

Intertextuality, Pop-Culture References, and Puns in the Quests and Achievements in *Wrath of the Lich King*

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou úkolů a achievementů ve hře *World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King*. Teoretická část popisuje důležité lingvistické metody a termíny použité v praktické části a zároveň vysvětluje herní termíny, které jsou klíčové pro pochopení a následnou analýzu ve druhé části této bakalářské práce. Příběh a historie hry jsou stručně nastíněny pro lepší pochopení kontextu úkolů a achievementů. Praktická část poté zkoumá tyto úkoly a achievementy a vyhodnocuje, kde se popkulturní odkazy, slovní hříčky a odkazy na jiná díla nachází.

Klíčová slova: diskurzivní analýza, Blizzard Entertainment, World of Warcraft, Wrath of the Lich King, úkol, achievement, slovní hříčka, popkulturní odkaz, intertextualita

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis deals with the analysis of quests and achievements in the game *World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King*. The theoretical part focuses on the description of important linguistic methods and terms used in the practical part as well as on the definition of in-game terms that are crucial in the understanding of the following analysis in the second part of the thesis. The story and the history of the game are briefly outlined to better understand the context of the quests and achievements. The practical part then examines these quests and achievements and evaluates where pop-culture references, puns and links to other works lie.

Keywords: discourse analysis, Blizzard Entertainment, World of Warcraft, Wrath of the Lich King, quest, achievement, pun, pop-culture reference, intertextuality

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

World of Warcraft is still one of the most popular MMORPG games and is played by millions of players internationally. Quests are one of the most important aspects of the game because they not only tell a story of a whole in-game world, but they are also the main element of the game-play. Achievements, on the other hand, are present in the game merely as a bonus for ambitious people that want more from the game. For some players the story is not important and the quests and achievements are only a tool to reach the content they want, the end-game content. Personally, I am the kind of player who likes to explore and participate in the stories the quests offer. However, both of these game features can become boring and repetitive. When I started to feel bored, I discovered that there is sometimes more in these quests and achievements than a story or a challenge. I realized that Blizzard sometimes references other works and other times there can be a pun involved in the text. It is really exciting to encounter them and recognize their hidden meaning. And that is the reason I decided to search if there are more of these references, intertextualities and puns or if I just came across an exception.

The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to discover if a selected quest or achievement contains a pun, a reference or both. It also determines where it is located, if it is in the title or the description of said quest or achievement. And lastly what is the hidden meaning of the pun or reference which is then analyzed.

The theoretical part firstly focuses on defining the discourse of the in-game text by focusing on the narrative, context, cohesion and coherence, intertextuality and puns. There are also other terms that had to be described in order to understand the whole context of the analysis. The second part focuses on the game's story and history, continuing with the needed definitions of the in-game quests and achievements.

In the practical part, I had to go through thousands of quests and achievements which I briefly read through to determine if there is either a pun or some kind of a reference or intertextuality to other works. Then I read through these selected quests and achievements again and I decided if the references and puns are interesting enough to elaborate on. I tried to include as many different types of quests/achievements and references/puns as I could to cover most of the possible combinations and to show how much they vary. After this process, I ended up with 25 different quests and 20 achievements that I later analysed based on the knowledge from the theoretical part.

I. THEORY

1 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

1.1 Discourse

Discourse can be described as “a linguistic unit (such as a conversation or a story) of language longer than a single sentence”, as stated in Merriam-Webster dictionary. It is basically the use of written or spoken language in a context (Merriam-Webster 2019).

1.2 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is essentially the study of language and could count as a sub-field of linguistics. It studies the possible methods of putting sentences and utterances together to form texts and interactions. It also includes the use of the language in real life, for example, joking, arguing, persuading or even flirting (Jones 2012, 2-11). The analysis of the structure of common spoken language such as conversations, speeches, interviews or commentaries is called discourse analysis. The analysis of written language that can be found in essays, chapters, road signs or notices is called text analysis. However, this division is not always used as it might be inaccurate because not everybody follows the same terms (Crystal 1997, 116-117).

1.3 Text

A text is a piece of language which serves a communicative purpose. On the contrary, the sentence is just an abstract unit that does not have to carry any meaning. It is not necessary to understand the language of the text; however, it is crucial to know that it has a purpose for it being a text. For example, if a foreign tourist receives a menu in a restaurant, he/she knows the purpose of the text, although he/she might not speak the language. The text can have several purposes. Some of them have a clear utility function but other may contain social purposes: to inform, entertain, express a point of view, share an opinion, etc. A text can have more than one purpose. For example, an Inflight magazine should inform the people on board about the company's fleet and their safety, but also entertain them to reduce their stress or promote destinations for their future flights. People produce texts for many different purposes, but it is up to a reader or a listener to understand what message it wants to send (Widdowson 2007, 3-10).

1.3.1 Cohesion and Coherence

For the text to have a purpose it has to be cohesive and coherent. Cohesion is a linking within a text, holding the text together and forming sentences that are related. This link can be a

result of structural relations between sentences or the relations between lexical items that are used in the text. For instance, the link between pronoun and a previous noun phrase. Coherence is even more important as it makes the text semantically meaningful. For the texts to be coherent sometimes the person reading it has to have some knowledge about real life facts (Herbst 2010, 283-287). For example, to understand a text about Times square the person has to know that it is a name of a square in the City of New York which is located in the USA. Even though the text can be really cohesive in terms of the inner links it does not have to be coherent at all if it is not connected to the external knowledge of real-life items and events of the receiver (Widdowson 2007, 45-51).

1.4 Narrative

A narrative is in a simplified way a story or the action of telling stories. However, the more accurate description is that a narrative is a representation of interconnected events in time. Some may call it a narrative only if there is a change of state, or that it requires human characters, others say for a story to be legitimate the events have to “follow an arc from equilibrium to disruption and back to equilibrium” (Abbott 2011, 533-540). In *World of Warcraft* the story is being told by quests. The narrative is hidden in the descriptions and objectives of the quests, as well as in conversations (Metzen, *World of Warcraft - Behind the Scenes* DVD 2004).

1.5 Context

Linguistic Context is a term describing the words and sentences which help to discover the meaning of the text. Context plays a role also in spoken language. In a conversation between two people, the social status and setting of both of them may play a huge role in understanding each other, this is called a social context (Nordquist 2018).

Sometimes an understanding of a text is a matter of context. In addition to understanding a text it may require the person to not only know a situational context but also a cultural context. This might lead the person to think to know the purpose of the text even though the reality might be different (Widdowson 2007, 19-26).

1.6 Intertextuality

Intertextuality is a term that is used to describe the fact that every literary piece is somewhat interconnected. Texts are related to one another and can be influenced, referenced, made a parody of, drawn from, quoted, inspired or built on each other. Simply put, every text is

somehow intertextual. Authors, even without them knowing, are influenced by what they have read. This also applies to the literature pieces; they can be intertextually influenced even if it was not on purpose (Nordquist 2019).

There are two types of intertextuality: deliberate and latent. Deliberate intertextuality is when an author consciously chooses to reference someone's work. For example, the name of an electronic music duo is "Zeds Dead" and it comes from a famous quote in *Pulp Fiction* which is a film directed and written by Quentin Tarantino. On the other hand, latent intertextuality is a form that is used by accident or without the author's intent. (Literary Terms 2019) Theorists say that it is almost impossible for authors to create original and unique literary, musical or any different type of art without it being interconnected or influenced by other artwork (Allen 2011, 5).

1.6.1 Pop-culture References

As described before, the connection between every literary piece is evident. This interconnectedness between all types of literature can result in taking an idea, style or any aspect from one author's work and including it in own's work. That is called a reference. References are also not exclusive for literary art but are applicable to all forms of artwork and can be interchangeable (Fitzgerald 2017). This means that *World of Warcraft* can draw from other pc games but also from books, films and popular culture as a whole. Popular culture encompasses cultural products that are consumed by the majority of people. This can include literature, music, film, television, video games, fashion and it is usually promoted by mass media and therefore influencing the lives of ordinary people (Crossman 2019). When an author is influenced by a mainstream movie that was just released and decides to take an idea from it to expand a book's plot, it is called a pop-culture reference.

1.7 Humor and Jokes

Humor can be described as an ability of being amusing or comic and provoke laughter but also the capability of being amused (Merriam-Webster 2019). To produce something humorous people often make jokes. It is usually a brief verbal or written narrative with a funny twist at the end. It should be taken lightly, not seriously, and the point is to make people laugh. A joke can also include a pun, irony, sarcasm or different word plays (Merriam-Webster 2019).

1.7.1 Puns

A pun is sometimes perceived as the lowest form of humor, but others view it in the opposite light. However, puns are associated with humor only in recent years. In ancient Greece, the use of puns was often seen as a religious matter and could lead to a conflict (Pollack 2012). A pun, also called paronomasia, is usually described as a play on words and it is often used in jokes. It can play with several meanings of the word or with the meaning of words that sound similar. In order to understand a pun, the person has to know multiple meanings for the word otherwise it will not work. There are several types of puns. A homographic pun is spelled the same but sounds different and has a different meaning. It is usually used in a written form because in a spoken form it might lose its meaning. On the other hand, a homophonic pun sounds similar but its spelling and meaning are different. A homonymic pun is a combination of the two, both the sound and spelling are the same but carry a different meaning. Compound puns use two or more puns in the same sentence. To understand a recursive pun the person has to know the first element of the pun in order to comprehend the second element. A visual pun is made by using pictures. It can appear in logos, advertisements, comic strips, etc. (Nordquist 2018).

1.8 Slang

There are usually two explanations in dictionaries for the word “slang”. Slang is a language of either a group of professionals or a distinct group on a margin of a society. This explanation is rather outdated because the term “slang” we use today usually depicts the second meaning. The second meaning is described as “temporary and unconventional vocabulary characterized primarily by connotations of informality and novelty” (Mattiello 2008, 31). Nowadays slang can be seen as a means of connecting people inside of a specific group. It can help with being accepted and being on the same speech-level in this specific group. However, when it comes to people who want to keep conversations private and use slang as a result, it may have the opposite anti-social impact (Mattiello 2008, 32-33). Slang may be occasionally used in *World of Warcraft* and it usually depends on the race and a social class of the character. Noble races such as elves never use slang, goblins, on the other hand, are not usually bothered to use the formal language and may tend to use slang, sometimes even engineering jargon.

2 WORLD OF WARCRAFT

In November 2004 Blizzard Entertainment released a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) called *World of Warcraft* (WoW). They published this game on the 10th anniversary of the Warcraft franchise and it was the fourth instalment in the Warcraft fantasy universe. Over the years, they had released seven expansions (*The Burning Crusade*, *Wrath of the Lich King*, *Cataclysm*, *Mists of Pandaria*, *Warlords of Draenor*, *Legion*, and *Battle for Azeroth*) to update the game's content, story, graphics, mechanics, and more (Blizzard Entertainment 2019). In 2008 *World of Warcraft* was the most popular MMORPG game in the world with almost 10 million subscribed players (Guinness World Records 2008). Blizzard stopped releasing subscriber counts in 2015, but the rumors are that “only” around 1.7 million players are now subscribed to *World of Warcraft*. It is still one of the most popular MMORPGs in the world (Gadgets 360 2018).

2.1 Wrath of the Lich King

Wrath of the Lich King is the second expansion pack for *World of Warcraft* released in November 2008 (Blizzard Entertainment 2019). The numbers reached 2.8 million copies sold within 24 hours and made this expansion the fastest selling PC game of all time back in 2008 (Cohen 2008). The game received a massive content update. They added a new continent called Northrend for players to explore, raised the level cap from 70 to 80, introduced the first Hero Class, Death Knight and more (Blizzard Entertainment 2019). Achievement system was also added as a new challenge for players that are bored or want to acquire new titles, cosmetic items or just to measure personal progress (IGN 2013).

2.1.1 Lore in Wrath of the Lich King

Lore in Blizzard games is essentially the story that the game is built upon. It is the background story on which all the characters and their motives and beliefs stand. Warcraft universe is vast and for it to be credible, there is more than the *World of Warcraft* games. The origin of the Warcraft universe started with the release of the first game called *Warcraft: Orcs & Humans* in 1994 (Blizzard Entertainment 2019). Since then Blizzard released not only number of games, but also books, comics, animated videos, short stories, audiobooks and more.

Wrath of the Lich King directly continues after the events of the preceding expansion, *The Burning Crusade*. After the failed attempts of Kil'jaeden to invade Azeroth, the in-game world, he decided to create the army of the dead with one to rule them all, the Lich King.

The Lich King was supposed to help Kil'jaeden conquer this world and many others with the assist of the Scourge, undead controlled telepathically by the Lich King himself. He was placed in Northrend, the northern part of Azeroth, and started to build his undead army by killing living creatures and turning them undead. On top of that, each death fed him more power and made him stronger. By this he created a "cycle of death" spreading through Azeroth like a plague. The stronger the Lich King was, the more he wanted not only to conquer but also to escape the control of the Burning Legion because he was only a mere tool for them. As a result, the Lich King instead of conquering wanted to destroy Azeroth and all the living creatures with it (Stickney 2010).

The lore is very important and so are the quests in this game. The quests are essentially little pieces of the story that is happening in this expansion. Blizzard wanted to introduce the players to the main villains early on and show us their intentions and motives. This is to make the story believable and to make the player be invested emotionally in the main characters of *Wrath of the Lich King*. They wanted to make it easy for the players to get to know the story without them having to go online and search the explanation for why some events happened. That is why Blizzard focused more on reproducing the story via quests (Metzen, *World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King - Behind the Scenes DVD* 2008).

The music in *World of Warcraft* is entirely recorded for the purpose to be used in this game and is composed to match each individual zone. It also influences the narration of the lore. It gives the game and the story another dimension and the player is even more immersed in this world. Not only is the lore influenced by the music but the music is influenced by the lore. Composers for Blizzard discuss the backstory for the zone or race with the Creative Development Historian to make sure the music fits the lore (Metzen, *World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King - Behind the Scenes DVD* 2008).

2.1.2 Life Versus Death

Light versus Void, Good versus Evil, Life versus Death are recurring themes in the *World of Warcraft* lore. In *Wrath of the Lich King*, this theme is more evident than ever. Heroes of the Warcraft universe would often have to fight evil forces, sometimes even undead, in order to prevent them from destroying the whole planet of Azeroth and the life with it. However, this theme is not exclusive just for the Warcraft universe. Fantasy, Sci-fi and other literature is rich on these battles between good and evil or life and death (Fleming 2019).

In fact, it is one of the most common themes in literature. For example, in *The Lord of the Rings*, from which Blizzard often took inspiration, is this theme as obvious as in *Wrath*

of the Lich King and we can see a clear connection between these two (Metzen, *World of Warcraft - Behind the Scenes DVD 2004*). There is one villain, Sauron, that controls a horde of creatures made for only one purpose, to kill and conquer. His one and only goal is to conquer the realm of men and destroy all the living. It could be argued that Blizzard was greatly inspired by Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and not only by this piece. *The Walking Dead* is a TV series narrating a post-apocalyptic story about zombies taking over the world versus the rest of the mankind fighting them to survive. There are millions of zombies that are fueled only by a hunger for human flesh that will stop at nothing. This is also a great example of the recurring theme of life versus death in sci-fi television series.

3 QUESTS

Since the aim of this thesis is to analyze WoW quests, it is necessary to define and explain in depth what this term means and how it can be studied. A quest is a journey around a fictional world which player takes to achieve a goal that was either given to him or he chose to do to complete a challenge and earn a reward or gain experience (Jeff 2008). Quests are crucial in the storytelling of computer role-playing games (RPG) and are used to engage the player in the game's story and the world as a whole. They are used to move the plot forward. In *World of Warcraft* players and their story is not driven by one major quest after which the game ends. They can rather choose from thousands of quests located around the world and determine which story they will be involved in. Even after reaching the maximum level they always have something to do. There are quests for increasing reputation with factions, they can go to dungeons and raids to kill monsters and villains or fight enemy players (Corneliussen and Rettberg 2008, 167-182). Even though the quests are usually short and quick, it is possible to narrate a bigger story using them.

3.1 Quests in World of Warcraft

A quest in *World of Warcraft* is a task given to a player via a non-playable character (NPC), posters, opening containers or from dropped items. When a player completes it, he or she will be rewarded with consumable or wearable items, recipes for professions, money, and reputation with specific NPCs. Questing in *World of Warcraft* is the fundamental way to level up your in-game character. Until the player reaches the maximum level the quests also give you experience points which are necessary for levelling up (Karlsen 2008).

3.2 Quest Design

Quests have a very simple and consistent design. They all look almost the same and the structure is identical. If a player clicks on a quest giver or a quest giving item a window opens. This window is always divided into three parts. The first part begins with a heading, the name of the quest, and a short story follows. It usually describes the problem the player has to solve. The next section contains an objective. It briefly specifies the objectives the player has to complete in order to receive the rewards. The last part ends with the list of rewards that are upon completion given to the player.

There is also a separate tab called quest log which displays all of the currently active quests. Upon opening it, the player can see a list of those quests located on the left side of

the window with the name and the type of the quest. On the right side, there is the same window that popped up on the initial opening of the quest with all the information.



Figure 1 Quest Log (Source: <https://wowwiki.fandom.com>)

3.3 Quest Givers

Finding quests is pretty simple. Quest givers, NPCs that give quests, have gold exclamation points over their heads, which indicates that there is a pending quest that can be completed. A gold or blue question mark shows completed quest ready to turn in (Karlsen 2008). Quest givers can be of different races, social classes or professions which leads us to languages in quests.

3.4 Language in Quests

If a player opens a quest, the text is revealed word by word, as fast as the quest giver speaks. This is to point out that the text of quests in WoW is actually a transcribed speech. How the quest giver speaks is reflected on how is the text structured, if it is formal or informal and if there are any mistakes in the language. Even though the structure is the same in most cases, the language in the quests can differ based on race or class that the quest giver belongs to. Every NPC has its own story even if it is an orphan in one city or beggar in another (Metzen, World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King - Behind the Scenes DVD 2008). That is why the language can be so different every time the player comes across a new quest. To better

understand how big the differences may be, there are specific examples listed below to support this point.

3.4.1 Troll Quests

Crab Fishin'

“Perhaps me agin' body is just growin' too picky after all dese years, but boar meat just ain't goin' down easy no more. More for da new recruits I be thinkin'.

We just set out some crab traps, but if ya be willin' ta help an impatient old troll, I'd love ta have some fresh crawler meat right now. Dey're all around da island, but da best spot ta be huntin' them is off da eastern coast.” (Wowhead 2019)

Saving the Young

“I actually have somethin' really important dat I could use help with, if ya be willin', mon....” (Wowhead 2019)

This is a great example of using a different dialect to highlight the race of the quest giver. Excluding the most common Darkspear tribe which uses common English, some of the troll tribes in the game use language resembling Jamaican English. More specifically this resembles the Jamaican “twanging” which is essentially Jamaicans trying to speak with the English accent. It is neither Jamaican Patwah, the creole, or American English (Paul and Bennett 2018). In the case of WoW quests, the language resembles English more than the Jamaican Patwah. Therefore, the language is informal as they shorten the words, for example, from “willing” to “willin’”, use “d” instead of actual “th”, use “ya” rather than “you”, instead of “to” they use “ta” and referring to the player as “mon” rather than “man”.

3.4.2 Dwarven Quests

Catch the Wild Wolpertinger!

“Here now. Ye hear that? There be sounds in them hills. Those're the wolpertingers! Wily beasts, they are, attracted by the smells o' Brewfest. I've a mind to catch me some, but I knocked me shin and can't outrun the buggers. Ye can help me, though!...” (Wowhead 2019)

Same as trolls, dwarves speak a different dialect. Specifically, they use Scottish English and it is transcribed into the text of the quests as well. Scots usually use rhotic “r”, they pronounce the “o” sound like an “ae” sound, and they also block the airway to pronounce the letter “t”, this is called the glottal stop (Davies 2016). Some other common features may be: the use of “eh” sound instead of “e”, the “i” sound transforms to the “a” sound, etc. (Bailey 2018). In the transcribed quests the dwarves use informal English with contractions, slang words can appear, there might be wrongly conjugated verbs, they use “me” instead of “my” and in spoken English they use the same features as Scots, such as the “r” is pronounced, etc. Dwarves tend to joke sometimes; this might be a reason for including more puns in the quests.

3.4.3 Elven Quests

Quests received from elves are usually written in formal English. In most cases it is very formal, even without contractions, and in case of blood elves, their way of speaking might sound “posh” depending on the social class of the quest giver.

The Balance of Nature

“...The spring rains were particularly heavy this year, causing some of the forest's beasts to flourish while others suffered. Unfortunately, the nightsaber numbers grew too large, and they will devastate the other populations if they are not culled.

Journey forth, young <class>, and thin saber populations so that nature's harmony will be preserved.” (Wowhead 2019)

The language in this example is very formal even though he is an ordinary night elf. There are no contractions and the syntax and the terms used are complex.

Delivery to the North Sanctum

“I'm pleased to discover that you're at least somewhat competent, <name>. I'll give you another task since you seem so eager to prove yourself.

This is a letter to Ley-Keeper Caidanis, the arcanist in charge of the upkeep of the North Sanctum. Go southwest of Falconwing Square and

you will find him. He is a very important person, so I hope you don't bother him too much with trivial chatter.” (Wowhead 2019)

Here we can see the nature of some blood elves. They might be arrogant and posh and it reflects on their language too. We can see that there are contractions but otherwise, the language is very formal and the words used are complex. Both elven races lack humor so there is a lesser chance that their quest will include puns or jokes.

3.4.4 Goblin Quests

Slightly Unstable

Looking good!

“No, not you - my new mines. You're just a little full of yourself, aren't you? I, on the other hand, am absolutely brilliant! My intellect cannot be matched.

What were we talking about? Oh yes, my new mines! New and improved... ready for whatever devious use Ricket has concocted.

Be a <good lad/doll> and go hand them off to Ricket, will you? She's right over there... it should be quite the epic journey, I'm sure. Be careful though, she's a little loopy.”

Despite goblins being quite small, their personality is usually much bigger. They are generally extroverted, ambitious vendors or engineers with a huge interest in money. They do not want to waste time on pointless work because “time is money, friend” and that is why they often try to occupy the player with insignificant work while they work on something bigger for example mines, as shown above. They speak informal English and tend to joke around which can lead to the occurrence of puns in these quests. They might be a bit crazy and it is shown in the quests as well. They use contractions, informal phrases and sometimes engineering jargon.

3.4.5 Extraordinary Quests

In some cases, the language can differ because of the extraordinary origin of a quest giver. For example:

Feedin' Da Goolz

“Git o'er heer, gool! Yeh, I talkin' to yoo.

It feedin' time now. Gotta git da grub ta all da gools!

Speshal grub dis time! Bowels an' brainz bowl... num, num, num.

Jus drop da bowl nexta da gool. Gud way ta make frenz.

Yoo got goolfrenz? Ha, ha, hah!” (Wowhead 2019)

As shown above, the quest giver speaks broken English. He uses very informal English, misspells words, usually incorrectly transcribes and shortens them. This is to highlight the origin of the quest giver. In this case, he is an abomination falling under the Scourge. These creatures are not intelligent and it is made obvious at first sight when a player opens this quest.

3.5 Quests Variations

In World of Warcraft, there are many variations of quests a player can complete. These variations can be sorted into the following main categories. A kill quest wants the player to find and kill and sometimes loot an item from a certain creature. A gather quest tasks the player to collect herbs, ingredients or materials for the quest giver (Bacon 2017). In a delivery quest, the player has to bring a given quest item from one NPC to another usually located in a different city or zone. On the other hand, the escort quest wants the player to transport an NPC from point A to point B and keep the NPC alive while it slowly walks forward through the monster-infested area (Karlsen 2008). Explore quests have only one purpose and that is to make the player explore a new zone.

3.6 Quest Types

Quests can be also divided into types. For example, a quest which is meant to be completed alone is called a solo quest. A group quest is designed to be completed in groups. As many as five players can help each other in completing them. In order to complete dungeon and raid quests, the player has to go to these mentioned instances and has to group with 5 to 25 players to be able to finish them. These quests are the most difficult of all the types. Some quests can also be repeatable: daily, monthly or yearly. A PvP quest is a special type for players who are interested in playing versus other players and usually involves a task of killing them. Class quests are designed for players to gain new abilities, powers or special items that are tailored for the class they play. A chain quest usually tells a larger story and

consists of more than one quest in a row as the story continues from the last one. They are made to be gradually harder with a climax usually being to kill a boss (Lummis and Vanderlip 2005, 24-26).

4 ACHIEVEMENT SYSTEM

The expansion *Wrath of the Lich King* brought a new feature into *World of Warcraft*. The achievement system was introduced in the game for the first time in 2008 and it was highly inspired by the Xbox 360 achievement system (Cavalli 2008).

The reason for this addition was to give players a way to measure their game goals and statistics. The other idea was the ability to compare each other for how much have they accomplished in WoW. The achievement points are the way of putting a number to those accomplishments and ensuring the countability of them (Metzen, *World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King - Behind the Scenes DVD* 2008). Upon release Blizzard designed 749 original achievements, but the number grew with each patch and expansion that followed (IGN 2013).

There are many different achievements and they are also differently graded. This ranges from 5 points per achievement, usually the easiest, to 50 points per achievement, usually the hardest to obtain. In rare cases, achievements reward no achievement points to the player. Among the easiest belong, for example, achievements that are acquired by just playing the game, getting to level 10. While the hardest to get are really time-consuming and requires the player to focus on the goal in order to obtain it. Some of them rewards the player with titles, mounts and pets or tabards, but all of them are purely cosmetic, without the player getting an advantage over others (IGN 2013).

4.1 Achievement Design

Achievements show up on the screen right after completion. It is a rectangular box with a logo of the achievement on the left side, a shield icon with the amount of achievement points received on the right side and a title with a short description in the middle. As with quests, achievements are consistent in their design and layout. There is also a separate achievements window with an overview of all unlocked and locked achievements.

The language in WoW achievements is mostly neutral but rather more formal than informal. However, Blizzard is known for their love for puns and even more for putting puns in the names of achievements.



Figure 2 Achievements Window (Source: <https://wow.gamepedia.com>)

4.2 Achievement Variations

Achievements vary on how can a player complete them. Some of them are unlocked by only one action while others can include a progress bar to see how many times have to be a certain action repeated in order to obtain them. For example, a player can obtain an achievement by just simply reaching level 10, on the other hand, different achievement requires the player to complete five daily quests. These achievements can also be progressive, meaning that after completing five daily quests the player will unlock new objective, to complete 50 daily quests. Meta achievements are received upon completing other achievements that are stated. For example, achievement *Glory of the Hero* requires the player to obtain 37 other achievements in order to unlock it and is rewarded by a rare mount (Wowpedia 2018).

4.3 Achievements Categories

Achievements categories are made for players to easily navigate between what they have already accomplished and what can be still achieved. This might involve character development achievements, a record of player's completed quests, dungeons and raids. It

can also track how many locations a player has explored or how much gold he/she has looted. There are also achievements connected to the PvP combat system which might be the most difficult to attain. Achievements can also serve as a tool for players to challenge themselves in dungeons and raids, because there might be a time or a player limit on killing a boss or finishing the instance. Feats of Strength achievements are challenging and sometimes impossible to complete, because they are usually obtainable in special events, for example, on the release of an expansion or its end (Wowpedia 2018).

II. ANALYSIS

5 INTERTEXTUALITY, POP-CULTURE REFERENCES, AND PUNS IN THE QUESTS

This chapter of the practical part deals with an analysis of intertextuality, pop-culture references and puns in the quests in the *World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King*. It consists of 25 chosen quests, which are attached unabridged in the appendix. These quests were carefully chosen to include as many different kinds of intertextualities, references and puns with regard to the location of the occurrence. The subheadings in this chapter are always the names of the quests. Furthermore, the number of a subchapter corresponds with the number of the unabridged quest placed in the appendix. Each subchapter analyzes only one quest at a time, with the exception of the third and the last one, and determines which of the linguistic tools are used in it and where. All of the quests are taken from the official database www.wowhead.com.

5.1 Can't Get Ear-nough...

This is a great example of using a pun in the title of a quest. In a glimpse, the player learns that the quest giver wants to bring 15 ears off dead hunters that are killing innocent animals nearby. *Can't Get Ear-nough...* is an obvious play with the words “ear” and “enough” and it is really trivial for the player to understand it. This quest also becomes repeatable after the first completion thus the meaning of the title gets even clearer. “Can't get enough” is an idiom used when somebody likes something so much that wants more of it.

Furthermore, the quest giver is a high-ranking night elf arch-druid, so the quest is otherwise very formal and without any humor. However, in the quest's description, there is a mention of an organization called D.E.H.T.A. After completing several quests given by this organization and further communication with them it becomes clear that D.E.H.T.A. is a parody of real-life organization fighting for animal rights called PETA. The quests deal with saving animals and killing hunters. If it is not clear enough, the arch-druid also explains in other conversations that the acronym stands for “Druids for the Ethical and Humane Treatment of Animals” which is almost the same as “People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals”. As an interesting fact, D.E.H.T.A. is an anagram for the word “death” which is ironic, because of the fact they want to save the animals.

5.2 Grand Theft Palomino

The quest (2) can refer to at least two things. *Grand Theft Auto* is a videogame franchise developed by Rockstar. However, both the quest and the game are inspired by “grand theft

auto” crime, which depicts an act of stealing a car or other vehicle. The players’ task, as seen above, in this case, is to steal a Palomino, a horse breed, and deliver it to the quest giver, so there is a clear connection with both, the title of the quest and its content. However, there is another connection with Rockstar. They also developed a popular game called *Red Dead Redemption* which has been given a nickname “Grand Theft Horse”, because of the similarities of the two games except for the time period in which the games take place in.

5.3 It's All Fun and Games

In this quest (3) the objective is to destroy *The Ocular*. It is a huge eye resting on a tower of the Shadow Vault. The Lich King can control it and as stated “He's using a device known as The Ocular to watch the area”, this eye seems to be a reference to J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*. Specifically, the Eye of Sauron, which happens to be on top of a tower and the Dark Lord Sauron also has the ability to control it. This theme also occurs in the quest (25) with the title *The Eye of Archeus*. In the description of the quest, there is even a mention of “all-seeing eye of Archeus” which is pretty close to already mentioned Eye of Sauron, described in the books also as all-seeing eye (Fandom 2019). In addition, it says that “What the eye sees, the Lich King sees” which is another link to Sauron.

Furthermore, the title of the quest is a reference to the idiom “it's all fun and games until someone loses an eye” as The Ocular is representing the eye which is being destroyed. The idiom stands for a warning usually given to children to be careful to not hurt each other when playing. Moreover, the quest item used in this quest to destroy The Ocular is called “Eyesore Blaster”. This can be a play on words as the “eye” can be unpleasant to watch.

5.4 A Bear of an Appetite

The objective of this quest is to fish for salmon and bring them back to the quest giver to feed his pet bear. However, the reference is hidden in the quest giver’s name. He is called Hugh Glass. This man is a direct reference to real-life Hugh Glass who was an American frontiersman, trader, hunter and explorer living at the turn of the 19th century. He is best known for his legendary survival of a grizzly bear attack (Tikkanen 2019). This grizzly is also represented in the game, however the bear, in this case, is a pet of Hugh Glass. Besides this, the quest description and the name is lacking any obvious references or jokes and puns.

5.5 A Sister's Pledge

Similarly, to the previous quest, this one is also referencing characters via the names of the NPCs. The player is requested to help find a sister of Sasha, Anya. Anya is located in a nearby cave protected by wolves. In *A Song of Ice and Fire* saga by George R. R. Martin there are two main characters, sisters called Sansa and Arya which belong to a house Stark with a direwolf on the house's sigil. So, there are enough similarities that it is quite certain that Blizzard took inspiration from these books. Besides this, there is no further intertextuality or reference to be found in this quest.

5.6 Dun-da-Dun-tah!

Even though the description of this quest is short, this is probably a reference to the *Indiana Jones* franchise. Starting with the name, it is a transcription of the melody from the Indiana Jones theme song. The second hint can be the nature of the quest. It is an escort quest; however, the player is being escorted by a quest giver. The quest is received in ancient ruins and the objective is to escape from the ruins while being attacked by a huge snake. In the movies Indiana often runs from different kinds of ruins, castles, caves, caverns, etc., also, he is afraid of snakes. What is more, the name of the NPC is Harrison Jones, while Jones is the last name of the protagonist, Harrison is the first name of the actor who plays Indiana Jones.

5.7 It Takes Guts....

This quest requires the player to visit the same ancient ruins as in the (6) quest and to bring canopic jars to the quest giver in order to help the souls to rest. There is an obvious play on words in the title. *It takes guts* can be interpreted as an idiom describing how courageous the player must be to enter these ruins swarmed by ghosts. Canopic jars were used by the ancient Egyptians to preserve the guts, in this case meaning viscera, of the dead (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2019). So, this means that the guts of the dead are necessary in helping the lost souls. Otherwise, the quest description is written in formal language and no other puns or jokes can be found there.

5.8 Scourgekabob

Right at first glance, one can spot a pun Blizzard made for players who are familiar with the Turkish meal shish kabob. The objective is to bring a mummified troll carcass to an NPC and burn it so they do not come back alive as Scourge, hence the name of the quest. Moreover, the shish kabob is a skewered meat which is then grilled (The Mediterranean Dish

2016). This could be similar to the content of the quest. Furthermore, after its completion, the NPC says: “Wrote a little shong about it. Wanna hear it? Here goes....”. This is a possible reference to Calhoun Tubbs, a character from a TV show called *In Living Color*. He used to say: “I wrote a song about it. Like to hear it? Here it go!” The song was always only one or two sentences long and so is the in game tune: “Shcourged trooolls roashting...”, “...on an open fire.....”. Additionally, the text of the song might reference “The Christmas Song” made famous by Nat King Cole with the opening lines “Chestnuts roasting on an open fire, ...”. As can be seen this, quest is full of many different intertextualities and references.

5.9 Kick, What Kick?

In this quest, the goal is to simply shoot an apple of a gnome’s head with a given rifle. This is a kind of quest Blizzard makes just to amuse the players. However, there is a hidden reference to a Swiss folk hero called William Tell. The first hint might be the name of the NPC the player is trying to shoot the apple off. His name is Lucky Wilhelm, which is the German equivalent of the name William. The content of the quest is, however, the main reason of this intertextuality. That is because William is partly famous for shooting an apple of his son’s head in order to save them from being executed (Wernick 2004).

5.10 Zedd's Probably Dead

This quest is given to a player via a journal found on another dead body. The goal is to find Zedd who was separated from the writer of the journal and is presumed dead. Hence the name of the quest *Zedd’s Probably Dead*. This is a slightly modified quote from the popular movie *Pulp Fiction* written and directed by Quentin Tarantino. There is a well-known scene where one character, Butch, takes a chopper from another character called Zed and returns back to his girlfriend, Fabienne.

Fabienne: Butch, whose motorcycle is this?

Butch: It's a chopper, baby.

Fabienne: Whose chopper is this?

Butch: Zed's

Fabienne: Who is Zed?

Butch: Zed's dead, baby. Zed's dead.

Other than that, there is no evident reference to other movies or books.

5.11 Coward Delivery... Under 30 Minutes or it's Free

This is a delivery quest, specifically the player has to deliver a deserter to the Alliance. In the text, there is no apparent reference but the title is the exact opposite. “You got 30 minutes” was an advertising campaign made by the American chain Domino’s Pizza. It meant that if the pizza is not delivered to the person in less than 30 minutes, they do not have to pay for it (it is free). This shows that Blizzard is not only inspired by big movies, books and historical events but also by advertisements. However, there is no actual time limit for the delivery of the deserter.

5.12 The Sub-Chieftains

The objective of this quest is to kill four robots, which have no ordinary names. Twonky is also a robot in the board game called RoboRally originally published by Wizards of the Coast in 1994 (BoardGameGeek 2019). They not only share a name but there is a slight similarity in the looks of the robots. However, this figure in a board game could also be a reference to a 1954 sci-fi film called *The Twonky*. There is, again, a robot with a similar appearance to the board game piece. The second one is called ED-210 which seems to be a reference to the film *Robocop*. The Enforcement Droid, Series 209, or ED-209 is a robot that tried to kill the main protagonist. It is also designed to look similar to the film’s robot. Max Blasto, the third robot, is a homage to Master Blaster which actually was not a robot, rather a character from the movie *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* from 1985. There are no visual similarities between these two characters. The last robot, The Grinder, has a generic name without a clear reference to anything. Other than the robots there is nothing more to analyze in this quest with respect to the aim of the thesis’ topic.

5.13 Lupus Pupus

In this quest, the objective is to retrieve eight pieces of microfilm that wolves have eaten. And because it is in their digestive tract, the player has to wait till the wolves excrete it. There is no obvious pop-culture reference in this quest, however, the name of the quest hides a secret meaning. *Canis lupus* is a Latin name for a wolf, where “canis” is the genus and “lupus” is the species. Simply put, “canis” points to the dog-family and “lupus” to the species, wolf. “Pupus” however is not a Latin word but is very similar to “puppis” which means “poop” in English. Combined together Blizzard made a joke in the title, calling it

“The Wolf Poop”. Furthermore, in the description of the quest, we can find a sentence “I’d offer you my special lupus pupus scopus for the job,…” where the quest giver talks about “scopus”. This is not a Latin word and it is not close to a similar word in Latin, but either way, the player might recognize the pun that it could mean “a scoop”. Other than that, the formality of the quest is neutral and it clearly demonstrates that it is a transcribed speech.

5.14 Slay Loguhn

Slay Loguhn is a kill quest that is self-explanatory from the title. However, until the player sees the target, it is unlikely to spot the reference. Loguhn is a wolvar, which is a primitive wolverine-like humanoid race in *World of Warcraft*, with huge fist weapons looking like claws. After this, it is fairly simple for those who know comics to connect the dots. Wolverine, also known as Logan, is a fictional character with huge claws appearing in American comic books by Marvel Comics. So, there is not only a reference in the title of the quest but moreover, there are visual similarities and even the race of the NPC plays a role in the understanding of this link.

5.15 Jormuttar is Soo Fat...

The objective of this quest is to kill a “spawnmother” in a nearby cave in order to stop the spreading of their species. There is nothing special about the description of the quest, however, the title is a pun. When the name of the monster, “Jormuttar”, is pronounced it may sound similar to “your mother” and if it is connected with the rest of the title, it makes the beginning of a “yo momma is so fat” joke.

5.16 We Have the Power

The player is given a task to go and find two power cells. However, after further look into the names of the batteries the player can notice that one of them is called *Durar’s Power Cell*. If the word “power” is omitted, one can get “Durar’s Cell” which is conveniently close to a real-life company specializing in the production of batteries, Duracell. The title of this quest might also be a pop-culture reference. In 1990 a German music group Snap! released a famous song called *The Power* which is mostly known for its hook “I’ve got the power”. This similarity might be unintentional; however, it is very unlikely because Blizzard often focuses on making different kinds of references.

5.17 A Cleansing Song

The player's objective is to find, lure and kill three spirits to cleanse the water of a certain zone. At a location where the player can summon one of those spirits, there is an island in the middle of a lake. On the island, there is a hatch with numbers: 5 9 16 17 24 43. Both the hatch and the numbers are references to a popular TV show *Lost*. The numbers in the game are incremented by one from the original 4, 8, 15, 16, 23, and 42. The numbers appear throughout the whole series and are an essential part of the show's mythology (Fandom 2019). Even though the quest giver uses broken English because he is a part of a primitive race, there is no other pun or joke used in this quest.

5.18 Nowhere to Run and Nowhere to Hide

In this quest, the player is sent to kill a city official to show dominance. The target is called Mayor Quimby, which is a reference to a character of the same name from an animated sitcom *The Simpsons*. This character is a mayor of a fictional town, Springfield. Moreover, the title can be seen as a reference to a song called *Nowhere to Run* by KISS from 1982. The lyrics of the chorus are: "Nowhere to run, Nowhere to hide". The rest of the text is without a pun or pop-culture reference.

5.19 Hungry, Hungry Hatchling

This daily quest requires the player to feed a raptor hatchling in order to help it grow. The description of the quest does not hide any references. The title, however, is an altered name of an old tabletop game originally from 1966 called *Hungry Hungry Hippos* (BoardGameGeek 2019). The goal of the game is to "feed" the hippos as many marbles as possible. Therefore, regarding the feeding, the content of the game and the quest is also similar.

5.20 The Reckoning

This quest, part of a chain quest, is an excellent reference to Norse mythology. And not only this chain quest, but this reference spans throughout at least three different chain quests containing dozens of individual quests. In the quest (20) the player witnesses the fight between *Thorim* and *Loken*. Thorim represents a Norse god of thunder, Thor. The quest (21) describes the discovery of Thorim's hammer, Krolmir, Hammer of Storms which is a direct reference to Thor's hammer, Mjölnir. Furthermore, the player can read about Thorim's wife, Sif, who is sharing the same name as the wife of Thor (Klimczak 2016), in another quest

(22). In quest (20) there appears one more character that has been borrowed from Norse mythology, Loken. He is an equivalent of Loki, the god of trickery and master of shapeshifting and lies (McCoy 2019). He is also an in-game boss of a dungeon and is killed by the players at the end of the (23) quest. The objective of (23) is to bring *Loken's Tongue* to the quest giver, which might be symbolic as without the tongue he is incapable of telling lies. These questlines are not only accurate about the characters but also tries to tell the story of the two gods. Even though they are slightly modified for the purpose of the game it is still a great representation of Norse mythology. All of the quests listed above are written in a very formal language, to represent the status of the gods. Throughout the whole expansion, there are even more references to Norse gods, for example, the quest (24) mentions Freya, representing Freyja, the goddess of love, fertility and beauty (McCoy 2019).

6 INTERTEXTUALITY, POP-CULTURE REFERENCES, AND PUNS IN THE ACHIEVEMENTS

The second chapter of the practical part deals with an analysis of intertextuality, pop-culture references and puns in the achievements in the *World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King*. It contains 20 chosen achievements, which are attached unabridged in the appendix. As with the quests, the subheadings in this chapter are always the names of the achievements with the exception of the last one. Furthermore, the number of a subchapter corresponds with the number of the unabridged achievement placed in the appendix. Each subchapter analyzes only one achievement at a time, with the exception of the last one, and determines which of the linguistic tools are used in it and where. All of the quests are taken from the official database www.wowhead.com.

6.1 Make Love, Not Warcraft

This achievement is obtained for hugging an enemy's corpse. It can be viewed as a pun referencing a famous quote "Make love, not war," and it even fits with the content of the achievement. However, it can be also seen as a reference to a popular TV series called *South Park*, specifically, an 8th episode of the 10th season called "Make Love, Not Warcraft" which was dedicated to *World of Warcraft*. Furthermore, it could also reference a specific scene from that episode where Stan, a character, in-game hugs his dying father.

6.2 Fast and Furious

A player earns this achievement by learning a riding skill. It is a possible reference to a movie franchise called *The Fast and the Furious*. These action movies are concerned with fast cars and illegal street racing. That might be the reason Blizzard chose this name because the players learn how to ride their mounts faster than before.

6.3 Get to the Choppa!

This achievement can be obtained by two different means. The player has to obtain either a Mekgineer's Chopper or a Mechano-hog which are mounts that look like motorcycles. He/she can buy one from an engineer or an auction house or craft it if he/she is an engineer. The name of the achievement might come from one of the most known phrases of Arnold Schwarzenegger, an Austrian-American actor. He, in the role of Major Alan "Dutch" Schaefer, said this quote in the sci-fi film *Predator* from 1987. Even though the chopper in

this film is a helicopter and, in the game, it means motorcycle, it is likely to be a reference. The way Arnold said the word “chopper” is highlighted in the title of this quest.

6.4 Defense of the Ancients

This PvP achievement is earned in a battleground called Strand of the Ancients. Players have to defend it without losing any walls. The title of this achievement can be a reference to a game mode of Blizzard’s another game called *Warcraft III*. It is also called *Defense of the Ancients* and nicknamed DotA from the mode’s acronym. The goal of the game mode is to defend a walled off base from the attacks of other players, so there is a similarity to the content of the achievement. This game mode got really popular later on and created a new sub-genre called multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA).

6.5 Ironman

Ironman is another PvP achievement that can be earned in a battleground called Warsong Gulch. To get this achievement the player has to “carry and capture the flag three times without dying”. At first sight it can be interpreted as a reference to the *Iron Man* which is a fictional superhero, whose first movie was released a few months before *Wrath of the Lich King*. However, after further inspection of the achievement’s content, it is more likely to be a reference to the Ironman Triathlon. It is considered one of the most challenging endurance events in the world. It consists of swimming, cycling and marathon running, all without a break (Ironman 2019).

6.6 A Void Dance

To obtain this achievement a player has to kill a boss without killing his sentries. There is no apparent reference to anything but there is a possible pun in the achievement title. It could seem like a stretch but *A Void Dance* if said quickly and without pauses between the words starts to sound like the word “avoidance”. Also, it makes sense in the context of the achievement. The player has to avoid killing void sentries, and so it seems like an intention from Blizzard.

6.7 The Cake Is Not A Lie

This simple achievement is earned after baking a cake. However, one might be curious why a cake should be a lie. In a popular game *Portal*, a player undergoes an experiment with an expectation that there will be a reward at the end in the form of a cake. However, throughout the game, there are mentions that “the cake is a lie”. This phrase became so popular that it

even became an idiom. People started to use it as a way of saying “you are chasing after an empty, unattainable goal” (McCoral 2010).

6.8 Snakes. Why'd It Have To Be Snakes?

The title of this achievement is a famous quote said by Indiana Jones from the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark* which is the first instalment of *Indiana Jones* franchise. As stated before, Indiana Jones is afraid of snakes and that is the reason for him saying it. In order to achieve it, the player has to defeat a boss, conveniently a humanoid snake, without being snake wrapped, which is also what Indiana wanted to avoid.

6.9 Full House

As with the (8) achievement above, the player’s objective is to kill a boss. Not only that, the player also has to leave five different types of NPCs alive when the boss dies. The name comes from the popular card game Poker. To win a round of Poker a player has to have the best combination of cards of all the players. Statistically, the harder the combination is to get, the better a player’s hand is. A full house is a combination of two cards of one rank and three cards of another rank (PokerStars 2019). In-game, the NPCs that have to survive can be also divided into groups of two and three. The names of the first two are Cult Adherent and Reanimated Adherent and the names of the other three are Cult Fanatic, Reanimated Fanatic and Deformed Fanatic, which makes a symbolical full house.

6.10 Leeeeeeeeeeeeeeroy!

This achievement is a tribute to a player of *World of Warcraft*. He and his group were in a dungeon discussing a strategy. He suddenly yelled his name “Leeroy Jenkins” and went into a room full of little dragons and because of him everybody died. It was captured on a video, posted online and went viral. It is one of the most famous WoW videos ever made and the name of his character is referenced in other games (Dubs 2009). The content of the achievement is to kill the same 50 whelps within 15 seconds that killed Leeroy and his group. There is also a reward for accomplishing it in the form of a title “Jenkins”.

6.11 World Wide Winner

Although the content of the achievement is not related, there is a reference in the title and surprisingly also in the icon. *World Wide Winner* might be a link to the World Wide Web. Moreover, the icon is really similar to the Netscape Navigator icon, which is a web browser.

It is very rare to spot a reference in an icon because they are usually very general and not unique.



Figure 3 Achievement icon (Source: <https://www.wowhead.com>)



Figure 4 Netscape icon (Source: <http://www.iconarchive.com>)

6.12 Mine Sweeper

In order to obtain this achievement, the player has to “Get caught in 10 consecutive land mine explosions in the Sparksocket Minefield without landing”. The title is a tribute to the well-known classic computer game that was included in almost every MS Windows, *Minesweeper*. The goal was to clear hidden mines from a playing board without detonating them. It could also reference a warship called Minesweeper which used to clear mines from waterways.

6.13 All You Can Eat

In this achievement the player has to, again, kill a boss in a raid under the right circumstances. This time no member can receive “more than 5 stacks of Mystic Buffet”. Which means that a player cannot be hit five times in a row by the spell called Mystic Buffet, otherwise the group will fail in obtaining this achievement. In order to see a pun made in the description of this achievement, a player has to know the phrase “All you can eat” and that a word “buffet” can mean either a knockback, the effect of the spell, or “a meal where people serve themselves different types of food” as stated in Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge University Press 2019). This seems to be a rare instance where the pun can be understood only after reading the description of an achievement.

6.14 Home Alone

This achievement is a part of Children’s Week in-game event. Throughout this week players can take care of orphans, entertain them, do quests with them and much more to show them love. However, the content of this achievement is the exact opposite. Players have to use their hearthstone, which teleports them home, while their orphan is still with them, making them stay alone where the players were. The title and the content of this achievement can be

a reference to a popular Christmas comedy movie called *Home Alone* where the main protagonist, an 8-year-old boy, is left behind, while his family is on vacation in Paris.

6.15 G.N.E.R.D. Rage

The objective of this PvP achievement is to eat ten sweets called *G.N.E.R.D.S.* and earn ten honorable kills. While it is easy for gamers to spot a reference in the title to a popular phrase “nerd rage”, which means literally a rage of a nerd, there might be a second reference connected to the sweets. “Nerds” is a popular American candy made by Nestlé Candy Shop formerly The Willy Wonka Candy Company which is inspired by Roald Dahl's book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

6.16 References to the work of Ernest Hemingway

In the quests and achievements in *World of Warcraft*, there seem to be many references to the American writer, Ernest Hemingway. For example, a meta achievement (16) called *Hemet Nesingwary: The Collected Quests* specifically reference a quest giver that appears throughout the whole in-game world. His name, *Hemet Nesingwary*, is an anagram for the author himself, Ernest Hemingway. Ernest liked to hunt in his spare time and even killed a lion and other large game in Africa. (Hemingway Ltd. 2014) Hemet is also a hunter and all of the quests he assigns deal with hunting animals. Moreover, the names of the achievements that are required to earn the meta achievement (16) are all probably references to his work. (17) *The Green Hills of Stranglethorn* should be a reference to his second nonfiction *Green Hills of Africa*, (18) *Hills Like White Elekk*, where Elekk is a name for an elephant like animal, may be a homage to the short story *Hills Like White Elephants*, and the same applies to (19) *The Snows of Northrend* which can be a tribute to another short story *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*. Furthermore, there is also one more stand-alone achievement (20) called *The Old Gnome and the Sea* which is perhaps a reference to Hemingway's short novel *The Old Man and the Sea*. However, it can also reference a 2007 Blizzcon Movie Contest Winner. The first time this title, *The Old Gnome and the Sea*, appeared was at the beginning of this winning short movie called *Snacky's Journal - Episode 3 Freaked Out Over Fishing* written on a book.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to discover whether Blizzard uses puns and references to other works in their game, specifically the quests and achievements. Furthermore, where the puns and references are located, if they lie in the title or the description of the said game features and what is their content.

	Total Amount	Containing P/R/I	% Containing P/R/I	Analyzed
Quests	2,217	230	10.37	25
Achievements	1,776	111	6.25	20

Table 1 Frequency of P/R/I in quests and achievements

I browsed through 2,217 quests and discovered that around 230 of them contain either puns, references, intertextuality (P/R/I) or combination of them. Which makes around 10% of all *Wrath of the Lich King* quests, however, the number might be even higher. There are quests that are almost identical for two reasons. The first one is that they are slightly adjusted for the faction (Alliance or Horde). The second one is that the quest might differ only by the location where it can be completed in (seasonal events), however the names and descriptions of these quests are identical. A complete analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis; therefore, I chose 25 of them. I tried to choose subjectively the most interesting quests that contain as many different types of references and puns or their different combinations as I could to show how much they vary.

I also went through 1,776 achievements and learned that around 111 of them contain either puns, references, intertextuality (P/R/I) or combination of them. This makes around 6.25% of all WotLK achievements, but again the number might be higher if I did not count the progressive achievements, which usually vary only by a number, or some raid achievements that are identical and vary only by the player mode (either 10-player or 25-player). The reasons why I chose to analyze only 20 of the achievements are the same as with quests.

	Total Amount	Only in the Title	Only in the Description	Both
Quests	25	4	8	19
Achievements	20	11	0	9

Table 2 Location of P/R/I in quests and achievements

Most of the analysed quests contained puns, references or intertextuality in both, the title of the quests and the description. The description either elaborated on the P/R/I that was included in the title or it included a different one. However, in the case of achievements, the location was split only between the title or the title and the description at the same time. What is more, no pun, reference or intertextuality was found solely in the description, which is presumably caused by the length of the achievements' descriptions. There is however one exception and that is an instance where an achievement had a reference hidden in its icon. This was the first, and only time I spotted this in an achievement.

Taking into consideration the identical quests and progressive achievements it is fairly common, as the analysis shows, for Blizzard to include references, puns and links to other works into the quests and achievements. Approximately every tenth quest or achievement contains a pun or is referring to other works. Considering that some of the quests and achievements involve more than one reference, it could hint that Blizzard goes one step further to ensure the players are not bored and have a chance to discover something new every day even in completing their quests and achievements.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DotA	Defense of the Ancients
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
MMORPG	Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game
MOBA	Multiplayer Online Battle Arena
MS	Microsoft
NPC	Non-Player Character
PC	Personal Computer
PETA	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
PvP	Player versus Player
RPG	Role-Playing Game
TV	Television
USA	United States of America
WotLK	Wrath of the Lich King
WoW	World of Warcraft

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APPENDIX P I: QUESTS IN WORLD OF WARCRAFT: WRATH OF THE LICH KING

Source: <https://www.wowhead.com/>

1. Can't Get Ear-nough...

Arch Druid Lathorius at the D.E.H.T.A. Outpost in the Borean Tundra has said that he will reward you should you bring him 15 Nesingwary Lackey Ears.

Whether they be treasure seekers or bloodthirsty hunters of the wastes, any being that supports Nesingwary and does dare strike at our beloved wildlife shall be considered an enemy of D.E.H.T.A. Should you slay these filthy Nesingwary sympathizers, bring me proof of their demise and you shall be rewarded with a blessing from the druids of D.E.H.T.A.

2. Grand Theft Palomino

Salanar the Horseman asks that you steal a horse from the Havenshire Stables and return it to him at Death's Breach.

How fortuitous it is that the Crusade has a stable full of horses a mere stone's throw from this post. Though they guard it tenaciously, an enterprising young death knight could break through their defenses and take what is rightfully <his/hers>! Once you acquire a horse from the Havenshire Stables, return it to me and I will see what can be done about transforming it into a proper deathcharger. Remember, <name>, it's only stealing if you're caught. Watch out for that deranged stable master, Kitrik!

3. It's All Fun and Games

Destroy The Ocular and then report to Baron Sliver at The Shadow Vault.

The Knights of the Ebon Blade want to take the Scourge base known as The Shadow Vault to the northwest. I have a contact in their group who has asked for help.

The first step is to blind the Lich King. He's using a device known as The Ocular to watch the area, which floats above the vault's spires.

Our dwarves have created something for you to use against it. After the 'eye' has been destroyed, find Baron Sliver on the vault grounds. He's pretending to still be under the Lich King's will.

4. A Bear of an Appetite

Bring 6 Northern Salmon to Hugh Glass at the Redwood Trading Post.

Thank goodness you're back, Limpy! I worried that Griselda and I were going to be all alone.

I'm cooking up some food here for us, but Griselda'll have none of it.

She's fond of the fish that live off the coast of the Eastwind Shore, to the east. Can't stand them myself, but she's always been a picky eater. Six good-sized fish ought to keep her happy for a while.

Now, run... err... limp along, Joe. Wouldn't want to keep the girl waiting, would ya?

5. A Sister's Pledge

Look for Anya in the Duskhowl Den near Solstice Village.

Please, <name>. I know it is Arugal you're after. I swear on my father's memory I will help you take him down.

But I must beg you... Anya is completely innocent, we cannot leave her with these savages.

Help me rescue my sister and you'll have me at your side when you face Arugal.

I know the den Anatoly spoke of. We'll find it on the other side of this hill. Let's go, my sister's in danger.

6. Dun-da-Dun-tah!

Escort Harrison from Drakil'jin Ruins, then speak with Harkor at Harkor's Camp.

Listen, kid. This is no place for you to be playin' around.

I'm about to make a break for it. Stick with me and I'll get you outta here.

7. It Takes Guts....

Kraz at Harkor's Camp wants you to enter Drakil'jin Ruins and collect 5 Drakkari Canopic Jars.

Greetings, <class>. It is kind of you to stop and listen to Kraz's tale.

For many years Kraz has strained to hear the spirits and do their bidding.

Recently, many voices have been crying to Kraz from these ruins. They seek for a peace they cannot find on their own.

If you would help the spirits of those who have come before, enter this crypt and collect something that once belonged to those tormented souls.

8. Scourgekabob

Prigmon at Granite Springs wants you to bring a Mummified Troll Carcass to Mack Fearsen and place it in the fire.

Ugh.

Wrappin' up these unfortunate trolls be makin' my heart ache, but not so much as my back!

Help ol' Prigmon out and haul one of these carcasses over to Mack.

If we don't burn 'em they be walkin' again in no time.

9. Kick, What Kick?

Using the RJR Rifle, shoot the apple on top of Lucky Wilhelm's head, then speak with Drostan.

So you think you can shoot?

Well, let's give it a try. Here, we'll start you out with something nice and gentle. Don't worry, it's got no kick to it at all. Remember, don't point that gun at anything you don't intend to fire at.

Now, when you're ready, just take aim at that apple on top o' old Lucky Wilhelm's head and let 'er fly!

10. Zedd's Probably Dead

Search Wyrmskull Village for Zedd.

To whomever finds this journal:

These bloodthirsty monsters have taken up residence in the ruins of Wyrmskull. What they want or why they're here is a mystery. In any case, the artifacts are not safe with those beast-men around.

Zedd and I made a new discovery while hiding out: a cipher to decode the tablets! Unfortunately Zedd and I were separated late last night. He had the cipher. Tablets were with Glorenfeld and Daegarn. Location unknown...

Find Zedd.

-Pulroy

11. Coward Delivery... Under 30 Minutes or it's Free

Take the Alliance Deserter to the crossroads east of Warsong Hold and fire your Warsong Flare Gun to signal the Alliance.

Report to Scout Tungok once you have successfully delivered the Alliance Deserter to their destination.

We're seeing more deserters show up at our gates with each passing day. We simply do not have enough room to keep all of these maggots caged up. Especially not if we want to keep the pigs happy.

<Nork snorts as he laughs.>

I want you to escort one of these cowards to the crossroads east of here and fire this flare gun. One of their captains will show up when they see the flare and take the coward off your hands.

Report to Scout Tungok on the east road once the delivery has been made.

12. The Sub-Chieftains

Defeat Twonky, ED-210, Max Blasto, and The Grinder, and then report back to Sage Earth and Sky at Taunka'le Village.

It is known that Gearmaster Mechazod has four sub-chieftains that manage the robots in the pools.

We must put an end to them!

Our longrunners and snow trackers say that if you were to turn the valves at the west point, north point, mid point and south point stations, each of his sub-chieftains would come quickly to prevent you from fouling their operations.

The stations are centered on the spinning lights in the pools surrounding the pumping station.

Hurry, <name>!

13. Lupus Pupus

Iggy "Tailspin" Cogtoggle in the Scalding Pools wants you to bring him 8 pieces of Microfilm.

Whatever you do, don't eat this bait yourself. Just set it down in the vicinity of an oil-soaked wolf. If they're desperate enough to eat the microfilm, they'll come running when they smell the bait.

Simply wait for nature to take its course and then all you need to do is search the, uh... byproduct for the film.

I'd offer you my special lupus pupus scopus for the job, but I left it back at the airstrip. I'm afraid you'll have to conduct the... err... search the old-fashioned way.

14. Slay Loguhn

Smear the Blood of Loguhn upon yourself and then return to Elder Ko'nani at Moa'ki Harbor.

Already it goes from bad to worse. There is only one course to take... regrettably, Loguhn must die!

He's the alpha male of the Snowfall Glade tribe and one mean wolvar. But it's the only way to get a short break from their attacks and stealing forays.

You will find the "Render of Flesh" in front of his hovel upon the northern rise of the glade. It's larger than the others and hard to miss. Kill him and smear his blood upon yourself, both to show your dominance and respect.

15. Jormuttar is Soo Fat...

King Jokkum in Dun Niffelem wants you to slay Jormuttar in Hibernial Cavern.

The jormungar are a nuisance best dealt with quickly. If given any quarter, they breed like hares and spread like fire.

They have appeared southwest of here, in the Hibernial Cavern. If their spawnmother is not slain soon, they will gain a foothold in our region.

She cannot refuse food. Take this knife and get the flank of a bear corpse from their cave. Place it near her crater and kill her as she feeds.

16. We Have the Power

Bring Durar's Power Cell and Kathorn's Power Cell to Raegar Breakbrow at Prospector's Point.

We're almost there, but the war golem won't run without power cells. From the information I was able to collect in Dun Argol before we were discovered, both Rune-Smith Durar and Rune-Smith Kathorn each create one power cell.

We'll need one power cell from each of the rune-smiths before our golem will work. You should be able to find each rune-smith in his workshop on the central level of Dun Argol.

17. A Cleansing Song

Soo-nee, at the Rainspeaker Canopy, wants you to play the Cleansing Chime at Bittertide Lake, Wintergrasp River and River's Heart and slay the evil spirits that plague the waters there.

Earth in Sholazar is pure. The pillars have protected the land for centuries.

Water, not as pure, it comes from outside Sholazar.... from oceans, from lakes, from rivers. Water sometimes bring bad spirits - need to be cleansed.

You take this chime and play at Bittertide Lake, Wintergrasp River and River's Heart. It make bad spirit angry... and then you must kill it.

18. Nowhere to Run and Nowhere to Hide

Prince Keleseth at the Crypt of Remembrance has ordered you to kill Mayor Quimby and recover the New Avalon Registry.

Nothing less than total annihilation will suffice, <name>. To that end, a few hundred mindless ghouls assaulting the front gate of New Avalon will not do. We must infiltrate the inner sanctum and dispose of their officials. They must be shown that no one can escape the Scourge's grasp!

Make your way to the New Avalon Town Hall, southwest of here, and assassinate the mayor. Search the building for the New Avalon registry and bring it to me.

19. Hungry, Hungry Hatchling

Your Venomhide Hatchling wants you to feed it 15 pieces of Fresh Dinosaur Meat. The venomhide hatchling looks at you expectantly, then begins to scrawl a pictogram into the dirt.

The drawings are rough, but you can make out the shapes of diemetradons, stegodons, and pterrordaxes. As the raptor finishes the sketch, it looks up at you, bares its teeth, and makes a biting motion.

Your venomhide hatchling must be craving fresh meat from these animals. Find and kill any type of diematradon, stegodon, or pterrordax in Un'Goro Crater and feed its meat to your hungry hatchling.

20. The Reckoning

Meet Thorim near the Temple of Wisdom. Report the outcome of the fight to King Jokkum in Dun Niffelem.

Loken killed my wife, turned my followers and me against each other. He took away everything I had, but today... that changes.

Today we reclaim our sacred grounds. Today... Loken dies.

Meet me on the bridge near the Temple of Wisdom, just southwest of Ulduar. I will finish this one way or the other.

I need you there as a witness. You will not aid me -- this is personal.

After it's done, send word to Jokkum, King of the Frost Giants. He's a good friend and will know what to do.

21. Krolmir, Hammer of Storms

Thorim wants you to talk to King Jokkum in Dun Niffelem and discover what he knows of Krolmir.

One task remains before I can reclaim my home at the Terrace of the Makers.

Krolmir must be found.

On that fateful day, I threw it to the earth with all the power and rage I possessed. A mighty explosion followed.

I've thought it lost for these many years, but now I must be certain.

Return to King Jokkum and discover what, if anything, he knows of my hammer's fate.

22. Sibling Rivalry

Thorim wants you to listen to his story.

Sif? Is it truly you?

No? A <race>? But for a moment....

Enough of this! The visions of my Sif have tormented me for far too long. It is time for me to avenge her, and to bring honor to her memory.

My brother must pay!

23. Whatever it Takes!

Stormherald Eljrinn in the Halls of Lightning wants you to defeat Loken. You are then to return to Stormherald Eljrinn with Loken's Tongue.

One way or another, Loken shall fall.

The honor and glory of his defeat shall be yours.

Return to me with his lying tongue, and earn my unending gratitude.

24. Freya's Sigil

Prospector Doren at the Archivum in Ulduar wants you to obtain Freya's Sigil.

For more information on obtaining Freya's Sigil consult the Archivum Console.

Freya's Sigil is going to be one of the tougher ones, I reckon.

According to the Archivum, the essence of the Sigil is tied to her three elder servants, Brightleaf, Ironbranch and Stonebark. Should any of the elders be harmed, the Sigil's integrity will be compromised.

Sparing the elders, however, means that Freya will be more powerful when you face her.

What can I say, <name>. We're stuck between a rock and hard place.

25. The Eye of Acherus

Report to the Lich King in Ebon Hold.

Behold, Acherus, the grand citadel of death! It has no equal in this world! Not even the mighty Naxxramas could withstand a direct assault from the Ebon Hold. Looming above the face of the necropolis is the all-seeing eye of Acherus. From it the master is able to see great distances into the territories held by our enemies. What the eye sees, the Lich King sees, and now the time has come for you to peer through the eye! The Lich King has called for you, <name>.

Go now! Suffer well, <brother/sister>...

APPENDIX P II: ACHIEVEMENTS IN WORLD OF WARCRAFT: WRATH OF THE LICH KING

Source: <https://www.wowhead.com/>

1. **Make Love, Not Warcraft**

Emote /hug on a dead enemy before they release corpse.

2. **Fast and Furious**

Learn the Journeyman Riding skill.

3. **Get to the Choppa!**

Obtain a Mekgineer's Chopper or a Mechano-hog.

4. **Defense of the Ancients**

Defend the beach without losing any walls.

5. **Ironman**

In a single Warsong Gulch battle, carry and capture the flag 3 times without dying.

6. **A Void Dance**

Defeat Zuramat the Obliterator in The Violet Hold on Heroic Difficulty without killing any void sentries.

7. **The Cake Is Not A Lie**

Bake a Delicious Chocolate Cake.

8. **Snakes. Why'd It Have To Be Snakes?**

Defeat Slad'ran in Gundrak on Heroic Difficulty without getting snake wrapped.

9. **Full House**

Defeat Lady Deathwhisper with at least five different types of Cultists active at the time of her demise in 10-player mode.

10. **Leeeeeeeeeeeeroy!**

Kill 50 rookery whelps within 15 seconds.

11. **World Wide Winner**

Win a ranked arena match in Blade's Edge, Nagrand, Dalaran Sewers, the Ruins of Lordaeron, Tol'Viron Arena and the Tiger's Peak.

12. **Mine Sweeper**

Get caught in 10 consecutive land mine explosions in the Sparksocket Minefield without landing.

13. All You Can Eat

Defeat Sindragosa in 10-player mode without any member of your raid receiving more than 5 stacks of Mystic Buffet.

14. Home Alone

Use your Hearthstone while your orphan is with you.

15. G.N.E.R.D. Rage

Earn 10 honorable kills while under the influence of the G.N.E.R.D. buff. It's a slap in the face!

16. Hemet Nesingwary: The Collected Quests

Complete the Green Hills of Stranglethorn, Hills Like White Elekk and Snows of Northrend achievements.

17. The Green Hills of Stranglethorn

Complete all of Hemet Nesingwary quests in Stranglethorn Vale up to and including Big Game Hunter.

18. Hills Like White Elekk

Complete all of Hemet Nesingwary quests in Nagrand up to and including The Ultimate Bloodsport.

19. The Snows of Northrend

Complete all of Hemet Nesingwary quests in Northrend up to and including Post-partum Aggression.

20. The Old Gnome and the Sea

Successfully fish from a school.