Gaming and School Language

A study of gamers’ use of a second language and attitudes towards English during online gaming and in the classroom

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2017

C-essay, 15hp
Engelska 61-90
Ämneslärarprogrammet med inriktning mot arbete i gymnasieskolan

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Abstract
This research paper investigates the language that is used by upper secondary students both in gaming and in school related situations. The overarching aim is to compare the language that students in upper secondary school use during online gaming and in classroom situations and how one influences the other and what attitudes students have regarding spoken English during online gaming and in the classroom. A questionnaire was used to gather information about the students’ gamer habits and how they perceive the connection between online games and second language learning. The results provided by the questionnaire showed that there is a positive attitude among the students regarding how online games can provide opportunities for expansion of a second language vocabulary. Many of the students felt that the online sphere provided a more secure and more accessible setting for learning than what their school could give them. It also showed that second language learning through online gaming is possible, but at the same that the language provided through online games has limited use in for example a school environment. Words and phrases that the students have picked up from online gaming are in many cases not useful outside of the speech community of gamers. Therefore, the conclusion that was made was that online gaming is a large part of many students’ second language learning and that many students feel that is a more accessible way to learn a second language. Therefore, a didactic implication is that it is important that teachers start to include online gaming language in their education.
1. Introduction

1.1. Background
Languages are more accessible now than they have ever been. The English language spreads throughout the world and is encountered daily by an enormous number of people through movies, TV, social media as well as games. The video and computer game industry has quickly become one the high earning entertainment media industries in the world and brings in more money than many of the biggest blockbuster movies of modern times (Correa, 2013). As a result of this, the game industry can influence a lot of people from all over the world. What is also unique for this media is that it encourages people to play socially and not just with people in close proximity to themselves, but also with people from different parts of the world. Cultures meet and social exchanges happens through text-based online chats and oral conversations through communication services like Skype or Discord.

These new ways of communication create new ways for people to experience and learn language. Direct contact with people from other countries in their day to day lives have become even more common with the advancement of technology. Both first and second language users get to interact with each other and learn from the other part. A mutual exchange of knowledge could be achieved through online gaming and be used to improve language used outside of the online sphere. At least, this is what it seems like at first glance. This scenario might be a lot more complex than what it was first perceived to be.

In my relatively short period of time working as a teacher, it has become quite clear that many of my students fall into the category of young online gamers who engage in game media in some capacity each day. They play games and talk to other gamers through the Internet. In most cases, the language that is spoken with the other players is English. This should bring joy to me as a teacher, and while it does, it also comes with some concerns and questions. While it is good that people use their language skills regularly, it seems like this “game talk” might not be as big of an asset to my students’ language development as I first thought. Even though some of them engage in conversations with both first and second language users on a daily basis, they tend to avoid conversations during school hours. This dilemma is an interesting one and deserves to be researched. The tension between language use in gaming and at school can be analyzed by drawing from empirical data.
1.2 Aim and Research Questions
The overarching purpose of this essay is to compare the language acquired from online gaming and second language teaching in school. Gamers are a part of their own language community and use language in a way that is tied to their interests and social norms. This variety of the language could because of this come into conflict with the way that language is spoken in school.

A somewhat more subordinate aim of the study is to bring the attitudes that upper secondary students have regarding spoken English in online gaming sessions compared to spoken English in school situations into the light.

The research questions for this project are the following:

- How do people inside the speech community of gamers use language to communicate while playing online games?
- Are gamers incorporating the gaming language into their school language used in assignments? And if so; are they aware of this incorporation
- What attitudes do Swedish upper secondary students express regarding speaking English while gaming and in school?

2. Method
In order to answer these questions, data on gamers and their opinions and approaches to the English language is needed. To achieve this, quantitative research will be conducted in the form of a questionnaire. The participants will be asked a set of eight questions regarding the habits of the gamers and how they use language during online gaming. In order to keep the questions approachable for the students who will answer the questionnaire, the questions relatively short and focused on the central themes. The questions are also designed to be relatively easy to answer. There are many questions that could be answered with one word but also some that give the participant room to evaluate their answers. The design of the questionnaire questions is aimed at giving precision in the answers provided by the participants.

The questionnaire will be handed out to a class of around 30 individuals in the age of 16-17. Things like choice of study program or differences in gender in the classes will not be taken into consideration. Also, since there is a short deadline for this project the gender aspect of gaming language will not be taken into consideration. A study of genders effect on gaming language demands more time than what is available
for this project. A class of 30 individuals should also function as a good representation of what the typical class situation in Sweden looks like. It will also be anonymous; the goal is not to gather extensive personal answers but rather to get enough data to make statistics based on the results.

Stage two will be to compile the results of the questionnaire and compare the results with previous research that deals with similar research topics and aims. Since online gaming is a relatively new thing, there is not a lot of research done in the topic. Therefore, theories and studies on concepts like differences in language levels and attitudes towards second languages in school will be used to inform the discussion of the results.

2.1 Questionnaire

1. How many hours a week do you play video/computer games online?

2. What kind of game genres do you prefer?

3. Do you speak to other gamers in English while playing online?

4. What do you talk about with other gamers while playing online?

5. Do you think that gamers use their own words and phrases to describe different things and can you tell me a few of these words if that is the case?

6. What do you feel most comfortable with; speaking English in school or in an online gaming session? Write a sentence and explain why you prefer the first or the second of the alternatives.

7. Do you feel that there are words that you have learned through gaming that you can use in your school assignments?

8. Do you think that games have helped you to be a better English user? If your answer is yes, then how has it helped you learn?
3. Previous research
The previous research chosen for this project have been picked for a number of reasons. Gass and Selinker (2013) have been chosen because of his studies into how learning and language functions in a classroom environment. This information is needed in order to understand what classroom language is and to get some understanding for eventual learning hinders that could arise during second language education. Also, Gass and Selinker’s (2013) research on how students picks up errors from each other is important because of the amount of “wrong” language that circulates online and how it affects the gamers vocabulary.

The research that explains “multplayer” and “speech communities” have been chosen to give some context to terms that will be frequently used during this research paper. Finally, Gee’s (2007) “Experience” section have been chosen because of its relevance in learning processes and its importance for individuals’ ability to understand and perceive language. This ties both to gaming and school related situations.

3.1 Gass & Selinker – School Language and Anxiety
Gass and Selinker’s (2013) research sheds some light on the different factors of language that can arise in second language learning. Two of these things are; a definition of what classroom language is and how it compares to other forms of language and also the effects that anxiety could have on language learners. These two factors are two key parts that is needed to understand the process that could accrue when students avoids talking English in a school environment.

What is classroom language then? One way to describe it would be to call it a more controlled and shaped version of language. Usually there are three sources of input in the classroom; the teacher, the learning material, and the other learners in the classroom (Gass & Selinker, 2013). The inputs can be somewhat limiting in their ability to teach. An example of this is that the teachers are just one source of language input, usually an input that students interact with during a long period of time (Gass & Selinker, 2013). Another limitation could arise when learners talk to other learners during classroom hours. These conversations could be filled with errors and language limitations that could result in students picking up other students’ errors or no new language input since the other part of the conversation is limited in their own language (Gass & Selinker, 2013).

Another issue is anxiety. It is something that many people feel at some
point in their life in conjunction with different activities or challenges that they must face. One of these challenges could turn out to be language related. It is unclear what triggers anxiety, it could be emotional reaction to a certain situation or perhaps something that is tied to different personalities. What is clear though is that it can be both a negative and a positive factor on language learning (Gass & Selinker, 2013). In order for anxiety to become helpful, there needs to be a low level of it present in the language learner. Fear of failure could easily become hurtful for the language learner but a small dose of anxiety could help the learner perform and learn better. On the other hand, learners who do not care about the language that they are learning have no reason to be afraid of failure since they will not try in the first place (Gass & Selinker, 2013). Different situations might also vary the usefulness of anxiety in language learning (Gass & Selinker, 2013). Even though a person acts in one way at a certain time, there is a chance that a small variation in circumstances could change that person’s reaction to an event the next time that he or she faces it.

3.2 Gass & Selinker – Picking Up Errors
It is important to remember that it is highly unclear how much of an impact the students have on each other’s language. There is some evidence that would suggest that second language learners do not pick up errors from one another (Gass & Selinker, 2013). The researchers speculated that the learners have a sense of right or wrong when it comes to language and do therefore not pick up errors when they hear them from classmates. Once again, it is important to remember that these theories do not have any real proof of correctness, but do never the less provide an interesting thesis on how language learning in the classroom functions (Gass & Selinker, 2013).

3.3 Falkner – Multiplayer
The gaming world is evolving fast and is in a constant state of flux. New games arrive and become popular, some old ones lose players and die out while some franchises keep the gamers engaged no matter what trends come or go. To get a glimpse into the world of social gaming it is important to establish what it is and how it works. Falkner’s (2007) study shows what to expect when talking about social gaming, or as it is more commonly known; multiplayer.

Multiplayer is like the name implies, a game where multiple players can play with each other. Usually there are two ways that could be used to play a multiplayer game. The first option is to play through LAN, this is where many different
players connect to the same local network. This usually means that the players play in the same room. The other option is to connect to other players through the internet (Falkner, 2007). It is online that many players form clans, a form of online team and both compete and engage in conversations with other players. You could liken a clan to a sports team but the difference is that the clans engage in social interactions through the internet and are limited by the format. The social interactions are made through the screens instead of face to face (Falkner, 2007).

3.4 Gee – Experience and its Importance

Gee (2007) is a researcher that has focused on a relatively new area of research, video games and what they can teach us about learning and literacy. One of the many areas that his research considers is the notion of experience. The term experience is common in both video games circuits and in school environments. Simply put, experience is when a person encounters something and gets more and more familiarized with that thing. The person then applies past experiences to future predicaments and uses that knowledge to get past that obstacle or to try and understand eventual hinders. Gee (2007) argues that this is one way of looking at the process of problem solving. Humans have and store experiences to later make connections and associations to them when faced with a new scenario. One must also take into account that these experiences are not pure, but they are rather formed and shaped by the person in question’s own interests, values and goals (Gee, 2007).

Gee (2007) makes one interesting comparison between one of his encounters with the video game “Deus ex” and a scenario in a classroom environment. Before even playing the game, Gee (2007) picked up the instruction booklet for the game and tried to read it but could not understand it. He had no past experience of either the game or the world of “Deus ex” and could therefore not understand the contents of the instruction booklet. It was not until he gained sufficient experience by playing the game that he could grasp the contents of the booklet. By playing and encountering information in situation-specific terms in game, Gee (2007) could tie the relationships of the in-game information to hundreds of other pieces of information found in the booklet. The relationships between the different pieces of information allowed him to him to at last use the information inside the booklet in a meaningful way (Gee, 2007).

Gee (2007) argues that a scenario that is similar to his encounter with the booklet is something that students face in school on a regular basis. Schools demand more and more from their students, but are at the same time unable to create meaningful
experiences that the students can tie to the language of school, that sometimes are encountered in instructions for school assignments. Phrases in textbooks could become a source of frustration without proper instructions on how to perceive and associate them (Gee, 2007).

3.5 Wardhaugh - Speech Communities
A useful term when discussing gamers’ language is the term speech communities. The term is used to describe a group of people and the way that they use language to communicate. One community could be people who are English or American and how both those groups varies in their language use. It is impossible to try and make a “true” definitive of a speech community since language can be extremely varied from people to people even though they are included in the same speech community. The group can be brought together by many different reasons, such as religious, political, or cultural reasons. There should also be at least two people who are part of these communities and these individuals can belong to multiple speech communities (Wardhaugh, 2006).

Speech communities are also tied to both identity and social norms in the group of people. The people who identifies strongly with their speech community is more likely to use the language variations of that community (Wardhaugh, 2006). The norms on the other hand can shape the way that the members choose to speak and use the language inside the speech community (Wardhaugh, 2006).

4. Result
The results presented here will be based on the participants’ answers the questionnaire. Only relevant information has been accounted for, answers that felt out of place or lacking in any real value to the results have been left out of this section. The results are also based of 22 participants’ answers instead of the originally planned 30 participants’ answers. The reason for this is because of sick students who could not attend school.

4.1 Hours of Gameplay
A large part of the participants answered that they play more than 10 hours of games a week. The exact percent of both participants who play more and less than 10 hours can be seen in the diagram.
The statistic show that 76% of the participants play for more than 10 hours a week while 24% play less than 10 hours. A great deal of spare time is put on gaming for a majority of the students. A few participants also gave a more detailed description of their gaming habits, the most extreme of players stated that he or she puts around 65 hours a week into gaming. The participants who answered that they play less than 10 hours a week were also more inclined to believe that gaming can’t help a person improve their language. Instead they only perceive it as a form of entertainment.

4.2 Preferred Genre of Games
The participants have answered that they mostly enjoy playing a variety of four different genres of games. These are; first person shooters, massive online battle arena games, role playing games and sports games like FIFA football or NHL hockey. No participants answered that they prefer game genres like puzzle, adventure or racing games. The preferred game genres are also somewhat tied to multiplayer games with a social element to them which forces the players to interact and speak with the other gamers who play.

4.3 Conversations in English with Other Players
A clear majority of the participants answered that they engaged in conversations with other gamers online during online gaming sessions. The diagram illustrates the results gathered from this question;
4.4 Conversation Topics During Gaming

Almost all of the participants who engage in online conversations during gaming stated that the conversations that occur during gameplay are centered around the game that they are playing. Game strategies and warnings to other players are what is discussed during these conversations since they help the players achieve success in their games. The genre of the game that the participants play does only make a small difference when it comes to the depth of the conversations. Online roleplaying gaming can require more in-depth planning than what a first-person shooter does since the time needed to reach a goal could be far longer than in an action game.

Only one participant stated that he or she speaks about other topics than the game at hand. In this case, this person stated that the conversations could lead to discussions about “random” things. The topics change depending on the people who are engaged in the conversation.

4.5 Gaming Related Words and Phrases

When the participants were asked if there is something that could be called a gamer language, many answered that they did indeed believe that but few could describe what it was. Two participants answered that they believe that a key factor to gaming language is the way that the gamers use shortened forms of sentences and mold them into a single word. The results somewhat confirm this statement since many of the words that the participants stated as examples are acronyms. Some of these words are; “IDK” (I don’t know), “AFK” (Away from keyboard), “BRB” (Be right back) and “GG” (Good
There are also more common words that are used, but given a new meaning, two of the examples of these words are; “Toxic”, which is used to describe an online session that is hostile, racist or annoying in tone, and “Camping”, which is when a player sits still for a long period of time in an action game. There is also one example of a new word; “NOOB”, which is used to describe someone who is new to a game.

64% of the participants answered that there is a thing called gaming language, while 23% answered that there is no such thing. There was also a small part of participants who did not answer this question, 13 % to be precise.

The question regarding if there are words and phrases that the participants have learned through gaming that could be useful in a school environment was mostly answered with a positive response. 82% believe that gaming has bestowed them with words and phrases that they can use in school assignment while 18% did not share this belief. Although many students believed that they could use words learned through games in school, there were no instances of actual examples of words or phrases that they have learned and actively use in the classroom. The closest thing to an example that a participant wrote is that this individual believed that games can teach the player more complex words than what the teachers normally offer. According to this individual, the language that schools teach their students is far more basic than the language that games portray. If this person referred to the in-game language or the conversations that could happen with other online players is unclear.

4.6 Preferred Situation to Use Spoken English
The most common place that the majority of the participants felt comfortable speaking English was during online gaming sessions. A majority of the participants felt that gaming sessions offered a more secure place to practice their second language. Several of the participants stated that they felt this way because of the lack of pressure online. Classmates and teachers are not anonymous participants of the conversations in classroom discussions and can therefore judge and point out errors in language. The students state that no one cares if you are good or bad at English online, which creates an inviting atmosphere no matter language skill. The fact that they will never meet the person that they are speaking to in real life also contribute to the feeling of security when speaking English online.
4.7 Games as a Learning Tool for Second Language

At the last question, many of the participants stated that they felt that they had become better English speakers because of video and computer games. The statistics shows how many participants who felt that gaming has helped improve their second language and how many who do not share this view:

![Graph showing the percentage of students who feel gaming has improved their English skills.]

82% of the students who answered felt that they had been able to become better English users as a result of the games and the people that they have spoken to online. Both pronunciation, speech flow and spelling are things that the participants state as things that have improved because of their interaction with games and related media. Meanwhile the 18% who indicate that games do not help language development have not given any indications that they believe that games are helpful in any way when it comes to language development.

5. Discussion

5.1 Attitudes Towards Language

The questionnaire produced a lot of interesting and sometimes surprising results. Language learning and online gaming seem to be closely associated for these students. For many it seems like the online world has become the main source of language learning outside of school. In some cases, maybe even more so than school in their opinion, even though the vocabulary that they are explicitly aware of learning is mainly acronyms. A safe haven to practice language without the need for anxiety or rules seems to be one way of describing online gaming, at least if we look at the answers presented.
in the results. So what do teachers learn from these results and how can they apply it to their teachings?

One of the most important things that was answered with the questionnaire was that a majority of the asked students felt more comfortable speaking English while playing online than in the classroom. Prejudices from classmates and the fear of being wrong seems to be some of the bigger factors to why the students feels the way that they do. The online world seems to guard them from these things since no one knows who they are and can not fault them for their language use. One of the asked students described the use of language online as a place where no one cares since no one knows who the other part is. Anonymity can apparently be a relief for people, but it can also come with its own set of limitations when it comes to language learning and use. As Gass and Selinker (2013) stated in their research, sometimes anxiety can work as a motivation for language learning since the speaker becomes aware of their own faults and try to avoid it. But through anonymity, the anxiety could be missing and some individuals might stop their developing their language since there is nothing online that pushes them to improve their own language.

There is also the notion of experience to acknowledge in regards to these results. The majority of the students that answered the questions said that they spend more than 10 hours a week playing video games. That is a lot of hours and something that a school can not compete with in terms of time. These students have a total of three hours of English each week, which gives them a very limited time to practice and gain experience in the classroom if we compare it to the hours they can amass while playing games. More hours mean more experience that they can use to understand the tasks at hand. Classroom activities tends to change format to accommodate for the different parts of the second langue education, like speaking, writing or reading. Games on the other hand, tends to follow a straighter path when it comes to format. The game that you buy is what you get, the activities a player can do inside of a game seldom change or adapt to fit different players’ needs. The classroom offers the students the ability to adapt to and experience many different aspects of a language for a period of time, while games offers one language experience for a long period of time.

It is rare that an assignment in an English course lasts for more than 10 hours, but that is not the case for online games. Gee (2007) writes that it is common for many people to feel uncomfortable when they have to engage in activities that they lack experience in (Gee, 2007). If we look at the time that the average gamer spends online and compare that with their time in school, then it is not hard to see which one of the
topics that they have the most experience with and therefore feel most comfortable with. Unfortunately, time is a limited resource in a school environment. In order to gain experience, a person needs to put time and effort into what that individual is trying to learn. When time is in short supply, a compromise must be done to give the students some chance to try out different aspects of a second language. But in doing so, students might be forced into situations where they do not understand the task at hand because of insufficient experience.

While the given time that the teachers are given might be something that is hard to change, there might be other things that could be done. The research that Gee (2007) present regarding meaningful experiences in his encounters with the “Deus ex” game could be useful in teaching of vocabulary and understanding of meaning. The students need to have meaningful experiences with language to understand and actively use them effectively (Gee, 2007). This meaningful experiences seem to be something that many of the participants have encountered through the games they play. Many of the participants have presented gaming related vocabulary and seem to have a grasp of how to use them effectively inside their speech communities because of the meaningful experiences they have encountered when playing online. Perhaps teachers could use this in their education to expand their students’ vocabulary. While the capabilities of online gaming’s ability to teach second language effectively is limited, the single-player components are not. Instead, the language that is presented in these components is often very well written and correct. It is probably the single-player components that can help to improve the students’ language through context based language encounters in game and to combine the positive attitude towards learning in gaming with the education in schools.

A school environment should be welcoming and secure for all students. If the games give them a better sense of secure language learning than what the schools do, then it is time to reflect. Perhaps teachers in schools needs to reevaluate their approach to teaching in order to offer better education for a new generation that have grown up with technology by their side. Especially when a teacher and a classroom cannot offer some of the possibilities that the internet can (Gass & Selinker, 2013). If classroom learning is as limited as Gass and Selinker (2013) suggests, then teachers needs to become better at combining more traditional learning with new ways of language learning like the one that games can offer.

The online gaming world also offer something that is very hard for schools to copy or even offer the students. Through the games, the players engage in
conversations with people from all over the world. These people come from different backgrounds, a background that will be reflected in the way that they speak. Variations in pronunciations, dialects and even use of words in different situations will arise in the online sphere, but this seldom happens in school. Once the students get to know the teacher and their fellow classmates, the languages variations in that community becomes known to them and stops being something new and exciting. In that way, games can help create a source of language variation that schools cannot. Games could in a way prepare the players for the globalized world of today. This might also be one of the reasons for why the participants prefer speaking English online rather than in school.

5.2 Gaming Language and How it is Used in School

The two most important aspects that the questionnaire answered in regards to how gamers use language inside their speech community are how the conversations are shaped by the games and the vocabulary that is used during gaming. The information provided by the participants’ answers can give a glimpse of how gamers use language, but far from the whole picture. This study is basically too small in scale to engineer any larger generalizations, but it allows for a peek behind the curtain on the topic and indicates conclusion to why the students have answered in the way that they did.

The dominating topic that the participants discussed while playing comes as no surprise; the gamers focus their conversations on gaming related topics like strategies. This would support the description of multiplayer games that Falkner (2007) presents in her research. Like in any kind of competitive activity, the players need to strategize in order to win. But what does this choice of conversation topic say about the gamers use of language inside their speech community? Firstly, a focus on one topic would create conversations that are fairly limited in variation and use outside of gaming. As an example, the game Battlefield 1 is one of the most popular online games in the US at the moment of writing (Pereira, 2016). The game is set during the first world war and contains a variety of game modes. Even though one could argue that Battlefield 1 could offer a lot more in terms of conversation topics if compared to games with fictional settings and not historical, it’s still a game with a limited array of content. The core of the games does not change, but the activities during lessons do. Therefore, the amount of language that could be learned while playing online is limited, even though they can offer the gamers more depictions of dialects and variations in pronunciation than what a teacher can do in a classroom setting.
This also means that the language that the gamers learn from online gaming conversations is restricted in its use outside of the gaming world. The phrases that were written by the participants in their answers to questions 5 and 7 of the questionnaire are words that do not fit into the more academic work that are conducted in school. Mostly, the words that are gained through gaming are two things; shortened variations of sentences and closely associated with gaming. Phrases like “AFK” (away from keyboard) or “GG” (good games) are highly functional inside the speech community of gamers, but hold little value outside of the community.

That’s not to say that the students don’t try to use these “gamer words” outside of their communities. Some of the answers that were handed in were written with gaming influenced language. It is therefore important that teachers use the gaming language as an example in English teachings. The teachers must explain why it shouldn’t be used in school assignments and what distinguishes the gaming language from the academic language and incorporated into everyday language teachings. If it is not included, unnecessary anxiety could arise that hinders the students’ language development. The language experience that they have amassed in their games could be perceived as correct by the gamers and will continue to be perceived as such until they are told otherwise.

The results of the questionnaire also seem to contradict the research that Gass and Selinker (2013) presents regarding how students pick up language errors from other individuals. Many of the participants answered that they do indeed use phrases that originated in gaming circuits. This would imply that the gamers have learned these words and phrases from gaming and use them even though they are not grammatically correct, but part of a speech community variety. The sense of right or wrong that Gass & Selinker (2013) mentions can therefore not be applied to this situation since the variation of language that Gass and Selinker (2013) bases their research on is classroom language, a variation that is very different from gamer language. While the language that schools teach their students is perceived as correct by society, gaming language is not. Gaming language is instead “correct” inside of the players’ speech community and is not perceived as errors to them. In a way, these individuals both pick up errors from each other while they at the same time don’t, depending on the situation that they use these errors in.
5.3 Incorporation of Gaming Language into Formal English in School

What is clear from the results is that the majority of students who answered the questionnaire believe that language in games influences their way of both learning and using English in the classroom. 82% believe that they use words gained through gaming in the classroom and the same percentage of people believe that they have become better English users as a result of their exposure of gaming related language. At the same time, it is hard to draw any conclusion regarding if they incorporate the gaming variety of English into their school language since there were no real examples of words learned through gaming presented in the participants answers.

Instead, a small insight into the mindset of a few students was provided. Their reasoning in regards to the mixing of the two language variations showed that a few of the students were aware that gaming language is something that should not be included into school assignments. One student stated that gaming language is very tied to gaming and does not fit into any other context than those kinds of forums. The students also believe that the language inside the speech community of gamers is created to be quick and short, which does not always produce the best communication results, especially not in school assignments.

6. Conclusion and Further Studies

The results of the research conducted with this paper have varied in their ability to shed some lights on the different aspects that I have tried to study. While the questionnaire answered a lot and presented some compelling information, it is still not enough to paint a clear picture of how gaming and school language compares and are connected to each other. Instead, this is just the first step on a long road to comprehend something that seems to become more and more common with the advancement of computer technology.

However, the results have allowed me to draw some conclusions in regards to the gathered material. First and foremost, the attitude that the participating students feel regarding language use in gaming and school is something that teachers should start to take into consideration when creating their lesson plans. A majority of students have shown that they feel more comfortable practicing English with complete strangers instead of classmates and teachers. This seems to point towards the need for teachers and schools to rethink and reimagine the way that English studies are done. A school should provide an environment that encourages and provides learning that all students can feel comfortable and safe to take part of. This does not seem to be the way
that things works at the moment.

The second conclusion that can be made from the results is that online games in some capacity influence the way that many students learn and practice English. Even though some participants answered that the phrases used by gamers do not have a place in school assignments, a majority still answered that they have improved their English by playing games. Further studies could focus on what kind of linguistic features students pick up from games since the questionnaire in this paper was more general in nature. Because of this general approach to the questions, a more in depth look into what the students feel that they gain linguistically from the games that they play is underrepresented in the results. It is important information that is needed if a more welcoming and adapted study plan is to be created.

More time, more personalized interviews with students and field studies will be needed if a more in depth result is to be achieved regarding online gaming and second language learning. My research has been somewhat limited by the amount of time that I had to complete this. Still, there is a lot of relevant data that was collected in a short amount of time. This proves that there is a lot to discover about this subject. Gaming is one of the biggest entertainment medias in the world right now (Correa, 2013), and according to the results of the questionnaire it seems like it is a big part of many teenagers lives and identities. Because of this, it will influence these individuals’ language, which is why it is so important to learn more and implement the knowledge gained into the students’ second language education.
7. References


