Semantic neology in the domain of videogames in Spanish

Inmaculada Álvarez de Mon Rego and Carola Álvarez-Bolado Sánchez
Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (Spain)
ialvarez@euitt.upm.es & calvarez@eui.upm.es

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to discuss the meaning of five neologisms in the domain of videogames in Spanish: *título, aventura, personaje, plataforma,* and *rol.* Our study focuses on a special type of neologism since the Spanish terms we deal with here are not strictly new words; they are what have been called sense neologisms or neosemanticisms, that is, old words taking a new sense in a different domain. These words were identified as new concepts after a process of analysis based on contextual evidence. This study of neology is based on the analysis of a corpus of press articles evaluating videogames published by the Spanish newspaper El País from 1998 to 2008. The analysis of the instances of use of domain specific terms in the corpus revealed that they acquired new senses different to those they have in other domains where they are also used. The paper explains the process of discovering the specialized meaning these words have developed in the domain of videogames and how the analysis of collocational behavior helps in the process of discovering the new sense and in the design of the definition provided.

Keywords: neology, sense neologism, computer terms, videogame terminology, domain-specialized corpus.

Resumen

Neologismos semánticos en el ámbito de los videojuegos en español

En este trabajo se presentan cinco neologismos del ámbito del videojuego en español: "título", "aventura", "personaje", "plataforma" y "rol". Se trata de un tipo especial de neologismo, conocido también como "neologismo semántico" o "neosemanticismo", ya que son palabras ya existentes en la lengua que adquieren un nuevo significado. Los nuevos significados que adquieren estos términos en el ámbito del videojuego se establecieron tras el análisis del contexto de uso en

un corpus periodístico de críticas de videojuegos. Este corpus recoge las críticas de videojuegos publicadas por el periódico El País entre 1998 y 2008. El análisis de los casos de uso de los términos en el corpus de videojuegos reveló que adquirían un nuevo significado diferente al de su uso en otros ámbitos o en el lenguaje general. El artículo describe cada uno de los neologismos y el proceso de análisis contextual que conduce a descubrir el nuevo significado y elaborar su definición.

Palabras clave: neologismo, neologismo semántico, términos informáticos, terminología de videojuegos, corpus especializado.

1. Introduction

The notion of neology is of special interest in terminology dealing with science and technology. In fact, technological developments are one of the most important sources for the creation of neologisms and this is evident in the field of computer technology. Neologisms are so important in specialized terminology that the term "neonym" is sometimes used for referring to a neologism in a specialized domain (Cabré, 1999). The aim of this article is to discuss a type of neologism found in the Spanish terminology of computers and videogames[1]. In fact, the Spanish neologisms we deal with here are not strictly new words; they are "sense neologisms" (Rey, 2005) or "neosemanticisms" – that is, everyday language words that take a new sense in the specialized domain of computer and videogames.

We consider videogames as a specialized domain in itself, although pertaining to the more general one of computer technology and the Internet. This is one of those fields where the consequences of interdisciplinarity are most evident since four different areas contribute to the emergence of new terms: industry, technology, theoretical studies and entertainment activity. Moreover, each of these areas can be identified with a community of practice and this is especially obvious in the case of professionals devoted to the theoretical study of videogames who have become a discourse community with a growing number of publications (Murray, 1997; Ryan, 2001 & 2006; Frasca, 2003; Juul, 2005) and even a terminology of their own[2].

This study of the terminology of computer and videogames is based on a journalistic corpus compiled from the journal *El País* (1998-2008). This corpus is domain specific, since it is a collection of only those texts classified under the category *juegos* ("games") within the larger *CiberPaís* corpus. *CiberPaís* publishes information on ICTs, but only reviews and articles on

new videogame releases were selected for our study. Although using Wordsmith Tools 4.0. (Concord, Wordlist and Keyword tools) (Scott, 2004), the detection of neologisms carried out in this study is primarily based on the qualitative analysis of contextual evidence. Initially, a list of keywords was extracted using both the domain specific corpus and a reference corpus. This list revealed that the most frequent terms in the videogame corpus are common words belonging to general Spanish: *juego, jugador, título, género, consola, aventura, personajes, acción, enemigos, videojuegos, escenarios, protagonista, plataforma, rol* and *misiones*. The analysis of the use of these terms in context revealed that five of them (*título*, *aventura*, *personaje*, *plataforma* and *rol*) developed new meanings in this domain.

The analysis also showed that these common words which acquire new senses in the field of videogames are originally terms in other domains such as computer technology and narrative. According to our corpus, the language of videogames, although belonging to computer technology, differs slightly from the terminology of computer science in Spanish. In the analysis of computer terminology in Spanish carried out by Aguado de Cea (1996), the author concluded that most terms are anglicisms (either pure or adapted), calques and neologisms created by means of affixation.

In this article, we focus on the role of context for identifying the new meaning of these terms and for determining the features of the new concepts they refer to. The research here presented is part of a corpus based study of the Spanish terminology of videogames that will eventually result in a style guide in Spanish along the lines of previous work carried out for English (Thomas, Orland & Steinberg, 2007).

This article is structured as follows. Following this introduction, we review the topic of context briefly and how it is applied in this work. Then we describe the corpus used and the methodology followed. Finally, each of the neologisms in Spanish is discussed in detail and some concluding remarks are presented.

2. Levels of context relevant for the identification of neologisms

From the linguistic perspective, context is kaleidoscopic and multifaceted. In this brief description of context which is necessary for describing its role in

the identification of the neologisms in our specialized corpus, we take into account different approaches to the description of context (Coseriu, 1973; Halliday 1978; Leech, 1983). One of the most complete descriptions of context in Linguistics is that of Coseriu (1973), who defines context as the reality surrounding a sign, a speech act or a text, being physical objects, the knowledge the speakers possess, the language used and the activity the speakers are involved in. Coseriu's explanation of context stands out for its comprehensiveness and delicacy in spite of the years passed by and includes the perspectives from alternative approaches.[3]

More recently, context has been of key importance in computational tasks involving word sense disambiguation. Ide and Vèronis (1998) and Miller (1999) establish three levels for context: "situational", "topical" and "local" or "microcontext". Miller (1999: 15) describes situational context as that information "about the purposes and goals of the communicative interaction"; topical context, as that depending on the "domain of discourse" and local context as "information provided by words in the immediate neighborhood".

In this study, we add a fourth level of context, that of the complete text surrounding each term and we distinguish between domain and topical context. We are aware that in our specialized corpus belonging to the domain of videogames, this is also the topical context, as the reviews were selected by using the keyword "videogames". However, the specific corpus is then contextualized in the more general domain of computer science and the Internet.

The first level of context of interest for identifying the specialization of meaning in the corpus is that of domain and accounts for the fact that all the texts included in the corpus pertain to the specialized domain of videogames.

The second level of context is that of genre and medium. All the texts included are found both in the printed and the digital edition of *CiberPaís*, which covers news, opinion articles and interviews concerning Communication and Information Technologies (ICTs), and hence the Internet[4]. Being a journalistic corpus, the writer is an expert in the domain of games and in the genre of the review.

The third level of context is the textual level which corresponds to each of the texts where the neologism is used. This level of context can be identified with what Blass (1990: 79) calls context continuity: "... within a planned

discourse, there is a continuity of context, that is, information made accessible by the interpretation of the first utterance is used in establishing the relevance of the second". This notion, based on Sperber and Wilson's (1986: 15) Theory of Relevance, where context was "the set of premises used in interpreting an utterance" allowed us to confirm a property of domain specific terms when used in continuous discourse. Some of the neologisms we are discussing in this article, such as *título* or *aventura* are used in the corpus with another meaning, that of videogame. In fact, there are many instances in the corpus where they are used as synonyms of videogame.

The fourth level of context which affects the meaning of terms is the surrounding words. This context is seen in the concordance lines extracted from the corpus for each of the terms analyzed. The analysis of the collocations found in the corpus will be essential for identifying the new meanings and for distinguishing the features of the new concepts in the domain of videogames as opposed to the concepts that the terms in the reference corpus refer to.[5]

3. The corpus

The corpus used for the study comes from *CiberPaís*, the weekly supplement that was published by the Spanish newspaper, *El País*, focusing on ICTs and the Internet. The readers of *El País* are the youngest readers of Spanish general information newspapers – 33% of readers being under 35 (*El País*, 2009).

The corpus, which covers a span of ten years from 1998 to 2008, was provided for this study by the News Library and Archive of *El País* and, upon our request, it was divided into two collections: a corpus of reference, called CRC (*Corpus de Referencia CiberPaís*), and a corpus of analysis, CVC (*Corpus de Videojuegos CiberPaís*). Both corpora can then be considered specialized from the point of view of content. However, from the perspective of genre both of them are examples of expert to non-expert communication. The composition of the *CiberPaís* corpus is shown in Table 1.

CVC, which is the corpus of analysis, is a topic specific corpus as it only includes those texts in the original *CiberPaís* corpus 1998-2008 that were classified under the category *juegos* (games). By using the keyword *juegos*, 983 articles were selected. The result is, in our opinion, what can be described as a "situational corpus", that is:

When documents or fragments of texts are selected with a particular criterion in mind, and when they are evaluated, selected and organized in a systematic way according to explicit criteria, we end up with a situational corpus, a body of texts. (Temmerman, 2000: 54)

	CVC	CRC
Bytes	2,191,156	42,988,880
Tokens	370,138	7,235,908
Types	25,368	136,825
Type/token ratio (TTR)	7	2
Standardised TTR	46.38	45.12

Table 1. Composition of the *CiberPaís* Corpus.

4. Methodology

The first step in our work was to select those terms specific to the domain of videogames. By means of a reference corpus (CRC), we produced a list of keywords out of the corpus of analysis (CVC). We used CRC as the standard for comparison although it can also be described as a domain specific corpus; it is made up of texts on ICTs and the Internet. We did not use a general corpus because our aim is to establish videogames as a domain in itself, pertaining of course to the more general domain of computer science and the Internet. Therefore, our key words reflect both domain and topical context.

The list of keywords is shown in Figure 1. The words are ordered according to their degree of keyness, which interests us not for its statistical relevance, but for its role in the reflection of the most relevant concepts in the corpus, and therefore in the genre and domain analyzed (Scott & Tribble, 2006). It is necessary to consider that this study of the terminology of computer and videogames in Spanish is mediated by the notion of genre. The study is carried out on the assumption that the most frequent terms will be those concepts the expert writer of the reviews considers of interest for the intended reader.

Being a corpus-driven study, we focused on nouns, as they are the words that mainly reveal content. The relevance of nouns when dealing with the lexis of a domain was confirmed by the list of keywords. Only three verbs, *deberá, distribuye* and *podrá* appear in this list. For this reason, we did not consider verbs as terms *per se* but they will be analyzed as actions linked to concepts.

We also discarded named entities such as *Nintendo*, *Pep*, *Elena Avellaneda* and *Xbox*, because, as individual concepts, they were left out of this study.[6]

Figure 1. Keyword list of the CVC corpus as extracted with Wordsmith Tools (Scott, 2004).

The second step involved the extraction of all the contexts where the terms were used. Concordance lists were produced for each of the keywords, both in the CVC and CRC corpora. The contextual analysis of the concordances was the means for discovering that out of the list of keywords, only five of them developed new senses in the computer and videogame domain: *título, aventura, personaje, plataforma*, and *rol*.

Concordance lines were extracted and later expanded to produce contextualized examples of the use of these neologisms. Collocations for each of them were found in both corpora. Consideration was given to the presence of word combinations with a relative frequency of use, and the existence of a clear meaning associated with them. Results obtained for each of the corpora were contrasted, thus providing the necessary evidence for identifying the new meaning of each word. This was particularly useful when

confronted with polysemy, which had to be solved in two of the cases, those of *título* and *plataforma*.

The comparison of the different collocations in both corpora was supplemented with a qualitative analysis of syntactic co-occurring patterns so that the descriptions of each of the neologisms would take into account the most usual patterns in the corpus. Verbs and adjectives found in the concordance lines for each of the five terms were analyzed in order to obtain information on the semantics of these terms. For each of the terms analyzed a table as that shown in Table 2 was completed.

Neologism: CVC vs. CRC	
Frequency	CVC → %
	CRC → %
Adjectives	CVC:
	CRC:
Verbs	CVC:
	CRC:
Collocations	CVC:
	CRC:

Table 2. Table designed to show results of the term in both corpora, CVC and CRC.

It is important to say that the definitions for the neologisms found in the corpus were developed following the information provided by the context of use; their validity was checked by using lexicographical information and expert knowledge. Finally, we verified that the meanings corresponding to the uses of these terms in the CVC corpus had not been defined in a dictionary.

It is also worth mentioning that the information obtained when studying the different contexts turned out to be essential for providing a definition for each of the new senses detected. Once all the information extracted from the context had been detected in the table, the new uses of the terms became evident and therefore, a preliminary meaning description was given for each of the new meanings. After comparing these new meanings with the definitions in the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* [on line], hereafter DRAE [on line], as well as with those in the *Diccionari de Jocs i joguines*, produced by Termcat, we created definitions for the neologisms identified.

5. Semantic neology in the domain of computer and videogames in Spanish.

In this section, we discuss each of the neologisms following the order of appearance in terms of frequency in the list of keywords.

5.1. *Título* ("title")

In the CVC corpus, the term *título* is first used to refer to entertainment software products which add an educational purpose to the act of playing. Figure 2 shows two examples of contexts for this meaning. In the first example, *título* denotes a history of Catalan art and in the second, it refers to a computer-aided learning program for science. According to this, the term refers to all electronic entertainment products, mainly educational software and not just games.

---

1. Este es, también, el recorrido del CD-Rom Historia del arte catalán. El *título* permite una aproximación, clasificada en cinco grandes periodos históricos, a lo más destacado en pintura (CVC/2293946/98*)*

2. Tras varios *títulos* dedicados a las ciencias, nos llega ahora Juega con las ciencias, un estupendo CD-ROM para usuarios de hasta 12 años. (CVC/2553192/185)

Figure 2. Concordance lines for *título* with the new meaning found in the CVC corpus.

This use of the term *título* shows that the reviewers avoid designating educational materials as videogames, in an attempt not to identify electronic products having educational purposes with purely recreational activities. In these cases, the human agent related is no longer a player, but a user.

A second use of the term *título* is as a synonym for videogame. This use of the term for achieving cohesion is typical of journalistic style (Hoey, 1981; Van Dijk, 1988) in which writers like to use as many different words as possible to refer to the same concept. Figure 3 shows three examples of this use, which can be considered either a case of meronymy, since every videogame has a name, or a hypernym, *título*, used for referring to an electronic entertainment product.

1. Moon, que acaba de lanzar un tercer *título* al mercado se creó hace escasamente dos (CVC/1776192/7)

2. crear hasta cuatro unidades virtuales de disco para poder jugar con varios *títulos* sin tener que colocarlos cada vez en la unidad lectora. (CVC/5312369/41)

3. Sin embargo, los japoneses llevan muchos años jugando a *títulos* de rol que, como Final Fantasy, utilizan un sistema de combate que se asemeja sobremanera a la llamada estrategia por turnos. (CVC/cnc/4253634/55)

Figure 3. Concordances for the word *título* with the meaning of videogame (CVC corpus).

In fact, collocations with *título* reflect this use both as a synonym of videogame (*título de acción*, *título de acción tridimensional*, *título de estrategia* and *título futbolístico*) and as a hypernym (*título educativo*, *título infantil*, *título de entretenimiento interactivo*). Adjectives accompanying *título* relate to product appraisal (*adictivo*, *barato*, *básico*, *comercial*, *interactivo*, *intenso*, *mítico*) thus showing that in a corpus of reviews such as CVC one of the most important functions of adjectives is to evaluate. Verbs referring to actions related to the commercial launch of a videogame (*aparecer*, *fabricar*, *lanzar*, *salir al mercado*) indicate that the corpus is journalistic and therefore concerned with breaking news, as shown in Table 3. This contrasts with the use of *título* in the reference corpus, where it is used with one of the senses of the word in general Spanish (university or academic degree) as shown by the collocations: *título universitario* and *título académico*, in Table 3.

Título: CVC vs. CRC		
Frequency	CVC	→ 0.23%
	CRC	→ 0.01%
Adjectives	CVC:	adictivo, barato, divertido, interactivo, intenso
	CRC:	atractivo, ilustrativo, explícito, bueno, impactante, sugerente, breve, provocador
Verbs	CVC:	incorporar, ofrecer, permitir, lanzar
	CRC:	añadir, insertar, mostrar
Collocations	CVC:	título de estrategia, título de carreras, título de lucha, título para PC
	CRC:	título académico, título oficial, título universitario

Table 3. Search results for the term *título* in the *CiberPaís* corpus.

Based on the context of use in the CVC corpus, and taking into account the meaning of the word outside the domain of videogames, we present the following definition for *título* highlighting the idea that several important skills required for succeeding in music, learning and sports are developed while playing.

título

<videojuegos> programa de entretenimiento electrónico basado en la práctica de determinadas habilidades ocupacionales, como por ejemplo actividades mentales, deportivas y musicales.

5.2. *Aventura* (“adventure”)

In the CVC corpus, *aventura* refers to a videogame genre, as shown by the examples in Figure 4.

---

1. La compañía Péndulo Studios lanza al mercado su última *aventura* que, para satisfacción de muchos, conserva varios ingredientes de la aventura tradicional. (CVC/cnc/3935395/92)

2. En la actualidad trabajan en la segunda parte de Runaway, una *aventura* que cosechó una buena crítica. (CVC/ cnc/4932472/14)

3. Pese a que el juego podría tener un fuerte componente del género de *aventura*, puesto que el guión es rico y sería factible una trama en la que el jugador descubriera poco a poco la historia. (CVC/cnc/4953219/307)

4. Con esta excusa se sumerge a jugador en un título de plataformas con más puzles que de costumbre (…) Hay que acabar con 50 tipos de enemigos a lo largo de los cinco mundos que conforman la *aventura*. (CVC/ cnc/5428596/172)

5. Pero además, esta aventura se complementa con otra aventura gráfica,(…)que a su vez genera un tercer módulo llamado la Banda de Corvino. No está mal, tres *aventuras* al precio de dos, y a un precio económico. (CVC/cnc/4854781/6)

Figure 4. Concordance lines for *aventura* with the new meaning found in the CVC corpus.

The analysis of the occurrences revealed that *aventura* is used to refer to a specific kind of game, or to the name of the genre. In this case, when used in the singular, it is often preceded by the word *género* as in *género de aventura*.

---

1. pese al giro de 180 grados que Quantic Dream ha sabido dar a la *aventura gráfica* con este Fahrenheit (CVC/cnc/ 6002513/242)

2. La innovación en el sistema de juego consiste en liberar las *aventuras gráficas* del típico buscar objetos e interactuar con el entorno (CVC/ cnc/6002513/243)

3. los usuarios que disfrutaron en su día de esta *aventura de plataformas* podrán apreciar de nuevo las diferentes fases que superaron en el título para Súper NES” (CVC/cnc/5183848/201)

4. “Astérix y Obélix visitan de nuevo el mundo del videojuego con una *aventura de acción* para PC y Playstation” (CVC/cnc/3820781/229)

Figure 5. Concordance lines showing frequent collocations of the word *aventura*.

The contexts of use in the corpus reveal that videogames classified as belonging to the adventure genre aim at solving certain riddles that the player encounters as the story unfolds. Thus, the meaning of *aventura* does not necessarily imply that the game has a narrative thread, but that no special skills are needed nor combats are used in its development, as it would happen in those games belonging to the action or the role-playing genres. The adventure genre does incorporate narrative elements such as letters or messages that provide both the player and the character with information on the actions they should perform. This information can also be provided by a character specially designed for that purpose. The analysis of the reviews where *aventura* occurs reveals the presence of the words *enigma, puzle*, and *misterio*. These nouns together with the verbs *resolver* ("to solve") and *conversar* ("to chat") in those reviews referring to videogames belonging to the adventure genre, as well as the information provided by the authors, clarify some of the features of this genre. As described in the corpus, in these *aventuras* the player chats with other characters that give instructions or provide clues that help the player solve riddles, puzzles and mysteries.

This meaning of the term as a recreational artefact is confirmed by the verbs: *crear, desarrollar diseñar* and *lanzar*, which denote that the game is the result of a process of design and creation and is a source of recreational content (*disfrutar*): "Consigue una interesante *aventura* apta para ser *disfrutada* junto con los padres, quienes también gozarán …" (CVC/cnc/4732583/23).

This meaning of *aventura* as a kind of videogame is confirmed by experts (Perron & Wolf, 2009) who trace the origin of the use of *aventura* from the title of the first videogame belonging to this type: *Adventure*[7]. In Spanish it received the same title: *Aventura*.

In contrast, in the reference corpus, the adjectives co-occurring with *aventura* (*empresarial, sexual, comercial*) reflect that in this corpus the term is used with the meaning it has in everyday language as described by DRAE [on line]: *Empresa de resultado incierto o que presenta riesgos. Relación amorosa ocasional.*

In the CVC corpus, it is possible to find several uses of the term *aventura* as a hypernym equivalent to *videojuego*. This meaning is emphasized by the prepositional group after the word which specifies the type of videogame we are dealing with here – see examples 3 and 4 in Figure 5. This use of *aventura* with the meaning of videogame can be described as the cohesive use of the term as was also explained in the case of *título*. The collocates of *aventura* in the CVC corpus, evaluative adjectives such as *divertida, auténtica, excelente,*

singular and *clásica* (Table 4) make it possible to distinguish between the term used to refer to *aventura* as a type of videogame which can be amusing, authentic, singular and classic, and the electronic product itself, which can be described as excellent from the point of view of its quality.

Aventura: CVC vs. CRC		
Frequency	CVC	→ 0.19%
	CRC	→ 0.00%
Adjectives	CVC:	Auténtica, clásica, divertida, excelente, fresca, singular
	CRC:	Empresarial, literaria, sexual, televisiva, comercial
Verbs	CVC:	crear, desarrollar, diseñar, disfrutar, lanzar
	CRC:	emprender, financiar, vivir
Collocations	CVC:	aventura de amistad, aventura de plataformas, aventura gráfica, aventura de rol, modo aventura
	CRC:	aventura gráfica

Table 4. Search results of the term *aventura* in the *CiberPaís* corpus.

According to the results of our analysis, a definition for *aventura* in Spanish in the domain of videogames should take into account that it is an entertainment product since the main aim of an *aventura* is to entertain by solving riddles.

> *aventura*
> *<videojuegos> género al que pertenecen aquellos videojuegos que tienen como objetivo principal la resolución de una serie de acertijos que se le presentan al jugador, quien para ello recibe pistas por parte de los personajes.*

5.3. *Personaje* ("character")

The uses in the CVC corpus of the term *personaje* reveal a new sense and consequently, the term differs from that in the domains of literature or cinema. In the domain of videogames, *personaje* refers to the characters in the game, which are often imaginary as in literature or cinema. However, in videogames, although they share some features, *personajes* act differently from characters in books and films. In videogames, their behaviour can be modified by the player, and the *personaje* is not always in the hands of the author-creator, but in the hands of the player. This is shown in the specialized corpus by some of the verbs collocating with *personaje* (Figure 6) such as: *controlar, descargar, evolucionar, entrenar, generar*, which confirm that in videogames, the player has a key role in the development of the story the author of the videogame has designed. Consequently, in the domain of videogames, apart from computer- controlled characters which behave

similarly as those in literature and cinema, there are some characters which are controlled by the player and whose behaviour and features are not predetermined in advance. In fact, it is the player who controls the character and its development conducting the performance of the character according to his or her wishes as shown by the verb *entrenar* in the example: "el título de Codemasters permitirá *entrenar* a un *personaje* para conseguir llegar a la gran final" (CVC/cnc/49942707/32).

---

1. el *personaje* del jugador empezará viviendo en un vivero y si el jugador es hábil podrá conseguir la mejor casa del barrio más chic de la ciudad" (CVC/cnc/5094735/241)

2. Star Fox Adventures es un título en el que se deben manejar diferentes *personajes* y pilotar naves espaciales (CVC/5050556/43)

3. Si el jugador juega solo el propio ordenador generará *personajes* llamados bots que acompañarán al usuario y cumplirán sus órdenes. (CVC/2553187/464/)

4. A partir de ese momento el jugador deberá elegir el *personaje* que desea interpretar (podrá elegir ser Guilliam o Anna). (CVC/3086446/779)

5. En la nueva modalidad el jugador crea a un *personaje*, monta un vehículo y entra en un guión que le sitúa compitiendo. (CVC/4356409/117)

Figure 6. Concordance lines for *personaje* with the new meaning found in the CVC corpus

In role playing games, the player even becomes the character. This is even more so in the case of massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG), where players can be located anywhere in the real world, bringing their different circumstances and points of view into the game. Here we are no longer talking about a character in a story, but about a participant in a game.

Consequently, the term *personaje* in the terminology of videogames results into two different classes according to the involvement of the player. This is shown by two of the most frequent collocations in the specialized corpus, *personaje jugador,* which is used to signal that the player acts as a controller of the character he or she impersonates and its corresponding opposite, *personaje no jugador,* which refers to the character that is not controlled by the player, but by a computer program the player cannot modify.

In the CVC corpus, the collocations reveal that *personaje* refers to a participant in the game which is described by adjectives denoting technical, evaluative or physical characteristics: *poligonal, mítico, jugable* and *femenino*, while

in the reference corpus all the adjectives co-occurring with *personaje* (*relevante, televisivo, querido*) describe celebrities or important figures (Table 5).

Personaje: CVC vs. CRC		
Frequency	CVC	→ 0.23%
	CRC	→ 0.00%
Adjectives	CVC:	aceptable, femenino, jugable, mítico, poligonal
	CRC:	ilustre, querido, reconocido, relevante, televisivo
Verbs	CVC:	controlar, descargar, entrenar, evolucionar, generar
	CRC:	conocer, elegir, definir, incluir, llevar, mezclar
Collocations	CVC:	personaje no jugador, personaje de videojuego
	CRC:	personaje ilustre, personaje histórico, personaje famoso

Table 5. Search results of the term *personaje* in the *CiberPaís* corpus.

In our definition we try to distinguish between those characters that do not have an active role in the game and those essential for the action taking place. A further distinction is made between those characters that are controlled and those that are impersonated by the player.

> personaje
> *<videojuegos> cada uno de los seres humanos o fantásticos que aparecen en un juego. En el caso del denominado personaje jugador es el jugador quien controla al personaje o quien, en algunos casos, como en los juegos de rol, puede incluso adoptar su personalidad.*

5.4. *Plataforma* ("platform")

Plataforma, as a term in the domain of videogames, refers to a specific type of game, that is to say, a genre, as shown by the first two concordance lines in Figure 7. Videogames belonging to this genre present a main character that jumps from one place to another completing a series of challenges. These places are called *plataformas.* The genre takes its name from the fact that the only way to go forward in the game is moving from one *plataforma* to another. In the CVC corpus, it is possible to find two other uses. *Plataforma* also refers to a superordinate category of devices such as computers, arcade cabinets and consoles for television as shown in Figure 7 concordance line 3. Another meaning found in the CVC corpus is that of *plataforma* as a board: *tablero horizontal, descubierto y elevado sobre el suelo, donde se colocan personas o cosas,* as in DRAE [online]. This is the meaning of the word in general Spanish from which the neologism originates.

1. El Príncipe de Persia ha conseguido levantar por fin su reinado con la segunda entrega, Warrior Within, y el premio al mejor juego de *plataformas*. (CVC/5706908/16)

2. todos los ingredientes que han hecho que, a pesar de los años y las dificultades, Sonic sea uno de los reyes indiscutibles del género de las *plataformas*. (CVC/6074656/61)

3. por último, en 1994, llegaría a las estanterías de medio mundo Super Metroid, para la *plataforma* Super NES, para muchos esta tercera entrega es la mejor de la saga, ya que está considerada como la culminación del estilo de juego Metroid.(CVC/5025985/119)

Figure 7. Concordance lines for *plataforma* with the new meaning found in the CVC corpus.

The new semantic content the term has acquired in this domain in Spanish is confirmed by the frequent presence of collocations, *juego de plataformas* and *género de las plataformas*. These collocations can be considered as two new multiword terms: *juego de plataformas* for referring to a class of videogames and *género de las plataformas* for naming the genre. In the reference corpus, *plataforma* is not used with any of these senses. *Plataforma* refers either to the members of a representative group, as in *plataforma de comunicación* and *plataforma reivindicativa*, or to a category of computer devices as in *plataforma educativa*.

Plataforma: CVC vs. CRC		
Frequency	CVC	→ 0.17%
	CRC	→ 0.02%
Adjectives	CVC:	diferente, distinta
	CRC:	creativa, favorita, grande, importante
Verbs	CVC:	crear
	CRC:	aportar, buscar, crear, integrar, proponer
Collocations	CVC:	género de plataformas, juega de plataformas
	CRC:	plataforma de comunicación, plataforma educativa, plataforma reivindicativa

Table 6. Search results of the term *plataforma* in the *CiberPaís* corpus

Based on the information in the table, *aventura* in the domain of videogames in Spanish, should be defined considering the original meaning of a horizontal surface that plays a special role during the game as the main character jumps from platform to platform.

> *plataforma*
> <*videojuegos*> *género al que pertenecen aquellos videojuegos en los que el personaje principal debe avanzar, a base de habilidad y coordinación, saltando de un escenario a otro mientras elude peligros y amenazas.*

5.5. *Rol* ("role")

This neologism stands out among the other five because it reveals its foreign origin. The definition of DRAE [online] shows that, in spite of its French origin, the word comes into Spanish from English. In general Spanish, *rol* is used with the meaning of *"papel, función que alguien o algo cumple"*.

In the corpus of analysis, however, *rol* refers to a kind of game where the player takes the role of a character in a science fiction or fantasy environment, and joins a group of players to accomplish a mission. This use is shown in the examples in Figure 8.

1. Sin embargo, los japoneses llevan muchos años jugando a títulos de *rol* que, como Final fantasy, utilizan un sistema de combate que se asemeja sobremanera a la llamada estrategia por turnos. (CVC/4253634/55)

2. El juego es del género de *rol* multijugador masivo, es decir, permite jugar a través de Internet junto a miles de usuarios, con el objetivo de crear un personaje que sea capaz de sobrevivir en este mundo virtual. (CVC/5094733/63)

3. Los buenos juegos de *rol* se reconocen por la profundidad de su guión. Morrowind para PC es sin duda uno de ellos. (CVC/4597916/142)

Figure 8. Concordance lines for *rol* with the new meaning found in the CVC corpus.

In the reference corpus, the meaning of *rol* corresponds to the use in general Spanish as defined in DRAE [on line]. It usually refers to a position or impersonation, as shown by the adjectives co-occurring with it: *activo, determinado, profesional* as well as by the verbs *adquirir, asignar, asumir*, as shown in Table 7.

It is interesting to point out that the collocation *juego de rol* appears in both corpora. This collocation is used in general Spanish and for that reason its definition can be found in DRAE [on line]: "*aquel en que los participantes actúan como personajes de una aventura de character misterioso o fantástico*". However, this definition does not correspond to the use of the term in the corpus of videogames, but rather to the traditional tabletop role-playing game.

Another difference between the use in general Spanish and the use of *juego de rol* in both corpora is that in general Spanish the collocation has a negative overtone. In 1994, due to a crime occurred in Madrid, newspapers made popular the expressions "*el asesino del rol*" ("the role murderer") and "*el crimen del rol*" ("the role murder") which established that murder could be one result

of following the rules of a role-playing game[8]. The analysis of the specialized corpus did not reveal any negative connotations in *rol*, and only showed that the player assumes the role of a particular character. Table 7 confirms that, in those games belonging to that particular videogame genre, *rol* also refers to the player's adoption of the features of a character.

Rol: CVC vs. CRC		
Frequency	CVC	→ 0.5%
	CRC	→ 0.0%
Adjectives	CVC:	nuevo, popularísimp, polémico
	CRC:	activo, determinado, profesional
Verbs	CVC:	profundizar, revolucionar, trasladar
	CRC:	adquirir, asignar, asumir
Collocations	CVC:	juego de rol, juego de rol de sobremesa, juego de rol en línea
	CRC:	juego de rol, juego de rol en línea, mundo del rol

Table 7. Search results of the term *rol* in the *CiberPaís* corpus

It is necessary to note that in the specialised corpus *rol* is often used as an independent lemma as shown by the examples in Figure 9.

1. Aventura y *rol* vuelven a cruzar sus destinos en Arcatera, ópera prima de la compañía alemana Westka Entertainment, y a juicio de sus creadores no se han apuntado casualmente a (…) esta mezcla de géneros (CVC/cnc/2939698)

2. Tras tres entregas de la serie Baldur´s Gate para ordenador la saga llega por primera vez (…) para quien ose a entrar en nuevo terreno, el *rol*, que domina a la perfección. (CVC/cnc/4328197/44)

3. El juego es del género de *rol* multijugador masivo, es decir, permite jugar a través de Internet junto a miles de usuarios, con el objetivo de crear un personaje que sea capaz de sobrevivir en este mundo virtual. (CVC/5094733/63)

4. Este juego propone una fórmula para trasladar el *rol* en estado puro al entretenimiento electrónico. Género: *rol* (CVC/cnc/4742542/20)

Figure 9. Concordance lines for *rol* with the new meaning found in the CVC corpus.

Based on the information obtained from the corpus, *rol* in the domain of videogames in Spanish should be defined taking into account both that the player impersonates either one or several characters, and that more than one player is usually required.

> *rol*
> *<videojuegos> género que agrupa aquellos en los que el jugador adopta el papel de un personaje en un entorno de ciencia-ficción o fantasía, para cumplir una misión*

con el concurso de otros jugadores. Juego de rol
Nota: cada jugador controla uno o varios personajes y el ordenador o la consola
gestionan los niveles de habilidad de los jugadores.

6. Concluding remarks

This data driven study of the terminology of computer and videogames by means of a journalistic corpus has shown that some common words used in general Spanish acquire a new meaning in the domain. The comparison by using Wordsmith 4.0 between the domain specific corpus, CVC, and the reference corpus, CRC, produced a list of keywords that were later analysed in context. The analysis of the syntactic constructions and the lexical combinations of these terms in both corpora led to the detection of the new senses. Contextual evidence proved that these terms specialized their meaning and became neologisms in the context of the domain of videogames.

The analysis of these neologisms took into account their frequency of use, their behaviour and their meaning in context. The study of the adjectives and verbs that accompany them in each of the corpora confirmed that in the CVC corpus these terms are used with the new specialized meaning they have developed.

The examination of the neologisms under study revealed that they are originally common words that can also be considered terms in other domains such as narrative (*título, personaje, aventura, rol*) or computer technology (*plataforma*). However, in the domain of videogames, these terms specialize their meaning because of the new environment in which they are used. *Título, personaje, aventura,* and *rol* refer to concepts different from those used in stories or narratives. Regarding the term *título,* it is worth noting that although frequently used for referring to a game, it also refers to electronic products related to activities such as cookery, music or sports, where there is no gaming, but an unmistakably educational purpose. Our data reveal that in the CVC corpus it is possible to find *título* used as a synonym for videogame because of the phenomenon of lexical cohesion.

Personaje refers to either a fantastic or a real creature that is controlled by the player; there is also the possibility of the player impersonating the character and deciding on the actions that take place in the game.

As for *aventura*, its meaning is neither that in general Spanish nor that in the language of narrative, but refers to a type of videogame where there is often no plot, but a series of riddles that have to be solved by the player by using certain clues that some characters provide.

This specialization of meaning is also found in the words *plataforma* and *rol*. Among these five neologisms only *plataforma* is used in the domain of computer technology. However, its meaning is different to that of the term in the CVC corpus as it refers to a specific genre of videogames. *Rol* is also an interesting term since it is originally a neologism in general Spanish, where it is classified as an anglicism acquiring a new meaning in the terminology of computer games.

For three of these terms, *aventura, título y rol*, it is necessary to mention that in the CVC corpus they are also used as synonyms for referring to the object of the review, the videogame. Being a journalistic corpus of reviews we were not surprised to find that writers like to vary the words they use to refer to the object they deal with.

To conclude, our study of the neology of videogames confirms that videogames as a specialized domain involves two communities of practice: the specialists who design, develop and write about videogames and those gamers who just play and cannot be described as specialists. The fact that many terms are common words also used in general Spanish makes it difficult to classify them as terms and consider their definitions technical enough to be included in a dictionary of computer terms.

Acknowledgements

References

Aguado de Cea, G. (1996). *Diccionario comentado de Terminología Informática.* Madrid: Editorial Paraninfo.

Blass, R. (1990). *Relevance Relations in Discourse. A Study with special reference to Sissala*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, G. & G. Yule (1983). *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cabré, M.T. (1999). *Terminology: Theory, Methods, and Applications*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Coseriu, E. (1973). "Determinación y entorno" in *Teoría del lenguaje y lingüística general.* Madrid: Gredos.

Firth, J.R. (1957). *Papers in Linguistics, 1934-1951*. London: Oxford University Press.

Frasca, G. (2003). "Simulation versus narrative" in M. Wolf & B. Perron (eds.), *The Videogame Theory Reader*, 221-235. London/New York: Routledge.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1978). *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning* London: Edward Arnold.

Hatim, B & I. Mason (1990). *Discourse and the Translator*. London/New York: Longman.

Hoey, M. (1981). *Patterns of Lexis in Text*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ide, N. & J. Véronis (1998). "Word sense disambiguation: The state of the art". *Computational Linguistics* 24: 1-41.

Juul, J. (2005). *Half-Real: Video Games between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. London/New York: Longman.

Miller, G.A. (1999). "On knowing a word". *Annual Review of Psychology* 50: 1-19.

Murray, J. (1997). *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press

Perron, B. & M.J.P. Wolf (2009). *The Video Game Theory Reader 2.* New York: Routledge.

Rey, A. (2005). "The concepts of neologism and the evolution of terminologies in individual languages". *Terminology* 11 : 311-331.

Ryan, M-L. (2001). *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ryan, M-L. (2004). *Narrative across Media: The Languages of Storytelling.* University of Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press.

Ryan, M-L. (2006). *Avatars of Story*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Scott, M. (2004). *WordSmith Tools version 4.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scott, M. & C. Tribble (2006). *Textual Patterns: Keywords and Corpus Analysis in Language Education*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Sperber, D. & D. Wilson (1986). *Relevance. Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Temmerman, R. (2000). *Towards New Ways of Terminology Description: The Sociocognitive-approach*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Thomas, D., K. Orland & S. Steinberg (2007). *The Videogame Style Guide and Reference Manual*. URL: http://www.gamestyleguide.com/Video GameStyleGuideeBook.pdf [09/02/13]

Van Dijk, T. (1988). *News as Discourse*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

——-. *Dico Info*. URL: http://olst.ling.umontreal.ca/cgi-bin/dicoinfo/search. cgi. [07/12/11]

——-. *Diccionari de Jocs i joguines*. URL: http://www.termcat.cat/ca/Diccionaris_En_Linia [30/06/11]

——-. *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*. URL: http://buscon.rae.es/draeI/ [07/02/11]

Dr. Inmaculada Álvarez de Mon Rego is senior lecturer at Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM) in the Department of Linguistics Applied to Science and Technology. She has published a number of articles on the study of technical language. She is the convenor of the research network Communication in Specialized Domains of the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA).

Carola Álvarez-Bolado Sánchez is lecturer at Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM) in the Department of Linguistics Applied to Science and Technology, where she teaches both English and Spanish for Professional and Academic Communication. Her current research activities focus on lexical analysis and the language of videogames. She is a member of the research network Communication in Specialized Domains of the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA).

NOTES

[1] Videogames is the term we use for what is referred to as computer games, electronic games or video games. The style guide by Thomas, Orland and Steinberg (2007) recommends to write it as a single word, although it can often be seen as a two-word expression: video games.

[2] An example of this specialization of terminology within the field is the Dictionary of Video Game Theory by Jesper Juul. This dictionary, which is part of Juul's book (2005), can also be accessed online at URL: http://www.half-real.net/dictionary/

[3] From the point of view of discourse and translation, a detailed account of the topic of context can also be found in Brown & Yule (1983) and Hatim & Mason (1990).

[4] *CiberPaís* is no longer published as such; the section on ICTs and the Internet became a part of the daily newspaper in September 2010.

[5] The notion of "collocation" is that of Firth (1957).

[6] The names Elena Avellaneda and Pep are proper names corresponding with two of the authors of the reviews in our corpus.

[7] *Adventure* is the name of the videogame first released by Atari in1979.

[8] As published in the newspaper *El País* (23 June 1994).