

“Just spilled a whole cup of Fanta on my carpet gg”: The Usage and the Implications of the Gaming Term gg Outside of Video Games

Bachelor's thesis
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English
Spring 2020

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistis-yhteiskuntatieteellinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kieli- ja viestintätieteiden laitos
Tekijä – Author Ellinoora Hytönen	
Työn nimi – Title “Just spilled a whole cup of Fanta on my carpet gg”: The Usage and the Implications of the Gaming Term <i>gg</i> Outside of Video Games	
Oppiaine – Subject Englanti	Työn laji – Level Kandidaatintutkielma
Aika – Month and year Huhtikuu 2021	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 23
Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Videopelit ja niiden suosio ovat jatkuvassa kasvussa koko maailmassa ja niiden vaikutus näkyy jo useassa eri mediassa. Näin niiden vaikutus nykyään näkyy myös siinä, kuinka käytämme kieltämme. Tämä vaikutus korostuu erityisesti keskusteluissa videopelien yhteydessä, mutta näissä yhteisöissä syntyneet sanat ja termit ovat myös leviämässä niin arkiseen vuorovaikutukseen kuin internet keskustelupalstoille.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on tutkia miten ja kuinka paljon pelitermistöä käytetään sosiaalisessa mediassa. Tarkemmin sanottuna tämä tutkimus keskittyy tutkimaan pelitermistön merkitystä videopelien ulkopuolella ja sitä, onko termejä käytetty samalla tavalla kuin itse videopeleissä. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan yhden pelitermin, <i>gg</i> (‘hyvä peli’), avulla. Aineistona tutkimuksessa on julkisista tviiteistä kerätty otos k.o. termin käytöstä. Tämä aineisto kerättiin lyhyeltä aikaväliltä, jottei ajan tuomia muutoksia näkyisi tuloksissa. Ensiksi data jaettiin kahteen osioon: sen mukaan käytettiinkö termiä pelikontekstissa vai muissa konteksteissa. Seuraavaksi tarkasteltiin yksityiskohtaisemmin tämän pelitermin käyttötapoja pelikontekstin ulkopuolella, jakamalla ne teemoittain niiden eri merkityksien mukaan. Merkityksien ymmärtämisessä konteksti oli tärkeässä osassa. Lisäksi tutkimus hyödynsi temaattista analyysia.</p> <p>Tutkimus osoitti, että pelitermistöä käytetään runsaasti videopelien ulkopuolella Twitterissä. Tämän lisäksi termiä käytettiin monipuolisesti, ja aineistosta nousi esiin useita eri merkityksiä, joita sillä ilmaistiin. Näistä merkityksistä usea vaikuttaa olevan termille ominainen vain videopelien ulkopuolella, joten pääteltävissä on se, että pelitermistö sopeutuu ja muokkautuu sen käyttöympäristön vaikutuksesta. Tässä tapauksessa pelitermi on omaksunut uusia eri merkityksiä. Vaikka tutkimus keskittyi vain yhteen pelisanaston termiin, voi tuloksia hyödyntää pelisanaston jatkotutkimuksen suunnittelussa. Tulokset myös osoittavat, että pelitermien tutkimuksen saralta löytyy vielä kosolti tutkittavaa.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords English, video games, pragmatics, thematic analysis, semantic shift, Twitter, videopelit, pragmatiikka,	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository JYX	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	3
2 BACKGROUND THEORY	5
2.1 Meaning of words.....	5
2.1.1 Context and meaning	5
2.1.2 Semantic change	6
2.2 Gaming language.....	7
2.3 Previous research on gaming language and Twitter.....	9
3 PRESENT STUDY	12
3.1 Research aim and questions	12
3.2 Data collection.....	12
3.3 Analytic methods.....	13
4 ANALYSIS	15
4.1 The quantity of <i>gg</i> uses outside of gaming context in the data sample.....	15
4.2 The many meanings of <i>gg</i> outside of the gaming context.....	16
4.2.1 Positive meanings of <i>gg</i>	16
4.2.2 Negative meanings of <i>gg</i>	19
4.2.3 Other meanings of the term <i>gg</i>	21
5 CONCLUSION.....	23
BIBLIOGRAPHY	25

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Wolf (2012: 11), little is known about the history of video games. Regardless of this, video games are one of the biggest industries nowadays; they gain billions of U.S. dollars yearly in western countries alone (Statista Research Department 2021). Nowadays we also have eSports, events where talented video game players, also known as gamers, compete against each other in various platforms and types of gameplay. In addition, video games have gained popularity in other media, and references to them can be heard and seen in music, movies, news, social media and even schools (Duke 2014: XIV). As a consequence, video games appear in our daily conversations, and they have become the subject of various studies in different fields. They have been studied in linguistics, too, and the focus has often been on how video games could be used for language learning, or on how people communicate within and around them (Sierra 2016). Nonetheless, there is yet more to study, especially because video games' popularity has caused effects on how some people use language as well.

The present study seeks to investigate how video game related vocabulary is used outside of video games. This it does by studying how much gaming language is used within social media, and what those terms mean in those different contexts. However, due to the limited scope of this study, only one term is the focus. This term is *gg*, sometimes written as *GG*, which was created within multiplayer video games where multiple people can play the same game simultaneously. The gaming term *gg* is an abbreviation of the utterance *good game* and it is usually used within multiplayer video games after a match has ended to indicate that the played game was either good or fair (Urban Dictionary). However, the description of the word in Urban Dictionary already includes another way of using the same term: it can also be used to insult other players. This term is also frequently used outside of video games, and as confirmed by my own experience with the term, in those cases the meanings conveyed are often quite different. This notion, and the conviction that video games should be studied more for their popularity in today's society, persuaded me to embark on this research.

The gaming term *gg* was chosen from gaming language as a focus in this study not only due to its familiarity to me, but also for its popularity online. Thus, the aim of this study is to look into how often gaming language is used outside the context of video games in social media, and what meanings or implications the term has in those other contexts, especially on Twitter. The present study focuses on the use of the term in social media, thanks to the accessibility of online data and to the frequency of the use of gaming language online. The decision to collect data from Twitter was done for being able to collect the data from a certain platform, and not from the internet overall as that data might

have included news et cetera, which would not represent natural language online. Further, the meanings of the uses of *gg* are analyzed thematically, so that the different meanings of the term will be categorized on the basis of whether they are associated with a particular theme, surrounding discourse thus having a central role in the analysis. This study offers an overview of the various meanings of the term *gg* outside of the gaming context, while also providing numerical information on how often it is used within the data. Despite the fact that this study will not be able to analyze the diverse meanings of the term thoroughly, it can nevertheless offer an insight into how gaming vocabulary is used. Consequently, the present study demonstrates that there is yet much to study about linguistics and video games.

The following section will present the background theory for the present study, while also discussing some previous research on this subject. After this, I will move onto explain the methodology of the present study, i.e. its aims, research questions, data collection and analytic methods in more detail. The analysis of the data follows this section, presenting and discussing the findings with examples. The last section, conclusion, discusses the findings and evaluates the present study.

2 BACKGROUND THEORY

This section offers an insight into both the background theory and the previous research in gaming vocabulary. First, the importance of context in language use and meaning is briefly discussed. This part is followed by examining language change, why and how it happens and what it means for this present study. After this the text moves onto explaining gaming language and its features. Finally, the text examines previous research done on meaning making within Twitter and the use of gaming language outside of both video games' communities and platforms.

2.1 Meaning of words

There are different ways of understanding words. However, context is fundamental in many instances, especially when a word has many meanings. Meanings are not permanent either, and they can change sometimes rapidly and other times over many years. In this section, both the context in meaning making and the changing of meanings are discussed, as they are crucial for understanding the topic this study seeks to research.

2.1.1 Context and meaning

Many everyday words have multiple meanings, and thus they are being used in various ways within sentences, gaining their meaning from the surrounding discourse (Mitra, Mitra, Riedl, Biemann, Mukherjee and Goyal 2014). Therefore, context is essential for understanding the meaning a word takes when it is used (Stubbs 2001). Words are rarely used alone, and consequently people understand the meaning by the encircling discourse and context (Stubbs 2001). Van Dijk (2008: 16-18) describes contexts as participant constructs, unique experiences, mental models, experience models, socially based and planned. By this he means that context is frequently built by individuals' own experiences of the world, culture, and language. Van Dijk (2008) notes that context controls discourse production and comprehension, additionally shaping the way we speak. For example, in a job interview people usually try to act polite and adjust their language and vocabulary to suit that situation, whereas using this vocabulary and language between friends would be considered odd. Briefly, context is the surrounding discourse, topic and environment in which language is used, shaping its use.

When we study the meaning of language, for instance the meaning behind certain words, it is no wonder why context plays an important role. Indeed, Requejo (2007: 169) notes that context should come first when studying languages, and Mitra et al. (2014) agree with this statement, adding that context has an important role in creating word senses. Requejo (2007: 173) demonstrates these

statements by presenting an example with the word *black*. This word is usually associated with darkness and used to represent a dark color. However, sometimes the word *black* is used to indicate something cool, as in the example sentence presented by Requejo (2007: 173) “Aqua Blue Crush. A first glimpse at ‘the new black’”. In this example, the word *black* carries the implication of fashionable, and this meaning is further justified with the photo the sentence appears with, as it is a woman on a catwalk. Furthermore, Ensslin (2012: 65) highlights that words are often metaphorical, not literal, and this is well demonstrated in the previous example as well. Thus, there are different kinds of meanings, such as connotational, symbolic, and pragmatic meanings, in which meaning is implied outside of literal meanings, alike in the example presented earlier (Wiana 2019: 56).

This section explained what is meant by context in language use, while also explaining its importance in meaning making. The previously discussed theory also mentions possible errors that might occur in the process, such as one’s personal experience with the language which affects the comprehension of various words and utterances. Due to this, people might understand the same utterance differently. The next section will further deepen the understanding of the theory behind lexical meaning, and how they change over time.

2.1.2 Semantic change

Vocabulary can change in many ways. Some words change in meaning, some in-topic co-occurrences, spelling, or in their distribution (Mihalcea and Nastase 2012: 259). However, for this study only the theory of change in words' meaning is relevant. This change can occur in several ways, a few of them being word birthing a whole new meaning, or one meaning splitting into two or more similar meanings (Mitra et al. 2014). Birthing a new meaning signifies that the new, birthed meaning is completely different from the original meaning. For instance, the word *sick* is usually understood as being ill. However, it has recently gained the meaning of something being cool or crazy (Mitra et al. 2014). In contrast, when a word meaning splits into two or more meanings, these new meanings usually have some sort of similarity, or are related to the original meaning (Mitra et al. 2014). However, neither of these mean that the original meaning is necessarily lost, as it usually remains in use for long periods of time. Ensslin (2012: 73) suggests a third way of creating new meanings, and this is by functional shifts within which the grammatical function of a word changes, for instance from a noun to an adverb. This can be seen in an example of the word *back*, whose basic meaning is the human’s back, but which can nowadays be used to describe the backside of something. This kind of shift is also called grammaticalization (Riemer 2012: 373). Besides these ways of changes of word meaning, according to Riemer (2012), a word can change through specialization, in which the

references are narrowed, generalization, in which the opposite occurs, and the meaning broadens. Additionally, a word meaning can change from a positive to a negative one, or the other way around (Riemer 2012).

Ensslin (2012) names changes of meanings semantic shifts. They occur both naturally, but usually the change occurs by the influence of people. Cunha, Magno, Comarela, Almeida, Gonçalves and Benevenuto (2011: 59) propose that new meanings are innovations, which usually are created by a single speaker. They suggest that these innovations are introduced to other members of the same speech community, who then either accept or reject it by using it or not. Therefore, new words are introduced by some speakers and then adopted by others, usually within a same speech community (Cooper 1979: 25). In order to this adaptation to occur, the adapters need to be aware of the term, evaluate the term, know how to use the invention, and eventually use it in their own vocabulary (Cooper 1979: 29). Usually new words or meanings have a few features in common: they are created and used in specific situations, so only a handful of people know them, and they tend to not be used long enough to get recorded (Cunga et al. 2011: 61). This indicates that new inventions are created and used frequently; however, not many of them are used for long periods of time. In the case of *gg*, the term was created and used within the video game community, from which speakers have started to use the expression outside of video games as well. Whether or not all the people who use it know its origin is not known, yet it is likely that people outside of video game activities have also adapted the term *gg*, especially with the internet where information can be spread quickly.

Language and therefore vocabulary are constantly changing in meaning. This change is natural; however, it is still being influenced by the users of the language. Now that the meaning construction within context and the change of those meanings through meaning have been discussed, the next section will move onto describing how gaming language is created and used. This is important, as this specific type of language is the key interest of the present study.

2.2 Gaming language

Video games, their creators and communities of fans have created various words, and sometimes even new languages specific to the video games' worlds (Portnow 2011: 137). The language game developers and players create is also called a gaming language. This language creation is no surprise, because Duke (2014: 82) claims that video games have a purpose of establishing discussions and increasing communication between participants of gaming groups. Even though the term gaming language is used, in reality this language is closer to a slang as the vocabulary is used mostly by

certain groups of people, in this situation the players of video games (Ensslin 2012: 66). However, Portnow (2011: 135) argues that digital games generate various dialects, rather than slangs as he proposes gaming language being more than mere words. Duke (2014: 70) agrees with Portnow, however going further by stating that some video games have a game-specific vocabulary which is not understandable for people without gaming experience, creating a gaming jargon as a consequence. Ensslin (2012: 66-69) agrees to some degree that video game developers' language might not be understood by regular people, as it involves coding and technological vocabulary. However, she states that gaming language is in no way formal, and usually used for fun. Thus, gaming language is more like social communication, which justifies its definition as a slang (Ensslin 2012: 69). When speaking of gaming language as a slang, it is important to note that the vocabulary of the slang can vary from game to game, since there are great differences between them and their communities. The characteristics of this slang, gaming language, are discussed next.

Common to other jargons and slangs, gaming language has its own set of vocabulary. Often these words are created by the game developers, who implement such words to their video games, but sometimes they are also created by the players. The formation processes of this vocabulary are thus diverse, and Ensslin (2012: 69-70) lists and explains these formations processes as follows: composites, shifts in meaning, shortenings, loan words, blends, new creations, and initialism. Composites are combinations of two or more already existing words acquiring a new meaning, for example *gameplay*, whereas blends combine two or more words into one word by taking something away from both origin words, as in *spork* where both the words *spoon* and *fork* are fused. Shifts, in turn, are words that go through a change in meaning, the word preserving its external shape, for instance the word *sick* described in the section 2.1.2. When shortening occurs, a part of a word is deleted, for example the word *info* is part of the word *information*, whereas in initialism everything but the initials of lexemes are removed, which way the studied term *gg* was created from the utterance *good game*. Loan words are taken from another language, although some minor changes can be made to the appearance of the word. Lastly, new creations are completely new words created for a certain purpose. The use of initialism is common considering the popularity of MMORPGs, massively multiplayer online role-playing games, where many people can join to play the same game. This is because shorter words make writing and communicating faster within the game (Ensslin 2012: 70). Inside these games such communication is also necessary, generating a creative platform for languages to evolve in (Portnow 2011: 137), though many of newly created words only tend to emerge a few times (Cunga et al. 2011: 61).

Gaming language and vocabulary created for and from video games are often heavily game-related. This is because they frequently reference something within video games and their mechanics (Ensslin 2012). However, Ensslin (2012) indicates that the gaming language does not only consist of these games and their specific terminology, but it also includes a large number of superlatives, since commenting on one's favorite and the most disliked video games and their features is noticeably common within the video game community. She further proposes that gaming language is usually used in written form, thus consisting of abbreviations and generally brief utterances. However, this does not mean that gaming language only exists within games and in written forms. Even though the spoken gaming language is often used when playing video games, for example when playing with friends, or when talking about games with people who are interested in similar topics, it can also be used in everyday conversations with others, if they share similar interests and knowledge (Sierra 2016). Sierra (2016) observes that video games can be referenced even when talking about serious topics, such as being poor. This will be further discussed in section 2.3.

In sum, gaming language is a slang that creates many words and meanings which are used by the games themselves and their players. Even though gaming language is mostly used within video games, the same language can be used for discussing shared interests. It is common for video game vocabulary that it is characterized by the shortness of words. This enables faster communication within video games, something that is also common for online communication. Now that we have gained an understanding of words in context, changes in word meanings, and both the characteristics and creations of gaming language, previous research on gaming language and the study of meaning in Twitter is discussed. This is important because Twitter is the platform the data is collected from.

2.3 Previous research on gaming language and Twitter

Research on video games and their linguistics features is quite broad. Nonetheless, Sierra (2016) argues that linguistic research on video games has concentrated mostly on gendered cultural discourses of video games, how video games can be used in classroom settings, and how people interact linguistically within video games. However, other types of linguistic research on video games do exist. For example, Ensslin (2012: 78-80), through corpus-based methodologies studied what the most commonly used words in gaming magazines, chats, forums, and such are. She discovered that some of the most common words included the following: game, games, Halo, LOL, haha, hahaha, good, think and online. These findings do reveal that the words video game contexts prefer outside the video games themselves are quite short and informal, while also a considerable number of adjectives are used. However, it should be noted that this study was conducted almost ten years ago,

and thus are not quite up to date because video games and the internet have evolved greatly in that time.

Sierra's (2016) research demonstrates how video games are also connected to everyday conversations as references, usually within friend groups. The study was conducted by recording the researcher's friend group's discussions. What she noticed was that multiple video game references were made, even though the conversations were mostly about studying or paying the rent. Thus, video game vocabulary functions as an intertextual resource in managing relationships as well (Sierra 2016). Consequently, video game vocabulary also emerges in other discourse than within the gaming one. Additionally, Sierra (2016) discovered that references to video games were made when meeting new people, to lighten the mood and connect interests, making it easier to get acquainted with others. All the participants in the recorded conversations were familiar with the discussed games, though, which implies that such references could not be used with people unfamiliar with video games. Nonetheless, this study indicates that this specific vocabulary is used outside of video game activities, in addition to managing relationships.

Burgess and Matamoros-Fernández (2016) did a study on a gaming word *gamergate* and explored its surroundings. This research was conducted mostly on Twitter, the focus being on the role digital media platforms have in shaping public issues, and on how to study such phenomena. In their case, they conducted only a case study of this term for using their suggested methodology. Nonetheless, this study demonstrates that game-related words are indeed studied in the media, though they do not yet study how these words are used and what they mean. However, the meanings of vocabulary through context have been studied on Twitter, though with words outside of gaming language. For example, Zappavigna (2011) studied hashtags associated with the results of the US presidency election of 2008. The study was done through a thematic analysis which was done by separating sentences and words into different categories, on the basis of for instance attitudes, engagement, and graduation, emphasizing the importance of context in determining the meaning. Though not related to gaming language or terms, this study provides an effective way to analyze meaning online, specifically on Twitter. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that such studies exist and are being made.

Video games are nowadays more popular than ever, and the popularity does not seem to be decreasing anytime soon. This has led to the increasing popularity of study of video games: how they affect us, how we could use them and what we could learn from them. However, more research in the area of gaming language and vocabulary use outside of video game context is needed, especially because

playing video games is a popular activity, and thus they can shape the language usage greatly. Previous studies on gaming language and understanding meaning through context, especially on Twitter, have indicated that there is a need for further research in understanding gaming language better. The next section discusses the present study on the term *gg*, describing questions the study aims to answer, the data collection and its analytic methods.

3 PRESENT STUDY

This section introduces the present study. First the aims and research questions are explained. The following sections present and justify the data collection and chosen methodology for the analysis.

3.1 Research aim and questions

As the use of gaming language outside of the gaming contexts has not yet been researched much, this study aims to study if it is used online, more specifically on Twitter. On Twitter such language is common, because the user range is large, and the posts vary from mundane topics to politics. As a result, Twitter is a good data source for my study. Considering that gaming specific vocabulary is quite broad, this study focuses only on one term, which is *gg* (*good game*). The reason for this choice is the familiarity and popularity of the term. The aim in this study is, more specifically, to investigate how much the term *gg* is used outside of the gaming contexts for the purpose of understanding how much the word has spread in its use. Additionally, this study seeks to understand the term's meaning in those different contexts. As, outside the game context, the term cannot literally mean *good game*, this study seeks to understand the term's pragmatic meaning, and what its function is within its immediate discourse context. In multiplayer video games *gg* is usually used in a positive way, either stating the fairness and goodness of the ended game. However, it is also sometimes used sarcastically, even mockingly, between players (Urban Dictionary). Therefore, it is interesting to study if these same meanings exist in other settings, or if the term has gained new meanings. Therefore, to study these matters the present research questions are the following:

1. How often is *gg* used outside of video game context on Twitter?
2. What does *gg* imply when used outside of video games?

Due to the conciseness of this present study, the aim is to understand the diversity of the meanings of the gaming term outside of its original context. Thus, this study does not analyze in detail the meanings identified; however, these meanings are still described and explained in a concise way.

3.2 Data collection

The data were collected from Twitter. This is because Twitter is a fairly neutral platform due to its many uses and large user base. In this case, neutrality means that Twitter activities do not surround video games. If they did, the word *gg* would thus mostly be used when discussing video games in a way that would not most likely provide answers for my research questions. Furthermore, Twitter

contains a lot of conversation-like posts, which gives a good idea of how the term is used by people. Twitter messages can contain photos, videos and text which can include up to 140 characters; these are called tweets. Additionally, tweets can have hashtags which are used to link different topics together. In this study, I only focus on the written part of tweets.

Twitter is a useful source of data. However, the researcher has to consider the ethicality of doing so. Even though Twitter's own terms and conditions allow researchers to collect data from their platform, Ahmed, Bath and Demartini (2018) argue that the users of Twitter are not often conscious of the fact that their tweets are actually seen by everyone, and many feel uncomfortable about researchers using their tweets in their studies. Taking this into account, for every shown example in this study a consent was asked from the writers of those tweets.

The data were collected manually with the following criteria: the language used in tweets is English and the tweets had to either include the term *gg* or *#gg*, including some variations such as *GG*. Both writings and answers containing the term were also included as data. The tweets were posted recently, in the summer of 2020, which means that I can return to them if needed. However, for research economic reasons, I later decided to narrow my data to posts sent within one day. Hence, the data were collected during January of 2021, and saved on a Word-document.

As this study is only aiming to understand the usage of a particular gaming term *gg*, and as *gg* has other meanings, such as *girl group*, when collecting the data each occurrence was scrutinized to determine what *gg* means in each message. Since meaning making is dependent on the receiver of the message, some errors might have nevertheless occurred during this part of the analysis. The data sample consisted eventually of 121 tweets. My initial aim was to collect about one hundred tweets so there would be enough data to analyze; however, my plan also was not to collect too many, since every sentence had to be analyzed independently.

3.3 Analytic methods

For the purpose of answering the first research question, a simple calculation was made. The data was arranged within two categories, first of which includes tweets in which *gg* is used within the gaming context whereas in the second the term is used outside of it. On the basis of these numbers, the percentages of their use were calculated in order to see how much *gg* is used in different contexts. In addition, a basic chart was created. These results give an insight into how much *gg* is used in other contexts than its original context in social media.

For the purpose of understanding the pragmatic meanings of *gg*, and their possible variation, thematic analysis was chosen as the analysis method for two reasons. Firstly, it was used in a similar study done by Zappavigna (2011). Secondly, it provides a good basis for identifying and classifying the meanings of the term. As the name suggests, thematic analysis, TA, seeks to identify and describe patterns of meaning which then are separated into categories these themes represent (Joffe 2012: 209). From this further analysis can then be made, for instance by comparing frequencies, co-occurrences, and relationships (Guest 2012: 10). In addition, as highlighted by Guest (2012), in TA the researcher has an important role because they have to both interpret and categorize the meanings.

For this study, TA means separating the collected data first according to the term's context, on the basis of whether it is used inside or outside video game context, and then separately, by dividing the meanings into further categories. Before analyzing the data, two categories of positive endorsement and mocking were identified, because *gg* already has these meanings in gaming language (Urban Dictionary). However, after analyzing the data, nine different themes were needed for categorizing all the meanings and implications. After analyzing the data, some further categorizations were made on the basis of the data.

4 ANALYSIS

This section provides an analysis of the collected data to answer the set research questions. The first section looks at how much the word *gg* is used outside of the gaming context in the data sample from Twitter, providing a chart of their number, and observations on what they show of the distribution of the term *gg*. The next section focuses on analyzing the many implications of the use of the term outside of video game context.

4.1 The quantity of *gg* uses outside of gaming context in the data sample

The chart below displays the numbers of the usage of *gg* in both the gaming context, where it is used to comment on a played game, and other contexts in the data sample. The findings are discussed more after the chart.

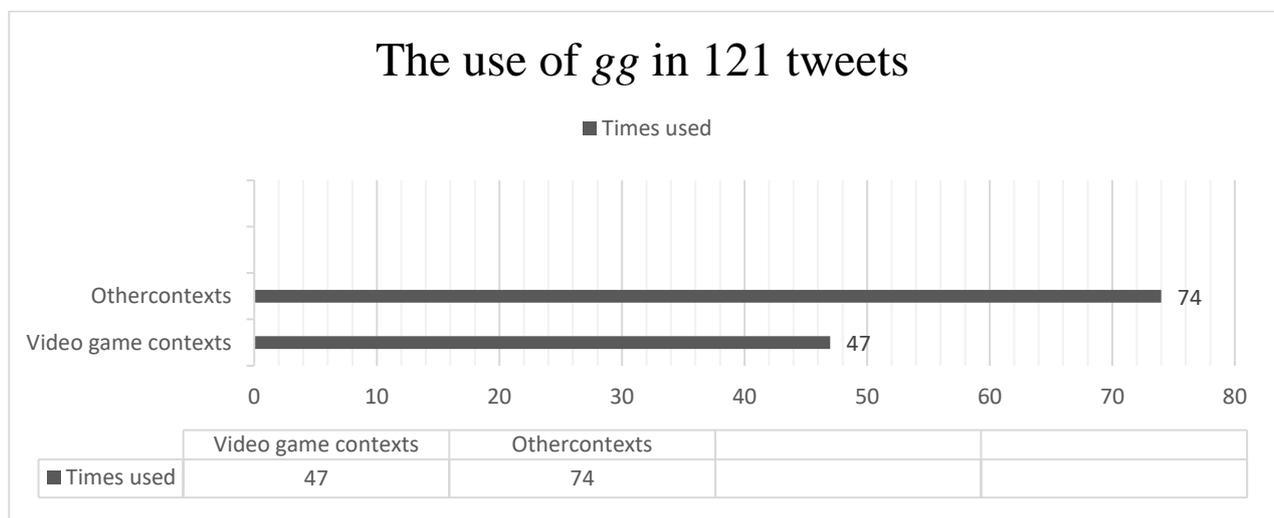


Figure 1: The use of *gg* in different contexts

In total the collected data contains 121 tweets. Contrary to my initial idea, the term *gg* was used more frequently outside of the video game context. Within these contexts the term was used 74 times out of the total number of samples. Within the gaming context, the term was used 47 times. Consequently, in the data sample *gg* was used 61% of the time in other contexts than video games, which leaves the original use of the term to 39%. Thus, from the data sample it can be concluded that within Twitter the term *gg* is more likely used to discuss matters outside of video games, though the latter is the context in which the term was created and used at first. This evidence would suggest that the gaming term has clearly spread outside of its original use.

Although these findings do not correspond to my hypothesis before collecting the data, there is a reason for these results. As a platform Twitter is quite different from video games, where the term *gg*

is used in a chat within a certain player group right after the end of a game. While it is possible to tweet instantaneously after such gaming events, this message should either be directed to someone specifically by using the tagging feature or be used as a comment on a game without much context. Although this is possible, and in the data sample it is indeed done multiple times, using *gg* this way can be impractical as the message might not reach the players within the played game, thus making the communication one-sided. Additionally, within the video game context, the term *gg* is usually used in two ways, to indicate solidarity or mockingly. This variation of meaning provides more options for using the term even without games. Therefore, when using *gg* in other ways, there are more possibilities for its usage, due to the various meanings it can convey.

In sum, the results show that the gaming term *gg* is used quite often. Indeed, the gaming term is used more frequently outside of video game context than within it in the data sample collected from Twitter. This is most likely due to the many functions the term can have outside of video games. The next section presents and discusses these different pragmatic meanings that the term can have.

4.2 The many meanings of *gg* outside of the gaming context

This section will discuss and present examples from the data sample of the various meanings of the gaming term *gg* outside of the gaming context. Many of these meanings are characteristic for the term *gg* inside the gaming context as well. However, others seem to only be present when used outside of video games. Overall, multiple meanings were identified, and often the term was also used in a polysemic way. Additionally, this meaning could often be understood differently if, for instance, the emotions of the writer were apparent in other ways. The next sections describe these different meanings, starting with the more positive ones and following up with the more negative meanings it has. Next, meanings which does not fall into either of these categories will be presented. Due to the conciseness of the present study, this section cannot delve deep into every meaning identified. Despite this, this study offers an insight into the broad range of uses of the gaming term *gg* outside of video games. Furthermore, only the meanings are discussed. Nevertheless, it should be noted that more meanings were found in the data sample and thus it should be borne in mind that the gaming term has more meanings than the ones discussed in this study.

4.2.1 Positive meanings of *gg*

One of the various ways in which *gg* is used outside of video games is to show gratitude. This meaning was actually the most prominent one in the data sample, as it was used 16 times. However, this is to

be expected, as within the gaming context this is one of the meanings *gg* carries as well. This explains the term's usage in this way in other contexts, too. Example 1 illustrates this usage of the term:

Example 1

GG boys. Thanks for coming out today (Tweeter A)

Within this tweet *gg* expresses gratitude towards the people who were presumably in the writer's stream or held event. This becomes apparent on the basis of the content of the rest of the tweet ("Thanks for..."). Thus, the tweet includes two ways of expressing gratitude. Interestingly, this exact same sentence was used thirteen times in the data sample. This would suggest that there is an established phrase which includes the term *gg* outside of video games, and the phrase is used supposedly after streaming on a platform. Additionally, the term might be a sign of solidarity; this is due to its position before the word *boys*, and the phrase being used regularly, maybe even inside a certain group of people. This meaning was also apparent in other tweets, though within those messages the term was used similarly.

Another way of using *gg* in the data to convey a positive meaning was to praise someone, and this way of using the term was done eight times. Thus, the term can also serve as a way to express contentment of somebody's actions or doings. This meaning was also quite prominent in the data, which might be explained by that it is also used this way in the gaming context, though embedded in other meanings. Consequently, this meaning of *gg* seems to be clearer outside of the gaming context. The next tweet from the data sample demonstrates this meaning.

Example 2

Not sure when this happened, but GG @Twitch #BlackLivesMatter  (Tweeter B)

The emote at the end of the tweet represents three different colored fists aimed at the air. Twitch, to which this tweet was aimed at, is a streaming platform from which various content can be shared in real time. This platform also has its own sets of emotes, which vary from smiley faces to some certain people's faces. Assumably, this emote with three fists was added to that roster, and someone who had noticed it, indicated that adding it was a good thing to do in this tweet, especially when this topic was very relevant. Thus, the writer praised the platform for adding the emote with the term *gg*, and that it could replace other similar expressions, such as *good job*.

The third way of using *gg* positively in the data was to use it to congratulate someone. This meaning emerged in the data only four times. In the same ways as in Example 2, this meaning was also used within the gaming context, though evidently not very often. This would again explain why the same

meaning of *gg* appeared outside video games – it is easy to use in this way as the meaning already exists. The next tweet from the data sample is an example of using the term to congratulate someone of something.

Example 3

GG to all my friends hitting Affiliate 🥳❤️ freaking awesome sight to see 🙌 (Tweeter C)

In this tweet the writer was congratulating their friends for achieving something positive. Consequently, within this tweet the gaming term *gg* functioned as a word to congratulate other people, and it could presumably be replaced with other words such as *congratulations*.

The last positive meaning of *gg* is to express success. In the data this meaning was not prominent, as it was located in three tweets only. Within these tweets the gaming term *gg* was used to comment on something that had happened before, usually relating to something that the writer had achieved. Interestingly, this positive meaning of *gg* is the only one in the data sample that seems to only exist outside of gaming context. However, using the term to express success is somewhat logical: in the gaming context this term is used after something has ended, and so the term is used to indicate success in other contexts. In this instance *gg* commented on somebody's success, whereas in the gaming context it is used to imply other meanings. Thus, the shift in meaning is a subtle one and it possibly happened through specialization: the meaning has specialized from a broader meaning to something more specific (Riemer 2012). An example of a tweet where *gg* stands for a feeling of success is the following tweet:

Example 4

Finally found me a C920S, GG 🙌 (Tweeter D)

Gg in this sentence is an evaluation of the writer's achievement of finding a certain type of a web camera. Other words such as *finally* implies that this is something the writer had been trying to achieve for some while, and managing to do it had made them feel pleased. Thus, what they managed to do was a success, which the *gg* at the end verifies and represents.

In sum, in the data sample four main themes of positive meanings of the term *gg* were used outside of the gaming context: gratitude, praise, congratulation, and success. Most of these meanings are logical, because these meanings of the term are sometimes conveyed in the gaming context as well. When *gg* is used in relation to a video game, the term usually implies that a played game was either a good or fair one, which is something that one can be grateful for. Or the term can even be understood

as a praise – the game was good because some other players were skillful. Consequently, when using *gg* outside of the gaming context, it would make sense for the term to be used in a similar way to imply that some events were good. Additionally, one can react differently to those good events: one can be grateful, praiseful, or well-wishing. Sometimes the term is used to express success, too. Furthermore, when used positively, the term *gg* seems to function as a praise for events or people.

4.2.2 Negative meanings of *gg*

The gaming term *gg* is also used negatively outside of the gaming context. One of these uses is to insult someone. Using *gg* mockingly was found in six tweets, which makes this meaning quite common in the data. However, this was to be expected due to the fact that this meaning is quite prominent in the video game context as well. Within the data sample the term *gg* was used regularly to insult others, mostly companies or acquaintances. The Example 5 from the data indicates this type of use of the term.

Example 5

gg to my ex you downgraded i upgraded i don't take no Ls have fun with the
ugly mutt tho (Tweeter E)

The *L* in this tweet means losses, and *tho* is an abbreviation of the word *though*. The meaning of *gg* in this tweet is quite clear from the surrounding discourse: the tweet is rather malicious overall, as also indicated by words *ugly* and *mutt*. Because the message of the sentence is not positive in nature, *gg* cannot mean something being good, although the word *good* is included in the term. Thus, the term was used here to mock the person referred to in the tweet, the writer's ex-partner, as *gg* was aimed at them. Another way of analyzing the use of *gg* in this tweet is to see it as irony: whereas *gg* usually means *good game*, in this context it could mean *bad game*. What is meant by this is that the writer implies that the ex-partner had made a bad decision or a move from the writer's point of view, and this interpretation is not made in a kind manner. Thus, the term in this tweet works as an insult.

In the data sample *gg* was also used to express disappointment. However, this is not a common usage, as in the data the term was used to convey disappointment four times. Still, it is interesting that this meaning was present. This is because this meaning of *gg* seems to only exist outside of video games. While this is interesting, this implication is not very different from the other existing negative meanings of the term. Additionally, as discussed earlier, the term is used to praise others, and thus expressing disappointment is almost an opposite to that meaning. Instead of feeling positive of what someone has done, disappointment expresses that someone is not pleased of some doings. When the

term is used to indicate disappointment, *gg* is usually aimed directly at someone and at what they have done. An example is the following post:

Example 6

Also not surprising metacanada is still around. Canadian subreddit with some explicitly white supremacist mods. *gg* Reddit. (Tweeter F)

Gg in this tweet was aimed at a network called Reddit. The tweet itself was quite self-explanatory, as the writer explained how a discussion forum in the network is still used. However, the writer indicated that this is not a good thing, which led them to be disappointed with the network. This is what the *gg* in the tweet conveys. However, this particular usage could also be understood as an insult to the network. Nevertheless, the co-text implies that this event had been going on for a while, and while the writer expected this outcome, they were still disappointed in the network for not taking action to prevent the use of this discussion forum. Thus, the term *gg* functions as a remark of disappointment.

Frustration was also one of the meanings of *gg* identified in the data sample. To convey this meaning it was used four times. This use of the term outside of the gaming context is an expected one, because this is one of its meanings in the gaming context, too. Consequently, this makes the shift of meaning from one context to another logical. This implication was, however, quite ambivalent, as *gg* in these utterances could also convey other meanings. For instance, the term could have been used sarcastically, or the term could even make the message more positive by giving it a humorous tone. The next example from the data sample demonstrates this.

Example 7

Just spilled a whole cup of Fanta on my carpet *gg* (Tweeter G)

The situation described here is not a serious one; however, it resulted in a lost product and a mess. *Gg* at the end comments on this situation, which has already come to an end. What makes the *gg* stand for frustration becomes apparent on the basis of the co-text. For example, there are no emojis or positive words in the message which would describe the situation. This leads me to believe that the writer did not find the situation amusing. Another point that makes this meaning likely is that the writer itself had caused the situation. These factors lead me to believe that the gaming term in this tweet, and in a few other tweets, conveys frustration. Though the use of *gg* in this tweet mostly indicated annoyance, the term was also used quite sarcastically. Sarcasm, as described by Sanders (2013: 117), reverses a meaning of a said utterance. However, this is clearly done so that the hearer can interpret that the speaker did not entirely mean what they said (Sanders 2013). As the situation is not horrible in nature, the *gg* at the end of Example 7 could also imply that the writer used the term

to comment on himself, as though they had made a bad move. Thus, the meaning *good* in *gg* changes into *bad*. This actually seems to be the case whenever the term was used to mean something negative. Thus, *gg* can be used sarcastically as well, which was quite prominent in the data sample.

When *gg* was used in a negative tone it was used quite similarly in the data sample. Frequently the term was used to comment on an unfortunate event or occurrence, and the term's meaning was somewhat contrary to the literal meaning of *gg*. As the term means *good game*, when used negatively it takes a form of something being bad or undesirable instead. Thus, this way of using *gg* was done sarcastically at least to some degree. This is something that is common in the gaming context as well, which would also explain why *gg* is used in these ways outside of gaming context. Furthermore, sometimes the term can have more than one meaning in single use of *gg*, which makes its meaning unclear at times.

4.2.3 Other meanings of the term *gg*

Although *gg* was often aimed at someone and thus used prior to a reference to the addressee, it was also used to comment on events that had already occurred. Even though this term usually conveys some attitude towards the occurrence, sometimes it also refers to an ending, or to something that has come to an end. Within the data sample this meaning was quite prominent, and in total used 14 times. However, its prominence might be due to how it was often used to comment on news on Covid-19. Nevertheless, this meaning, though interesting, for its usage to be found only outside of the gaming context, using the term this way is logical. This is because inside video games and their surrounding context the term is almost always used after the game has ended. In the data sample, and outside of video games, this implication of an end is quite humorous to some degree, though. This is due to the lighthearted tone of these tweets. Although the term means the end of something, the situations are not serious in the data sample. The following tweets from the data sample demonstrate this meaning:

Example 8

Gg's boys. Nice knowing you all 🙏 (Tweeter H)

Example 9

Welp GG's boys looks like we boutta head out (Tweeter I)

Tweets such as Examples 8 and 9 were quite frequent in the data sample, and most of the messages commented on news about a virus with pandemic potential. The term in both of these sentences could be translated into something alike to “thank you for the ride” or “it has been great”, both of which are something that could be said when the end of something is near. Thus, *gg* indicates an end, and in

this context the end is caused by the possible pandemic, which has ceased the normal day-to-day activity to some degree. This reference to an end is humorous in tone, though, because nothing has suggested that the pandemic would really be the end of humanity, and quite many of the tweets included the use of various emojis. However, *gg* was also used to imply an ending in a more serious way. Example 10 illustrates this:

Example 10

i'll never forget watching this game lol Chris Duhon hurt his back on a cameraman and it was a gg for Duke after that (Tweeter J)

This tweet discusses a basketball match and how one of the players was hurt in it. As a consequence, this player could not continue playing, and this presumably was a reason for the team's, named Duke, defeat. In this sentence the mentions of losing or ending are replaced with the use of *gg*. Thus, if the reader is not familiar with this term, they could not understand from this tweet alone what had happened in the match. Additionally, Example 10 implies that the gaming term can also mean losing, when used outside of video games. Therefore, *gg* in this context refers to an ending, although in a different way, when compared to Examples 8 and 9. Within Example 10 *gg* conveys ending in a more neutral tone, because the term could be replaced with terms such as defeat. Thus, within this message the term just conveys a neutral meaning of something ending, whereas in Examples 8 and 9 the meaning of an end is not literal, but instead a bit humorous.

To summarize, in the present data nine main categories of meanings were found, which suggests that *gg* can be used to express various meanings. However, there were some other meanings which were not discussed in this paper as they were not prominent in the data. The gaming term *gg* was mostly used positively outside of the gaming context in the data sample. Frequently the meanings of the term were clear. Nevertheless, occasionally the term could be understood differently if the writers' mood were clearly reflected in the surrounding discourse. A recurring trend was that the term could have multiple meanings within a single use, such as frustration and sarcasm. Furthermore, the term *gg* was often used as a comment on some other person, company, or an event, and its meanings are reflected in the co-text.

5 CONCLUSION

This study was set up to understand the meaning of gaming language outside of video games. This was done by studying the term *gg*, which was coined within video games, and which later spread to social media, with the help of data from Twitter. To get a more general picture, the data sample (121 tweets) was organized into two categories according to the term's context: whether it was used inside or outside of the gaming context. This gave a general picture of how often the term is used in other contexts, besides in the context of video games. On the whole, context had a crucial role in the analysis, in addition to using previous study on meaning in Twitter as a guide to the present study.

Similarly to Sierra's (2016) study, the present study demonstrates that gaming language is used both in a variety of ways and daily, even without video games. The results of the analysis suggest that on Twitter the term is used more often in other contexts than within the video game context. The analysis of the various pragmatic meanings of the gaming term *gg*, in turn, revealed that it has various meanings, many of which also exist when the term is used in video game discourse. These meanings include gratitude, frustration, and mocking. Nevertheless, many of these meanings seem to be used only outside the game context. Examples of this are expressing success and ending. This finding suggests that the term has gone through a semantic shift by obtaining new meanings (Ensslin 2012).

As mentioned earlier, the term *gg* was used more in other contexts than in the video game one in the data sample. This was to be expected, because video games and Twitter are quite different as platforms: within video games the term is aimed at certain people who are already available, whereas on Twitter the message is typically addressed directly to someone. This may also be one of the reasons why *gg* has adopted multiple meanings in addition to having obtained new ways of usage in different contexts. Thus, the term is no longer just a comment; it can be used to evaluate situations and people or used as a substitute for other words. Nevertheless, the term was still used most often to comment on something, often people or companies, had done. Frequently *gg* was used in various ways to indicate something positive, such as gratitude and praise, yet it was also used negatively. However, when the term conveyed a negative meaning, it was often used sarcastically. This showed how the term held a somewhat contradictory meaning to its literal one. Some of these meanings were also malicious in nature, whereas others made the message seem even humorous. Besides the meanings discussed above, the present data also included some meanings that were used only once and thus were not prominent enough to be discussed in detail in this data. This means that *gg* has even more meanings than the ones discussed in this study, which should also be noted.

Although this study discovered that gaming language is also used outside of video games and frequently in different ways from how it is used within them, this study only offered an overview of this specific topic. The meanings were not analyzed in a nuanced way; however, this study gives an understanding on how various the meanings of this single gaming term are when used outside of video games. Nonetheless, due to the sample size and its collection from one media platform only, no definitive conclusions can be made. In addition, there may be significant differences between social media platforms, and thus the term might be used differently in other platforms. If I were to do a similar study again, the data sample would need to be larger, and it would be obtained from the internet overall if possible. Additionally, the data could be analyzed more thoroughly to get a deeper understanding of how gaming language is used online, for example by studying the location of the term and its semantic role in a sentence.

Although not the focus of the study, some other interesting patterns were apparent in the data. For instance, the contexts in which the term was used were fixed. The term was often used to describe unfortunate events, or to discuss technology and sports. These contexts can be seen from the Examples 8, 4 and 10 respectively as well, though they were not the only messages highlighting these contexts. Thus, it would be interesting to study if there are indeed recurring patterns of usage of the term in social media. In addition, there were some words which were used frequently in connection with *gg*, such as the word *boys*. For instance, this word was apparent in the Examples 1 and 8. This could imply something about the identity of people using the term, or of the group to whom it is generally targeted, especially as the term was not used in reference to girls or women. Furthermore, it might be interesting to collect data from different time periods in order to examine how the meanings have evolved through time. Therefore, there are more intriguing aspects yet to research about gaming language and how it emerges in daily conversations and on the internet, especially because such studies are so far quite few.

As a conclusion, gaming language seems to be used in various ways outside of video games, and this slang appears to be prominent on social media platforms such as Twitter. Although the term in focus in this study has many meanings, quite a few of them already exist in video games, whereas only some are only characteristic of contexts outside of video games. This study was only one of many that have investigated the nature and meanings of gaming language in different contexts, however there is still much to study to get a better understanding of how video games may affect language and its use.

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