the vision of a game, which simultaneously involves controlling the flow of the game. Good teams tend to use wards often, in order to see where the enemy team is and plan around it, and even a losing team can have a huge advantage if vision control is used. Therefore, *control* appears to have a double meaning, both gameplay related and metaphorical game state related.

7.2.3.2. League of Legends gameplay mechanics

Most terms observed referred to aspects exclusive to *League of Legends*, barring the aforementioned examples of general videogame terminology. However, a few cases had radically different meanings from their general vocabulary counterpart, that they require more consideration to be understood, especially for the linguistic characteristics behind them.

One of the main terms that comes to mind when discussing radical change within *League of Legends,* is the verb *push.* This is commonly used to refer to the action of killing minions, with phrasal additions such as *push in, push in lane, push down, push back, push out,* or adjective forms such as *pushed forward, pushed in, pushed on, pushed back, pushed up*. Push can also appear among nouns which can be seen with *split push, push game,* and *bot push*. Surprisingly, the term *pull* is only used once[18]. The meaning of *pull* is to lead minions towards a destination, which is not antonymous to *push*, despite *push* and *pull* being antonyms in general vocabulary. This means that they are completely different within the context of *League of Legends,* with the only constant being the use of *minions*. The number of terms related to *pushing* more than likely highlights how important minion control is, as *pushing* minions is fundamental to winning, whereas *pulling* minions is uncommon, and only considered in specific contexts at high levels of play.

[18] The only other term with *pull* is the verb *pull back*, which is unrelated and has the meaning of retreating.

Two common characteristics of damage in *League of Legends* is that of *AP* and *AD.* These refer to ability power and attack damage respectively, which are two of the three forms of damage in *League of Legends*, and are commonly abbreviated. The other form of damage, being *true damage*, was not mentioned in the games most likely due to it being a much rarer damage type. These terms are quite long, and mostly due to the frequency and importance, they have been shortened for potential understanding, as most players understand that in order to be more effective in game, they should increase their *AP* or *AD.*

Another example of radical change is with the adverbs *up* and *down.* These are used as synonyms for active and not active respectively, for example, “dragon is of course *up*” and “that wall is *down*”. However, this is not the only usage, as *up* is also used as “to have an advantage” which appears in the phrase “the advantage 900 gold *up*”. Similarly to *stack*, *up* appears to change its meaning based on context, being either an adverb or adjective. The first meaning, the adjective form, shows how time in *League of Legends* is important, as knowing when something is active, means that there can be plays made around it, whereas the second form, the adverb, refers more to the game state. One term having two separate meanings could be confusing, however, due to the contexts it is found in, confusion appears to be seldom.

Pick has two meanings: *kill* and *choice. Pick* is commonly used during the champion selection phase, which was done before the games started. Like the previous examples with multiple meanings, the usage is related to different important areas of *League of Legends*, being advantages and decisions. In the first case, *kill*, a *pick* may happen before a *teamfight* starts, when an enemy player gets metaphorically *picked off*. Knowing that a pick has been made, the team that made the pick has a huge advantage, as a 4v5 almost always involves a lost fight for the 4-player team. The second usage, being *choice,* refers to the meta game which is discussed before a game starts. Before a match of *League of Legends*, characters are decided based on their current strengths, and counters. For example, a character that can only attack at a close range can be defeated by a character that can attack from a longer range, and these macro decisions take place before a game even starts, and making a good *pick,* shows that players and their coaches understand the game so fundamentally, that they can influence the game before it starts. These terms reflect this understanding, knowing that a good *pick* can make a good game. Similar to *up,* this is another term that is polysemantic, and only a few of these terms were observed within the games.

Pop is commonly used with abilities which means *to use*, commonly for abilities that last a long duration instead of a one-time use, as in “Huni *pops* the Ult to force the cho'gath away”. This term stands out due to how pop is commonly used as an

onomatopoeia, but it is used as a verb in gameplay. This is another example towards the lexical creativity that *League of Legends* terms has produced.

7.2.3.3. Other cases

The following terms had no specific category to belong to, as they are either complex with multiple reasons as to their formation, are jokes, or potential misspeaks.

Get turned on is a term that has a very radical semantic change, as the general vocabulary meaning is related to sexual excitement, however the meaning in *League of Legends* is literal, referring *to turn around to fight*. It is uncertain whether this term was made with the previous meaning in mind, but radical semantic change appears to have occurred in many terms, with this one standing out due to its nature.

One term that was difficult to define was an item which the presenter referred to as *best friend sword* instead of *BF sword*. This is almost certainly a joke, as the acronym BF means *big fucking sword* and not *best friend sword*. This is another term which comes back to the idea of *League of Legends* being a videogame, which has primarily been considered a time-wasting activity for fun, and jokes are commonplace within. Interestingly, the only collected joke was made during the

first game, from 2011. One reason for this could be due to the seriousness of the following years, as the tournament garnered more popularity, an air of professionalism needed to be added to the games themselves. This does not apply for the between games sections, as they tend to be full of humour.

To finalise, *top sider damage*, *zoning out,* and *territory* could be considered terms, however, they appear to be misspeaks as they do not make too much sense in context. Therefore, they have not been further analysed.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study demonstrate that *League of Legends* is a unique, complex activity with terms that are semantically rich in nature. Over the course of three separate games, 2451 terms were observed, which results in a terminological density of 9.57%. Of the terms discovered there were many unique formations that go beyond general speech, and are exclusively used within videogames, or *League of Legends,* showing that the speech community of this game is complex, unique, and constantly inventing. The large number of terms demonstrates that linguistic areas in this game is understudied, and that more research in both *LoL,* as well as other videogames, should be contemplated in order to understand terminology in a modern globalised context.

The morphological and lexical patterns in *League of Legends* are incredibly varied, with unique formations being found within all main four parts of speech in the open class, this being nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Nouns constitute the highest number of terms observed, which is common in terminological studies (L'Homme, 2020), however, the formations of verbs, adjectives, and adverbs demonstrate linguistic creativity that goes beyond what was expected from the outlook. This was mentioned by Cabré (1999a), who stated that terms are generally more productive when compared to general vocabulary. It appears that

terms evolve in regard to the complexity of the game state, as more terms are discovered over the course of the three games studied. Currently, *League of Legends* possesses many terms which have formed in order to describe the different techniques, plays, mechanics, objectives, abilities, and playstyles which dominate the professional scene. It is expected that more terms will be used the longer that *League of Legends* remains relevant in the eyes of gamers.

In regard to the methodology, the analysis of these terms required a mostly manual approach. While the first part of the approach was automatic (this being downloading the transcriptions from YouTube), the next steps required corrections, extractions, multiple revisions, sortings, creations of graphs, and explanations, which was all done manually. If this study were to be undertaken in the future, it could potentially be improved via advancements in word recognition software, as a lot of time was dedicated to the corrections, rather than actual analysis, and multiple watchings of the videos were necessary to correct the transcriptions and have the documentation ready for term analysis. However, it is the researcher's belief that the methodology was solid, especially for a qualitative project such as this. A suggestion for future research could be adding an *area related to term* category, so a future researcher could find what is the most common area in which terms are formed for.

Regarding the number of terms, if alternatively, the games were presented by a person who does not officially represent Riot Games, they may have used many more terms in comparison to the official broadcasts, or even used more complex ones to describe the gameplay. This is because the *League of Legends World Championship* is a formal event, hosted by Riot Games, and a large amount of money is typically invested into these events, which involves many sponsors, investors, and viewers, so the tournament organisers may wish to have slightly more professional and standardised verbiage than what a solo hoster with little or no affiliation with Riot Games could provide. Another study could be undertaken which focuses on hosters, such as *Caedrel*, a popular *League of Legends* coach and costreamer[19], who may provide additional terms with the lack of restrictions that the presenters have in the official tournament. This may also add to the point about creativity, as streamers and costreamers are a large part of the *League of Legends* professional and casual scene. A study that focuses on term usage between the scenes would provide an interesting point of comparison in regard to the reasons behind using terms in the first place.

To add on to the previous part, there are many common terms that appear within the *League of Legends* community that were not mentioned in the transcriptions. Many advanced *LoL* players know terms such as *run it down, int, boost, feed,*

[19] A person who watches an official *League of Legends* match in progress live, creating a type of "online viewing party".

nerf, buff, smurf, OP, peel, squishy, ff, afk, B, 9x, gg, 1v9, challenger, etc., but these were unused within the games, despite being regularly used within the community. One such reason as to why these terms were not mentioned could be due to their slightly insulting nature, and as the role of a presenter is that of objectivity and explanations, they could decide not to use these terms so as to not offend the players or coaches. This is an interesting point of study from a sociological perspective, as presenters decide not to use terms, not out of them being not descriptive enough, but as to not be rude. These terms are unique in their own right, and have more sociological and gameplay related reasons behind them, which would make an interesting future study.

It is uncertain if *League of Legends* is the only multiplayer game that possess this kind of terminology. As this study is explorative in nature, one should view this research as a jumping point to study other videogames in the modern era. There are many popular videogames with many terms that are not researched yet, and could provide many more insights as to the development of online communities. One example is with the videogame *DOTA 2*, created by Valve. This videogame is one of the biggest competitors to *League of Legends*, and while they both have different and unique mechanics, the genre is the same, meaning there may be many similarities.

Overall, this project demonstrates that videogames are evolving at a rapid pace, with many online videogames being exceptionally popular, communities within said games have developed lexicons that are rich, complex and underdocumented, and they have different degrees of formation that expand well beyond general vocabulary usage. This project has demonstrated that online communities in the 21st century engage with their interests unlike any community that has appeared before, and understanding the complexity of their terminologies is vital to understanding our world as it is today.

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10. APPENDIX

The following table contains the list of all the unique terms extracted from the three games.

Table 4

All unique terms observed from the three games.

bottom lane	focus fight	tractors knife	middle inhibitor
golem	ult on	solo laner	turretless
counter jungle	suppression	zoning	comeback
invasion	turret range	trinket ward	mid lane priority
smite steal	sheen	cs	pressure
wraiths	auto attack bot	gold lead	flash ult
spam	gold difference	crowd control	mid laner
aoe	differential	snare	life steal
W	boots	tether	aggro
jungle	get chased down	secure	flash r
E	gold per time item	gate	line of scrimmage
jungle speed	heart of gold	power spike	path up
smite	support	pop	lane swap
lay waste	money	mid lane duo	sweeper
blue	bottom supports	rupture	soak
middle	creep score	dive	experience
carry	donation	get silenced	wolves
knock up	blue buff	pick	catch
health	stack	laning power	push forward
laned	phage	kill pressure	split map
heal up	wits end	other side of the map	counter strike
regeneration pendant	anti magic	cc	melee
fairy charm	ward down	summoner	mid wave
ward	pink ward	first trade	path
health potion	face check	gankable	bot
cooldown	ashe arrow	flash root	swap

heal	wake	gank target	charm
healing	blood scent	tp	justice punch
auto attack	skill shot	bottom side	punch
percent life steal	gold advantage	draft	extension
health bar	kill score	team composition	showcase
minion	full	open up	shadowing strike
turret	lane phase	territory	bot brush
push in	build up	early game	bot wave
champion	blasting wand	rush	shadow
pushing	needlessly large rod	mobility boots	hold
farm	rabadon's	open	trade
farm up	banshees veil	blast cone	denial
gank	catalyst protector	aggression	phase rush
lane	ability tome	flash ulti	opposite side of the map
pushed	ap	get tanked up	hover
harass	steal	ulti	movement
top lane	lizard buff	back line	gank orientated jungler
lane	trinity	isolated	full clear
harassment	manamune	flashless	path
get caught	trinity force	ult	grub spawn
clairvoyance	tri force	body slam	contest
land	team fight	predictive play	grubs
sear	lizard	playmaker	dash
first kill	donate	bot lane	audacious charge
first blood	infinity edge	blow up	wind becomes lightning
stun	range carries	dragon pit	hero's entrance
passive	core item	polymorph	disengage
mage	fall	knock back	slam
stun	global gold	two man squad	get punched
root	die	get turned on	poppy slam
aoe spam	oracle	cancel	turret plate money
last hit	lane dominance	barrier	darkness
pull back	minion wave	bait	connection
doran’s blade	split push	tower	early game lead
volley	bottom turret	flash	secured
slow	burst heal	swap down	balloon
push on	baron	bot side	punch forward
utility	rocket	skirmish	crash down
overextend	arrow	objective	connect

flash	cleanse	map	healthy
mid lane	jump on	overstep	bot push
vision	back	setup	demolish
lane presence	mana crystal	dragon fight	proc
push up	phantom dancer	match	void passive
gold	up	drake	plate
top	down	pressure	top lane grub fight
up	top turret	teleport advantage	early on
healer	push game	burn	denied
push back	farm advantage	ocean drake	dive comp
base	dance	rift herald	online
heal	summon	top lane matchup	scale up
pick up	get blown	bot laner	pick potential
out of the lane	rush baron	red squad	spear rushforward
farm	clear	force	stunned
unpressured	out of place	control ward	hit
laning phase	baron grab	reengage	flash forward
kill	reinitiate	trade back	cataclysm
build	baron pit	fed	malignance
control	blue pill	chunked	shoes upgrade lucidity
oracles	revive	get out	ultimate cooldown
max	wave	return damage	void
mid	baron fight	stack up	spawn
get low	golem buff	team fighter	bot tower
spam down	void staff	stats	shut down
catalyst	baron buff play	knocked back	initial kill
potion	push down	chase	second kill
level up	race	zone away	flank
zone out	inhibitor	outer mid lane	sit on a ward
level	shove out	side pressure	overcommit
Q	get backdoored	attack damage	herald
ping spam	base race	ability power	gold gap
suppress	shove	smite away	ad carries' ult
bush	backdoor	kill parcitipation	wave clear
karthus wall	roam	ad carry	put behind
null zone	ward placement	pick off	feather
ultimate	buff	early baron	neutral objective
zone out	pin	bleed	bot side of the map
last hit	thornmail	ravenous hydra	tier one

push	beefy	vision control	top tier one
get stunned up	tank	reset	clear out
damage	ranged dps	long range iniation	tempo advantage
back	tanky dps	fog of war	top side objective
soak up	get blown up	chain	tower gold
get used	tick	fall off	botside tier one
out of position	dragon control	deathcap	tier two
fight	gold game	zeal	side lane secondary turret
loop around	nuke damage	frontline	income
in range	five bounce	adaptive helm	play into
melee range	executed	frozen heart	first item
spam	free	tank item	mid game fight
teleport	trade	rotate	hextech
get in	baron buff	qss	infernal
teleport gank	forced fight	mikhail's	gromp advantage
ablaze	crystal arrow	get hit	pressure advantage
ping	crescendo	lock in place	outer tower
dragon	pushed up	trundle pillar	static shiv
teleport	nexus	defensive tool	second item
ward control	inhib	single target damage	top tier two
timed out	map positioning	vision game	pull
brush	respawn	map control	vision play
wall	ace	snowball	deep vision
ward coverage	bottom side of the map	lane priority	flank play
death	demacia	follow up	prio mid charge
blue area	face tank	cask	chunk down
tri bush	super minion	body slam flash	force a play
top bush	damage crits	momentum breaker	tpless
xp	team play	flash initiate	get off
red buff	censer	gain vision	ultimate follow up
cv	supportive champion	explosive cask	cosmic drive
initiate	split in half	counter initiation	fimblewinter
in lane skirmish	top sider damage	burn down	top laner
get regenerated	chunk	tank	item spike
shield	stack up	misplay	guinsoo
aggressive build	melee attack	auto	win condition

push in lane	stack	explosive charge	outer objective
flash away	all in	bodyslam	break open
mana	starting position	warmogs	mid tower
ult	jungler	build	siege
river	bottom half of the map	deep pit	comfort pick
double buff	counter jungle	blue trinket	crucial fight
in position	top side of the map	behind	armguard
bottom	zoning out	swing back	pushed in
dead	zoned off	get chomped	nashor's tooth
assist	topside	turn onto	amp tome
healed	pillar	ccd	ie
red dot	barrel slow	silence	essence reaver
double kill	summoner spell	nether grasp	neutral
triple	burn	get low	crossmap play
play	side lane	nexus turret	bounce
get ulted	side lane pressure	flash Q	poke
burst	tp	manaless	inventory
damage output	freeze	chase	botside jungle
item	layering	elder dragon	fountain
BF sword	tiamat	momentum	navori flicker blade
best friend sword	strong laning	pit	pushed back
siege minion	attack speed	five stack	side of the map
malefic visions	bully	push out	deciding fight
jungle roaming	bottom lane bullying	true damage	mid tier one
blow up	mini map	side wave	locked up
tanky	gromp	slow push	feather storm
mercury treads	punished	mid lane wave	turnaround
rod of ages	voidling	last minion wave	turn
rylai's	pick	malzahar silence	side step
chase down	mid game	follow up	pincer
matchup	late game	frontline tank	collapse
lose	engage	crash	channel time
hp	recall	crash in	killer instinct
			stopwatch
			spirit rush
			nexus tower