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***TRANSLATING SYSTEMS OF KNOWLEDGE:
BEYOND RESEMIOTIZATION***

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***TRANSLATING SYSTEMS OF KNOWLEDGE:
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Volume 18, 2025

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“It ended nothing”: Translating the Languages of the First World War in Video Games

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Abstract

History has always been a source of inspiration for game developers, and historical video games are extremely popular. Like other forms of historical fiction, games allow players to actively engage with the past, they work as history, and, thus, they influence players' historical knowledge and consciousness, they reflect the ideologies of their designers and audiences, and have a role in constructing players' identities, values and beliefs. If compared to other conflicts, the First World War does not have a rich history in the medium. The centenary (2014-2018), however, sparked a renewed interest in the Great War which manifested itself in gaming too, with a new wave of story-driven titles which engage with the imagery and popular memory of 'the war to end all wars'. If great attention has been paid to this phenomenon in Historical Game Studies, the linguistic and translational dimensions of this genre of games represent a neglected research topic. To address this gap and foster debate on historical video games from the perspective of Game Localization, this paper presents the preliminary findings of a descriptive corpus-assisted case study examining the languages of the First World War in the English original version and the Italian localization of Battlefield 1 (Electronic Arts, 2016), the first big-budget game set in WW1. Preliminary findings show that game writers do engage with the past also linguistically, they leave various traces of the phenomena characterizing English in that period in the game original texts, they simulate features of the languages of WW1 in virtual soldiers' dialogues, but these historical traces, including lexical creations, slang expressions and borrowings and expressing the unique experiences of WW1, are so language and culture-specific that they inevitably disappear in translation, where a tendency towards neutralization can be observed..

Keywords: History, video games, game localization, translation, culturalization, WW1.

1. Introduction

History has always been a source of inspiration for game developers. According to Rochat (2019), nearly 1,700 historical video games were released between 1981 and 2015 for a variety of platforms, of many different gameplay genres and portraying several historical periods, from prehistory to the late modern period. Historical video games are indeed immensely popular, as testified to by the sales records of long-standing game series like *Assassin's Creed* (Ubisoft 2007–) and *Call of Duty* (Activision 2003–).

Even though history may not be the reason for their commercial success, these games are one of the most accessible media through which the past is engaged. As such, they can be interpreted as an instance of (inter)epistemic translation, meant as the verbal and nonverbal semiotic processes involved in the transfer of knowledge and information between different epistemic systems (Bennett, 2024; Bennett and Neves, 2024). In particular, historical knowledge is here narratively reframed, adapted, transformed and reformulated into a popular work of art for a different community, history is popularized thanks to the creation of an entertainment work on historical themes, whose authors select and supplement historical content to meet the expectations of the new target audience, by repackaging specialist content for non-specialist consumption. Historical video games are thus creative appropriations of historical sources, which, in turn, represent a form of translation of experienced reality into narrative form by historians.

Like other forms of historical fiction, games are “doing history, *if by the phrase ‘doing history’ we mean, rather than engaging with traditional discourse [...], seriously attempting to make meaning of the past*” (Rosenstone, 2006: 37, original emphasis). Popular media like games work as history because they are treated as such by their audiences, who use them as resources for establishing an understanding of the past, which inevitably influences their historical knowledge and consciousness, as well as their collective and cultural memory (Chapman, 2013; 2016a).

In this light, it comes as no surprise to learn that great scholarly attention has been paid to the potential video games have to actively engage players, especially the young, with history and historical practice. As a result,

in the last decades the increasing academic interest in the relationship between video games and history has developed into the field of Historical Game Studies (Chapman, Foka, and Westin, 2017; Lundblade, 2020), meant as the study of those games that in some way represent the past, relate to discussions about the past, or stimulate practices related to history (Chapman, 2016a: 16).

If research in these spaces of intersection gradually cohered connecting scholars in educational sciences, media and game studies, narratology, cultural studies, and obviously, history and historiography, despite the popularity of historical video games, in Game Localization (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013; Bernal-Merino, 2015) this genre is a neglected research topic and very few studies have been published so far (Serón-Ordóñez, 2011; Hsu, 2020; Šisler et al., 2022; Karagöz, 2023)¹. To address this gap and foster academic debate on the linguistic and translational dimensions of historical multimedia interactive entertainment, this paper presents a case study on the representation of the languages of the First World War in the English original version and in the Italian localization of *Battlefield 1* (Electronic Arts, 2016). The reason for focusing on this title is that, while the First World War has quite rarely been used as a game scenario (Kempshall, 2015a; Chapman, 2016b; Brazier and Sandberg, 2023), its 100th anniversary (2014-2018) witnessed a great renewed interest in the conflict, which manifested itself in the emergence of a wave of games using the war not just as a time period setting, but also as a vessel for telling new stories about the conflict (Kempshall, 2015b; 2017; 2019a; 2019b; 2020). *Battlefield 1* (BF1 hereafter) is “the first AAA [big-budget] game set in World War I” (Ramsay, 2020: online) and it is also a prime example of the narrative shift in WW1 game representation occurred after the centenary. Since language is a key component of story-driven video games like BF1, by drawing on scholarly and lexicographic studies examining the impact of the Great War on English (Buxton, 2011; Doyle and Walker, 2012; Ball and Wild, 2014; Wild, 2014; Walker, 2017), this paper aims to scrutinize whether and how language is used to contribute to the game’s fun factor, that is, immersing players into the (hi)story of ‘the war to end all wars’.

¹ Similarly, in the cognate area of Audiovisual Translation Studies historical fiction has attracted little scholarly attention and, in particular, the few studies on WW1 language have concentrated on the representation of trench talk (see Dall’Olio, 2023).

For this purpose, Section 2 explores the relationship between history, WW1 and video games, to contextualize the case study of this paper, namely BF1, whose features are discussed in Section 2.1. Section 3 describes the most important methodological aspects of this research, while Section 4 presents the qualitative corpus-assisted analysis of dialogues in BF1 singleplayer campaign to investigate whether and how game writers, and consequently players, engage with the conflict also linguistically. Lastly, some preliminary concluding remarks are made in Section 5.

2. History, WW1 and Video Games

History “is the past, but it is also the study and description of the past, storytelling of a particular kind” (Lukacs, 2011: 1). Accordingly, “the past and history are different things” (Jenkins, 1991: 7) and, as Chapman argues (2016a: 9), “the only way we have to engage it [the past] is through the subjective narrative representations we call history”, which also include “historical media (that is those media that in some way represent, relate to or use the past) without needing to anchor this solely in their perceived accuracy, i.e., their ability to capture ‘history’ in the sense of its first meaning, through the practice of its second”. Indeed, “history is always narrative, but this narrative doesn’t necessarily have to detail the exact sequence of events that is understood to have taken place in the past in order to be historical” (Chapman, 2016a: 10). In Chapman’s view (2016a: 10-11), historical is rather what attempts to make meaning out of the past, what uses historical themes, theories, evidence and/or arguments, what refers to or represents the past or seeks to make a point relevant to how we perceive the past, and historical narratives like novels, films, tv series, and video games utilizing historical settings with fictionalized events or characters can say something meaningful about the past in which they are set and, thus, they work as history. Moreover, popular forms of history are particularly powerful exactly because they are often accessible, engaging and widely experienced. According to Chapman (2016a: 12), “for most of us imagery and understandings drawn from popular media probably construct the past as much, if not more, than the books of professional historians (on which these popular media are often nonetheless based)” and it is precisely “through popular media that most of us will primarily experience history after school”. They do not only influence the way we see the past, but they also have a role in constructing our present-day identities, beliefs and ideals,

and they in turn reflect present-day values and beliefs demonstrating and affecting why and how we turn to the past (Chapman, 2016a: 13). Historical popular media offer us concepts of the past, ways of thinking in, around, and about it, together with more or less interactive experiences of the past. As regards this point and video games, for example, according to the survey conducted by Mol et al. (2020), 93% of the 1670 respondents involved in their study report that historical games usually inspire them to learn more about the setting and 90% think that playing historical games can affect their viewpoints on the people or events represented.

Video games offer players opportunities to actively engage with history and historical practice. By blending factual content with creative interpretation, although historical games are primarily designed for entertainment, they often shape players' understanding of history, raising important questions about historical accuracy, narrative authority, and educational potential. One of their defining features is the reliance on "selective authenticity" (Salvati and Bullinger, 2013), the practice of reproducing historical elements that are visually or culturally recognizable while modifying others to fit gameplay needs. In this light, selective authenticity can be seen as "a form of narrative license", in which "game designers draw upon a chain of signifiers assembled from historical texts, artifacts, and popular representations" to offer "an interactive experience of the past that blends historical representation with generic conventions and audience expectations" (*ibid.*: 154). According to Chapman (2016a: 34), indeed, "historical games are not just representations of the past, but constructions of history shaped by the constraints and conventions of game design" and since games "are systems of rules and play, [...] this often necessitates historical simplification in favor of interactivity" (*ibid.*: 82). Although developers prioritize user experience, sometimes sacrificing historical accuracy to maintain engagement and interaction, some games manage to balance realism with narrative often incorporating primary sources, timelines, and historically grounded characters, they combine entertainment with pedagogical value, while inevitably reflecting the ideologies of their creators and audiences. As McCall (2011: 12) argues, "games can promote historical thinking when designed to encourage exploration, evidence-based reasoning, and critical engagement with the past". Despite the limitations due to their nature as entertainment, video games have significant potential as tools of public history. While there is an inherent tension between historical fidelity and engaging gameplay, their interactivity allows players to experience historical agency and contingency

in ways that traditional media cannot. Frasca (2003: 224), for example, highlights the power of simulation in games, stating that it “allows the player to experiment with systems, causes, and effects, creating a unique engagement with historical processes”. Games can foster empathy, curiosity, and a deeper appreciation for historical complexity (Smicker, 2020: 138), they offer a compelling mode of engaging with the past, serving as powerful tools for storytelling, education and public memory.

The most referenced and depicted historical conflict within the medium is WW2, also due to its many cinematic and heroic portrayals and its more defined moral dichotomies and fast-paced action. Conversely, the First World War is an underrepresented historical period (Kempshall, 2015a; Chapman, 2016b; Brazier and Sandberg, 2023) and “options for WW1 wargaming are surprisingly limited” (Wackerfuss, 2013: 233), because the brutal stalemate of trench warfare is often seen as incompatible with engaging gameplay. Yet, video games and the Great War intersect in many interesting and evolving ways, and with the First World War centenary, begun in mid-2014 with the centenary of the war outbreak and ended in late 2018 with the centenary of the 1918 armistice, there has been increased attention brought to WW1, and therefore more representations of the war have been occurring in multimedia interactive entertainment too.

Dozens of notable titles set in the conflict have been released so far², including this research case study *Battlefield 1* (Electronic Arts, 2016), which will be discussed in the following subsection, and popular games like *Valiant Hearts: The Great War* (Ubisoft, 2014) and its sequel *Valiant Hearts: Coming Home* (Ubisoft, 2023), the 1914-1918 WW1 Game Series published by MH2 and Blackmill Games including *Verdun* (2015), *Tannenberg* (2017) and *Isonzo* (2022), and *11-11: Memories Retold* (Bandai Namco, 2018), among many others.

As Chapman (2016b) observes, the memory of the conflict has inevitably influenced its representation in popular media, and the most common and evocative image of WWI, the one encapsulating its myth, is the Western Front trenches. In Wilson’s words (2013: 59), the “mud, blood, gas and rats of the trench system...has become a literary topos” in historical fiction, meaning that the visual imagery of WW1 typically features the frontline soldier, especially infantrymen, with their material and psychological suffering in the trenches, in the desolation and devastation of battlefields and no-man’s land, with barbed wire, wreckage, seas of mud and

² See Chapman (2016b) and Wackerfuss (2013) to explore lists of WW1 games.

human remains. Moreover, WW1 history and memory are emotionally charged, contested and controversial, dominated by the idea of an utterly futile and bloody war fought by ‘lions led by donkeys’. According to Chapman (2016b), it is exactly this type of imagery and popular memory what makes WW1, and trench warfare in particular, an unsuitable subject for games, inappropriate for play, due to the difficulty of negotiating aspects of its memory, like the morally unclear landscape of (playable) positions and the lack of an identifiable Good versus Evil narrative, that do not easily and naturally resonate with mainstream games and that have the potential to be considered disrespectful and offensive in the ludic frame of the medium³. Accordingly, as Chapman explains (2016b: online, original emphasis), unlike other forms of popular history, “most WW1 games negotiate popular memory [...] by simply taking story/content decisions that omit images and historical elements associated with it”, decisions that “*spatially, thematically and mechanically*” distance games from it and from “the visceral individual experiences of trench warfare in which the tragic and horror-infused popular memory of WWI is very much grounded”. In sum, “the nature of depictions of WWI that players are exposed to in this new popular form is shaped in particular ways by the particular limitations that the videogame form and its perceived cultural role entail” (*ibid.*).

2.1 *Battlefield 1*

Battlefield 1 is a first-person shooter developed by DICE and published by Electronic Arts in 2016 as a multiplatform title, and, contrary to its name⁴, it represents the fifteenth installment of the *Battlefield* series (2002–). In line with the franchise characteristics, BF1 is a war video game, but unlike its predecessors and successors, it is not set in the modern era, it is not about modern conflicts. As game writers explain in the title’s opening lines,

³ In this sense, the reaction to the announcement of *Battlefield 1* launch is a case in point. Indeed, major concerns regarded exactly its engagement with the war popular memory and, specifically, the uncertainty of the playable positions offered by this WWI first-person shooter game focusing on the frontline soldier, and the potentially trivializing effect of ludification (see Donlan, 2016; EDGE, 2016; Hern, 2016a; 2016b; Muncy, 2016; Smith, 2016).

⁴ In regard to BF1 title, it is interesting to mention that DICE producer Aleks Grondal explains in an interview (cit. in Yin-Poole, 2016: online) that the game’s name depends exactly on the WW1 setting, as they “wanted to portray the dawn of all-out war [...] and to say that this [WW1] is the genesis of modern warfare”.

indeed, “Battlefield 1 is based upon events that unfolded over one hundred years ago”, that is World War 1, the Great War, or, as sardonically referred to by game writers with an intertextual allusion, “the war to end all wars”, a phrase which was “used from the outset [of WW1] with varying degrees of conviction, but later often ironically or in disproof” according to the historical Oxford English Dictionary online (OEDO hereafter), as used in this game. As the quotation included in this paper title reads, “it ended nothing”, game writers add with a critical tone, “yet, it changed the world forever. What follows is frontline combat. You [the player] are not expected to survive”. Written in white at the center of a black background, the above-mentioned lines introduce players into BF1 experience and narrative which, in the singleplayer mode this research focuses on, unfold through a prologue and five war stories or missions, whose titles and in-game descriptions are listed in Table 1 below. Each war story is in turn divided into sublevels and revolves around different theatres of WW1 which reflect its global scale, from the Arabian deserts to the Italian Alps, from Gallipoli in Ottoman Türkiye to the Western Front. “The game is thus structured anthologically” (Alonge and Fassone, 2019: 357), without a single and coherent narrative, but with different stories “which seem to draw from the genre of the war chronicle”. This approach allows the player to experience diverse roles – tank operators, foot soldiers, pilots, and even Bedouin rebels – while conveying the war’s vast geographic and cultural reach.

War story	Title	In-game description
Prologue	Storm of Steel	A desperate German breakthrough threatens the position held by the US 369th Infantry, the “Harlem Hellfighters”.
1	Through Mud and Blood	The British Mk. V Tank is an armored beast designed for a single purpose: shattering enemy lines.
2	Friends in High Places	Battle for air supremacy as a volunteer pilot in the British Royal Flying Corps.
3	Avanti Savoia!	Volunteer for the Italian Arditi, a shock trooper unit battling amongst the Italian Alps.
4	The Runner	Storm the beaches of Gallipoli under the guns of the largest naval fleet hitherto assembled.
5	Nothing is Written	Join Lawrence of Arabia in his desert campaign against the Ottoman Empire.

Table 1: *Battlefield 1* war stories.

The first mission, which is the game prologue, is *Storm of Steel*. Set in France in 1918, this mission casts playable Harlem Hellfighters of the US 369th Infantry⁵, who defend their position against a German offensive together with their French and British allies. The special feature of this mission is that players can control several soldiers, all of whom die during combat. According to Bender (2017: online), this initial unusual gameplay structure “of death-and-respawn-as-different-character can be read as humanizing the player’s avatar [...] to set a particular tone to the game”, that is “an almost austere stance toward the violence depicted”.

The futility implied by the player’s constant dying [in the prologue] is clearly motivated by an attempt at realism as one of the cultural memories of World War One is the sheer likelihood of being killed, whether as a frontline soldier or a citizen of a country engaged in combat [...]. For *Battlefield 1*, the repeated dying is really part of the text’s aesthetic engagement. (Bender, 2017: online)

In other words, this feature of BF1 prologue serves as a metaphor for the mass casualties of WW1, as a narrative device to emphasize the war’s human cost, directly confronting the player with its lethality. According to Wiggins (2019: 94), BF1 navigates “the tension between entertainment and commemoration by framing the war as both tragic and heroic” and it “functions as both a homage to the dead and a critique of war, rare for a commercial shooter” (*ibid.*: 97).

Going back to the prologue texts, this unusual gameplay mechanic translates into on-screen white text strings on black background which explicitly announce the death of the many named or unnamed soldiers killed in action, as shown in the following lines extracted from this research corpus.

(1)	Harvey Nottoway
	1900 – 1918

(2)	A Soldier of the Great War
	1885 – 1918

⁵ The inclusion of this African-American regiment, with a soldier of color featured on the game cover art, became a source of major criticism before and after the game release, because players perceived these choices as a strategy of blackwashing and forced diversity that threatens the white mythic space of WW1 (see Aguirre-Quiroga, 2022).

Another interesting aspect of the game prologue concerns intertextuality (Pettini, 2022a: 118), which manifests itself in different forms. First, *Storm of Steel* may be a reference to the title of the famous graphic memoir of the same name by Ernst Jünger (1920) about his experiences on WW1 Western Front from December 1914 to August 1918. Secondly, the song playing in the opening cutscene is the 1931 classic *Dream a Little Dream of Me* by Margot Bingham, and since this song was released after the war end, it suggests that the story is a flashback episode experienced by a WW1 veteran. Lastly, the combat during the opening scenes is evidently inspired by the ending battle scene of Paul Gross' WW1 film *Passchendaele* (2008).

The second war story is titled *Through Mud and Blood*, and it is set in Ribecourt, France, in the autumn of 1918. The playable protagonist is Daniel Edwards, a British recruit joining the crew of a Mark V Landship as their new tank driver. His mission is to break through the German line and advance to Cambrai. Players thus fight the Battle of Cambrai, a British offensive that marked the first large-scale use of tanks in warfare.

Friends in High Places is the third mission, and it tells the story of Clyde Blackburn, an American pilot posing as George Rackham, an officer in Britain's Royal Flying Corps. The setting is France in the spring of 1917 and playable Blackburn's task is flying a Bristol F2 in various reconnaissance and combat missions against the German Empire around the Western front of the war.

The fourth war story is titled *Avanti Savoia!*, Italian for *Long live the House of Savoy!*, the ruling house of Italy from 1861 to 1946. Gamers play the role of Luca Vincenzo Cocchiola, an Alpini soldier in the Royal Italian Army elite special force *Arditi* regiment and the episode takes place in the autumn of 1918 on Italian Dolomites, in the Northern region of Veneto. *Avanti Savoia!* is the only war episode against the Austro-Hungarian Empire in BF1 and it is particularly meaningful for this research and for the English-Italian pair examined, because it provides players with an Italian perspective into WW1 which exemplifies interesting aspects of localization and culturalization (Edwards, 2011; 2012; 2014).

The story is told in flashback: Luca Cocchiola is an aged war veteran who narrates his WWI experience to his daughter and unfolds the story of his twin brother, Matteo, who died in the decisive battle on Monte Grappa on their 21st birthday. Narration time exactly coincides with their birthday and, indeed, after long interactive sequences, where Luca (the player) fights several battles against the Austro-Hungarian forces in the Italian Alps, a final cutscene casts him wishing Matteo *buon compleanno* [happy birthday]. (Pettini, 2022b: 225)

Regarding localization and translation, the Italianness of the playable protagonist, and also of other characters in the *Avanti Savoia!* war story, openly manifests itself in the original English game texts. First, dialogues contain Italian words and expressions like proper names (Luca, Matteo, Becca, Arditi), vocatives used by old Luca to address his daughter Becca like *tesoro* [lit. treasure, here meaning darling or sweetie], the Arditi's motto *O la vittoria, o tutti accoppati!* [We either win, or we all die!] and, as mentioned above, *buon compleanno* [happy birthday]. Secondly, Luca Cocchiola is dubbed with a strong Italian accent in the English game. Both Italian words and accent are completely neutralized in the Italian game, where dialogue lines are performed in unmarked Italian (Pettini, 2022b: 225).

The second interesting aspect of the *Avanti Savoia!* war story concerns culturalization. Since history is one of the most sensitive and potentially contentious game contents (see Edwards, 2011; 2012; 2014), predictably, “*Battlefield 1* provoked great controversy in Italy before the game was launched due to the WWI setting” (Pettini, 2022b: 225).

The most adverse backlash was expressed by the Italian Association of Alpini, who defined the developers' decision to transform a sacred place like Monte Grappa into a video game as disrespectful, inappropriate, and outrageous, an offence to the sacrifice of those tens of thousands of young people who fought and died to defend their homeland (Malgieri, 2016). The controversy hit the headlines for some weeks until the game's launch, and when *Battlefield 1* was finally playable, backlash abated but criticism was redirected at historical accuracy. (ibid.)

The fifth game mission is *The Runner* and is set in the Dardanelles strait, in the spring of 1915. Players take control of Frederick Bishop, an experienced message runner in the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) during the British Army's landing at Gallipoli in Ottoman Türkiye, in a combined naval and military operation of the Gallipoli campaign.

Lastly, *Nothing is Written* is the sixth and final war story of the game and is set in Mesopotamia in the spring of 1918. The playable protagonist is the Bedouin female warrior Zara Ghufuran, who's fighting in the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire. She is the right hand of the British military officer and diplomat Thomas Edward Lawrence, commonly known as Lawrence of Arabia, who also appears as a character in this final mission. Like the game prologue's title *Storm of Steel*, also *Nothing is Written* is an intertextual reference and relates to a well-known dialogue line uttered by the protagonist of the 1962 film *Lawrence of Arabia*, directed by David Lean.

To conclude, as the description of the game war stories above shows, and as Ramsay explains (2020: online), “*Battlefield 1*’s single-player campaigns do not follow one central narrative, or one single soldier”, each war story “follows a different playable character. Other than fighting in the same war, these characters have little in common, and their narratives do not intersect”. However, as a *fil rouge*, Ramsay adds (*ibid.*), the prologue “introduces an unnamed member of the Harlem Hellfighters (an African American unit) who goes on to provide voice-over introductions for each of the War Stories”, while each of the five playable characters – (1) a British tank driver, (2) an American pilot, (3) a soldier of the Italian Royal Army, (4) an Australian runner, and (5) a woman Bedouin fighter⁶ – “provide ‘personal’ perspectives” which “individualize the war and counter the anonymity of the Unknown Soldier. They also generate a sense of a hugely varied conflict on a global scale, extending from the battlefields of France, through Europe and the Dardanelles, and into the Arabian Peninsula” (Ramsay, 2020: online).

The value of this game’s attempt at alternative storytelling, with its emphasis on tone and affect, is that even the “kill-em-all” player may experience a momentary impact from the violence depicted. This is particularly important given that [...] many young people encounter the history of warfare through such popular videogames. (Bender, 2017: online)

In connection with the game’s tone and educational value, to conclude this section, worth mentioning is the text of the game’s ending cutscene that players must unlock after the six missions to complete the single-player campaign. Titled “Remember us”, this cinematic⁷, as described in-game by developers, is “a closing message from the *Battlefield 1* team. Dedicated to those who served”:

⁶ In this regard, Kempshall (2020) argues that, if compared to the game’s multiplayer mode and to the downloadable contents released in 2017, playable positions in BF1 single-player campaign are extremely limited. Not only the Central Powers are heavily restricted to the enemy roles, but no war stories are devoted to the French and Russian armies. According to Kempshall (*ibid.*), thus, BF1 is one of the most Anglo-American portrayals of the First World War in the popular mainstream, which aims at meeting the expectations and interests of a very specific audience, that is the American audience, despite the European origins of the game’s developer.

⁷ The ending cutscene (Battlefield, 2016a) is a longer version of the official reveal trailer, which, with 74 million views and 2,5 million likes, was the most watched and the most liked game trailer ever on YouTube (Battlefield, 2016b).

One day all this will be over. The war to end all wars will be won—by one side or the other. The guns will rust. Grass will grow and there'll be nothing left of any of this. The land will heal itself as everything does in the end. We'll be long gone by then—but maybe not forgotten. If history only remembers one in a thousand of us, then the future will be filled with stories of who we were and what we did. How we lived, how we fought and how we died. When this is all over and the war is won—they will remember us. But until that day comes, we will stand, we will look death in the eye—and we will fight!

3. Methodology

Given the descriptive analytical approach of this study, an English-Italian corpus of *Battlefield 1* has been compiled to examine and compare parallel text strings in their original and translated versions. As regards this point, it is important to mention that BF1 was fully localized into Italian, meaning that all texts are translated and the audio is voiced-over and subtitled. Due to the game's story-driven nature, in this preliminary investigation the focus is on diegetic on-screen texts and, particularly, on monologues and dialogues, because they serve as the leading narrative device. However, since game texts are non-linear to give players authorial agency in the storytelling process, to create this study corpus an online walkthrough of the game (QuelTaleAle, 2016)⁸ was used to order texts chronologically based on the BF1 authentic English-Italian localization database I was provided with by the game's US publisher Electronic Arts. The Italian texts displayed on-screen in the walkthrough selected have been used as the point of reference and, given the authenticity of the database, double-checking the accuracy of the original English texts was not necessary.

The corpus presents an overall playtime of about five hours and a total of 1,216 text strings, containing 9,841 words in English and 8,965 words in Italian. Going into more details, the on-screen game texts in single-player BF4 experience examined comprise the following types: (a) the war story title, (b) the war story description, both illustrated in Table (1), (c) texts containing names, surnames, birth and death year of the many named and unnamed soldiers dying throughout the game, as in examples (1) and (2), and, more importantly, hundreds of strings of voiced-over and subtitled

⁸ At the time of the research, this online resource was the only complete walkthrough of BF1 single-player campaign played by an Italian gamer and available on YouTube.

texts like (d) the unnamed narrator-soldier monologues, and (e) dialogues involving characters during both interactive and non-interactive sequences.

The importance of voiced-over and subtitled monologues and dialogues is testified to by the quantity of their strings, which account for 93% of all string types in this research corpus, and 27% in the whole game database. This clearly suggests that the large majority of texts gamers listen to and read when playing a (hi)story-driven experience like BF1 belong to this text type.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the analysis of the languages of WW1 in the corpus draws from relevant scholarly studies and lexicographic analyses examining the impact of the conflict on English (Buxton, 2011; Doyle and Walker, 2012; Ball and Wild, 2014; Wild, 2014; Walker, 2017) and it aims to describe the phenomena selected by game writers, and dealt with by game translators, to linguistically characterize the experience of virtual soldiers fighting the Great War.

4. Discussion

World War 1 not only changed the scale of warfare and reshaped global politics and society, but also left a lasting imprint on the English language. Indeed, as Buxton (2011: online) explains, “the circumstances of the First World War were so horrific, so extraordinary, and involving so many millions of people that a new language was almost essential”. According to Walker (2017: 2), “there are many types of language [...] across several fields of linguistic activity” that characterized English in WW1, including new coinages, slang and borrowed words specific to the war and its unique conditions. Traces of this linguistic interpretation of the experiences of the First World War can be found in the corpus and are discussed in the following paragraphs.

First, given the WW1 theme and shooting genre of BF1, military language plays a pivotal role in game texts and represents a remarkable and varied source of linguistic phenomena (Pettini, 2022a: 149). Most strings in the corpus are indeed dialogues taking place during military operations and involving soldiers who speak to other soldiers including the player, about warfare, and the language used ranges from specialized jargon to colorful slang. Characteristic of military jargon is the vocabulary relating to warfare and technology, as to vehicles, weapons, roles, and equipment, whose names are encoded in hundreds of more or less specific terms like *aircraft*,

airship, *artillery*, *aviator*, *battleship*, *bayonet*, *bomber*, *cannon*, *charge*, *dreadnought*, *grenade* and *grenadier*, *fighter*, *infantry*, *machine gun*, *rifle*, *tank*, among many others, and, more importantly, even though to a lesser extent, terms which are more clearly representative of those realities, because they belong to the languages of World War I (Ball and Wild, 2014; Doyle and Walker, 2012). Examples include the hand-held *flamethrower*, the attack by aircraft *air raid*, the now chiefly historical *zeppelin* to mean the large German dirigible airships used for reconnaissance and bombing in WW1 (OEDO), the acronym PBI for Poor Bloody Infantry(man), an abbreviation which dates from WW1 and implied that the infantry was at the end of the line of consideration (Doyle and Walker, 2012: 45), the role *stormtrooper*, a now chiefly historical noun to specifically mean a German soldier trained and equipped for carrying out sudden assaults during WW1 (OEDO), the colorless chemical weapon *mustard gas*, the barrage ballon *blimp*, and the now historical adverb *over the top* used in the conflict to mean “over the parapet of a trench and into battle” and “usually in **to go over the top**” (OEDO, original emphasis).

In Italian, these traces of WW1 English are mostly translated into direct equivalent nouns of military language, including *lanciafiamme* (flamethrower), *incursione* (air raid), *dirigibile* (zeppelin), *fanteria*⁹ (PBI), *assaltatore* (stormtrooper), *iprite* (mustard gas)¹⁰, and *pallone da sbarramento* (blimp). Worth observing, however, is the loss of the language-specific, figurative and historical value in the direct transfer of going over the top into *attaccare* [attack], as in example (3), because “the act of leaving the trench to assault the enemy was a pivotal experience in the life of a Great War soldier” (Doyle and Walker, 2012: 183), as even the game character claims in (3), meaning “the act of rising bodily out of the protecting earth and advancing into the face of enemy guns” (*ibid.*).

(3)	Tomorrow we'll be going over the top —finally up against the Hun.	Domani è il gran giorno, finalmente attaccheremo i crucchi.
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⁹ Mirijello (2014) explains that similar figurative names for infantrymen were *fantoccino* and *formica* in Italian.

¹⁰ According to Mirijello (2014), iprite derives from Ypres, the city where this gas was first used by the Germans against the Canadians, but it was also called *gas mostarda* as a calque from *mustard gas*.

Another area of vocabulary which openly reflects WW1 in the game includes the words encapsulating its topoi and reproducing the visual imagery of the conflict, as discussed in Section 2, words which do not pose any translation issues, but are noteworthy because they refer to the most potent symbols of trench warfare, like barbed wire and the related verb, *gas* and (*gas*) *mask*, *mud*, *no man's land*, *shell hole*, *shell shock* and, obviously, *trench*, as in examples (4) – (14). In particular, according to the OEDO, *shell shock* is a now historical phrase which specifically refers to “a disorder identified in soldiers in the First World War (1914–18), attributed to exposure to shell-fire and characterized by severe anxiety and other psychological disturbances, often accompanied by somatic symptoms such as rapid heartbeat and nervous tics” and it “would now be classified as a form of post-traumatic stress disorder”. According to Doyle and Walker, “the term ‘shell shock’ was to become a lasting legacy of the war” (2012: 194).

(4)	No man's land was a maze of barbed wire , dead bodies and debris. But I held my course.	La terra di nessuno era un labirinto di filo spinato , cadaveri e macerie, ma io ho proseguito, determinato.
(5)	We're in no man's land , we need to go. Now.	Siamo nella terra di nessuno . Andiamo. Ora.
(6)	Grind that wire into the mud !	Schiacciamo quel filo nel fango !
(7)	More damn mud !	Altro fango maledetto.
(8)	Even from one hundred feet we could see that their lines had been wired so heavily that only a rabbit could get through.	Anche da lontano era chiaro che il filo spinato a protezione delle loro linee era così fitto che solo un coniglio avrebbe potuto attraversarlo.
(9)	Incoming gas !	Gas nemico!
(10)	Get your damn gas mask on!	Su la maschera antigas . Presto!
(11)	Let's just find a shell hole and wait it out.	Troviamo una buca e aspettiamo per un po'.
(12)	You hear what he did to those poor bastards who went in for shell shock ?	Sai che ha fatto a quei poveretti che hanno marcato visita per shock da bombardamento ?
(13)	When we dug this trench we dug not dirt alone but legs, arms, skulls, helmets, all the debris of this mighty struggle.	Non abbiamo scavato le trincee nella terra, ma in gambe, braccia, teschi ed elmi. Nei detriti di quest'immane conflitto.

(14)	Gun! Second trench!	Cannone! Seconda trincea!
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WW1 military terminology in BF1 is slang too, including expressions like *archie*, *Little Willie* and *potato-masher*. According to the OEDO, the now historical *archie* means anti-aircraft guns collectively or, if plural, an anti-aircraft gun or a shell from it, and was chiefly applied by Allied soldiers to German guns during WW1. *Little Willie* is a WW1 slang nickname given to various weapons, including tanks, as in the game, and especially to the first tank constructed in 1915 by the British army (OEDO), a name which also represented a jocular reference to the Kaiser's son, Wilhelm (Walker, 2017: 53). As to *potato-masher*, this is a type of hand grenade whose shape resembles that of a potato masher (OEDO), which thus illustrates the inventiveness characterizing coinages to deal with the immediate relevance of weaponry too (Buxton, 2011). As examples below show, slang words are translated into non-slang expressions, namely *cannoni contraerei* (anti-aircraft guns) and *granatiere* (grenadier), the latter referring to the role and not to the weapon, while *Little Willie* becomes il *piccolino* or *piccoletto* (little guy), diminutives of *piccolo* commonly used for a baby boy or a short male person (Treccani Dictionary of Italian).

(15)	Just a few archies left!	Restano pochi cannoni contraerei!
(16)	Little Willie still moving!	Il piccolino si muove ancora!
(17)	Little Willie is still kicking!	Quel piccoletto non si arrende!
(18)	Watch out! Potato masher!	Attenzione! Granatiere!

Another feature of WW1 military slang which is represented in BF1 dialogues is the “strong female presence [...] in the names of weapons”, that is “the gendering of the names given to large guns, shells, mines, tanks, even the bayonet and rifle” (Walker, 2017: 199). Instances in the corpus relate to the machine gun *Emma Gee* used in the prologue, and to the British Mk. V tank *Big Bess*, also referred to as just *Bess*, *Bessy* and *Bessie*, driven by playable Daniel Edwards in the first mission. Female-gendered are also all the pronominal forms used to refer to the plane in the second mission, as exemplified in (22). As concerns the machine gun, it is also important to highlight the game's representation of WW1 soldiers' metaphorical use of language aimed to assign human voice quality to weapons (Doyle and Walker, 2012: 129), as *sing* illustrates in (21).

(19)	Use that Emma Gee ! Sweep the ground!	Forza con quella mitragliatrice ! Diamo una ripulita!
(20)	Tear that Emma Gee to pieces!	Facciamo a pezzi quella mitragliatrice !
(21)	Let her sing ! Pump 'em full of lead!	Falla cantare ! Riempili di piombo!

(22)	The bird was busted. She buried her nose in no man's land, a half a mile due west of where I went down.	L' aereo era andato . Se ne stava col muso nel terreno, un chilometro più a ovest di dove ero finito io.
(23)	And come and meet Big Bess. Woman of your dreams.	Ti voglio presentare Big Bess. La donna dei tuoi sogni.
(24)	Bess has got us this far and she 'll get us all the way if we do our bit.	Bess ci ha portato fin qui... E ci farà arrivare fino in fondo, se faremo la nostra parte.
(25)	Sir, she needs new sparkplugs.	Ci servono delle candele nuove.
(26)	Edwards, start her up.	Edwards, metti in moto.
(27)	Keep her steady, driver!	Pilota, niente scossoni!
(28)	Edwards! Get her fixed and get back in here!	Edwards! Sistema il carro e torna dentro!
(29)	Hey Edwards! She likes it when you swear, boy!	Ehi Edwards, le piaci quando dici le parolacce!

According to the OEDO, the expression *Emma Gee* was used in the oral transliteration of code messages in military communication during the war, standing exactly for 'mg' as an abbreviation for machine gun, whose equivalent in Italian is *mitragliatrice*, as in examples (19) and (20). Given the feminine gender of this noun, the pronoun *her* in (21) is gendered in Italian too. Conversely, since the standard equivalent *aereo* for the informal *bird* is masculine, this instance of feminization is neutralized, as example (22) shows.

Regarding the tank *Big Bess*, all occurrences of this name are kept unaltered in translation, but since the equivalent noun for the referent (*carro armato*) is masculine, pronominal forms relating to *Big Bess* are either omitted, as in extracts (24) - (27), or made masculine, as in (28). Interestingly

enough, the only instance of female pronouns relating to the tank kept in Italian is in the quite stereotypical line shown in (29). In this scene the playable tank driver Edwards is struggling to repair *Big Bess*, that had suddenly broken down, and the engine finally starts when he, angry and frustrated, curses, suggesting that swearing is a trait of masculinity, strength and power women like and, in this case, obey.

The gendering of this tank is also expressed in the allusive phrase *woman of your dreams* when presenting *Big Bess* in (23), and also in the forms used to address or refer to it, namely (*old*) *girl*, and *the* (*old* or *big*) *lady*. These colloquial gendered expressions are translated into the equivalent *ragazza*, *signora*, *bellezza* and *piccola*, as examples (30) – (36) illustrate.

(30)	Come on old girl . Come on, please.	Forza, ragazza . Non mollare, per favore.
(31)	Bess! You did it girl!	Bess! Ce l'hai fatta, ragazza!
(32)	Catch up to him. Let's test the old girl out and see if she can keep up with him!	Raggiungilo! Vediamo se questa bellezza riesce a stargli dietro!
(33)	Hold together old girl , it's not much further now.	Tieni duro, piccola . Ormai non manca molto.
(34)	Come on, boys! The lady's pulled us through before!	Avanti, ragazzi! Questa ragazza non ci ha mai tradito!
(35)	The big lady needs a hand!	La ragazza ha bisogno di una ritoccatina!
(36)	Easy on the old lady , Edwards.	Tratta con rispetto la signora , Edwards.

Another important trace of WW1 found in the corpus results from the role language played in shaping how soldiers saw each other as 'us' and 'them' during the conflict, operating "as a major determinant in the making of national identities" (Walker, 2017: 148). A productive area of colloquial lexical creations was indeed that of ethnic epithets (Wild, 2014). The image of the enemy Central Powers is clearly encapsulated in the expressions largely used to address or refer to the Germans in many derogatory ways, like *Fritz* and *Jerry*, mainly as singular nouns, sometimes in modifier position, and in the instances of the now historical adjective and noun *Ottoman*.

According to the OEDO, *Fritz* and *Jerry* are nouns and adjectives which were chiefly used during WW1 to mean German(s), and especially German soldier(s). In particular, *Fritz* is colloquial and offensive, while *Jerry*

is “colloquial (usually disparaging and sometimes considered offensive)”. *Fritz* originated as a pet form of the German male forename Friedrich, while *Jerry* was formed by shortening of German. According to the dictionary, both epithets usually carried less derogatory force than related terms such as *Boche*, *Kraut* and *Hun*, which do not occur in this paper corpus, but can be found in BF1 database, although to a very small extent in comparison with *Fritz* and *Jerry*¹¹. In this regard, Doyle and Walker (2012: 61-62) explain that all these forms of othering Germans stayed in use throughout the war, but, unlike the others, *Fritz* was first used in 1915 and in the period 1916-1918 the term German was common too.

As examples (37) – (42) show, both *Fritz* and *Jerry* are always translated into *crucchi* in Italian, a disparaging name for German which was used, according to the Treccani Dictionary of Italian (online), during WW2 to mean German soldiers by those who fought in Russia and later by partisans¹². According to Cazzullo (2023: online), on the contrary, *cruccho* actually dates back to WW1 and comes from the Slavic word *krub* (bread) used by the soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army – including German, Polish, Slovenian, Slovak, Czech soldiers, among others – to look for food in occupied territories.

(37)	We'll chase Fritz all the way back to Berlin!	Inseguiremo i crucchi fino a Berlino!
(38)	Fritz is on the retreat!	I crucchi si ritirano!
(39)	Destroy all Fritz vehicles you can find!	Distruggi tutti i mezzi crucchi che trovi!
(40)	Keep Jerry away from Bess!	Teniamo i crucchi lontani da Bess!
(41)	Jerry's down!	Crucchi abbattuti!
(42)	Our bomber formations incoming! Keep those Jerry fighters off of them!	I nostri bombardieri stanno arrivando! Teniamo lontani i caccia dei crucchi!

¹¹ The OEDO explains that *Boche*, *Kraut* and *Hun* represent chiefly offensive and derogatory colloquial names for the Germans collectively and were frequently used during WW1 and WW2. In the Italian database of BF1, they are all translated into *cruccho*, like *Fritz* and *Jerry*.

¹² Pagano (2015: 88), too, records *cruccho* as a word belonging to WW2 jargon, derived from *Krub* (bread) and originally used by Italian soldiers in the Balkans. According to Pagano (2015) and Mirijello (2014), the Italian nicknames for German and Austro-Hungarian soldiers were *muc* or *muccho* and *austrello* respectively.

As regards *cruccho*, in the Italian game this ethnic epithet is also chosen to translate *shower*, a colloquial noun originally used in military slang to mean a group of people (OEDO) and, more interestingly, the neutral *German* and the German masculine name *Günther* as in (43) and (44), which exemplifies how foreign proper names have always been borrowed in informal English to be used derogatorily.

(43)	Another German buried!	Un altro cruccho in meno!
(44)	Günther is splinters!	A mai più, crucchi !

On the Allies' side, which represent most playable positions in the game, the ethnic epithets found in the corpus include Pommy and Pom, Brit and Tommy for the British Empire, and Aussie and kiwi for the ANZAC.

According to the OEDO, these names present the following features: *Pommy* and *Pom* are colloquial and usually derogatory names for a British person, especially an English, in Australian and New Zealand Englishes, and they are indeed always found in the lines uttered by the playable ANZAC soldier in the fourth war story. *Brit* is a colloquial form for a British person, *Tommy* is a generic and colloquial name for British private soldiers collectively, now used chiefly with reference to WW1. As to *Aussie* and *kiwi*, the dictionary explains that the former is a colloquial name for an Australian and was originally used to refer to an Australian soldier in WW1 specifically, while *kiwi* designates a New Zealander and especially a New Zealand soldier, being first attested in 1917. As the examples below illustrate, all these informal and sometimes derogatory ethnic epithets are translated into standard equivalent forms in Italian, that are *inglese* (English), *australiano* (Australian) and *neozelandese* (New Zealander).

(45)	Stupid fucking poms .	Stupidi inglesi di merda.
(46)	Fucking pin-headed Pommies , shelling their own men.	Bastardi inglesi , sparano ai loro compagni...
(47)	The Brits launched an offensive just west of us.	Gli inglesi stanno attaccando, appena a ovest di qui.
(48)	I almost pity poor Tommy in their trenches, trying to make sense of it all.	Provo quasi pietà per gli inglesi disorientati, nelle loro trincee.

(49)	There. You're a proper Aussie now. Gotta look the part.	Ecco. Ora hai proprio l'aspetto di un australiano!
(50)	Not a Kiwi , are you?	Non sia neozelandese...

As concerns the war's multilingual environment, as Ball and Wild explain (2014: online), "by 1914 military involvement overseas had long been leaving its mark on the English language" and, in particular, during the conflict great influence was exercised by "French, the language of the ally on whose territory the conflict played out, and German, the language of the enemy". German and French were indeed the sources of many loans about the war itself, mainly relating to its strategies and technologies. Borrowed from German were words referring to weapons and vehicles like the mine shell launching mortar *minenwerfer*, also abbreviated into *Minnie*, and the submarine *U-boat*, together with currently naturalized words like *strafe* and its derivatives *strafes* and *strafing*, which originated in the WW1 German propagandist slogan *Gott strafe England!*, meaning *May God punish England!* to generally mean *attack*, *punishment* or *reprimand*¹³ and which later acquired senses specific to aerial warfare (OEDO). Conversely, "the influence of French was more idiosyncratic, and perhaps more revealing about the culture of the soldiers who used it" (Ball and Wild, 2014: online). British soldiers used to coin new informal macaronic phrases to be used at the front by garbling and mispronouncing French expressions, often with humorous anglicization of spelling and pronunciation. Examples include *no bon* [no good], *napoo* [from French *il n'y a plus*, meaning kill or destroy], *bokoo* [from French *beaucoup*, a lot], and *toot sweet* [from French *tout de suite*, straightaway, quickly], even in the anglicized comparative form *the tooter the sweeter* [the sooner the better].

This feature of WW1 English is represented in BF1 texts via the use of some borrowings from German and French exactly. Regarding German, the loans found in the corpus include *(the) Kaiser*, a now historical title used to refer to the 1871-1918 German Empire ruler Wilhelm II, who was widely blamed for the war (Doyle and Walker, 2012: 23), *Flammenwerfer*, the name of a portable flamethrower used by the Germans in trench warfare, the German heavy tank *Sturmpanzzer*, and *strafing*, an adjective derived from the verb *strafe*, emerged as a loanword in WW1 to mean attacking with machine-gun fire from low-flying aircraft (OEDO). According to Ball and Wild (2014: online), however, *strafe* is "the most significant German loanword of

¹³ According to Mirijello (2014), the verb *strafare* in Italian was coined with these senses in WW1.

the First World War – one which outlasted the war”, and since it “has been fully naturalized in English, [...] is no longer perceived as markedly German”.

Concerning the French language, the borrowed expression found in the corpus is *C'est la guerre* [lit. it's the war], which was commonly used to acknowledge the harsh realities of the conflict and which “became a universal answer to finish any discussion on any topic” (Doyle and Walker, 2012: 208). In BF1, it is a decontextualized line uttered by a non-playable character in the mission set in Gallipoli during an interactive sequence.

As corpus extracts (51) – (55) show, two of these borrowings disappear in localization. However, while *flammiere* still presents a foreignizing historical effect, since this noun is no longer in use and can be perceived as directly associated with the Great War¹⁴, the omission of *strafing* might depend on the difficulty of translating the complex meaning and specialization of this military term, especially if used as an adjective as in the game.

(51)	Those trenches were packed full of the Kaiser's finest.	In quelle trincee erano appostati i migliori uomini del Kaiser .
(52)	Flammenwerfer!	Flammiere!
(53)	Sturmpanzer closing in!	Sturmpanzer in avvicinamento!
(54)	Concrete pillboxes, strafing guns, mustard gas.	Bunker in cemento, mitragliatrici, iprite.
(55)	C'est la guerre.	C'est la guerre.

5. Conclusions

This paper has explored the linguistic and translational dimensions of the representation of the First World War in *Battlefield 1*, shedding light on how the languages of the conflict are used by game designers, and dealt with by translators, for the purposes of historical engagement. Drawing on relevant scholarly and lexicographic studies, the analysis of the English-Italian parallel corpus of this research, including the game's single-player campaign monologue and dialogue lines, has shown that many features of WW1 English have been selected in order to better characterize the interactive experience as historical and allow virtual soldiers to immerse themselves in

¹⁴ Flamethrower soldiers were nicknamed *flammere* and *roscopiciere* in Italian (Mirijello, 2014).

stories of the Great War. In particular, the typical military lingo of the first-person shooter genre BF1 belongs to has been enriched with several lexical creations, slang expressions, colloquialisms, and borrowed words, mostly from the enemy German language, which are specific to the war, to its unique conditions and extreme experiences, words which encapsulate its topoi, iconic imagery and popular memory, words which originated in the conflict to express the apparently inexpressible, or which originated earlier but acquired new senses during the war. Findings of this pilot study suggest that language is thus one of the symbolic and recognizable historical elements which are reproduced by BF1 game writers in their representation and re-construction of the past, an element to be included in the game's selective authenticity, to meet the expectations of an Anglophone and particularly Anglo-American audience, and to finally offer an Anglocentric viewpoint. In translation, indeed, the languages of WW1 English pose remarkable challenges to language professionals who tend to directly translate historical military terms thanks to equivalent terms in Italian, and, when dealing with language and culture-specific phenomena like slang and ethnic epithets, they often neutralize the historical, figurative and symbolic values of these linguistic traces selectively left to balance authenticity with gameplay experience.

To conclude, as regards future research, the study will move in two directions. First, the analysis will explore other text types which may contribute to the game's educational potential. For example, special attention will be paid to the over 300 Codex entries that players can unlock throughout the game by taking specific actions and completing challenges. These static texts are extremely rich in WW1 vocabulary, as they are designed to give players insights into the history of the conflict as to weapons, vehicles, tactics, battles, events, the empires and armies involved, among many other facts. As BF1 credits show, codex entries were indeed compiled by the game's creative director Stefan Strandberg and Era Designer Martin Koppardh, with additional assistance from the team of the YouTube channel *The Great War*, including host Indy Neidell and research assistant Markus Linke. As they explain (Neidell and Linke, 2016: online), *The Great War* team greatly contributed to the research behind and writing of these texts, and they also named all the game's medals and awards players win. Secondly, a gender-critical perspective will be adopted to examine issues concerning women's representation, in the light of the playable female warrior cast in the final war story of the single-player campaign, and also of the female Russian Scout class added to the game's

multiplayer component in an expansion released in 2017. It is worth noting, indeed, that a game inspired by real-world history actively involves women in fighting WW1 and even offers players a female-gendered engagement to rebel against one of the mightiest and longest-standing dynasties in world history, the Ottoman Empire, considering the “predominantly male space” realistic war video games tend to represent (see Pettini, 2020).

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