The intricacies and overlaps of Lebenswelt and Spielwelt during an instructed match of Counter Strike: GO

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Abstract

In this paper, we explore an interaction between a competitive "Counter Strike: Global Offensive" player and her younger brother, whom she is tutoring in his first match in competitive mode. At least two phenomena, intertwined with each other, are prominent in this data excerpt. One is the boy's consistent orientation to his sister's instructions, accountable and observable through the work of following them. The other one deals with the intricacies and overlaps of *Lebenswelt* (life-world) and *Spielwelt* (game-world) time and how these apparently different temporalities constitute a temporal whole. Analysis suggests that communication in this instructional setting is grounded in gestalt-contextures that embrace multiple embodied forms of interaction such as talk, gesture, gaze, as well as in-game elements (such as rules to follow and goals to achieve), and how important is the re-specification of those elements as a set, not as a mere sum of individual pieces. Moreover, it is discussed how, while in a gameplay context, players use their common-sense reasoning and practices to elaborate strategies and develop skills necessary to successfully reach their goals.

INTRODUCTION

Video games, especially massive-multiplayer online games (MMOGs), have attracted considerable attention from the Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis (EMCA) community. EMCA scholars see games as 'important cultural artifacts in their own right' (Reeves et al. 2017, 27), which are, consequently, crucial to understand interactional phenomena in modern society. Moreover, playing online games is being regarded nowadays as a complex form of social interaction (Milik 2017) or even a new form of communication

(Reeves et al. 2009), where players can develop social and literacy practices (Kiourti 2019). Therefore, knowing how players engage and interact in gameplay is also to learn how society is operating in the current digital era without authoritative descriptions or, as Schwartz (2002, 8) would put it, without 'repaired concepts'. Analysing gameplays can help us learn something about the 'local organisational order' (Garfinkel 1967) of game environments from within, i.e., 'an inquiry into the culture from within the culture' (Mair et al. 2018, 85), and how social order is produced by players' common-sense practices during the game 'time experience' (Garfinkel 2006).[1]

Recently, as suggested by Reeves et al. (2017), EMCA studies have started to reconceptualise the body of research on video gaming, moving the scope of those studies beyond the separation of in-game and off-game elements to explore these as a single unit, i.e. as one analytic *gestalt*. The notion of *gestalt* (Garfinkel 2002, Gurwitsch 1964) here is used to eschew, as pointed out by Reeves et al. (2017), analytically troublesome dichotomies (i.e., between on-screen / off-screen elements, game world / real world, bodily action / verbal action). These dichotomies are found, for example, in multimodal approaches to gameplay, which identify and analyse (and consequently distinguish) modalities to which members orient their actions when trying to reach their goals. As they (2017, 29) argue, 'players do not appear to necessarily concern themselves with "modalities" or distinctions at all – rather, they employ whatever interactional resources are available to get the job done, that is, to play the game'. Moreover, we argue here that games are not abstracted from (or even framed outside) the everyday world. Instead, players rely on what is mundane, i.e their common-sense reasoning and communicative procedures (e.g. the use of economy rule and fast dexterity), to make moves and elaborate strategies.

Another mundane instance present in games refers to temporality. According to Garfinkel (1967, 99), an 'action must be taken by a time and in pace, duration, and phasing that is coordinate with the actions of others'. Games are no exception to this observation. Players are always orienting to each other's moves to produce actions that will enable them to achieve their goals and avoid unfavourable outcomes. Time is then critical in this accomplishment, since players are constrained by certain temporal aspects that will interfere in the management of their 'practical circumstances'. In this paper, game temporalities will be explored according to the members' orientations, which is a radically praxiological turn that EMCA studies on gameplay are now bringing to the field of game studies.

Although there are more studies focusing on situated, locally-produced actions during gameplay of other games, those are still rare, with some exceptions worth mentioning (e.g. Baldauf-Quilliatre and Colón de Carvajal 2020 & 2015, Milik 2017, Mondada 2011, 2012, Sjöblom 2011, Bennerstedt 2008, Bennerstedt et al. 2012, Brown and Bell 2004). Our paper explores an instructed setting where an experienced "Counter Strike: Global Offensive" (CS:GO) player, Jessie, is teaching her younger brother, Antonio, a casual player

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[1] Garfinkel refers to time experience as two modes of temporal experience. One is the experience of inner time *durée*, i.e, the present time; whilst the other is the *cosmic time* (Schütz 1962), the outer spatialized time, where events of the inanimate nature occur. See also Au Yeung (2021).

of the same game, how to play it in competitive mode. The coordination of moves among players associated with the time necessary to accomplish each task make temporalities of what Schutz (1962) called the life-world (*Lebenswelt*) and game-world (*Spielwelt*) overlap.

Schütz (1962) talks about the game-world of the child (*Die Spielwelt des Kindes*), which, according to him, 'permit intersubjective participation and even interaction in terms of the shared fantasms' (342). That participation and interaction, though, according to Schütz, cannot be detached from the life-world (*Lebenswelt*), as it is the province in which we always participate, 'into which we can gear by our bodily activities and, hence, which can change and transform' (342). Moreover, still based on Schütz (1962), the fluxes of time as experienced by participants [also called 'inner time *durée*'] during a game will overlap and 'become synchronous with the even in outer time [the time of the *Lebenswelt*], and therewith one with the other' (317).[2] This overlap, as will be possible to observe, is not only related to an intersection between in-game and off-game elements, but to a more complex organisation where games should not be seen as detached from life-world, as players maintain their mundane attitude towards activities that assert their everyday experiences and relationships as being the ones on which they mostly rely.

In our data, Antonio, rather than just orienting to the *time in the game*, has to promptly follow Jessie's instructions and play the game *for how long it takes* to acquire the necessary skills to become a competitive-mode player. This is the main problematic to be explored in this paper; i.e., how participants (Jessie and Antonio) are managing actions and temporalities in an instructional gameplay context.

LEARNING HOW TO BECOME A COMPETENT PLAYER OF SIMULATION GAMES ONLINE: THE CASE OF CS:GO

CS:GO is a first-person shooter (FPS), a game genre centred on guns and melee weapons in which the player conducts an avatar and experiences actions through the view of the protagonist. As the virtual environments in the game resemble a real combat scenario, these types of games are regarded as simulation games. In the case of CS:GO, the game is usually played online, and players have to access a suitable server in which other group of players are waiting to form teams. Players can choose between two different sides: Terrorists (Ts) or Counter Terrorists (CTs). Ts's main goal is to plant a bomb and protect the area from CTs, whereas CTs have to find and defuse the bomb before it explodes. Another way to win the round is by killing all the members from the opposing team.

In the video analysed here, Jessie is instructing her younger brother, Antonio, on how to play CS:GO in *competitive* mode. Antonio is a casual CS:GO player, which means he is used to playing the game in other modes, i.e., *casual* and *deathmatch*.[3] While there is no big difference in terms of game mechanics, these playing modes (competitive, casual and deathmatch) differs extensively in terms of experience. In casual/deathmatch mode, for

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[2] This overlap will constitute what Garfinkel (2006) calls 'vivid present'.
[3] CS:GO has other types of game modes, seven in total (Casual, Competitive, Deathmatch, Wingman, Arms Race, Demolition, and Flying Scoutsman).

example, players do not have to commit to a full thirty round match (as they have to on the competitive mode). They can also drop in an out at any time without receiving any penalty from the system. In casual/deathmatch mode, players always receive armour and defusal kits, and team damage (i.e. 'friendly fire') is turned off. In competitive mode, though, the level of skills required is much higher. One has to master all the points on the map to avoid team damage and select the right resources (e.g. weapons and defusal kit) depending on the side they are playing (terrorists or counter terrorists) before the round starts. Moreover, players in competitive mode cannot respawn after a death event. Instead they will have to wait until the start of the next round to re-enter the match. As a result, players have to act more strategically (Kiourti 2019) since they will not be able to return to the round to repair potential mistakes.

As mentioned above, in the competitive mode of the game, there are thirty rounds. After fifteen rounds, teams swap roles, i.e. the team playing as Ts in the first fifteen rounds will play as CTs in the following ones. The first team to win sixteen rounds is considered the winner. Players from the same team can talk to each other via radio messages to elaborate strategies or make callouts after, e.g., a killing or death event (Rusk and Ståhl 2020). All those complex resources and mechanics make the game look even closer to a real scenario and reinforce the notion of simulation.

CS:GO has been the object of scrutiny of some previous EMCA studies. In EMCA literature, there are some studies on Counter Strike concentrating, for example, on how kill and death events are topicalised by players (Rusk and Ståhl 2020); how identities are (re)produced during gameplays (Kiuorti 2019); how expertise is displayed (Reeves et al. 2009); and how players and spectators interact based on their visual competence of actions within the game (Reeves et al. 2017). In CS:GO and other simulation games, such as FIFA Soccer (Mondada 2011, 2012), Warcraft III (Sjöblom 2011) or EVE Online (Milik 2017) where the preferential-play possibilities are presented in the account provided by players during the game, rules and directions are not specified by an instruction manual.[4] Instead, they are part of the self-same practices that players themselves develop in cooperation along the course of the game.

Simulation games are interesting to explore as, according to what Heap (1971) suggests, anyone who is a competent member of the everyday world would at least understand the basic structure of the game which allows a novice player to 'start playing' without the need of long explanations about the steps to follow in the beginning. This is not to say, however, that playing minimally well is a straightforward phenomenon. As any other game, simulation games require a lot of practice (as any particular task in the real world does). One has to play it repetitively and be instructed (or carefully examine the moves made) by a more experienced player to find the best strategies, which make games have

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[4] The fact might explain why so many gameplay channels start to appear on video platforms and social networks. Recorded gameplays might be useful since it provides something that manuals cannot provide, i.e.: the 'hands-on-practice experience', which teaches the novice player 'on the go'. Actually, most of our daily life activities are learned 'on the go', which also partially explains why players must hold a mundane attitude towards the actions and the temporalities they experience while playing.

certain requirements and procedures that, to use Schütz's (1962) words, constitute a "finite province of meaning", or a reality of their own.

Nonetheless, this particular reality of games does not disconnect them from the real world as play is not an isolated practice as, for example, Caillois (1950) would suggest, but a social practice shared by many other people (i.e. players). This phenomenon is evident if we consider that a player, being a video game, board game or card game player, is a member of that specific game community. In that community, players have to learn and develop strategies on how to play the game well. As a result, this knowledge is reflexive. Players need to witness a good play first to recognise and identify themselves as good players. Learning how to play or playing well becomes an enterprise, an 'oriented object' (Garfinkel 2002, 179) that players start to pursue throughout a certain period of their lives. This does not mean that in-game (*Spielwelt*) temporality cannot be layered *pro tempore* over the *Lebenswelt* temporality and vice-versa. However, if so, this should be treated as a matter of relevant account to the players themselves, not the analysts.

The same thing goes for instructions. An instructional event becomes clear when there are relevant accounts from the participants (e.g., when one checks with the other if she/he is correctly following the instruction given). Moreover, when hearing utterances as instructions, one is trying to come to terms with what those instructions actually mean in practice. Garfinkel (2002) argues that an instruction alone is only a product, but the process (i.e., the work of following the instruction) reveals 'the practical, local, occasioned work that turns the rules into a description' (200). During the process, the work of following instructions becomes accountable (as a descriptive account) and the participant's purpose in being engaged on that work is revealed as a form of 'oriented object' (Garfinkel 2002, 179). According to Garfinkel (2002), the purpose of the work (e.g. playing CS:GO in competitive mode) is the enterprise, i.e. the oriented object, and the work of getting this done is accountable in our data through the actions Antonio is producing when being instructed by Jessie.

The oriented object is then the problem for Antonio to solve and the way he is following the instructions given by Jessie is accountably available to her (and hence to us, analysts), to learn what Jessie's instructions mean in practice. In other words, we have here what Garfinkel (2002, 181) calls a 'perspicuous setting' of an instructed gameplay. The perspicuous setting available in our data reveals to and teaches us what is going on organisationally, i.e. what Antonio and Jessie are up against and, based on Garfinkel (2002, 182) 'what their affairs consist of as locally occasioned', and locally ordered/described/recorded/observed phenomena of order*.[5] Antonio has, along the course of Jessie's instructions, to learn, e.g., how to distinguish a good move from a bad one so that his oriented object (learn how to play CS:GO in competitive mode) can be found. The way Antonio is doing this reveals the material disclosures of his practices, which would

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[5] Order is spelled with an asterisk (*) to be read, according to Garfinkel (2002, 118), as a collector and "proxy for any and every *topic* of reason, logic, meaning, proof, uniformity, generalization, universal, comparability, clarity, consistency, objectivity, objective knowledge, observation, detail, structure, and the rest" (italics in the original).

remain implicit or tacit if he played the game 'alone', i.e., without the help of a more experienced player.

PLAYING CS ON COMPETITIVE MODE

The data excerpts that will be discussed here were extracted from a video available on a YouTube channel titled 'Jessie Games'.[6] Jessie is an experienced competitive-CS:GO player, who frequently posts gameplay videos of CS:GO and other games on her channel. Although her videos are publicly available, permission (under the form of written consent) was sought and granted to use the gameplay sequence[7] (of 40 seconds) we will be exploring here.

   The excerpts below will be presented in four parts. Each part is the continuation of the previous one. In all of them, we will focus our discussion on instructed actions and on the management of temporalities, which are forms of orderly action prevalent in the setting depicted below. Therefore time, space and practical actions here should not be seen as separate properties, as they are intertwined and inextricably dependent of each other as a unity. The interactions were originally conducted in Portuguese and were translated into English below each line of the transcript.

Typing quickly and learning where to go

CS:GO can be played on different maps, but there are maps more popular than others and each of them implicates the use of different strategies on specific spots. Dust 2, the map in use here, depicts a Middle Eastern environment and is the most classical map (even considered by some players as the *default* one) which players use to acquire basic skills in CS:GO. Its image can be found on the top left side of the screengrabs provided in the transcripts and also (more detailed) in the figure 1 below.

   Members of the terrorist and counter terrorist teams start (are 'spawned') in different points of the map (i.e., T Spawn and CT Spawn). Therefore, CT Spawn is the place where Antonio, playing for the CT team, starts.

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[6] On February 1st, 2016, Jessie uploaded the first video to her YouTube channel, JessieGames, with the idea of sharing videos of her gameplays. Counter Strike is just one of the many titles she can be seen playing since the channel's debut. With a current audience of 243k subscribers and an average of 10k likes on her most recent videos, Jessie's channel features her - and occasionally her friends' - gameplays in a wide variety of game genres. The data we are analysing here is part of her most successful video, with more than two million views. The channel is available at https://www.youtube.com/user/GamesByJessica.
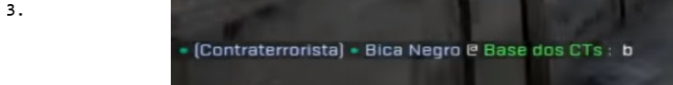
[7] The sequence discussed here is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3lmmqftEF0 from 00:48 to 01:28.

Excerpt 1

1.   Jessie   aí lá é o seguinte
                and now it's like that
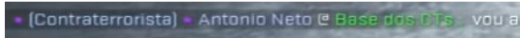
2.   ou você vai fundo (.) ou cê fica ali no bomb
                either you go pit (.) or you stay there on the bomb site

3.

4.   aí você escolh- vê pra onde esse cara tá indo=
                then you choos- see to where this guy is going=

5.   Antonio

                =ah tá, aqui é 'a' né?
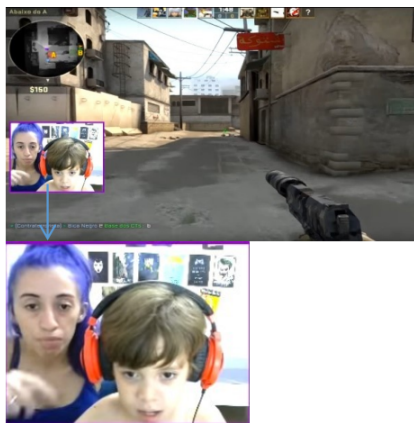   =oh I see, here is 'a' isn't it?
6.   (.)

7.   Jessie   i:sso (.) aí é 'a'-
                ri:ght (.) it's 'a'-

8.   vai lá pro fundo vai lá pro fundo
                go to the pit go to the pit

Excerpt 1: Starting the round
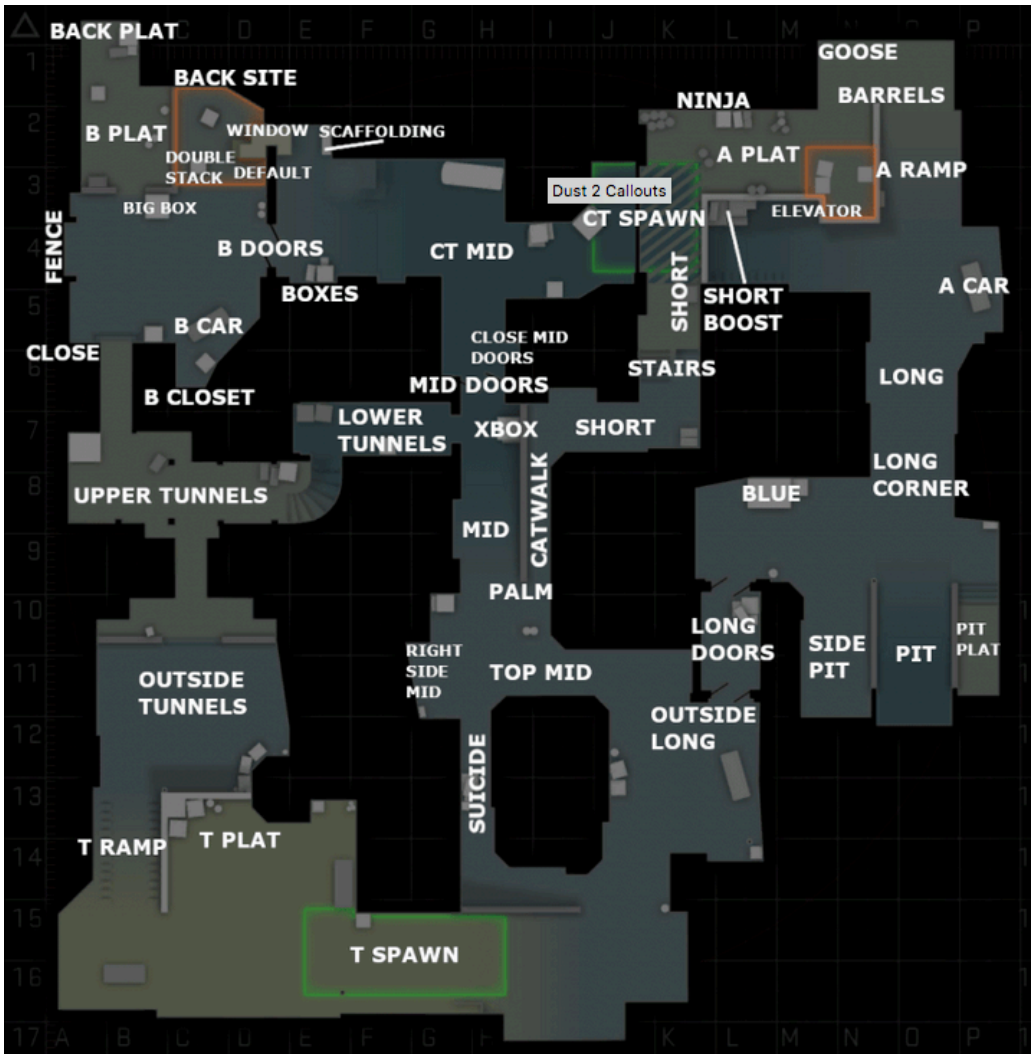
We will now turn our discussion into the first transcript provided. In the beginning of the round, Jessie begins to instruct Antonio by giving him two options: either you "go pit" ("vai fundo") or stay on the bombsite ("fica ali no bomb") (line 2). However, Antonio seemed to have already made his mind before his sister provides him with the two options. At line 1 (see the screengrab) Antonio quickly uses the chat option to type to everybody that he was going towards A side, where the pit is located. We are recovering the screengrab below to bring this matter to a greater relief:

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[8] Source: https://www.cadred.org/csgo/callouts/dust2/.

Figure 2: "vou a" ("I am going a")

The syntax of the sentence "vou a" ("I am going a") belongs to the endogenous practices of this-gang-of-players' work affairs, which in other words, are part of their locally produced and occasioned phenomena of order* (Garfinkel 2002, 182). The phenomenon visible in this syntax refers to Garfinkel's (2002, 98) distinction between 'taking all the time in the world' and 'taking the time we have' (the time that the game countdown is marking). Antonio here does not have all the time in the world, since he is being constrained by the time on his heads-up display. He then has to use an 'economy rule' (Sacks et al. 1974, Sacks 1995, vol. I, 357) when typing to his teammates, which consists in not using prepositions that, although required by formal grammatical rules in Portuguese, might sound unnecessary (i.e.: "vou *para* a", instead of "vou a") in this situation. This is part of the in-game interactive practices, i.e. Wittgenstein's (1988) 'inside knowledge', which is also based on the common-sense reasoning that Antonio developed while playing CS:GO in other opportunities. Although Antonio is playing CS:GO in competitive mode for the first time, he is a casual CS:GO player, who knows the 'logical grammar' (Wittgenstein 1953 and 1965) of the game and therefore how to properly communicate with his peers.[9] Antonio, using a quickening pace of writing, shows that he is able to attend to the endogenous practical actions of the game (Reeves et al. 2017) which comprise, among other things, effective and short language forms (Kiourti 2019).[10]

When the round starts, the counter terrorist team (CT), of which Antonio is part, has only 1 minute and 55 seconds to eliminate all terrorists or defuse the bomb. This is the game-world time (the *Spielwelt* time), to which Antonio and the other players are orienting their actions, and also the life-world time (the *Lebenswelt* time), since his moves, carefully monitored by Jessie, will determine how much training (i.e. *time*) he still needs to become a competitive-mode CS:GO player. For that reason, as postulated by Reeves et al. (2017, 29), there is no easy separation between both 'forms of orderly actions' (gameworld and life-world). Antonio's goal here means much more than just playing a round of CS:GO, as he used to do before in casual/deathmatch mode.

Now Antonio has to acquire other skills. One of them is being able to make a distinction between 'going pit' or 'staying on the bombsite'. No one knows where the bombsite is before the bomb is actually planted by the team of terrorists (T members). This means that 'going a' is a valid choice, although players can also choose to go in another direction. Going in different directions avoids the risk to be targeted together, which represents a strategy in any massive FPS games.

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[9] Antonio is a member, although better qualified as an 'ordinary player' rather than a 'professional' one. We are using here Cuff's (1993) notion of *qualified identities*. On this matter, see also Hester (2000).

[10] In Coulter's (1971, 309) terms, 'language can never distort or restrict, can never be true or false, but can only be either meaningful or meaningless in the sense of conveying intelligible or unintelligible usages in contexts'. Antonio's economic writing form here is part of the local particularization of the context (Sacks et al. 1974), which Antonio and other players are collaboratively producing and orienting to.

After Antonio deciding he is going towards A side (i.e. 'the pit'), Jessie provides him with an instruction "see to where this guy is going" (line 4). The guy mentioned by Jessie is 'Dont Cry', a player whose avatar can be seen in the screenshot at line 5. Following another (probably more experienced) player is seeing here as a predicate for a "novice competitive-mode player". Jessie uses 'Dont Cry' as a proxy to lead Antonio's way to the pit, since she is not controlling any avatar in the game. Antonio starts to follow that player in the beginning, but as soon as the first bifurcation appears, Antonio, instructed by Jessie again, takes a different direction (see the screenshot at line 8, where the other player's avatar is no longer visible on Antonio's screen, meaning that Antonio followed another path). Jessie gives Antonio the instruction to follow a different path at line 8, when both players reach the bifurcation just mentioned. Jessie uses talk and a hand gesture to place the instruction, which also can be seen on the screengrab at line 8 (see Jessie pointing to the screen, indicating the direction where the pit is located). Moving fast on the map may troublesome for a casual CS:GO player, as they usually do not play many rounds back to back (as it is required in competitive mode) and, therefore, do not have the same notion of terrain[11] (Reeves et al. 2009, Sudnow 2001 and 1979) as more experienced (competitive-mode) players do.

Here we can see that Antonio is visibly and accountably following the endogenously coherent properties of being in a competitive-mode team. He is becoming a player whose actions satisfy the very complex contexture of hitting and combining keys (and mouse) to move his avatar, typing quick messages and listening to and reading other players' messages as fast as one can. However, those skills are not only acquired in the game. Just by playing the game does not guarantee that Antonio will be able to orient to *Spielwelt* time at that specific in-game situation. He needs training, either by watching others play or receiving instructions from an experienced competitive-mode player. Jessie's and Antonio's work then go beyond the in-game mechanics, as they also require a visible and accountable display from Antonio, who is showing Jessie that her instructions are being followed. Those actions are not required by the game itself, as they would not be there in our data if instructions were not being given and followed. They are there because instructed actions are being produced and becoming accountable, for Jessie's assessment, as constitutive elements of that interactional event.

An example of Antonio giving accounts of his actions to Jessie can be found, for example, at line 5, when Antonio starts moving towards point A on the map. At that moment, he asks Jessie ("ah tá, aqui é 'a', né?", meaning "oh I see, here it's 'a' isn't it?"). Another example of his happens in the second excerpt we are presenting below. There it is possible to see that Antonio is confirming to be receiving the instructions that Jessie is giving. He does this either by asking for confirmation (e.g. line 9 'aqui', which means 'here?') or by positioning his avatar according to Jessie's instructions (e.g., see the instruction at line 12 and Antonio positioning his avatar accordingly in the screenshot at line 14).

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[11] The notion of terrain here can be defined, based on Reeves et al. (2009), as the necessary skills one has to hold not only in order to know where things are on the map, but also to move competently on the 3-D environment that the map represents (i.e., is a proxy of).

The co-operative move of giving and following instructions

Moving on the map is a particular skill that a competitive mode player of CS:GO has to master very well. It is more than just orienting to the 2-D map located on the top left side of the screen. It is knowing where the enemies might be on the virtual environment, how fast they are moving from place A to place B, how flashpoints of action form (Reeves et al, 2009), and how obstacles and other features of the map might influence in the action the player plans to take. In other words, as already mentioned above, knowing how to navigate on a map is intertwined with an orientation in relation to the terrain, which casual CS:GO players usually lack, since they do not necessarily have to master it in order to play a few rounds of the game.

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Excerpt 2

9.     Antonio    aqui?
                  here?
10.    Jessie     nh:é
                  uhum yes
11.               aí fica esperando que as pessoas vão ali na porta
                  now wait because the others are going towards the door
12.               fica mirando na porta
                  stay there aiming at the door
13.               se vier muita gente cê corre vai pro 'a' e se esconde
                  if many people come you run to 'a' and hide
14.               ó já vi que a bomba tá lá pro b alguém falou alguma
                  coisa?=
                  look I saw the bomb is there near 'b' did you hear
                  anything?=
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Excerpt 2: Moving on the map

After Jessie's confirmation that Antonio is going on the right path (line 10), she provides another instruction to him: "now wait because the others are going towards the door" (line 11). Who are the 'others'? They are the enemies, members of the terrorist team. Jessie knows what might come next since she is aware of the strategies the other team might use. It is a conditionally relevant 'next' move (Schegloff 1968) that one expects from the other when engaging in a conversation, although here this phenomenon is being realized not in talk, but in the endogenously and locally produced moves in a gameplay. Jessie is aware of this 'nextness' and orients Antonio's attention to it. The outcome of this orientation is Jessie's following utterances, under the form of instructions, i.e.:

"stay there aiming at the door" (line 12) and "if many people come you run to 'a' and hide" (line 13).

Nonetheless, Antonio has to learn how to take further actions faster. No enemy came through the door and Antonio cannot stand aiming at the door forever. He and his teammates have a goal to accomplish: they have to eliminate all T members or defuse the bomb before it explodes. Jessie orients to this in-game temporality as she quickly tells Antonio to move to the other side of the map. This is how it happens. At line 14, Jessie notices that there is a concentration of players on the B point of the map. The red dots near the letter 'B' on the map (see the enlarged figure of the map in the screenshot at line 14) refer to the location of the other players. She looks up at the map (see her eyes pointing to the left upper corner of the map in the enlarged part of the screenshot at line 14) and then down to the chat messages and radio subtitles displayed at the bottom of the screen. The message from one of the teammates 'Bica Negro' at CT spawn says "b" and the radio command from 'leox6magic' at B doors says "need backup". We are recovering this moment below as the screenshot at line 14 does not highlight this detail very clearly:
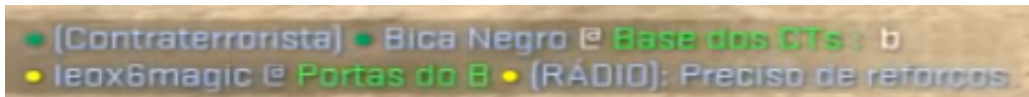

Figure 3: Bica Negro at CT spawn (Base dos CTs) says "b" and 'leox6magic' at B doors (Portas do B) says "Need backup" ("Preciso de reforços")

Jessie then immediately says "I saw that the bomb is there near 'b' did you hear anything?" As an experienced CS player in competitive mode, Jessie orients to the movements on the map and the messages on the screen, something that an ordinary CS player (such as Antonio) still has to develop in order to play in competitive mode. This 'visual skill' (Ellis 2011) is something that Antonio probably lacks. So Jessie has to instruct him to perform this kind of moves.

Another point here is the utterance "did you hear anything?", which refers to the fact that only Antonio can listen to what his teammates are saying over the radio, since he is the one who is using the headset (refer to the screenshots at lines 8 and 14). Jessie can only 'hear' what they say 'by proxy,[12] i.e. if Antonio tells her what his teammates are discussing. This point evidence that the instructed actions are performed through cooperative moves as not only Antonio has to follow what Jessie says, but also Jessie is dependent on Antonio's responses to her questions so that the instructions can be given and followed.

Through a question-answer sequence, Jessie can make sense of what Antonio is actually hearing and then can turn Antonio's observation to the things that are crucial in the game environment. More examples on this phenomenon can be found in the excerpt below.

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[12] To see more about the 'by proxy' methodical move, please refer to Marques et al. (2020) and Carlin et al. (2021a, 2021b).

*Switching weapons and moving faster*

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Excerpt 3


15.   Antonio    =[não
                 =[no
16.   Jessie     [é b é b (.) corre pro b, corre pro b
                 [it's b it's b (.) run to b, run to b
17.   Antonio
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                 corre pro b?
                 = run to b?=
18.   Jessie     =cê pode correr com a faca na mão
                 =you can run holding the knife
19.   Jessie     [cê consegue mudar no q
                 [you can change the weapon by pressing q

20.   Antonio
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21.   Jessie     =isso
                 =that's it
22.              (.)
23.   Jessie     mas não né::: isso é olhando pra frente não é olhando pro
                 but not like tha::t that's it keep looking ahead
24.              chão não=

25.
```
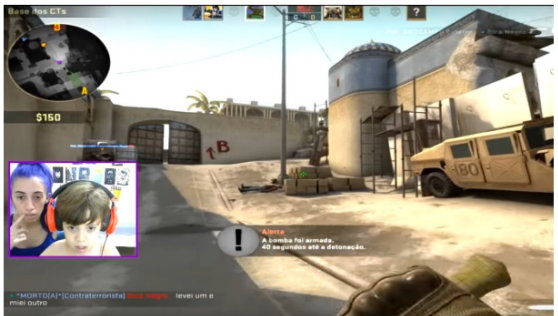

Excerpt 3: Following the bomb

Excerpt 3 shows that Antonio denied having heard his teammates talking about the bomb. However, he still follows Jessie's suggestion and starts to move towards point B on the map.

Regardless of Antonio's disconfirmation of hearing someone saying that the bomb has been planted on the B side (line 15), Jessie is sure that the bomb is there: "it's b it's b (.) run to b, run to b" (line 16). Antonio has to provide back up to his teammates and for this he has to reach the B side as soon as he can. Again, Antonio does not have all the time in the world to do that. He has to run fast and this requires to hold small items (e.g. the knife) in his avatar's hands in order to run at the maximum speed. Equipping with the knife allows the player to move at the highest speed of 250 units/second.[13] Jessie instructs Antonio on this (line 18) and also teaches him which key to press on the keyboard in order to select the knife (line 19). All this work here happens within the interaction between Jessie and Antonio, which is interconnected with the actions Antonio is producing in the game. See, for example, Antonio responding to the instruction well at line 20 (the screenshot shows that the knife in the game is successfully selected as Jessie gives the instruction).

We can then see that playing the game on the competitive mode requires fast manual dexterity, not only to switch weapons using the keyboard but also to manipulate the mouse to direct the avatar's viewpoint and trajectory, as in "yes, that's it, keep looking ahead" (line 23) "not down" (line 24). Moreover, the notion of terrain in Counter Strike discussed in Reeves et al. (2009) also applies here, as each weapon has its own particularities and its choice is associated to specific movements in the game, places to go on the 2D map and the player's historical experience of a specific location in the 3D virtual environonenment. The player's conduct of the avatar should then be viewed, (2009, 220, brackets in the original), "*in toto* (actions, weapon choices etc.) as part of a concerted effort that is intextricably linked to the terrain and emerging moves of their team and the enemy".

Still based on Reeves et al. (2009, 213), knowing how to move on the map means "moving competently". They make an important connection to Sudnow's (2001) experience of the temporal and spatial features of skill as a jazz piano player. Moving competently on CS map is similar to navigating to good points in music for a good imporovisational jazz player. One has to know where things are on the game map and how to get there on the same way a jazz player has to know where and how to access musical notes on the piano. Both the jazz player and the CS player are constrained by the time of the play. Either doing music or a game move, players have to accomplish certain tasks on time so that this task can make sense as a unity, which is formed by a series of concerted actions that would mean something else if they were not part of the same whole. The time for Antonio then, although being the same cosmic time of *Lebenswelt* (i.e. the clock of the game ticks at the same speed as the clock outside the game), is the time of the

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[13] See this information here: https://counterstrike.fandom.com/wiki/Movement#Speed.

game-world, as the actions Antonio is orienting to are actions in the game, done for that specific purpose, with a specific bunch of players. This is an example of how *Spielwelt* temporality is momentaneously layered over *Lebenswelt*.

Using temporal opportunities to instruct the player on what just happened

Excerpt 4 depicts the end of the round. Antonio finally meets the enemies (members of the terrorist team) and enters the battle. After eliminating some of them he is the first of his teammates to get to the bombsite. He then tries to defuse the bomb, but without a defuse kit, he had to wait for ten seconds (instead of just five if he had the kit) so that his avatar could do the work manually. Those ten seconds were crucial for Antonio. As the battle continued all Antonio's teammates were eliminated and without a backup, Antonio ended up being hit by a member of the Ts team.

When Antonio reaches the B side of the map, he is instructed to look through the window first before entering the combat zone. However, looking through the window is not an easy task,[14] not when "many people might be waiting" for him, as instructed by Jessie at line 26. Jessie's notion of terrain is useful here. She knows that by the time Antonio took to reach point B, enemies might be in position protecting the site where the bomb has been planted. Jessie knows more than him where things are on the map, she knows what "parts of a map mean for that particular point in play" (Reeves et al. 2009, 222). This is a particular skill an expert CS player has to develop. This is also at what Antonio is being instructed, which he seems to understand and follow pretty well. That is how this phenomenon becomes visible in the data. When Antonio reaches the window and spots an enemy (see Jessie's commands at lines 29-30 attracting Antonio's attention to this fact), he strafes (i.e. moves his avatar sideways) allowing him to keep the camera focused on his enemy while moving in different directions. He is then able to shoot the member of the terrorist team being immediately praised by Jessie (line 33) "good, you got one (.) good".

Nevertheless, Antonio does not immediately see the second enemy waiting for him just behind the window as soon as the enemy appears on the screen. The first evidence for this is his avatar's position at the moment he is about to cross the window. He was focused on making sure there was no one else in the same region he was shooting at – and where he killed an opponent – at the bottom of the screen (screenshot at line 33, Figure 4).

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[14] See Moutinho and Carlin (2021) for an example on how the simple operation of a glove puppet might be a complex instructional task.

```
Excerpt 4

26.   Jessie    =olha pela janela aí mas cuidado que pode ter vários
                =look through the window but be careful as many people
27.             te olhando
                might be waiting
28.             (.)
29.   Jessie    ó (.) tem um lá
                look (.) there's one there
30.             (.)
31.   Jessie    espera ele aparecer espera ele aparecer
                wait until he shows up wait until he shows up
32.             ((shots))
33.   Jessie    boa^ pegou um (.) boa^
                good^ you got one (.) good^
```



```
34.             (.)
35.   Jessie    AQUI EMBAIXO AQUI EMBAIXO na direita
                DOWN HERE DOWN HERE on your right
```

```
36.                 (.)
37.    Jessie       boa    pegou  [outro
                    good you got [another
38.    Antonio      [defusar=
                    [defuse=
39.    Jessie       =defusa
                    =defuse

40.    Antonio      (HOU hu hh)=
```



```
41.    Jessie       =AI [VOLTA
                    VOLTA ((ininteligível))
                    =OH [GO BACK GO BACK ((unintelligible))
42.    Antonio      [NÃO
                    [AAi
                    [NO
                    [OH
43.    Jessie       t[á
                    o[k
44.    Antonio      [qua:se=
                    [clo:se=
45.    Jessie       =é (.) é porque: é
                    =yes (.) it's becau:se it's
46.                 (.)
47.    Jessie       quando é assim é porque (.) tipo assim
                    when that happens it's because (.) it's like that
48.                 (.)
49.    Jessie       tu tava sem defuse então não ia dar tempo né?
                    you had no defuse so there wasn't enough time, right?
```

Excerpt 4: Entering the battle

Because of this, he did not pay attention to the enemy right below him. Note Antonio's position, aiming at the left of the screen (screenshot at line 35, Figure 5), while his avatar's body is already slightly across the window, thus vulnerable to the enemy, although the enemy did not notice him as well until it was too late to react.

Figure 5: Antonio's positioning aiming at the left of the screen while vulnerable to the enemy (not showing) on the right

On the other hand, Jessie has already detected the presence of the enemy; and she brings her brother's attention to that in the attempt to instruct him to see an enemy as fast as her. That is how it happens. By the time Antonio is still positioning himself (looking to the left), Jessie already had her finger pointed at the screen because she noticed something that players refer to as a 'pixel shift' or 'pixel change'.[15] This notion is extremely important for the game dynamics. Strafing, for instance, is one of the techniques used for 'opening pixels', that is, gaining – or recognizing – territory inch by inch, pixel by pixel. Jessie noticed this pixel variation on the screen and recognized an enemy in it, so she reacted instantly by saying "Down here" twice (line 35) as she also looks to the place where the enemy is standing (see screenshot at line 35, Figure 5) pointing her finger to the screen. The 'pixel change' happens on the map as well. As soon as an enemy is spotted, it is shown as a red dot in the map. After saying "Down here" twice, Antonio was still aiming to the left, but he quickly managed turn right to kill the TR. Jessie then praises Antonio again: "Good you got another" (line 37).

Jessie's visual perception and response time makes it clear that she is an experienced player or, rather, more experienced than her brother. The more experienced the player

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[15] In Portuguese, players refer to it as "mudança de pixel", lit.: "pixel change".

is, the more sensitive becomes her/his ability to perceive such subtle changes in the visual *gestalt* of the terrain. A pair of black pixels at the base of a door, for example, even at a glance, can indicate the presence of an enemy lurking around. This type of visual acuity is vital in game modes where there is no respawn, as is the case for the competitive mode. It is important to observe that Jessie is reacting and reporting to her brother concomitantly, which drastically reduces the response time, especially considering she is not controlling the avatar. We can then consider that the time Jessie has to react to the presence of an enemy intersects with the time that Antonio has to take actions in the game.

After beating the opponent using his pistol, Antonio turns his avatar's body to the site where the bomb is located and then provides an account of what he will do next: "defuse?" (line 38), followed by the same expression (as a form of confirmation) by Jessie (line 39). Antonio here is showing Jessie he is oriented to the objective of the round (i.e. defuse the bomb), but not only that. He has to be sure that it is *time* to defuse the bomb now. When Jessie confirms that this is the right *time* by repeating what Antonio had said at line 39, Antonio places the command on his keyboard and start the defusing process. As soon as the process is initiated, a countdown appears on the screen (screenshot at line 40, the zoom-in capture of the countdown message is being recovered below).
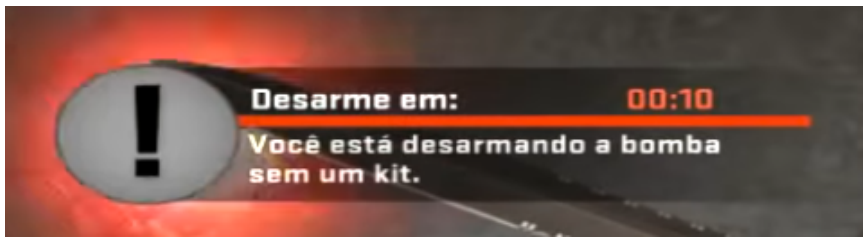

Figure 6: A zoom-in of the countdown message saying "Defusing in: 00:10. You are defusing the bomb without a kit"

However, when the countdown starts, Jessie notes that someone is on Antonio's back. This is another example of the 'visual skill' (Ellis 2011) that Antonio has not acquired yet. Immediately Jessie says "OH, GO BACK GO BACK" (line 41). However, the move proved impossible as the enemy eliminated Antonio before he could withdraw the defusing process to fight the enemy. The round then ends and the Ts team wins.

Immediately after the end of the round there is a time for the team members to select more weapons and resources to get ready for the next round. During this time, it is also common to witness players making comments on what has just happened. So Jessie (lines 45-59) takes this opportunity to topicalise Antonio's death event and explain to him why 'that' happened (line 47). According to Rusk and Ståhl (2020, 22), 'the period between rounds is a temporal position in-game when players may engage in more elaborate conversations regarding K- [kills] and D- [deaths] events in the previous round'. The same feature was observed in our data. However, the time concerned here is not only linked to an in-game temporal position (as it happens at line 49 – "you had no defuse so there wasn't enough time, right?"). The use of the conjunction 'when' at the beginning of line 47 ("when that happens...") presupposes that more deaths events might come in the

following rounds and that Antonio will have other chances to avoid that. This connects to the notion of 'getting ready for the next round',[16] which shows that participants are orienting here to a broader temporality than just the one experienced by the players this time.

Moreover, Jessie here locates a 'temporal opportunity' (Reeves et al. 2017) in the game to manage a potential disappointment from Antonio. Managing disappointments here, however, is much more than just motivating the person and elevating his morale; it also (and mainly) prepares the person for events to come (Marques et al. 2018). Jessie does this by evaluating Antonio's first attempt in competitive mode in its entirety.

However, Jessie and Antonio know that, although the first round is over, the match will go on (there are at least 15 rounds more to be played) and Jessie selects this specific point in time (the end of the first round) to provide a description of the 'game-as-it-has-developed-so-far' (Garfinkel 2008, 279). This is how she does that. Jessie produces an utterance at line 49, ("there wasn't enough time") referring to the defuse kit that Antonio had not selected before the round started. This is understandable since, for a casual CS:GO player, it is not necessary to select such items before rounds, as players in this mode are already automatically equipped with weapons and defuse kits. However, in competitive mode, players are responsible for selecting the resources they will carry during the round. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, Antonio's oriented object is other than that of a casual player of CS:GO, i.e., a player who tries to win a round or two and drop out of the game. He has to learn how to play several rounds in sequence (i.e. learn how to play the game in competitive mode) and this means to learn how to select the correct resources for each round. It also means to learn from mistakes he is making now to prevent them from happening again *every* next time. That is the temporality that Jessie is referring to and mastering this orientation is another feature that distinguishes a casual from a competitive-mode player of CS:GO.

OPENINGS

As Watson and Sharrock (1990, 235) argue, participants do 'bring to the game a variety of real-world identities, capacities, and understandings of what "typical" actions typically mean in everyday life'. These identities are woven into the texture of the game, which also constitutes the interdependence of both worlds (*Lebenswelt* and *Spielwelt*), not in a subversive way. The player, Antonio, is always making his actions accountable to Jessie, acknowledging her assistance, and recognising that she is the most experienced player (even though she is not *playing* the game at that moment) and that her instructions are being followed. Those aspects are not just "embedded" in the gameplay, they constitute the same "whole", the just-what-is-there-available-and-preserved-in-the-recordings. As a result, there is no easy (or maybe 'possible') separation of those constituting elements, unless participants produce and orient to a specific partitioned reality.

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[16] This also connects to Sudnow's (1979) description of his attempts to beat *Breakout* for 'another first time'.

The interdependence of aspects of the life-world and game-world also make the temporalities of both phenomenal properties overlap. Examples of this overlap lie in the fact that the speed the clock ticks in the game is not different from the speed it does in the real life and, regardless the game clock stops at the end of the round, the moves and strategies that happened during the round are recapitulated and topicalised after the round to serve as instructions to orient Antonio to the next round. Garfinkel (2008) discussing the different temporal properties between chess and *kriegßpiel* calls attention to the fact that in *kriegßpiel*, the temporal properties are better described as a 'time-object' (Garfinkel 2008, 280). Garfinkel compares this phenomenon to the description of a Beethoven string quartet. According to him, a recapitulation of the music in its entirety can only be grasped when 'the temporally ordered steps have been completed' (Garfinkel 2008, 280). Garfinkel's description is similar to the one found here in CS:GO, since Jessie can only describe to Antonio what his round really meant at the end, since all the temporally ordered steps in the round have been completed.

Moreover, the way Jessie addresses Antonio after the game round reveals that Antonio is being trained and that, therefore, failing is part of the process; but more important than that is the fact that he will have another chance (not only to play another round, but also to play as many other matches as he needs). Consequently, he and Jessie are also orienting to a broader temporality than just that of the game. It is imperative to understand that, although orienting to the objective of the round (defuse the bomb), Antonio has another, and more important, goal (learning how to "play CS:GO in competitive mode"). The time to reach this goal is not only constrained by the time in the game, but also by the time in the life-world, which, according to Schütz (1962), is the one which society-members place most faith – and to which Antonio has to orient to learn how to develop his skills as a competitive CS:GO player.

Moreover, during the work of following Jessie's instructions, Antonio was learning how to be part (a member) of a local culture, i.e. the one of competitive-mode players of CS:GO. Therefore, many aspects of that culture were available during the gameplay for our close analysis. These aspects (i.e. how players communicate to each other through radio commands or chat messages; organise strategies; move on the map; stick together as a team or split into small groups or individually) constitute and exhibit order that elucidate their orientation as an *in vivo* work site (Garfinkel 2002). This in turn contributed to our (analysts') own understanding of what was being done, which allowed us to examine and demonstrate the methods that participants were using in practice towards a specific oriented object.

The oriented object in our data was an object in the space of the game-world (*Spielwelt*). Nonetheless, games are part of the life-world (*Lebenswelt*) and aspects from both provinces of meaning are involved and practically interwoven. Sudnow (1979) provided us with a good example on how this happens. He described, in his work *Pilgrim in the Microworld*, how his search for 'good play' transcended the world of *Breakout* and became his oriented object in the life-world. As part of his iterations to play well and beat the

game, Sudnow narrated a passage in which he drove to the Atari headquarters to talk to one of the *Breakout* programmers:

> I told him where I was with the game, and asked my most pressing question: "What's good play like?" (…) He wasn't sure what a best score was, had no idea of the fastest times, and was convinced there were kids throughout the land who did far better than anyone in the company. Well, I wasn't worried about the very best score, and the fastest time didn't seem vital (…) (Sudnow 1979, 64).

The effort put on Sudnow's enterprise and the discoveries along the search for a 'good play' demonstrate, as Schütz and Luckmann (1994) postulate, constitute the practical actions of our mundane life. Therefore, as Garfinkel (1967) suggests, there is no time out from the *Lebenswelt*. This, according to Sharrock and Watson (1985), argues against frame analysis theory (Goffman 1974), in which a game frame modulates participants' actions and practices. Instead, still according to Sharrock and Watson (1985, 195), 'the reverse is the case', since players use their common-sense (everyday-world) reasoning to operate in specific ways.

All the observations made here point to the fact that although technology develops and games become more and more complex, players still use their common-sense reasoning and practices (e.g. writing fast, providing/following instructions, pointing at the screen, managing disappointments) to elaborate strategies and develop skills necessary to successfully reach their goals. No matter how "revolutionary" games might become, the routine, ordinary and mundane practical activities are fundamental and inescapable.

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