

**FINNISH GAMERS' EXPERIENCES OF
MULTILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE LEARNING
IN ONLINE GAMING**

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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Verkkopelaaminen on yleisempää kuin koskaan, ja verkkopelit yhdistävät eri- ja monikielisiä pelaajia ympäri maailmaa. Monilla peleillä on monikielinen yhteisö, joten verkkopelit tarjoavat alustan monikielisyydelle ja kielen oppimiselle. Verkkopelien vaikutusta kielenoppimiseen on tutkittu paljon, mutta tässä tutkimuksessa kiinnitetään huomio monikielisyyden rooliin peliyhteisössä. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää, millaisia kokemuksia suomalaisilla pelaajilla on monikielisyydestä verkkopeliympäristössä ja miten monikielisyyden on vaikuttanut heidän kielenoppimiseensa.</p> <p>Tutkimus toteutettiin laadullisena tutkimuksena haastatteleamalla kahta suomalaista pelaajaa. Haastatteluissa haluttiin selvittää pelaajien kokemuksia monikielisyydestä verkkopeliympäristössä ja sitä, miten pelaajat kuvailevat monikielisyyttä ja kielenoppimista peliympäristössä. Puolistrukturoidut haastattelut toteutettiin etäyhteydellä.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että pelaaminen koettiin selkeästi sosiaalisena ja yhteisöllisenä toimintana. Pelaamisen koettiin lisäävän yhteenkuuluvuuden tunnetta ja pelaamisen avulla voitiin viettää aikaa ystävien kanssa. Yhteisöllisyys ja yhteenkuuluvuus motivoivat monikielisyyteen pelitilanteissa. Haastateltavat hyödynsivät monikielisyyttä yhteenkuuluvuuden vahvistamiseksi ja pelin tavoitteisiin pääsemiseksi. Puhutun ja kirjoitetun suomen- ja englannin kielen lisäksi haastatellut pelaajat kokivat peleihin liittyvät pelin sisäiset kommunikointitavat osana monikielisyyttä ja yhteisen ymmärryksen kokemusta. Motivaatio englanninkielisen sanaston ja laajemminkin kielenoppimiseen vahvistui haastatelluilla pelaajilla peliyhteisöön kuulumisesta. Monikielisyyden ja kielenoppimisen kietoutuvat peliympäristössä monisyisesti yhteen. Puhuttu ja kirjoitettu kieli ovat vain osa pelimaailman monikielisyyttä. Pelimaailman erilaiset kommunikointitavat kannattaa nähdä niin yhteisen ymmärryksen kokemuksen, kuin yhteisöllisyyden tukena ja sitä kautta motivaation vahvistamisessa kielen oppimiselle.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

Today, online games are more popular than ever, connecting gamers of all backgrounds worldwide (Horowitz, 2019: 379-380). The chance to connect with players from all around the world is a significant benefit of online games. This can help gamers develop a sense of community and connection, even if they have never met in person. Many online games have a multilingual player base with active communities. Thus, online games provide a prosperous setting for language use, as players communicate with each other through voice chat or typing. Online games are a highly equal ground for language use, as many games have distinct lexica, and perfect language skills are not required to play and communicate with others.

Gee (2003: 192-193) suggests that collaborative efforts can create bonds between members of a group. Online games have their own set of common rules and objectives that the players work towards. This can create a sense of togetherness among players. Additionally, online games enable players to increase their abilities and expertise. Thorne (2008) demonstrates that online gaming can also create “teacher and learner” interactions, where gamers support each other’s language learning in the game. Online games provide an interaction-based learning platform and support autonomous language learning. Moreover, online games frequently offer a variety of tasks and goals, which can help to keep players involved and interested in the game. This makes it interesting and important to examine the experiences of how online games and gaming interactions affect language learning and what role does multilingualism have in creating a sense of community in gaming. This study explores the experiences two young adult Finnish gamers have had of multilingualism in gaming and its role in language learning and community. Through their own personal experiences, we can better understand the role of multilingualism in online gaming.

2 ONLINE GAMES

Online games can be a way for gamers to feel a sense of togetherness and fellowship with other gamers. Marsh and Tainio (2009: 157) argue that video games offer players the opportunity to participate in valuable communities of practice. Gaming is often seen as communal and something you do with friends and other people with similar interests. Schott and Kambouri (2006) noted that the phenomenon of group plays during the game resulted in participants assuming various roles, with individuals possessing a higher level of expertise offering guidance and support to less experienced players, effectively functioning as a scaffold for their progression. Some online games have their own communication systems and mechanics that can help and encourage gamers to communicate with teammates or other players. Online games are a viable tool for language learning as players are driven to use language diversely and are situated in authentic language use contexts. Gamers often use English as a foreign language (L2) to play online games, and gamers also use online games for autonomous language learning (Chik, 2014: 85).

Online gaming can be a great way to connect with other language learners and native speakers of English. In the gaming world, English is the most commonly used language. Most games use it as the default option, and it also acts as a common language between players (Arnold-Stein & Hortobagyi, 2021: 50; Richtoff & Persson, 2022: 5). Many games have large and active communities with players from all over the world. This is noted also by Dralega and Corneliussen (2017: 9) who point out that online games offer international interactions that are readily available. This can allow learners to make friends and practice their language skills with people who share their interests. Through online gaming, language learners can practice their skills in a fun and engaging way. In many games, players must communicate with one another to complete tasks or compete against each other. This communication often takes the form of text chat, voice chat, or both (Peake & Reynolds 2020: 3). This allows learners to

practice their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Furthermore, Horowitz (2019) argues that online gaming provides learners with a safe and supportive environment to make mistakes and learn from them. Because the games are virtual, there are no real-life consequences for making errors or using language in a non-native way. This can be especially beneficial for learners who are shy or self-conscious about their language abilities.

2.1 Multilingualism in online games

The European Commission (2007) defines multilingualism as: “the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives”. As a result of globalization and migration, a growing number of individuals have become multilingual in recent years, bringing the concept of multilingualism more awareness and attention (Duarte et al. 2020: 1). Multilingualism is the competence to use multiple languages. This may refer to individuals who speak many languages, as well as communities that use several languages. Martin (2016) argues that multilingualism is not defined by one’s linguistic competencies. It can be argued that there is no such thing as perfect language proficiency. Improved communication is one of the key advantages of multilingualism. When individuals or groups can speak numerous languages, they are able to interact with a greater variety of groups and are not restricted by language boundaries.

Multilingualism is an integral part of online gaming. In online games, players often have different native languages, so they need to establish a shared means of communication to fully enjoy the game together (Richtoff & Persson, 2022: 12). One of the primary advantages of multilingualism in online gaming is improved communication between participants. It may also assist in the establishment of friendships and the development of a feeling of community and camaraderie among players from diverse nations and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, multilingualism may minimize language barriers and make the game

more accessible to players who do not speak the primary language of the game. This may contribute to the creation of a more diversified and global community inside the game, which is beneficial for everyone involved.

Translanguaging

Online games can provide opportunities for translanguaging as players interact and communicate with each other in real-time, often crossing linguistic boundaries. Translanguaging refers to when multilingual individuals utilize aspects from multiple languages or communication styles to enhance their ability to communicate effectively (García 2009: 140). It plays a crucial role in facilitating cross-cultural communication, overcoming language barriers, and creating a more inclusive gaming experience. It is a method of leveraging the different resources available to speakers in order to express meaning effectively. García (2009: 112) argues that gamers often alternate between different languages and mix language features to improve their communication in their gaming discourse.

One of the primary advantages of translanguaging is that it enables speakers to utilize the entirety of their linguistic knowledge and abilities. Arnold-Stein and Hortobagyi (2021) argue that gamers are motivated to improve their language proficiency for better communication and confidence, leading to increased opportunities in the virtual world. By utilizing numerous languages or linguistic varieties, speakers may access a wider range of vocabulary, grammar, and cultural references, thus enhancing the precision and effectiveness of their communication. When speakers can draw from various languages or linguistic varieties, they can discover common ground and build a shared understanding, even if they do not share a first language. This is especially useful when speakers have varied linguistic origins and no common language.

2.2 Interaction in online gaming

Communication is a crucial element of the online gaming experience (Spyridonis et al. 2018: 1). Henry (2013: 136) argues that players engage in extensive interactions both with other players and the game environment, demonstrating a high level of involvement. Many games would be unplayable or considerably less pleasant without the possibility to communicate with other players. Spyridonis et al. (2018) mention that there the three most frequent modes of communication are voice chat, text-based chat, and pre-set commands. Text-based chat is one of the most prevalent ways players interact in online games. This may be accomplished using an in-game chat system or an external chat application, such as Discord or Skype. Another method of communication in online games is using voice chat. This allows players to speak to one another in real-time, which can be more efficient and effective than typing out messages. Voice chat can be beneficial in fast-paced games where quick decision-making is necessary. It also allows players to convey better their emotions and intentions, which can help to foster a more cohesive team dynamic. In addition to these two primary forms of communication, some games also offer the ability for players to use emotes or pre-set phrases to communicate with one another. These can be useful for conveying simple ideas or emotions without the need for words and can be a fun way to add some personality to the gaming experience.

One of the most significant benefits of communication in online games is that it allows players to coordinate and work together more effectively. In many games, success is heavily dependent on team strategy and coordination. Peake and Reynolds (2020) argue that video games have defined goals and established regulations that must be comprehended and improved upon as one progresses through the game. Being able to quickly and easily communicate with one's teammates can make a massive difference in overall performance. The extent of English interaction among players is impacted by the online game's nature. For example, English communication skills, including cooperation and negotiation

with other players, are required for complex online multiplayer gaming (Peake & Reynolds 2020: 8; Henry, 2013: 137).

Apex Legends

Next, I will introduce the game Apex Legends because it is central to this study. Apex Legends is a popular battle royale game launched by Respawn Entertainment in February 2019. In the game, up to sixty people battle in teams of three on an island, with one person acting as the team's leader. Apex Legends is recognized for its fast-paced action, distinctive character skills, and focus on team tactics. In Apex Legends, there are several ways for players to communicate. The most used method is voice chat, which enables participants to communicate in real-time. This may be accomplished using a headset, microphone, or the game's integrated voice chat function. In addition to voice chat, Apex Legends offers other communication options. For instance, the game has a pinging system that enables players to mark areas, enemies, or objects for their teammates to see. This may be a useful alternative to voice chat, particularly for players who are shy or who do not have a microphone. A variety of emotes and actions allow players to communicate with one another in Apex Legends. These include gestures and emotes, such as waving or pointing. These may be used to indicate a variety of emotions and are a fun way to interact with teammates.

2.3 Language learning through gaming

Video and computer games have recently gained recognition as effective educational tools (Marsh & Tainio, 2009: 157). Video games and their virtual environments provide a safe space for learning languages and support languaging as a tool in communication with others. Swain (2009: 98) defines languaging as the act of forming and shaping understanding and experiences through the use of language. Translanguaging is a specific aspect of the broader

concept of languaging, and it emphasizes the dynamic and fluid use of language in multilingual contexts. Case studies have been made about different game types and their language environments, such as Massively Multiplayer Online Role Play Games (MMORPG) and Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOG). These game types often require communicating with one's teammates and other players. Thorne (2008) illustrates how language learning can happen in an online game environment by using the in-game chat of two university students, one Ukrainian and one American. The students played an MMORPG called World of Warcraft. The students' affection and devotion towards the game and the shared objectives brought the students together, even with language limitations. The students also created a teacher-learner situation, as both took turns teaching each other their native language.

Chik (2014) argues that the teacher and learner situation is not restricted to language, as many players offer their mechanical gaming skills in exchange for language aid and training. Chik (2014) shows how games and gaming interactions can lead to accidental language learning even with two people that speak the same language. Chik describes a situation where two Finnish teens are playing Final Fantasy X, and even though they are conversing in Finnish, at the same time, they are repeating words and phrases from the game that are not in Finnish. This shows that the players used the linguistic resources from the game for their language learning through repetition.

Video games provide a ground for autonomous language learning, as an individual can make many choices related to gaming. Chik (2014) describes how young gamers often get help from their older siblings, but they start looking for online forums and like-minded peers for gaming advice as they age. Gaming is often a leisure activity not tied to a specific location or educational facility. A player can create accidental and intentional language learning scenarios. Chik (2014) describes a student from Hong Kong who wanted to socialize and make friends with international students by learning specific terms in English related

to a sports game. The student taught himself the vocabulary and different phrases, just like he would at school. This shows how players complement their formal learning with video games and use them as a resource for autonomous language learning.

Chik (2014) argues that gamers often seek support for gaming from gaming communities. There is a pedagogical element to these online communities and forums, as they offer tips and guidance. Many of the more experienced players were more than willing to help newer gamers learn how best to use games for language learning. Some forums and blogs even include translations of in-game texts and dialogue. Chik (2014: 95) mentions that when the game *L.A. Noire* was released in different parts of Asia in 2011, many forums and websites were rushed by gamers looking for help. Numerous translations of the game and its in-game texts were then released in these forums. These gaming forums and blogs also create teacher and learner situations, as the gamers serve each other as their language teachers and translators. Olson (2010: 182) made similar observations in their study where youth gamers showed interest in helping and teaching other gamers.

Motivation in gaming

Motivation is crucial for language learners to advance their language abilities (Horowitz, 2019: 383). Dörnyei (2005: 65) argues that it is what drives individuals to continue studying and practicing a new language, even when faced with challenges and obstacles. One of the primary sources of motivation for language learners is the desire to communicate with others. This desire to connect with others can be a powerful motivator, providing a sense of purpose and fulfillment to the language learner. Olson (2010: 182) mentions that making friends is a motivator for many gamers.

Gaming can be a powerful tool to help motivate individuals to learn a new language. Chik (2014) argues that video games motivate language learning and how language learning can also happen accidentally. Gaming offers an engaging and enjoyable way to practice and improve language skills. One of the main benefits of using gaming for language learning is that it provides a fun and engaging environment for learners to practice their skills. Instead of feeling like they are doing tedious and repetitive work, learners can experience a sense of accomplishment and progress as they complete levels and unlock new challenges in the game. Newcombe and Brick (2017: 81) argue that a language learner who finds joy in the challenge of playing video games might be motivated to learn more about the language so they can overcome any language-related obstacles in the game. This can help to maintain learners' interest and motivation to continue practicing and improving their language skills. Gaming can provide a sense of competition and challenge that can be highly motivating for some learners. Olson (2010: 180-181) found that the opportunity for competition and the possibility of winning was deemed a significant motivator for video game play especially among male individuals. Many games are designed to be played with others, either online or in person, which allows learners to compete against each other and track their progress. This can provide a sense of accomplishment when learners beat their friends or other players and can help to keep them motivated to continue practicing and improving.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1 Research questions and aims

As mentioned, video and online games are viable ways to motivate and enhance language learning. Thorne (2008) argues that video games and their environments provide a captivating ground for cultural and linguistic frameworks, leading to pedagogical research. Online games offer a prosperous setting for language use and contain rich multilingual realms. This study examines multilingualism in gaming experienced by the gamers, and what meanings gamers give to multilingualism in gaming. This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Finnish gamers describe the use of multilingual interaction in gaming?
2. How does gaming affect language learning, according to the interviewees?

3.2 Participants, data collection and data

The advantage of using interviews as a data collection method is that they allow for an in-depth exploration of the research topic. Because interviews are typically one-on-one conversations, participants can provide detailed responses and elaborate on their experiences and perspectives. This can provide valuable insights that may not be captured using other data collection methods. Another advantage of interviews is that they allow researchers to ask follow-up questions and probe for more information. This can help researchers gain a better understanding of the participant's experiences and perspectives and can also help to clarify any unclear or ambiguous responses.

As this study aimed to discover the participants' personal experiences, a semi-structured interview was the logical method to choose because it permits a thorough exploration of the interviewee's distinct and personal interests (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006: 315). The data was collected by interviewing two Finnish gamers. Both interviewees were young adults who play online games regularly. Both participants were recruited through social networks. Both participants play online games regularly and consistently, approximately 4-10 hours a week, but consider themselves casual gamers. Both participants started playing video games before school age. Both participants report playing Apex Legends regularly for its engaging storytelling and social interactions. Both participants had Finnish as their first language. The interviews were conducted over Zoom, and the interviews were recorded. The first interview lasted approximately 20 minutes and the second 30 minutes. The interviews were quite different as the other interviewee produced limited answers, while the other was more articulate and comprehensive in their responses. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, which created 21 pages of text. Those texts were read thoroughly multiple times. I have translated all of the data excerpts from Finnish.

3.3 Method of Analysis

This study aimed to learn about the interviewee's experiences with multilingualism in gaming and its impact on their language-learning experiences. A qualitative content analysis was the clear choice for analyzing the data because it allows us to explore and understand the experiences of individuals in greater depth. This type of analysis is particularly well-suited for studying complex social phenomena, such as people's experiences, beliefs, and attitudes. Because qualitative analysis is focused on understanding the meaning and significance of people's experiences, it can provide valuable insights that may not be apparent through other forms of analysis. According to Castleberry and Nolen (2018), qualitative data analysis can generally be outlined in five steps:

compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. Although the theory guided the collection of the data, I built the actual theoretical background after collecting the material and familiarizing myself with it. As mentioned before, the interviews were transcribed to see the data. The data were searched for relevant answers to the research questions. The data was gone through numerous times, and the analysis process that had already started in the interviews was continued. After this, the data was dissembled by separating and organizing it. Important themes and ideas in the data were searched and identified. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying and coding recurrent themes or patterns in the data. This involves closely reading the transcripts of the interviews and identifying words, phrases, or ideas that are repeated or emphasized by the participants. The researcher can then group these themes into categories and analyze how they relate to the research question. The data was reassembled through themes, and the patterns were examined. The themes were examined thoroughly and made sure they were applicable to the research. The themes capture the phenomenon's essence in the research questions and the purpose of the study. The conclusions are presented in their own section.

3.4 Ethical issues

Ensuring the participants were treated with respect and dignity throughout the study was crucial. This included ensuring that participants are fully informed about the study and what it entails and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Another important ethical issue was obtaining informed consent from participants. This means that participants were fully informed about the study, including its purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits. Additionally, participants were told that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Another ethical issue is protecting the privacy and confidentiality of participants. This means that personal information collected from participants must be kept

confidential and only used for the study. Any data collected from participants must be securely stored and handled per relevant laws and regulations. Before the interview, a form was sent out informing the participants about the study and its purpose. The document explained the research methods and how they would be conducted. The privacy statement clarified how their data would be handled and that they always had complete control of their data. The participants signed another form consenting to the study. The data was stored on a secure cloud service. The participants were told that all their data would be deleted after gathering the required material. The participants are referred to only as B1 and B2 to ensure anonymity.

4 FINDINGS

In this chapter I will present my data analysis and results through themes that emerged. These themes include gaming as a social activity, language learning through gaming and multilingual interaction in gaming.

4.1 Gaming as a social activity and motivator

Both participants report a sense of togetherness and communality as substantial parts of gaming. This can be seen in data excerpts 1, 2 and 3.

Excerpt 1:

You can hang out with your friends, without actually seeing them. (B2)

Excerpt 2:

When you get to play with friends sometimes, it's a joint event and you get to laugh and joke together and chat while there's something you do together and those are basically like positive feelings to me. (B1)

Excerpt 3:

It's like you're bonding around the game and around the experiences you've done in that game. (B1)

Excerpts 1,2 and 3 show that gaming can be seen as an important way to connect with other players and provide valuable experiences of togetherness. B1 reports that gaming has strengthened their relationship with their sibling. In excerpt 4 B1 tells that they have even created a gaming style where they both know their movements and actions at any given game.

Excerpt 4:

My close relationship with my... I feel like it's so close because we've played all our lives together et we know each other's playing styles. Almost no matter what the game is, we understand how the other operates. (B1)

Excerpt 4 shows the power of games as a way to bond with others through shared experiences and a common goal.

4.2 Multilingual interaction in gaming

Another theme that emerged was the use of multilingualism as a tool for strategic communication within the game. Both participants reported using different languages to communicate with their teammates or opponents. In excerpt 5, B1 explains the how they use multilingualism in gaming.

Excerpt 5:

If I play with my brother and we speak Finnish among ourselves and then if I want to say something to the other external parties in that team, then I might throw something at them in English, but then it usually goes to a different chat, but that's a bit of code switching. (B1)

Excerpt 5 shows how multilingualism is used in gaming. B1 claimed that using multilingual in-game communication mechanics allowed for high-level play. Another theme that emerged from the data was the positive impact of multilingualism on friendships and connections. Both participants spoke about the friendships and connections they had made with players from different backgrounds. This suggests that multilingualism is a highly valued and integral aspect of online gaming. It serves as a tool for inclusivity and strategic communication and is often seen as a necessary skill for successful play. In addition to the themes described above, several patterns emerged from the data. A pattern that emerged was the role of language choice in online gaming. Both participants reported switching between Finnish and English depending on the context of the game and different in-game tasks or for communicating with different groups of players. This suggests that multilingualism in online gaming is a dynamic and flexible skill that players use in various contexts. Both participants reported that they find in-game communication methods useful.

Excerpt 6 shows how B1 was able to use the broad selection of ways to communicate, including pre-arranged voice lines, pings, and emotes.

Excerpt 6:

I feel that I'm quite shy, that I don't really dare to open my mouth even if I'm in voice chat so I feel like it almost makes up for speaking out loud, especially since in Apex there is a wide ping system so in Apex actually you can play at a relatively high level... and like communicate with the team a lot. (B1)

This is a valuable notion as in-game communication mechanics can help alleviate communication pressures for shy gamers. Another aspect of multilingualism, translanguaging, was a theme that emerged from the data in this study. Both participants reported using translanguaging to bridge linguistic divides within the gaming community, switching between different languages or language varieties as needed to facilitate communication and understanding. In excerpt 7, B2 reports switching languages between teammates.

Excerpt 7:

If there were Finns in the team and then people from different countries, you have to speak English there. (B2)

One pattern that emerged was the use of translanguaging to create a sense of inclusivity and belonging within the gaming community. Both participants mentioned using translanguaging to communicate with players who spoke different languages, even if they were not proficient in those languages themselves. This suggests that translanguaging can be a valuable tool for building connections and fostering a sense of community within the gaming community. Another pattern that emerged was the use of translanguaging to access resources and information within the game. Both participants reported using different languages or language varieties to access in-game resources or to communicate with other players who had knowledge or expertise that they lacked. This suggests that translanguaging can be helpful in overcoming linguistic barriers and accessing valuable resources within the gaming

community. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that translanguaging is a common and valued aspect of online gaming communities. It serves as a tool for inclusivity, accessing resources and information, and is often seen as a necessary skill for successful play and communication within these communities.

4.3 Language learning through gaming

The analysis revealed several key themes related to the use of gaming for language learning. Participant B1 reported that they enjoyed using gaming as a platform for language learning. They also noted that the interactive and engaging nature of the games helped keep them motivated and interested in the learning process. Both participants reported that the use of gaming for language learning improved language skills, especially B1, who reported in excerpt 8 that they learned English entirely from video games.

Excerpt 8:

I think I've learned English completely from video games. I've noticed that my vocabulary is very game-oriented. (B1)

Excerpt 8 shows that gaming can be seen a beneficial way to learn new vocabulary. In addition to improving language skills, the use of gaming for language learning appeared to have a positive impact on overall motivation and engagement in language learning. In excerpt 9 they reported feeling more motivated to continue learning and practicing their language skills.

Excerpt 9:

My interest in this language has begun... definitely from what kind of language world exists in the games... it has definitely developed my motivation. (B1)

In excerpt 10, B1 mentions that online games have especially helped with pronunciation and have motivated them to study more words.

Excerpt 10:

...especially when I was younger, when I was playing some games and then always asking my dad what a word means. That's how I've learned... it also helps a little in pronunciation...Over the years, I've learned words and then wondered what a word is and then had to google it, but that's how I've learned new words. (B2)

Excerpt 11:

I want to see more of what the characters and what that world does. (B1)

Excerpt 10 shows that gaming can help with vocabulary and motivate to autonomously learn new vocabulary. Participant B1 reported that the use of gaming for language learning allowed them to feel more immersed in the language, as they could interact with the games and practice using the language more naturally and authentically. They also reported that they were interested in online and video games as storytelling mediums. Excerpt 11 shows how experiencing immersive and expansive game worlds draws players into games.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the complex and multifaceted role of multilingualism in online gaming communities. Multilingualism is an important factor in online gaming that enables players from different linguistic backgrounds to communicate, collaborate, and enjoy the game together. This study found that the use of multilingual communication like pre-arranged voice lines, pings, and emotes allow for enjoyable high-level gaming. This study also shows that online games provide an engaging and interactive way for language learners to practice their skills. One of the key benefits of online gaming for language learning is that it offers an immersive and interactive experience. Unlike traditional language learning methods, which often involve rote memorization and repetitive drills, online games provide a more dynamic and engaging way to learn. Through interactive elements, online games can help language learners build their vocabulary and improve their grammar skills in a fun and engaging way. This is supported by Peake and Reynolds (2020), who argue that players encounter a diverse vocabulary while working together to progress in the game. The findings also suggest that gaming can be an effective and enjoyable tool for language learning. These findings are in line with similar studies on the subject (Erkkilä, 2017; Väisänen, 2018; Hemminki, 2021). They highlight the potential of gaming as a tool for language learning and suggest that it may be particularly effective for enhancing motivation and engagement and developing a range of language skills.

This study presents another advantage of using online games for language learning is that they provide learners with a sense of community and support. The desire to connect and communicate with fellow gamers often motivates players to learn new languages. Gaming can facilitate social experiences that are related but separate from the actual game, which players consider to be crucial (Kaye, 2019: 460). Many online games are played with other people, which means that language learners can practice their skills with others who are also learning

the language. This can provide a sense of camaraderie and support, which can be especially beneficial for learners who may feel isolated or discouraged when learning a new language on their own.

The findings from this study on the use of gaming for language learning could have several implications for the field of language education. First, both participants' finding that gaming platforms have positively influenced language learning suggests that gaming could be a valuable addition to traditional language learning methods. This could be especially true for individuals who may find traditional methods less engaging, unmotivating or intimidating. Second, the fact that the use of gaming led to significant improvements in language skills for participant B2 suggests that gaming could be a powerful tool for language acquisition and skill development. This could have implications for language educators, who may wish to consider incorporating gaming into their lesson plans and curricula. Third, the finding that gaming facilitated powerful storytelling could also have implications for language education. Gaming can provide learners with a more authentic and immersive language learning experience, which could be particularly useful for developing these types of skills.

This study had some limitations and reliability issues. There was a small sample size as only two people were interviewed. This may not accurately represent the population of online gamers. There was also a lack of diversity as both interviewees were of the same gender and roughly the same age. This does not accurately represent the experiences and opinions of different genders, age groups, or cultural backgrounds. The findings may only be applicable to the specific individuals interviewed and may not be generalizable to the larger population of online gamers. Further research is needed to fully understand how multilingualism is used and valued in these communities and how it impacts player experiences and interactions. Further research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms behind the effectiveness of gaming for language

learning and to determine the best approaches for using gaming in language education. Further research could explore ways to tailor the difficulty level of the games to meet the needs of different learners better. Future research could focus on investigating the cross-cultural differences in language learning through online gaming. There could also be research on how multilingualism in gaming could be utilized in supporting L2 learners.

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